

Her Love, Endures

written by

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## Characters

Young Joe Ostrowski	An American Teenager in the 1960's
Adult Joe Ostrowski	A Typical American Man in the 1970's, 80's and 90's
Joe Ostrowski	A Retired American in the First Part of the 21st Century
Young Sandy Williams	An American Teenager in the 1960's
Adult Sandy Williams	A Typical American Woman in the 1970's, 80's and 90's
Sandy Williams	A Woman Holding Off Retirement in the First Part of the 21st Century
Carrie Ostrowski	Joe and Maggie's Youngest Child, mid teens to early 30's
Pete Ostrowski	Joe and Maggie's eldest Child, late teens to mid 30's
Laura	Pete's wife, a hair younger
Mike Nyquist	Sandy's Partner, a year or so older
Maggie Ostrowski	Joe's Wife, same age
Dr Morgan	Joe's Doctor, female
Priest 1	A Catholic Priest
Priest 2	Another Catholic Priest

Setting:

Various locations throughout a lifetime in Middle America.

Time:

September, 1964 through July, 2021

A Note On Casting:

Suggested double casting as follows:

Mike/Priest 1     Carrie/Dr Morgan  
Pete/Priest 2     Laura/Maggie  
Adult Sandy/Sandy\*  
Adult Joe/Joe\*

\*If needed.

A Note On Costumes:

When dealing with a play set in very specific time periods, it is very easy to fall into the cliches of the era. Not everyone in the 1960's was a hippie. Disco wasn't king everywhere.

I urge you to strive for authenticity, rather than take the easy stereotype.

A Note On Sets:

This show jumps forward and backward in time rather quickly. Sets should be incomplete, suggestive, layered... Like broken flashes of memory inside a dream.

ACT ONE

1.1 INT. PUBLIC HIGH SCHOOL CLASSROOM - MORNING -  
SEPTEMBER, 1964

1.1

It is the first day of school at the local Senior High.

YOUNG SANDY nervously enters. It is the first day of freshman year. She moves through the classroom, trying out several desks, before setting on one. Not in the front row, but not too far back either. She sits, sheepishly, for a bit before pulling a notebook and pencil from her bag.

She sits, alone, in the classroom, waiting to take notes.

After a moment, YOUNG JOE enters. It is also his first day of freshman year, but he is full of confidence, and holds himself with the swagger that one can only have at age fourteen and on top of the world.

He plops into a desk in the back row.

A beat.

YOUNG JOE  
(noticing YOUNG SANDY)

Hey.

No response, YOUNG SANDY is uncomfortable with the attention.

YOUNG JOE  
(a little louder)

Pardon me.

YOUNG SANDY  
(uncomfortable)  
Are you talking to me?

Young Joe looks around the room.

YOUNG JOE  
Yes.

YOUNG SANDY  
(unamused)  
May I help you with something?

YOUNG JOE  
Are you new? I've never seen ya before.

YOUNG SANDY  
(uncomfortably, as an admission)  
I'm new.

YOUNG JOE  
Cool.

Silence.

YOUNG JOE  
Hey.

No response.

YOUNG JOE  
(a little louder)  
I'm still sayin' "hey."

YOUNG SANDY  
(irritated)  
What?

YOUNG JOE  
Were ya from?

YOUNG SANDY  
Wichita.

YOUNG JOE  
Wichita?

YOUNG SANDY  
It's in Kansas.

YOUNG JOE  
Yeah, thanks, I've heard of it.

YOUNG SANDY  
Then, why did you ask?

YOUNG JOE  
I didn't ask, I've just never met anyone from  
Wichita before.

YOUNG SANDY  
Well, we're just people.

YOUNG JOE

Ok, so, and I'm not meaning anything by this, but you're being a little weird. Is it just you, or are they all weird-os in Wichita?

Young Sandy, insulted, turns her back with a huff.

Young Joe sit's back in his chair.

YOUNG JOE

(with a smile)

Sorry, sorry. I'm just giving ya grief. I don't mean anything by it.

No response.

YOUNG JOE

I'm Joe, by the way. Let me know if I can help ya find anything, or anything like that.

A beat.

YOUNG SANDY

Thanks.

YOUNG JOE

You got a name?

No response.

YOUNG JOE

(continued)

Goddam, you are really weird.

YOUNG SANDY

(quickly)

Please don't take the Lord's name in vein like that.

YOUNG JOE

Why, did I offend you. or something?

YOUNG SANDY

No, not really. It's just... Disrespectful.

YOUNG JOE

Sorry. I'm not really religious. Didn't mean to be disrespectful.

Pause.

YOUNG SANDY

I guess I'm a little offended.

YOUNG JOE

Well, I'm still sorry. No one in my family is religious. Not like, heathens or anything. Just... We don't really care.

YOUNG SANDY

Well, I think that makes you the weird-o.

Young Joe smiles. It's awkward and clumsy, but they're flirting.

A moment.

YOUNG SANDY

(with hesitance)

Sandy.

YOUNG JOE

What?

YOUNG SANDY

My name. It's Sandy.

YOUNG JOE

Hey, Sandy. I'm Joe.

YOUNG SANDY

Hey, Joe.

Lights Out.

**1.2 EXT. CEMETERY - DAY - JULY, 2018**

**1.2**

The funeral of Maggie Ostrowski, Joe's late wife.

Joe sits in a chair, his hands resting on the pommel of his walking cane, staring into the spot where they lowered Maggie's casket into the ground. Flowers surround him like the ephemera of a dream.

SANDY approaches Joe.

SANDY

(nervously)

Joe?

Joe looks up.

There is a momentary recognition on his face, as if he can't place where he'd seen her before.

JOE  
Hello. Um, yes?

She realizes that he doesn't recognize her.

SANDY  
Hello. I'm... Awfully sorry for your loss.

JOE  
Thank you. I appreciate it.

Joe returns to his thoughts, and Sandy quietly departs.

Carrie approaches, and, with a hug, sits next to her father.

CARRIE  
Hi, Dad.

JOE  
Hello, Carrie. How are you, Sweetie? How you holding up?

CARRIE  
Well, I just lowered my mom into the ground. But otherwise, I'm good. How are you?

Pause.

JOE  
Where's your brother?

CARRIE  
(scanning the crowd)  
I see him, he's over there with Laura and the kids. (calls to him) Pete!

Carrie waves her brother over, and a moment later Pete enters.

PETE  
Hey, guys. What's up?

CARRIE  
Sit with us.

Pete sits next to his dad.

JOE

You ok? How are the kids holding up?

PETE

Laura and I are fine. I think the kids may be a little too young to understand, but it's ok. You alright?

Pause.

JOE

It's good to have family around you, at times like this. It's good. Family is important.

Joe takes the hands of both of his children, and sits in quiet for a moment.

JOE

I'm happy you're here. I have something to say to you, if you have a moment.

CARRIE

(overlapping Pete)

Whatever you need.

PETE

(overlapping Carrie)

What is it?

Joe smiles a soft, melancholy smile.

JOE

I know living with us, or growing up with us, wasn't the easiest. I don't know why, I guess that... I guess that we just hit a point where everything became routine. We loved you, and we did our best to raise you into good people. But, and this is pretty strange to say...

PETE

We noticed.

JOE

(surprised to hear this)

Really?

CARRIE

Dad, *everyone* noticed.

JOE

Oh. I thought we hid it pretty well. I don't know. I guess we had you two, and I guess that it just kept us going.

Joe is in an odd space, not happy, not sad. He's looking back at his past, with all the emotion of a mirror.

JOE  
(continued)

Looking at it now, I can say that it wasn't that happy of a marriage. I think I can say that. But I don't know if I could leave, even if I thought that was an option.

CARRIE

Why not?

JOE

I was too excited to see how you guys would turn out.

Laura joins the group. She stands beside her husband, and puts her arm around him.

LAURA

What are we talking about?

PETE

Our surprisingly normal childhoods.

LAURA

What does that mean?

Joe becomes a little stern.

JOE

It means, Laura, it means that marriage is hard. They all are. And we can leave it there at her funeral.

PETE

Yes, Dad.

Priest 1 approaches the family.

PRIEST 1

Hello, everyone.

PETE

Father.

Everyone greets the Father.

PRIEST 1

Once again, I want to offer my condolences. Maggie was a wonderful woman.

CARRIE

Thank you, Father.

PRIEST 1

If there's nothing else...

JOE

Thanks, Father.

PETE

(quickly)

Actually, Father...

PRIEST 1

Yes?

CARRIE

Oh, I hope you're going somewhere with this.

PETE

I understand the church's thoughts on divorce and all that... But, what if two people just fall out of love? But, what's the point, then? Shouldn't they just shrug it off and move on? Can't two people just fundamentally grow apart?

LAURA

Oh, now I hope you're going somewhere with this.

JOE

Peter, you're being disrespectful.

PRIEST 1

Well, you're right, the position is that forever is forever. But, personally... I don't know, I still think it's best to honor your commitments, especially when there's children involved. Perhaps there's some joy in that, having the memory of love. Maybe that's better than never having loved at all.

JOE

Thanks, Father.

Priest 1 exits, leaving Joe surrounded by his family.

JOE

(sternly)

Please don't ever disrespect your mother like that. Or me. We were wonderful partners, if nothing else. We did our best, and you both turned out magnificently.

Joe relaxes, and his normal demeanor returns.

JOE

(continued)

Let's go have lunch. We have a lot of guests, and we really should thank them for coming.

Pete steps forward to hug his father. Carrie joins a moment later, followed by Laura. Joe hugs them back, completely cocooned in love, but still, somehow, alone.

Lights Out.

**1.3 INT. SCHOOL CAFETERIA - DAY - NOVEMBER, 1964**

**1.3**

Young Sandy sits by herself, quietly eating lunch and reading a book.

Young Joe approaches, sees her and ponders for a second before sitting opposite her at the table.

YOUNG JOE

Hi.

Young Sandy is surprised and annoyed by the intrusion.

YOUNG SANDY

Hello.

YOUNG JOE

Is it ok that I join you?

YOUNG SANDY

I think you just did.

YOUNG JOE

Right. So... Sandy...Right? It's Sandy? Ok, thanks. I don't want to have to just call you "Weird-o" all the time.

YOUNG SANDY

Yeah, that's not a great nickname.

YOUNG JOE

No, I guess not. I'm sorry.

YOUNG SANDY

It's ok, let it go.

Young Sandy returns to her book and lunch. Young Joe begins to pick at his food.

After a moment...

YOUNG JOE  
Meeting lots of people?

YOUNG SANDY  
(looking up)  
What?

YOUNG JOE  
I'm sorry... Are you meeting lots of people?

YOUNG SANDY  
A few. No one really close.

YOUNG JOE  
I guess that's something.

Awkward pause.

YOUNG SANDY  
I heard that you and Maggie Wilkinson just broke up.

YOUNG JOE  
Yeah, I guess. It wasn't really much of a thing. She just found someone that she thought was cuter, that's all.

YOUNG SANDY  
Oh.

Pause.

YOUNG JOE  
Hey, I saw you walking home the other day.

YOUNG SANDY  
Yep.

YOUNG JOE  
Where do you live?

Young Sandy takes a moment to figure out if he's trying to pull something.

YOUNG SANDY  
I'm not in the mood for a boyfriend.

YOUNG JOE

I don't want to... I walk that way too, and I could use the company.

Pause.

YOUNG SANDY

Really?

YOUNG JOE

I promise. I think I kind of gave you the wrong idea about me, and I want to fix that.

YOUNG SANDY

What is the right idea about you?

YOUNG JOE

That I'm a nice enough guy. Maybe even a friend.

Pause, Young Sandy considers this.

YOUNG SANDY

Ok, tell you what. You can walk with me after school, and we'll see how it goes. If you're still a jerk, then you can just go away. But, if you're normal... Well, we can see about that friendship thing.

Lights Out.

**1.4 INT. JOE'S LIVING ROOM - NIGHT - FEBRUARY 2019**

**1.4**

Joe is sleeping in his recliner.

He snores a bit, which turns into a cough.

He coughs himself awake. He's out of breath, and slightly disoriented.

He sits for a moment before lowering the foot rest and trying to stand.

Even with his cane, this is a bit of an ordeal. His strength isn't quite there.

He takes a few small, labored, steps.

He leans hard on his cane, but still manages to bump the corner of the coffee table.

JOE

Ow! Jeez!

Joe rubs his leg, as he begins to cough again.

Lights Out.

1.5 EXT. FOREST - DUSK - JULY 1967

1.5

A remote forested area of town, deep in a ravine.

Young Joe is on the ground, having just tumbled down a ravine and into the creek at its bottom. His clothes are torn and bloodied. He is wet, his leg is broken, and his movement is very labored. There is a deep gash across his forehead.

YOUNG JOE  
(calling)

Hello??

No response.

YOUNG JOE  
(calling)

Anyone hear me??

No response.

Young Joe shifts his weight, trying to stand.

He tries to stand, but screams when he tries to put weight on his leg

YOUNG JOE  
(screaming)

AHHHH!!!!

He falls to the ground. This is the worst pain he has ever experienced.

He fights, and fails, to hold back tears.

YOUNG JOE  
(calling)

SANDY? SANDY, WHERE ARE YOU? (softer) Come, on, Weirdo.

Silence.

YOUNG JOE  
(calling)

SANDY!

Silence.

The night settles in, the noises in the forest get louder, the air gets colder.

The weight of the moment begins to settle in on Young Joe, the situation making his broken leg hurt even more.

Night is falling.

YOUNG JOE  
(softly, without strength)

Sandy... Where...

Young Joe passes out, prone in the mud.

A moment.

YOUNG SANDY  
(off stage, from a distance)

Joe?

Joe doesn't hear her. He is laying on the forest floor, hypothermia beginning to set in.

YOUNG SANDY  
(off stage, closer)

JOE!!

Young Joe shifts, reacting to her voice.

YOUNG SANDY  
(scrambling down ravine)

JOE!!!

She tries to roll him over, he reacts to the pain in the leg from shifting.

Indiscriminate voices off stage.

YOUNG SANDY  
(calling)  
We're over here!!!

Young Sandy holds him, shivering in her arms.

YOUNG SANDY  
(to Young Joe)  
You're so cold! So cold.

She holds him close, to warm him up.

He stirs.

YOUNG JOE  
(weakly)  
Sandy?

YOUNG SANDY  
All those times walking me home... Did you think I wouldn't know how to find you?

YOUNG JOE  
Sandy...

YOUNG SANDY  
(scared, fighting tears)  
I'm sorry I'm late. I'm sorry, I'm sorry. I went to the Big Tree, and you weren't there, so I went to your house, but your mom said you weren't home, so we got help... This is all my fault...

YOUNG JOE  
Sandy...

YOUNG SANDY  
I'm here, I got help, they're bringing a stretcher.

YOUNG JOE  
Sandy...

The voices off stage are closer.

YOUNG SANDY  
 (calling out)  
 We're over here!!

YOUNG JOE  
 I...

YOUNG SANDY  
 I'm scared. You couldn't just be a jerk, could  
 you? We just had to be friends, didn't we?  
 You're ok. You're ok.

Young Joe finds the strength to  
 lift his hand and touch her cheek.

He whispers something.

YOUNG SANDY  
 What's...?

Young Joe whispers something.

Young Sandy lowers his head to hear  
 better.

He whispers again.

YOUNG SANDY  
 (at a loss)  
 I...

He kisses her.

Lights Out.

**1.6 INT. DOCTOR'S OFFICE - AFTERNOON - SEPTEMBER, 2020.**

**1.6**

Joe paces the length of the  
 examination room, leaning on his  
 walking cane a little more than  
 usual.

He is wearing a mask.

His movement is slow and labored.

He sits, alone and waiting.

He coughs.

A moment later the door opens, and  
 DR MORGAN enters. She is also  
 masked.

DR. MORGAN

Good Morning, Mr Ostrowski.

JOE

Doctor. How are you?

The Doctor sits and logs into her computer.

DR. MORGAN

Well enough. Staying healthy, checking in on the neighbor's when I can. Still doing that social isolating thing.

JOE

Good. Same here. I try my best, anyways. My kid's bought me a computer. I talk to them through that.

DR. MORGAN

Good, good. We all must do our part. Now, could you go over your symptoms for me, just one more time, please?

JOE

Sure. Been losing some weight, I get short of breath really quickly, I'm sore often. And, just, really, really, kind of tired. Oh, and I bumped into a table the other day... This is about the biggest bruise that I've even seen.

DR. MORGAN

I know the nurse asked you, but... Any symptoms?

JOE

No.

DR. MORGAN

Shortness of breath?

JOE

Just the coughing.

DR. MORGAN

To the best of your knowledge, have you been in contact with anyone who has COVID?

JOE

Nope.

DR. MORGAN

Have you been outside of the country in the past ninety days?

Joe stares at his doctor flatly.

DR. MORGAN  
Right. May I?

JOE  
Sure.

Joe lifts his shirt, revealing a rather large bruise.

DR. MORGAN  
Hmm. Can you hop on the table for me?

JOE  
Ok.

Joe makes his way to the exam table. He stops for a moment, pondering the best way to climb up.

DR. MORGAN  
Do you need a hand?

JOE  
I'm alright.

He manages to lift himself onto the table.

JOE  
See? Easy Peasy Lemon Squeezy, as my daughter would have said.

DR. MORGAN  
How old is she now?

Dr. Morgan guides Joe back, so he's lying on the table. He coughs a bit.

JOE  
Twenty-eight.

DR. MORGAN  
I'm going to lift your shirt up. Do you mind if I examine the bruise?

JOE  
Fine.

She does so, and examines the bruise.

JOE  
(continued)

They're both good kids. So nice and...

Joe lets out a groan as the Doctor gently pushes against his abdomen.

DR. MORGAN

Tender?

JOE

Just a bit.

DR. MORGAN

I'm going to feel some other spots; just bear with me for a bit.

She pokes around his torso, and then feels his neck. She examines pupil dilation.

After a moment.

DR. MORGAN

Any recent fevers?

JOE

Actually, yes. A few days ago. But I'm masking up wherever I go.

DR. MORGAN

That's good. How is your vision?

JOE

It's been a little blurry. I have an optometrist appointment next week.

DR. MORGAN

Let me help you up.

She helps Joe sit up, who begins straightening his clothes.

She then helps him back to his chair. He sits, slightly winded.

She looks at him for a moment, a deep concern in her face.

DR. MORGAN

Well, let me say that I don't think you have COVID.

JOE

Oh, good. I'd hate to be a statistic.

Pause.

DR. MORGAN

Do you have someone waiting for you in the car? Some one that we can call?

Silence.

JOE

Uh oh. This can't be good.

DR. MORGAN

I don't know yet, Joe. But I'd rather send you to someone who could tell you more decisively.

JOE

I understand.

Joe starts digging through his pockets until he finds a scrap of paper.

JOE

(continued)

My daughter in law gave me her number to call when I was ready, she's going to meet me at the door.

Joe passes the paper to the Doctor, who starts to dial.

DR. MORGAN

I'm hopeful that we'll get people back in the rooms again soon.

Doctor puts the call on speaker in time to hear the first ring.

JOE

Speaking of that. You hear on the news...

DR. MORGAN

Joe. It's a real thing. Don't even start with me. What's her name?

JOE

Laura.

Laura answers the phone.

LAURA

(on speakerphone)

Hello?

DR. MORGAN  
Hello, Laura?

LAURA  
(on speakerphone)  
Yes?

DR. MORGAN  
Hi, Laura, it's Doctor Morgan. How are you today?

Pause.

LAURA  
(on speakerphone)  
Uh oh. This can't be good.

JOE  
That's what I said. Hello, Honey.

LAURA  
(on speakerphone)  
How you doing, Dad?

JOE  
I think we're about to find out.

DR. MORGAN  
Ok, here's the thing... Joe, you're showing several text book symptoms of lymphoma.

A mighty silence.

LAURA  
(on speakerphone)  
Oh God.

Joe sits.

DR. MORGAN  
I'm going to put in a referral to the oncology department, specifically to ask for Doctor Wagner. I've known her for years, she's really the best one to handle this situation for you. You should hear from them by the end of the week, but if they don't reach out by then, I'll give you a number to call.

Joe sits.

LAURA  
(on speakerphone)  
Thank you, Doctor. Dad? I'll meet you at the door, ok?

DR. MORGAN

I'll grab some paperwork, and walk him up. It will be just a moment.

The phone call ends, and Dr. Morgan awkwardly avoids eye contact.

DR. MORGAN

Ok, Joe, sit tight. I'll grab your paperwork and have a nurse grab a wheelchair for you.

Dr. Morgan locks the computer and exits.

Joe sits.

After a moment, Joe stands to get his cane. He takes a few steps toward it, before being overcome with dizziness, and falling to the ground.

Lights Out.

**1.7 EXT. TRAIN STATION - DAY - AUGUST, 1968**

**1.7**

Young Sandy and Young Joe are sitting on a bench outside of the train station.

Young Joe's suitcases are beside him on the ground. He's smoking and wears a leg brace.

Young Sandy is sitting next to him, drinking a soda. She looks like she's been crying.

YOUNG JOE

Anyway, the Doctor said that I should wear the brace whenever I felt unsteady. But I'd be ok without it. Probably still have a limp for quite a while yet.

YOUNG SANDY

Yeah? It's been a year, you'd think all those smart people would have you fixed up by now.

YOUNG JOE

Well, it was messed up pretty bad.

YOUNG SANDY

I know, I found you. Remember?

YOUNG JOE

You know that I don't. I told you, I remember being in the woods, then waking up in the hospital.

A beat.

YOUNG SANDY

I can't believe that you're leaving for college.

YOUNG JOE

I can't believe you're not going to college.

YOUNG SANDY

It's not a thing that my family does.

YOUNG JOE

But you're the...

YOUNG SANDY

(interrupting)

It's not a thing that my family does.

YOUNG JOE

Ok, ok.

They sit in silence for a moment, each trying to steal glances at the other, without being caught. Studying each other's face, knowing that it will be the last time they see each other for a while.

YOUNG JOE

I'm glad you came.

YOUNG SANDY

Me too. Couldn't your parents see you off?

YOUNG JOE

Nah, they're not really the sentimental type. I guess that's where I get that from. Anyway, Dad had to get back to work.

YOUNG SANDY

Oh. Well, I'm glad I could be here for you.

YOUNG JOE

Me too.

Silence.

YOUNG SANDY

Do you remember what you said to me?



YOUNG SANDY

Why's that?

YOUNG JOE

What do you mean, "why?" You're my best friend, that'd be totally weird, even for you, Weird-o.

Silence.

YOUNG SANDY

It wouldn't be totally weird to kiss me.

Young Joe starts to say something in protest, but Young Sandy cuts him off.

YOUNG SANDY

You should know that I love you too and that's not weird at all. In fact, if I never see you again, I want it to be the last memory that you ever have of me.

Silence. They avoid looking at each other.

YOUNG JOE

It's not like I'm never going to see you again.

YOUNG SANDY

I hope not, but you never know. Kid's are dying all over the place.

YOUNG JOE

They're not gonna draft me with my leg.

YOUNG SANDY

That's not the only way kids die. So, I love you too. And, even if you don't remember it, you kissed me. And it meant something to me.

Pause.

YOUNG JOE

I should get inside, it's almost time to go.

YOUNG SANDY

I know.

Young Joe stands and gathers his bags.

YOUNG JOE

Well...

YOUNG SANDY  
(standing)

Yeah.

They stare at each other for a moment. The pain of separation already setting in.

YOUNG JOE  
(slight crack in his voice)

I guess....

YOUNG SANDY  
You should go.

Another moment of staring at each other, before Young Joe limps a step in.

Young Sandy braces for another kiss.

Young Joe reaches out, and hugs her deeply.

After a moment, he disengages. Young Sandy is clearly deflated.

YOUNG JOE  
I'll see you soon.

YOUNG SANDY  
See ya around.

Young Joe gathers his bags, and walks off.

Young Sandy watches him leave.

Lights Out.

End Act One.

ACT TWO

2.1 INT. CHURCH - DAY - JUNE 1975

2.1

Upstage, we have the wedding of Adult Joe and Adult Maggie. They stand in front of Priest 2, who is officiating. They are both vibrant and alive.

The scene is flanked by the apartment of Adult Sandy and Mike Nyquist. Adult Sandy one side, Mike on the other. They both look tired and worn out. Adult Sandy is 21 weeks pregnant.

Throughout the scene, the wedding continues upstage.

Adult Sandy is holding out her engagement ring, trying to give it back.

ADULT SANDY  
(hesitating)

I... can't.

MIKE  
(surprised)

I'm sorry?

Priest 2 leads Adult Joe through his vows.

ADULT SANDY

I can't.

MIKE  
That's my baby, right? You're carrying my baby?

ADULT SANDY  
Yes, yes. I am.

MIKE  
Then, what's the hold up?

ADULT SANDY  
Because...

Pause

MIKE

Because?

Adult Joe places the ring on Adult  
Maggies finger.

ADULT SANDY

Because, you're not the one.

MIKE

Wait, I'm...

ADULT SANDY

(interrupting)

Listen, please. I will stay with you. I will  
be your partner. We will raise this baby  
together. It will be like we are married. No  
one will be able to tell the difference. I'll  
even answer to Mrs. Nyquist, if you'd like.

Priest 2 leads Adult Maggie through  
her vows.

MIKE

Except it won't.

ADULT SANDY

No one will be able to tell.

MIKE

Everyone will be able to tell!

ADULT SANDY

Listen, it's 1975, and I can't even get a  
credit card, and...  
I'm sure a lot of people live like this.

MIKE

I don't care about a lot of people. I just  
care about us.

ADULT SANDY

So do I!

MIKE

Then, marry me!

ADULT SANDY

I can't!

MIKE

Why not? Just tell me, no running around it,  
no being cryptic... Just tell me... Why won't  
you marry me?

ADULT SANDY

(somewhat irritated)

Because the last boy I thought I was going to marry went away and never came back.

Mike is taken aback.

ADULT SANDY

(continued)

Stop. I know I this makes me sound like some crazy feminist lady. And I'm suddenly wondering what else my priest lied to me about. Who knows, maybe I'll wake up tomorrow in hell? But... I just... Can't. I'm sorry.

Priest 2 raises his hands in a final blessing.

ADULT SANDY

(continued)

I feel like I should be sent to a home for unwed mothers in their twenties. Is there such a thing? I hope not. Listen, I will be everything to you that a wife can be. Loyal partner, good companion, and, I hope, a fantastic mother. Right now, we're fine, and right now we're awesome and I don't want to mess that up. So, I'll be everything to you, I just can't be that one thing.

Pause.

MIKE

What's that?

ADULT SANDY

Your wife.

PRIEST 2

You may kiss the Bride.

Adult Joe and Adult Maggie kiss.

Adult Sandy puts the ring on a table.

Lights out.

## 2.2 INT. ADULT SANDY'S HOSPITAL ROOM - DAY - SEPTEMBER 1975 2.2

Adult Sandy is on the delivery table, lights ablaze above her. She is still on the table, drenched in sweat, numb.

There is a flurry of activity around her. Doctors and nurses work in hushed tones, cleaning up and putting things away.

ADULT SANDY  
(weakly)

Excuse me?

The flurry continues.

ADULT SANDY  
(continued, a little louder)

Excuse me, please?

Nurse 1 comes over.

NURSE 1  
(wiping sweat away)

How are you, Sandy?

ADULT SANDY  
I'd like to see Mike, please.

NURSE 1  
I know, in just a minute. They've sent for a priest for you, dear.

ADULT SANDY  
I don't need a priest, I need Joe.

NURSE 1  
(kindly)  
Dear, the priest isn't for you.

A beat.

NURSE 1  
(continues)  
Someone's gone to get, Mike. He'll be right in.

The nurse steps away and does her work.

ADULT SANDY  
Excuse me?

No response.

ADULT SANDY

Excuse me? May I see my baby?

Silence.

NURSE 1

The priest will be here in...

ADULT SANDY

I would like to see my baby, please.

Silence.

The nurse looks at the doctor, who nods.

The nurse exits, and returns momentarily. She pushes a small cart with a tiny box draped with a tiny cloth.

She wheels it to Adult Sandy, and placing her hand on he shoulder says...

NURSE 1

I'll get your husband.

ADULT SANDY

(matter of factly)

I don't need a husband, I need Mike.

Beat.

NURSE 1

Of course, we'll get him.

Nurse motions everyone out of the room.

Adult Sandy tries to sit up, wincing in pain as she does.

ADULT SANDY

Hi, Kari, I wanted to introduce myself and say that I'm your mom. That's how it works, right? No matter what, I'm going to be your mom and that's that... I can see myself checking in on you, from time to time... I hope you got to hear my voice, because, right now, I'm a little worried about you remembering what I sound like. This is weird...

(MORE)

## ADULT SANDY (CONT'D)

Sorry, your mom's not a weird-o, although that depends on who you ask... Is it nice, where you are? Are you still a baby? Or are you the teenager or grownup that you won't be here? Did you see the priest? Because, if he didn't baptize you in time... I guess I don't want to think about that... I think I'm going to picture you as a young adult, full of love, looking out for me... I never was sure if I had a guardian angel, I guess I got one now. I hope... I don't know how much longer I have before they take you away. But, can I say one more thing? I'm sorry... I let you down and I'm sorry... Everyone's saying that it's not my fault and there's nothing that I could've done and these things sometime still happen and I don't care... But, I'm your Mom, and I let you down and I am sorry. I will love you until my last and spend every day trying to make you proud of me... And I am sorry. I am sorry.

Mike enters.

Adult Sandy leans back, in shock, numb.

Mike kisses her on the forehead, and holds her hand.

They don't speak.

Lights fade.

**2.3 INT. HOSPITAL - DAY - NOVEMBER 2020****2.3**

Joe sits in a chair, next to him a nurse attaches a PICC line. A book sits in his lap.

NURSE 2  
(installing pic)

You're gonna feel a little prick. And...

Joe winces.

NURSE 2  
(continued)

All good.

JOE

Well, if I was all good, I wouldn't be here.

NURSE 2  
 (continuing to work, hooking up  
 the pump)

I like that, Joe. Keep the positive attitude.  
 That's the key to beating it. Ok, you're all  
 set.

JOE  
 (positive attitude)

Yippie!

NURSE 2  
 Can I get you anything?

JOE  
 Clean bill of health?

NURSE 2  
 (with a smile)  
 Sit tight, I'll be back to check on you in  
 just a bit.

JOE  
 Thanks.

The nurse exits and Joe opens his  
 book.

Joe sits in silence, reading his  
 book, as the chemo therapy pump  
 does its thing.

Silence, nothing but the sound of  
 the pump.

Joe turns the page of his book.

Silence, the pump keeps going.

Silence, Joe takes a deep breath  
 and closes his eye.

Silence, the machine beeps.

Long, slow, lights fade.

**2.4 INT. JOE'S DINING ROOM - NIGHT - AUGUST 1992**

**2.4**

Carrie and Pete, both teenagers,  
 are setting the table, as Adult  
 Maggie and Adult Joe bring food in  
 from the kitchen.

There is a buzz, a life and excitement, surrounding the family.

ADULT JOE  
All set?

PETE  
Just about.

CARRIE  
Because it's a special occasion, I'll let you do the dishes.

PETE  
(sarcastic)  
Oh, that's so considerate.

CARRIE  
(with a smile)  
I know.

ADULT JOE  
Only seems fair.

CARRIE  
Ha!

PETE  
Dad!

ADULT MAGGIE  
(entering with food)  
Don't laugh, Carrie, it's your job from now on.

PETE  
Ha!

ADULT JOE  
Ok, OK... Need me to get anything?

ADULT MAGGIE  
Nope, we're good.

ADULT JOE  
(sitting)  
Alright, let's eat!

Everyone takes their spot at the table, and starts reaching for food.

ADULT MAGGIE

HOLD!

Everyone freezes.

ADULT MAGGIE

(continued)

Aren't we forgetting something?

Adult Maggie extends her hands, and the family joins hands around the table.

ADULT MAGGIE

(continued)

Thank you.

Pause.

Adult Maggie closes her eyes and starts to pray. A deep, heartfelt prayer.

ADULT MAGGIE

(continued)

Dear Lord, we continue to thank you for the blessings that you have provided for us. Please give Carrie the focus to help her get through her junior year. We pray for Joe's continued success, and my continued sanity. We celebrate, with you, Pete as he leaves us for his first year at school tomorrow. We humbly ask that you watch over him, and give him the wisdom to complete his studies. But mostly, oh Lord, we ask that you keep him safe when he decides to do some random stupid college boy shit. In your name, we pray...

ALL

Amen.

The family resumes grabbing their food. Platters are passed around, servings are taken.

The family glows with love, and for a brief moment, there is nothing wrong anywhere in the world.

PETE

I appreciate the kind words, Mom.

ADULT MAGGIE

You're welcome.

ADULT JOE

Oh, come on. If there's one thing I'm not worried about, it's your judgement.

PETE

Thanks, Dad.

ADULT MAGGIE

I know, I feel the same.

ADULT JOE

I worry about Carrie.

Adult Maggie and Pete laugh.

CARRIE

Hey!

ADULT JOE

I'm kidding! I'm kidding! Both my kids have a good head on their shoulders.

ADULT MAGGIE

Now, are you all packed?

PETE

Yes.

ADULT MAGGIE

Are you sure?

PETE

Yes.

ADULT MAGGIE

I'm going to ask one more time.

PETE

Ok.

ADULT SANDY

(serious, with great focus)

Are you...Sure?

Pause.

PETE

(hesitating)

I will double check after dinner.

ADULT MAGGIE

That's the right answer.

Adult Joe sits back, and, with a smile on his face, watches the interactions on his family.

CARRIE  
(to Pete)  
Hey, after you go, can I...

PETE  
(interrupting)  
No.

CARRIE  
You don't even know what I was going to ask.

PETE  
Doesn't matter. I'm home at Christmas, and I want everything the same. Like a shrine.

CARRIE  
Gross.

PETE  
I know.

ADULT MAGGIE  
Oh, no. Trust me, that room is about to have the deepest clean that it's ever had.

CARRIE  
Can you imagine? Going down the hall without holding your breath?

Laughter.

ADULT MAGGIE  
Oh, Joe, I ran into Sandy Williams the other day?

ADULT JOE  
Really!

PETE  
Who's Sandy Williams?

ADULT MAGGIE  
We went to high school together.

ADULT JOE  
She was my best friend in high school.

ADULT MAGGIE  
Best friend?? They were inseparable. He dumped me, and started hanging out with here.

ADULT JOE  
Ok, look, first of all, I didn't dump you...

ADULT MAGGIE  
(interrupting)  
People were placing bets on if they'd get married or not. I would have won, except for the fact that he married me. So, I did win, really.

ADULT JOE  
(to the kids)  
Sandy was person who found me. And, yes, we were close.

ADULT MAGGIE  
In-sep-er-able.

ADULT JOE  
Best friends.

ADULT MAGGIE  
(laughing)  
Anyway, she seems to be doing ok. Runs a flower shop or something.

ADULT JOE  
That was a lifetime or two ago.

Adult Joe drift off into memories.

Adult Maggie sees the expression on her husband's face.

ADULT MAGGIE  
You alright?

ADULT JOE  
(snapping out of it)  
Yeah, pardon me. I was a lost in thought.

ADULT MAGGIE  
Oh? What are you thinking about?

Pause.

ADULT JOE  
Remembering, more like it. Where we started, and where we are now. What a ride, you know? I think we're ok. I mean, things could be better. But, things can also be a lot worse. I think that might put us ahead of the game. Not that it's a competition, or anything.

(MORE)

ADULT JOE (CONT'D)

But there are an awful lot of people who have it so much worse than us. And I hope we are appreciative of that fact. We have a good family, a good life, and I just wanted to show my gratitude for that. Sorry, sorry. I'm back now. Let's eat.

Adult Maggie squeezes his hand.

In a glorious display of mundane life, lights out.

2.5 INT. FLOWER SHOP - NIGHT - OCTOBER 1994

2.5

Adult Sandy and Mike are having a discussion after the shop has closed for the night.

There is a nearly drunk bottle of wine on the counter. They each have a glass.

They are staring at each other.

Pause.

ADULT SANDY

If you are unhappy, leave.

Pause.

MIKE

I'm not unhappy. Not usually.

ADULT SANDY

You seem unhappy.

MIKE

Well, I'm unhappy now. But not with the whole thing.

Adult Sandy takes a long drink.

ADULT SANDY

Oh good. It's been a year, let's have this conversation again.

MIKE

I guess it is.

ADULT SANDY

(steeling herself)

Ok, Poke the bear. That's a plan. Say it, let's go.

Pause.

MIKE

Let's get married.

Silence.

MIKE

Come on, everyone already thinks we are. The banks, the car loan, the house...Even the IRS thinks we're married. Since 1992! So, what's the big deal? The only thing that would change is that we'd be wearing rings.

ADULT SANDY

You don't wear jewelry.

MIKE

I would for you!

Pause.

Adult Sandy begins to laugh.

MIKE

What?

ADULT SANDY

We're too old for this.

MIKE

I agree! Don't you feel like we're still kids, playing house?

Pause.

ADULT SANDY

(calmly)

No, I don't. I don't know if I've ever felt so grown up. We have a business. It's struggling, but it's a business. It's ours, and it's a long way from where I thought I was going to be when I was a kid. Why isn't that victory enough? Why do I need to have a damn ring? Actually, why do you need a damn ring? It's 1994, aren't we past that yet? Listen, I've been with you for twenty years. I'm not going anywhere. I don't want to go anywhere. I have no plans to go anywhere. I love you.

(MORE)

ADULT SANDY (CONT'D)

I love our little life. It's everything I could possibly want. But, Mike, sweetheart, I say this with all love... You need to get the fuck over it.

Silence.

Mike has small tears.

MIKE

So it's on me, huh?

ADULT SANDY

It's always been.

MIKE

Yeah. I know.

ADULT SANDY

I'm not forcing you to be here. I've got nothing to offer you but a life full of love.

Silence.

Mike wipes his eyes. He crosses to Adult Sandy and kisses her, deeply and slowly. It is both the start of a new life, and an affirmation of their love.

ADULT SANDY

Would it make you feel better if I bought you some costume jewelry?

MIKE

It might. But I'm getting you a ring from the prize wall at the pizza place.

ADULT SANDY  
(sternly)

Michael...

MIKE

Just...

ADULT SANDY  
(interrupting)

I'm kidding. I'm ok with that. I'd like that.

They kiss again.

Lights out.

2.6 INT. JOE'S LIVING ROOM - NIGHT - MAY 1998

2.6

Adult Joe and Adult Maggie are sitting opposite each other. Adult Maggie is working on some needlepoint, Adult Joe is reading the newspaper.

After several minutes of minding their own business.

ADULT JOE  
(without looking up)  
Where are the kids?

ADULT MAGGIE  
(without looking up)  
Carrie is at Jenny's, studying for exams. Pete is... Huh, I don't know. Out, somewhere. With friends.

Long silence.

ADULT JOE  
(without looking up)  
Good.

ADULT MAGGIE  
(without looking up)  
I suppose.

Long silence.

ADULT JOE  
(without looking up)  
Did you see where some girl shot her lover's wife in the face? She just knocked at the front door and boom.

ADULT MAGGIE  
(without looking up)  
I don't love you anymore.

Adult Joe looks up in shock.

Silence.

ADULT JOE

Pardon?

ADULT MAGGIE

I think that part of our marriage is over.

ADULT JOE

What part? The love part?

Silence.

ADULT MAGGIE

I think so, yes. If I think about it, the love part of our marriage's been done for, oh, I'd say...ten years.

ADULT JOE

Huh. Interesting. Well, this is news to me.

ADULT MAGGIE

(quickly)

Is it, though?

A moment.

Adult Joe thinks about it.

ADULT JOE

I suppose not. You're right.

ADULT MAGGIE

Fine then. It's settled.

ADULT JOE

The hell it is? What happens next?

ADULT MAGGIE

Well, that's a good question. I don't know. In the mean time, you can sleep there in your easy chair.

ADULT JOE

Alright.

ADULT MAGGIE

Yes, alright. It's just how it should be now, and until we figure out...

ADULT JOE

(interrupting)

I'm sorry, but no, you can't brush this aside. You can't just up end the entire marriage because you don't "feel the love" anymore. Love ebbs and flows, and you stick with it, because you stood before God and promised you would.

ADULT MAGGIE

"Stood before God." You know, when I met you, you didn't even go to church.

ADULT JOE

You've had an influence.

ADULT MAGGIE

So have you.

Pause.

ADULT JOE

I do love you, you know.

Silence.

ADULT JOE

(continued)

Ebbs and flows. I just figured we were in the middle of a particularly log ebb. I guess it's not going to flow again.

She stairs coldly at him.

ADULT MAGGIE

You're right. And doesn't it feel good to finally say it out loud?

Lights out.

**2.7 EXT. CEMETERY - DAY - MARCH 2014**

**2.7**

Sandy stands beside Mike's grave, holding a flower.

SANDY

Hi, Kari, it's Mom. How are you? It's been a while, I know. I'm sorry. It's been busy, but I suppose you've known that. Can I ask a favor? Give your dad my love, ok? Be nice to him, show him around... I don't know if they have a snack bar where you are. But if they do, could you show him where it is? He always liked a good snack bar... If you ask nicely, I'm sure he'll get you something... Cancer sucks, kiddo. But, I'm sure you caught that. I'm choosing to believe that you had something to do with it being so quick. I know you don't like to see people suffer. Anyway, he was a good man and I had a good life and now this is a new chapter. It's good. I'm ok.

(MORE)

SANDY (CONT'D)

I'm not excited to do it alone, but I welcome the challenges head on and with my eyes open. I don't know if I have much more to say. Is that alright? Can we pick it up later? Thanks, Kari. I need to catch my breath.

Sandy leans in and kisses to the top the tombstone before placing the flower on the grave.

Sandy exits.

lights out.

2.8 INT. JOE'S LIVING ROOM - NIGHT - DECEMBER 2020

2.8

Joe's house is very frozen in time since Maggie's death. Orderly, but dusty. It is kept straightened, but not necessarily clean. Especially since his diagnosis.

Joe is asleep in his easy chair.

He is thinner, a little worn. What hair he had prior, is becoming thin and disappearing.

Carrie and Pete quietly orbit their father, putting up simple Christmas decorations, to provide some sense of normalcy.

Carrie is setting up a small Christmas tree on the coffee table. Pete is digging through boxes, looking for lights.

They are wearing KN95 masks.

PETE

(pulling up a strand of lights)

Do you think we could put these around the TV, or would the lights be to distracting?

CARRIE

I wish he'd go out, it'd be nothing to take him somewhere. Like, to the park, or something.

PETE

Yeah, why do you think that is? Doctor's are all saying that he's handling it much better than expected. There's no reason why he's... Pass me those hooks?

Carrie passes a box of hooks to her brother. Pete hangs decorations where he can.

PETE

Thanks... It's like he *wants* to feel worse than he does. He can sulk around in front of us all he wants, but...

CARRIE

(cutting him off)

Please don't finish that sentence.

PETE

Fine. But you know what? If I didn't know any better, I'd say he misses Mom.

CARRIE

Ha.

PETE

Right? The most relaxed I'd ever seen him was at her funeral.

They work in silence a bit.

Carrie grabs a stack of old Christmas cards from the box, and displays them on the mantle. A memorial to times long gone.

CARRIE

I used to think it was my fault.

PETE

What?

Silence.

PETE

(continued)

What was your fault?

CARRIE

I dunno. The whole thing? The weirdness?

Carrie picks up an old photograph.

CARRIE

(continued)

If I'd have to guess, I'd say mom's about eight months pregnant with me here. And look how happy everyone is! See?

PETE

Yeah. I see.

CARRIE

(thoughtfully)

I don't remember life ever being like that. I don't remember a lot of laughter or anything. Just quiet, and not really talking. The Weirdness.

PETE

Yeah. I see what you're saying. But, dude, Carrie... It's not your fault.

Carrie puts photo back.

CARRIE

(slight laugh)

Dude, I know. They weren't mean, or anything. Like, never mistreated me or anything. But... It was like...

CARRIE & PETE

(together)

They really didn't want to be there.

They chuckle at their speaking in unison.

PETE

Jinx.

CARRIE

I'll owe you. Did you ever think divorce occurred to them?

PETE

(thinking)

Good question. I don't know. If it had, I don't know if Mom would have seen it as an option, and Lord know that Dad would fight being a statistic...

Joe stirs.

CARRIE

Masks up?

Pete and Carrie double check their masks are in place.

CARRIE  
(continued)  
Hey, Dad. Good rest?

Joe, still sitting with his eyes closed, draws a deep breath, and brings his hands together in prayer.

JOE  
(praying)  
Dear Lord, I know you have your reasons. And I am not one to question Your almighty plan. But, if you can do me this one tiny favor? Could you make my children realize that their old man doesn't quite have the hearing he used to? Because if they're wearing those masks when they talk to me, it sounds like they have a mouthful of cotton balls.

CARRIE  
(lifting mask away to talk)  
You know what the Doctor said.

JOE  
(stilly praying)  
Unless, Heavenly Father, unless this is your way of telling me that I don't want to hear what they have to say.

Pete laughs.

CARRIE  
Doctor's orders.

JOE  
(stilly praying)  
And, if that's the case, then I thank you for your divine mercy. Amen.

CARRIE  
Dad, I...

JOE  
(still with his eyes closed,  
interrupting)  
Neither of you did the sign of the cross.

The kid's roll their eyes and cross themselves.

JOE  
 May I open my eyes now, or are there still  
 heathens about?

PETE  
 We're good, Dad.

PETE  
 (opening eyes)  
 Good. Well, look at you two! Family's all  
 together!

PETE  
 Yeah, Dad.

JOE  
 (adjusting his seat)  
 I like that.

CARRIE  
 Oh, Dad! Let me help you up!

JOE  
 (quickly)  
 Bah, I got it. I get out of chairs a lot when  
 you're not around.

Joe, unsteadily, stands up.

JOE  
 See? Tah da!

CARRIE  
 Good job.

JOE  
 I practice a lot. Standing, it's my favorite  
 hobby. Well, look at what you two did! It's  
 so festive in here!

PETE  
 How you doing, Dad?

JOE  
 I hope I've been good enough for Santa to  
 visit.

CARRIE  
 (with some force)  
 Dad. Pete asked you a question.

A moment.

JOE

(sigh)

I know, I know. I'm fine. Honestly. I wake up, take my medicines. Wait for my ride to the clinic for more medicine. I come home and go to bed. See? I'm fine.

Silence, for a moment and Joe looks through the Christmas cards.

JOE

(continued)

Wanna hear something funny? Most of these cards are from the year your mom died. I get fewer and fewer each year. Well, I guess that's not really funny.

Joe gathers the cards up, and throws them into the box.

CARRIE

Dad!

JOE

Carrie!

CARRIE

What are you doing?

JOE

I'm keeping positive about the whole thing! Most of those people were friends of your mom's. She was the social one. Well, with other people anyway. I don't need the reminder.

PETE

Dad? Can I ask you a question?

JOE

Sure can, Pete. What's up?

A moment.

PETE

You lonely? Dad?

The question hangs in the air like a radioactive balloon.

JOE

Me, lonely? Nah. How can I be lonely? I've got you and your sister, and your wife, and maybe someday grandkids. And, Dr. Morgan! I hang out with Dr Morgan. Between us, I think she has a thing for me.

CARRIE

Dad...

JOE

No, you can't say anything, because I would have been that delusional when I was younger. So that's nothing new. See, I hang out with lots of people, how can I be lonely?

A beat.

PETE

Yeah, but Dad... Are you lonely?

Silence.

JOE

Maybe. I am. I think.

PETE

(to Carrie)

Show him.

JOE

Show me what?

Carrie goes to her purse and pulls out a sheet of paper and hands it to her father.

CARRIE

I printed this off for you. It's an obituary.

JOE

Anyone I know?

CARRIE

I dunno. Does the name Brenda Schultz mean anything?

JOE

Can't say that it does.

CARRIE

Ok, well, it says that she's survived by her sister, Sandy Williams.

Silence.

Joe sits back down.

CARRIE

(continued)

Dad, it's from newspaper. Think, do you think this is your old friend?

Silece.

Joe offers the paper back to  
Carrie.

JOE  
No, I do not.

PETE  
But, what if it is, Dad? All the ages are  
right, neighborhoods. Everything.

JOE  
No.

CARRIE  
Just let us help you to find out if it's her.

Joe looks at the name on the paper  
again, before, once again, trying  
to hand it to Carrie.

JOE  
I'd have to be pretty lonely to have you do  
that.

CARRIE  
Keep it, you might change your mind.

JOE  
I won't.

PETE  
Sure, Dad. Let us know when you get lonely  
enough.

**2.9 INT. FLOWER SHOP - MORNING - APRIL 2021**

**2.9**

Sandy is working, gathering  
materials and taking inventory.

Outside, rain is falling. There is  
a crack of thunder.

The bell rings, and Carrie enters,  
wearing her KN95 mask.

SANDY  
Hello! Welcome! May I help you?

CARRIE  
 (very nervously)  
 Umm... No, thank you. I'm just browsing.

SANDY  
 Well, rainy days are a great excuse to browse  
 for yourself.

CARRIE  
 Thanks.

SANDY  
 Hey, listen. As long as you keep your  
 distance, I'm not going to make you wear your  
 mask.

CARRIE  
 (relieved)  
 Oh, thank goodness.

Carrie takes off her mask, and  
 Sandy recognizes her instantly.

SANDY  
 (surprised)  
 Oh!

CARRIE  
 Pardon?

SANDY  
 I'm sorry, that's a lovely shade of lipstick!  
 It just... struck me.

CARRIE  
 Oh, thank you. I'll look it up and...

SANDY  
 No need. I don't think it would work for me,  
 but it looks wonderful on you.

CARRIE  
 Thanks.

Carrie looks through the displays,  
 awkwardly looking at Sandy, trying  
 to confirm if she is the right  
 person.

After a moment.

SANDY  
 (slightly irritated)  
 May I help you?

CARRIE  
(embarrassed)  
No, thanks. I think I'm...

SANDY  
(interrupting)  
Then, could you please stop staring at me?

Carrie has been found out, and  
walks toward Sandy, putting on her  
mask.

Sandy stops her before she gets too  
close. The mask dangles off of a  
single ear.

SANDY  
Close enough.

CARRIE  
I'm sorry. I'm looking for someone, and I  
think you may be her.

SANDY  
Oh? What's your name?

CARRIE  
Sorry, I'm... My dad is Joe Ostrowski. He  
graduated from school in 1968. I'm looking  
for a friend of his.

SANDY  
(suspicious)  
Do you often look for your father's old  
classmates in flower shops?

Carrie digs through her bag and  
pulls out a few papers.

CARRIE  
Right. This is weird, I know. But, I'm  
wondering if you could help me. I'm looking  
for a Sandra Williams. According to the  
State's website, she's the owner here.

SANDY  
(ignoring the paper)  
I'm sure there are a lot of flower shops owned  
by Sandra Williams in the state.

CARRIE  
There are, but I am also very good at what I  
do. Please, is she here?

Pause, Sandy noticeably softens.

SANDY

I'm a little nervous about him coming back into my life.

CARRIE

I'm sorry, you're...

SANDY

(awkwardly, embarrassed)

Yes, surprise. I'm Sandy Williams. Class of '68.

CARRIE

I'm awfully glad to meet you!

SANDY

Yeah. So, I guess, how is he?

CARRIE

Dad? He's lonely, although he won't admit it. Mom died a few years ago, but they drifted apart long before that.

SANDY

Sorry to hear that. I lost my partner a few years ago as well.

CARRIE

Many condolences.

SANDY

Thank you.

Pause.

CARRIE

He'd like to see you.

Pause.

CARRIE

(continued)

I think it would make him very happy to see you.

SANDY

I'm sorry, what did you say your name is?

CARRIE

Oh, yes, sorry. I'm Carrie Ostrowski.

Carrie offers her hand.

All the emotions cross Sandy's face.

SANDY  
(struck)  
Carrie?

CARRIE  
(apologetically)  
Ack, the handshaking thing. I'm sorry. Just as soon as I think I figure out all the COVID rules, is just the moment that I go and mess it all up.

SANDY  
No, no that's not... I mean, yes, totally...  
But... Your name is *Carrie*?

Confusion sets in.

CARRIE  
Umm... Yes. *Carrie Margaret Ostrowski*.

SANDY  
My daughter's name is *Kari*. With a 'K.' Do you...?

CARRIE  
With a 'C.'

SANDY  
(slight disappointment)  
Oh. Still, pretty incredible coincidence.

CARRIE  
Absolutely! I would love to meet her!

SANDY  
Yeah, unfortunately, she passed. Long ago.

CARRIE  
I'm sorry.

SANDY  
Thank you. Still, life is more than condolences, eh?

CARRIE  
I certainly hope so!

SANDY  
That's the curse, isn't it? Life just keeps going on. Even after death.

CARRIE

Some may see that as the blessing.

SANDY

I suppose so. How is Joe? I mean, besides lonely? How's his leg? I'm the one who found him, you know.

CARRIE

I think I heard something about that. In case no one's ever said it, thank's for finding my dad!

They are beginning to relax and warm up to each other.

SANDY

My pleasure! That was a... Big day.

CARRIE

I bet. The leg's good. He still uses a cane, but it's holding up alright. He's been... sick... but his spirits are good.

SANDY

Lovely!

Long pause.

SANDY

(continued)

Seeing him is a lot to ask. I mean... It's kind of like if you came in here and said that you could... could make all my dreams come true.

A moment, and then Carrie smiles a long, sweet smile.

CARRIE

I get it. No matter how much I feel like I'm just trying to find someone for my dad to chat with, I understand.

SANDY

(with a sad smile)

No, I don't think you do. And, good for you.

The room becomes very still as Sandy becomes lost in her thoughts.

Carrie picks up on the emotion. She pulls a business card out of her bag.

CARRIE

Well, um, Ms Williams, I need to go. Will you please think about it?

SANDY

(quietly)

I will.

CARRIE

(placing business card on the counter)

I guess that's all I can ask. Please call me, if I can set something up. Please? Although, I gotta warn you, if I don't hear from you, I'll probably stop back in looking for an answer. What can I say, I'm as stubborn as my father.

A beat.

SANDY

(quietly)

You're a good daughter.

Carrie smiles, then exits through the door.

Sandy stairs after her for a bit.

Lights out.

**2.10 INT. HOSPITAL ROOM - DAY - JULY 1967**

**2.10**

It is the morning after Young Sandy found Young Joe in the ravine.

Young Joe is unconscious in the bed. His head is bandaged and leg elevated in braces and a cast.

Young Sandy nervously sticks her head in and looks around. Seeing no adults, she scurries in, and closes the door behind her.

She sits, bedside.

Pause.

YOUNG SANDY

I'm not supposed to be here, I don't think.

Pause.

YOUNG SANDY  
(continued)

You jerk.

Pause.

YOUNG SANDY  
(continued)

I didn't sleep last night, because of you. You can't just... You can't play with my emotions like that. I mean, you disappear, like "poof," and then you're back, sort of, and you say that you...

Pause.

YOUNG SANDY  
(continued)

And then you kiss me! I mean... And now you're here, and unconscious, and... I don't know. And you said...

Pause.

YOUNG SANDY  
(continued, melancholy)

Well, you whacked your head. It doesn't mean anything, I guess. Maybe not to you. But, it does to me... I guess... I don't know. I don't know what to think anymore. You look terrible, by the way. I mean, you look good, I guess, considering, but I've seen you look better.

Pause.

YOUNG SANDY  
(continued, melancholy)

I'm not sure God is real. I think I've been handed a sack of... Something, and told that this is the way it is and this is what we are told to believe and if you don't do these things then you'll be punished... I mean, who does that? Who just randomly punishes people for trying to make sense of the world. I mean I pray and I pray and nothing happens. But, what? Why, then... I guess I don't believe enough. Maybe that's what there is to it.

Pause.

YOUNG SANDY  
(continued)

I didn't pray.

(MORE)

YOUNG SANDY (CONT'D)

When they told me that you went missing, I didn't pray. I just sat up, and said "Well, ok, I'll go take care of it." And I did. So, that's what, God handling one out of ten? That's a failing grade, no matter how you look at it. That's a failing grade. I mean, I'm getting more done than God is, and I don't need worshipers.

Pause

YOUNG SANDY  
(continued)

I can hear you now, "That's the least weird thing you've ever said, you wired-o." And maybe you'd be right, maybe not. I don't know. But I have more faith in you than I do anything else... So what does that mean?

Silence.

YOUNG SANDY  
(continued)

I don't know. But, it's me and you against the world, Joe Ostrowski. You'll come back from this, I know. Not even death can keep us apart.

Pause.

YOUNG SANDY  
(continued)

If you tell anyone I said this, I'll kill you.

Lights out.

**2.11 EXT. PARK BENCH - AFTERNOON - JULY 2021**

**2.11**

Joe and Laura are sitting on a park bench. Laura is sipping coffee, Joe keeps shifting.

LAURA

Nervous?

JOE

No. Yes. Maybe. Well, that covers everything. I haven't seen her since I left for school.

LAURA

And you never tried to look her up?

JOE

It was a lot harder to do back then. Tried to look her up online a few times, but...

Joe coughs a bit, he covers his mouth with a handkerchief.

LAURA

Feeling alright?

JOE

All things considered.

LAURA

You'll tell her, of course.

JOE

Tell her what?

LAURA

About the cancer.

Joe doesn't respond.

LAURA

(continued)

I'd imagine that it's pretty tough. You haven't seen someone in over fifty years, and you have to tell them you have cancer.

JOE

(distantly)

Yeah, I guess it's pretty tough.

LAURA

Alright. I'm going to wander around, I'll see you in a bit.

JOE

Be safe.

LAURA

I will. Try not to knock her up.

JOE

Ha ha.

Laura leaves.

Joe fidgets nervously for a bit.

Sandy appears. Joe notices and stands. A life time of memories pass between the two.

The years, the joy, the heartache - all gone in an instant. In that moment, they are who they have always been... Two friends who just want to hang out.

Joe, forgetting himself, steps forward without his cane. He stumbles.

SANDY

Oh!

Sandy rushes to catch him.

JOE

I'm fine, I'm fine.

He grabs for his cane, and straightens himself.

JOE

Hey.

SANDY

(with a big warm smile)

Hiya... Weirdo.

JOE

(offering his hand)

Are you new? I don't think I've seen you before.

SANDY

(emotionally)

I'm new. And old. All at the same time.

She throws her arm around him, and they hug warmly.

SANDY

(continued)

I've missed you.

Silence, a long embrace.

JOE

(pulling away)

I'm sorry, I have to sit down.

SANDY

Oh, yes! Sorry!

They sit.

JOE  
Thanks. Getting old, as they say.

SANDY  
Aren't we all?

JOE  
So, it's been a while? What did I miss?

SANDY  
Oh, just one or two things.

JOE  
(earnestly)  
Yeah? Like what?

SANDY  
Let me think... My best friend went to college, and then disappeared without a trace.

JOE  
Sorry about that.

SANDY  
Jerk. Anyway, then the sixties ended and I naively hoped the seventies would be better. Met a guy, spent a bit of time with him.

JOE  
How long?

SANDY  
Forty years.

JOE  
I hate him.

SANDY  
You would. Anyway, worked a bunch of odd little jobs over the years, nothing you'd call a career. Then, when Mike passed... That was his name, Mike.... When he passed, I gathered a little bit of the money we had, and payed off the loan on the flower shop.

JOE  
Well, that's lovely.

SANDY  
Thanks. I bought it from a woman who was looking to retire. Funny thing is, she's two years younger than me! When I told her that, she started to have second thoughts. She could see the boredom sink in.

(MORE)

SANDY (CONT'D)

Anyway, I was doing that for a couple of years when a rather forward woman came into my store saying that her old man was looking for me. And here you are, the old man.

JOE

Hello!

SANDY

She's an impressive young woman, you must be proud.

JOE

I am, thank you. Of both my kids. Boy and a girl, also, two grandkids. How about you? did you and your husband have any children.

SANDY

Well, there's a couple of things there. Mike and I never married.

JOE

Oh, wow. If I may ask, why not?

Sandy wrestles with saying the truth.

SANDY

Because... Umm... I guess in forty years, we never got around to it. As for kids... There was one, still born. Never happened after that.

JOE

Oh, I'm sorry to hear that.

SANDY

Thanks. Yeah, it was tough. But... I still talk to her sometimes. I don't know, people look at me like I'm crazy. But I don't care. I find it comforting, and it's cheaper than therapy.

JOE

As long as you're happy.

A reflective pause.

SANDY

I am. I think I am. Well, right now, anyway.

JOE

Good.

SANDY

How are you?

JOE

Right now, I'm happy too. My wife died four years ago.

SANDY

My condolences.

JOE

Thanks. It wasn't a particularly good marriage. Wasn't a bad one, either. I just think, in the end, it was a box to check. We loved our family and all, but, in the end...

SANDY

That's... ummm...

JOE

It's ok. It was a life.

Pause.

SANDY

Can I tell you a secret?

JOE

Yes.

A young couple, who happen to look like Young Sandy and Young Joe enter and set up a picnic.

SANDY

I was there. At your wife's internment.

JOE

Really?

SANDY

Uh, this is embarrassing. Yes. I saw the announcement in the paper, and I wanted to see if it was you. And then it was, and you were surrounded by your nice little family... It brought me closure.

JOE

You should have said something.

SANDY

I nearly did! Shook your hand and everything. Nerves got me, I guess. It took everything I had to pretend that I didn't recognize your daughter when she came into the shop!

They laugh before the thought of what could have been encroaches on Joe's thoughts.

JOE  
You should have said something.

SANDY  
Well...

A couple who look an awful lot like Adult Joe and Adult Maggie enter. They are talking, softly, efficiently.

JOE  
Yeah.

Pause.

SANDY  
Sorry.

JOE  
Don't be. I get it. Hey, can I tell you a secret too?

SANDY  
Obviously.

A couple who look an awful lot like Adult Sandy and Mike. She is upset, he tries to comfort her.

Joe coughs.

JOE  
I've been thinking a lot about life lately. Like, the choices that we don't make. The could-a-beens. Not like "I regret..." blah blah, or anything. But I see a young couple on the street, and they're so happy, and I think "Don't do what I did, Kid. Don't let her go." And then they walk out of view, and then they leave.

The young couple leaves.

JOE  
(continued)  
But they don't. I mean, do they? Aren't they just memories being thrust upon someone else?  
(MORE)

JOE (CONT'D)

But it gets ya thinking... Well, it gets me thinking... But you can't, you see? You can't change the past. And you shouldn't want to. My kids are awesome, and I think that's in no small part because my marriage was so... Dysfunctional, I'm sure someone would call it. I just call it messed up.

The couple that looks like Adult Joe and Maggie leave.

JOE

(continued)

I don't remember talk of dreams and goals growing up. I just remember talk about needing to get ready for the "real world," whatever that is. We needed skills to help us get our two-point-five kids and white picket fence and what bullshit that turned out to be. Because, what they don't tell you, is in the end none of that matters. And you will end up alone, and you can be happy about it or you can wallow.

The man that looks like Mike leaves.

JOE

(continued)

And I guess I don't want to wallow. Not anymore. I've got... Not many years left. Right? I should be living them on my own terms.

The woman that looks like Adult Sandy leaves.

Silence.

SANDY

What's wrong, Joe?

JOE

Nothing.

SANDY

Come on, ya weirdo. After all this time, you can't fool me. You only make big speeches like that when you are incredibly nervous.

Joe looks at her, looks away, back at her.

JOE

I regret losing touch with you. I came home for Christmas, and just ran out of time. And I feel bad about that. I just... ran out of time... If I could start over, I would, but I'm not sure if I have the time left or...

Sandy stands, Joe follows. She takes a step, before turning into him with all the excitement of her fourteen-year old self. She throws her arms around him, and hugs him. The hug becomes a squeeze, and he begins to cough.

SANDY

Oh, I'm sorry! I'm sorry.

JOE

I'm ok, I'm...

The moment overtakes her, and she kisses him. Caught off guard at first, he eventually kisses back.

All the regrets, all the could-have-beens, are gone.

A beat, then Laura enters. Uncomfortably, she clears her throat.

They disengage.

LAURA

(embarrassed)

Hi, Dad.

JOE

Laura, hello!

LAURA

Sorry, I don't want to interrupt, like, awkward...

SANDY

It's ok. I'm Sandy.

LAURA

Laura, I'm his daughter in law.

SANDY

Good to meet you.

JOE  
I guess my ride is here, I have to go.

SANDY  
Ok.

JOE  
Can I call you tomorrow?

SANDY  
(innocently)  
I'd like that.

JOE  
Great! I'll call you tomorrow!

Laura and Joe begin to walk away.  
Joe turns, and Sandy gives him a  
small, flirty wave goodbye.

He turns back to Laura.

LAURA  
Did you tell her?

No response.

LAURA  
(continued)  
She needs to know that the cancer is terminal.  
It's only fair.

Pause. Joe looks back again. Sandy  
has left.

JOE  
I know. But not today.

LAURA  
Dad, she needs to know...

JOE  
She will. But give me today. Please. Think of  
it as a Happy Hospice present.

They exit.

Lights Fade.

END OF PLAY.