

WE ARE BLOOD

by Ryan Bernsten

Draft October 11, 2021
Copyright 2019 Ryan Bernsten
ryan.bernsten@gmail.com

Characters

Kathleen - 50s, a widow. a socialite. a skeptic.

Raymond - 20s, a graduate. a disappointment. a desperate believer.

Nance - 50s, a zealot. a freethinker. a host.

Lydia - 20s, a daughter. a harlot. a conjurer.

Gran - 80s, a secret.

The actress playing Nance may also play Gran.

Setting

A split-level home in the woods. Yancy Mills, Missouri.

A “/” marks a moment of interruption.

A character speaks in their own voice in this font, with *emphasis* and *repetitions italicized*.

All other fonts indicate someone else “speaking” for them.

“The water's dark and deep, inside this ancient heart
You'll always be a part of me.”
- Billy Joel, *Lullabye*

“All the times that I've cried
Keeping all the things I knew inside
It's hard, but it's harder to ignore it
If they were right I'd agree
But it's them they know, not me
Now there's a way
And I know that I have to go away
I know, I have to go.”
- Cat Stevens, *Father and Son*

Development/Award History:

Kansas City Public Theatre (Theatre Lab, 2021)
CoverFly RedList (#1 Horror Stage Play, 2022)
Ashland New Play Festival (Semifinalist, 2022)
Northwestern University (Faculty Reading, 2020)
Austin Film Festival (Semifinalist, 2020)
Ashland New Play Festival (Finalist, 2022)
Rave Theatre Festival (Finalist, 2020)
Kansas City Script Circle (2020)
University of Oxford (Workshop, 2019)

With original dramaturgy by Hunter Nelson.

SCENE 1

Raymond and Kathleen stand, suitcases in hand, looking up at an old dilapidated house. In the sunlight, their shadows lengthen dramatically. It's almost as if something is trying to escape their bodies.

Suddenly, unbidden, Raymond covers his mouth and begins to sob silently. Kathleen doesn't look at him. He fights through it, trying to push his grief back down, but sobs again and continues to repress it.

When he stifles it, Kathleen looks at him.

RAYMOND

I'm sorry.

KATHLEEN

You shouldn't have had that extra drink at the airport.

RAYMOND

You have a way of making people want to drink.

KATHLEEN

Keep it together. Just for the weekend. (*Kathleen surveys the house.*) Whoever buys this place is going to have to tear it down. It's completely unsalvageable. I'm sure there's asbestos and all kinds of shit in there. We'll have to send them in with a hazmat suit. But the land is nice. Don't you think?

RAYMOND

For Missouri, I guess.

KATHLEEN

It has potential! Little tiny home in the woods. View of the lake. It will make a great vacation home for someone.

RAYMOND

Now all you have to do is kick out Aunt Nance and tear down the house.

KATHLEEN

Raymond. Does it hurt to try to be charming?

RAYMOND

Does being charming mean being fake?

KATHLEEN

Well, you can't be real with them. They're family. (*spying a truck*) Did you see that truck parked back there?

RAYMOND

God...

KATHLEEN

They've got money coming in from somewhere. I mean, it looks pretty new. Wouldn't be surprised if—

RAYMOND

CAN YOU JUST GIVE ME A HUG OR SOMETHING?

KATHLEEN

Shhhh. Do you need a hug?

He motions to himself. "Look at me!" She hugs him.

KATHLEEN

Better?

RAYMOND

Mm.

KATHLEEN

Don't "mm" at me! What? What's that *what's that what's that* face?

RAYMOND

I'm thinking.

KATHLEEN

About how you want to be back in New York with Dad's family?

RAYMOND

That's a big leap to take from a single "mm."

KATHLEEN

Oh sweetie, you've been clear.

RAYMOND

I need to be with people who support me—

KATHLEEN

Oh, I don't support you?

RAYMOND

I didn't...

KATHLEEN

I would think *housing my jobless son* after paying for all those years of Columbia would be enough—

RAYMOND

Wow. You really—

KATHLEEN

—never even paid your own phone bill!

RAYMOND

I just want to be around people who care about me!

KATHLEEN

I care about you!

RAYMOND

But dad's family shows it! ...differently.

KATHLEEN

Will one Thanksgiving away from them really kill you?

RAYMOND

I thought it would be helpful to get some...

KATHLEEN

Some what?

RAYMOND

Catharsis.

KATHLEEN

That's what we're calling this? You keep your catharsis to yourself. No drunk weeping in front of them, spoiling Thanksgiving—

RAYMOND

You're kicking them out of their house and you're worried about spoiling dinner?

KATHLEEN

I put up with them for eighteen years. You can tolerate them for forty eight hours without "catharsis."

RAYMOND

Well maybe I don't want to tolerate them for the first holiday I'm half an orphan!

KATHLEEN

Half an orphan??

RAYMOND

Technically!

KATHLEEN

Sweetie, as a full orphan and recent widow, let me tell you, you can survive this.

RAYMOND

You are such a pillar of strength.

KATHLEEN

Someone has to be!

RAYMOND

See, this is why I don't... I don't want to be around someone who's so... jabby!

KATHLEEN

Well, guess what? I'm all you've got.

A beat.

KATHLEEN

I'm sorry. I'm not myself. You wouldn't understand - you had a happy childhood.

RAYMOND (this is news to him)

Oh?

KATHLEEN

You think I'm jabby, you should've seen how Grandpa Myron ran this house. Imagine growing up out here in the woods, away from everyone. No support, nothing but put-downs and criticism.

RAYMOND

I'm glad you got out.

KATHLEEN

Imagine if I hadn't. Look what happened to Aunt Nance, shut up here her whole life, raising that daughter of hers with Grandpa still ruling the house. If I hadn't left, you'd be just like Lydia.

RAYMOND

No thanks.

KATHLEEN

That girl scares the daylights out of me

RAYMOND

Last time we were here, I heard Lydia ask Dad if we ever *spoke in tongues*. Which is ironic, because... I assume they pepper too... or have...

KATHLEEN

Palilalia. Lydia has a mild form. Always making noises.

RAYMOND

Dad did the funniest impression of her.

KATHLEEN

Your dad made these visits bearable. I couldn't have made it through Grandpa's funeral without him. All the paperwork, all the inheritance bullshit, all of Nance's insanity. He was so sharp, so confident, keeping things in the right hands. Who could've known... two years later, I'd be burying him too.

Raymond laughs to himself.

RAYMOND

I just realized... I'm the only man left in the family.

From inside, a muffled sound, like a woman's cackle.

KATHLEEN

I just... I'm not sure I'm ready for this without him. He kept me sane. Kept me calm when they all went for the jugular. They know exactly how to... how to get under my skin. How to make me feel like a stupid little girl. Like they want me to revert back to what I was *was was was was*—

RAYMOND

Mom. You're peppering.

KATHLEEN

Back to what I was. (*a pause.*) I think I'm cold.

RAYMOND

Let's get you inside.

He picks up the suitcases. She marches to the door.

KATHLEEN

You're wearing his tie.

RAYMOND

Yeah. I thought it would be—

KATHLEEN

Take it off.

Raymond unties the tie and puts it in his coat pocket. She knocks on the door. Lights down.

SCENE 2

The inside of a shabby split-level house. The two sisters, Nance and Kathleen, stand mid-embrace in the doorway, squealing. For all the noise, their faces are quite cavalier. Nance is wearing her outdated holiday best, but done little to alter herself otherwise. Raymond stands awkwardly to the side surveying the worn and dirty surroundings. He sniffs surreptitiously, trying to figure out the root of a stench.

NANCE

Sissy!

KATHLEEN

Nancy Pantsy!

NANCE

Two years later, and of course you haven't aged a bit.

KATHLEEN

Well I've had a little help!

NANCE

Oh, you're so warm! What is this? A fur collar?

KATHLEEN

Faux fur.

NANCE

I wouldn't put the real thing past you.

KATHLEEN

Real fur?

NANCE

You love showing off. It's part of your New York charm. And here's Ray!

RAYMOND

Raymond.

NANCE

Of course. Raymond is much more grown up. What a handsome man he's becoming, Kath! Got Frank's looks. Got yourself a girlfriend yet, Raymond?

RAYMOND

Uh...

KATHLEEN

Not at the moment.

NANCE

Of course not. What am I thinking? With all you've been through? We were so sad to hear...

Lydia enters. She's a long-haired, modestly-dressed young woman of around twenty, with unfazed curiosity about her.

KATHLEEN

There's my favorite niece!

LYDIA (detached, staccato)

Ha. Ha.

Raymond laughs at her reaction.

KATHLEEN

You *are* my favorite niece! You're my only niece, but also my/favorite—

NANCE

Kath. It's her thing.

KATHLEEN

Oh, of course.

NANCE

You'd think it would be off-putting enough to keep the boys in town at bay, but somehow they think she's flirting, don't they?

LYDIA

It's nice to see you again Aunt Kathy.

She extends a handshake.

KATHLEEN

Well, what a polite young woman! But you can have a hug.

NANCE

I told her it might be nice to try and impress a big executive with a firm handshake.

An awkward moment. Kathleen goes to hug Lydia, but retracts as soon as she makes contact with her.

Did I shock you?

LYDIA

Your sweater did.

KATHLEEN

Kathleen laughs, then throws her arms around Lydia, who doesn't reciprocate the hug.

Ha. Ha.

LYDIA

You look so grown up. And you remember Raymond?

KATHLEEN

Hi, Lydia.

RAYMOND

She hugs him. Lingers a little too long.

Let me take your coat.

NANCE

Nance takes Kathleen's coat. Kathleen looks around the house with clear distaste.

I'll keep mine, thanks. I get a little chilly.

RAYMOND

Sure. We don't keep our house super toasty around this time of year.

NANCE

Do you mind if we put our bags in our rooms?

KATHLEEN

Sure, sure. You'll be in Lydia's room.

NANCE

No! No, I couldn't.

KATHLEEN

It's fine, Aunt Kathy. You're our guests.

LYDIA

Oh, no it's your room!

KATHLEEN

I'm sleeping on the couch.

LYDIA

No, no. You sleep in your room, I'll sleep in my old room.

KATHLEEN

No—

NANCE

Where am I sleeping?

RAYMOND

With Aunt Kathy. I changed the sheets and everything.

LYDIA

That won't work.

KATHLEEN

I'm fine on the couch.

RAYMOND

Lydia's on the couch.

NANCE

No, Lydia will be in her room. I'll go in my old room, and Raymond can sleep on the couch.

KATHLEEN

You can't stay in there.

NANCE

It's *my* old bedroom.

KATHLEEN

It's Dad's room now.

NANCE

Dad's dead.

KATHLEEN

It's being remodeled.

NANCE

You're *remodeling* it?

KATHLEEN

Yes.

NANCE

That seems unlike you.

KATHLEEN

A beat. Nance laughs derisively.

Classic Kathleen.

NANCE

It just doesn't seem like you have much interest in decorating. Historically.

KATHLEEN (scanning the room unsubtly)

It's being fumigated.

LYDIA

Fumigated? Do you have—?

KATHLEEN

Not anymore.

LYDIA

Oh my god!!!

KATHLEEN

We found one bedbug. It was a precautionary measure.

NANCE

I don't want to be rude here *here here here*—

KATHLEEN

Mom?

RAYMOND

I'm so sorry *ari ari ari ari*—

KATHLEEN

Raymond runs to his mom and strokes her arms, calming her down.

Mom, she has it too!

LYDIA

Of course she does. She's family.

NANCE

KATHLEEN

It's just a blip *lip lip lip lip*...

RAYMOND

Mom. I'm here. I'm here. Breathe.

Raymond eventually gets Kathleen to calm down.

KATHLEEN

I'm so I'm so I'm so sorry. Sorry. Sorry, everyone.

RAYMOND

In New York, we take bedbugs very seriously. We had them in our freshman dorm at Columbia and we all had to throw everything out. It was terrible. And Mom's especially... sensitive.

KATHLEEN (*with an un-ironic Spanish lisp)

Frank and I had an... an *experience* with bedbugs last year. Not from our apartment, obviously. We got them from a boutique hotel room in *Barcelona, disgusting.

NANCE

How awful.

RAYMOND

I'll sleep in here on the floor. It's fine.

LYDIA

I can grab a sleeping bag.

NANCE

Perfect. A little sleepover, just like last time.

RAYMOND

That sounds nice.

NANCE

You can give your cousin some advice on how to land a good job.

KATHLEEN (without thinking)

He doesn't have a job anymore.

RAYMOND

Seriously?

KATHLEEN (genuinely sorry)

Oh! Raymond. I'm so sorry. Seriously, that slipped out.

NANCE

Perfect. Neither one of you have jobs. Plenty to bond over.

LYDIA

And now neither one of us have dads.

An awkward moment.

KATHLEEN

Let me take my bags to your room. Thanks again, Lydia.

NANCE

I'll show you. And Lydia, he's your blood relative, don't get any ideas.

Nance and Kathleen exit upstairs.

RAYMOND

I guess we're both out here.

LYDIA

I hope you weren't offended by that. About your dad.

RAYMOND

I don't get offended by things that are true.

Lydia stares at her cousin.

RAYMOND

What?

LYDIA

It's just... your face.

RAYMOND

My face?

LYDIA

I just want to see...

She approaches Raymond, holds his face in her hands.

LYDIA

Ha. Ha.

SCENE 3

The family is finishing dessert at the dining room table, eating plates of pumpkin pie. A very protracted silence. Nance scrapes her plate with her fork as she eats. There's a sense that everything that could've been said has been said.

KATHLEEN

Nance. *Nance.* (*Nance looks up.*) You're scraping your plate with your fork.

NANCE

Was I?

KATHLEEN

Yes. Dad did that. It always drove me crazy.

NANCE

Well, when Dad did it, it was intentional. Dad *loved* to needle you. (*to Raymond and Lydia*) Grandpa Myron knew how to get under your mom's skin. In the 80s, your mom would blow her hair out with enough hairspray to preserve a body, and he made a game of throwing things in her nest. Q-Tips, bits of paper, even one time little pieces of cereal.

Lydia lets out a genuine laugh. Raymond smiles.

NANCE

Your mom had a date coming to pick her up, and he arrived after Grandpa had spent the past hour flicking Frosted Flakes in her hair. By the time the date arrived she looked like she had fallen asleep in Tony the Tiger's lap.

KATHLEEN (dryly)

He was hilarious.

NANCE

And her date comes and says, "I think you might have something in your hair," and then spent ten minutes picking out all of the flakes. Grandpa was crying laughing, kept saying she should've used dandruff shampoo.

KATHLEEN

I still scored a boyfriend.

NANCE

That's what it's all about. Scoring. Winning.

KATHLEEN

It was the 80s.

NANCE

It was that competitive spirit that got you where you are! To think of a small-town Missouri girl wanting to make it in *finance* of all things, but your mom did it. Scholarship to her fancy New York school, on to a big firm, rode the Reagan boom to become a lady executive!

KATHLEEN

I knew Reaganomics was going to destroy this town.

LYDIA

You got out just in time, then.

NANCE (in a sudden, uncharacteristic shift)

I really am very proud of you. You know that, don't you?

KATHLEEN (accidentally, involuntarily)

Thanks, Dad.

A beat. It was casual and strange, but they decide to move past it.

KATHLEEN

I noticed a new car in the driveway.

NANCE

Truck.

KATHLEEN

New or used?

NANCE

It's a new refurbished truck. Only had sixty thousand miles on it.

KATHLEEN

Big purchase.

NANCE

We do okay.

KATHLEEN

How are things, *er*, financially?

NANCE

They're just fine.

KATHLEEN

Oh, good. Everything in the black?

Yes, it is.

NANCE

It is! We're so... well, we're very proud.

KATHLEEN (relieved)

A beat.

Raymond, are you sure you don't want a beer?

NANCE

Uh—I'm fine. Thank you.

RAYMOND (looking to Kathleen)

Okay. We've got the whole fridge stocked. Figured you liked light beer like your dad.

NANCE

Sure. What's your Wi-Fi password?

RAYMOND

The password? Um...

NANCE

“baby_frances” no caps. With an “e.”

LYDIA

Baby... underscore... Frances...?

RAYMOND

Raymond, put your phone away. That's rude.

KATHLEEN

You just asked about their *finances*.

RAYMOND

So! We have a little tradition here... I know it's been a while since you've been here for Thanksgiving.

LYDIA (clearing her throat)

They usually only come for funerals.

NANCE

I like us to go around and say something we're thankful for. We're all dealt a hand in life, and we don't take enough time to really be grateful for it.

LYDIA

KATHLEEN

Well, I think that's extremely sweet. No one ever does stuff like that in the city. Goes to show... sometimes having less means you're more grateful.

RAYMOND

Mom.

KATHLEEN

What? If some people aren't able to better their situations through initiative, I hope they can at least appreciate what they do have in their lives, because calamity can strike any minute. I know that now.

NANCE

I'll start.

LYDIA

But no two people can say the same thing! Not that it will be a problem, this is such a small group...

NANCE

I'm grateful for my disability checks.

KATHLEEN

Nice...

NANCE

I was going to say the food *but*... since "my circumstances" aren't going to "improve" through my own "initiative" I might as well be thankful to God for my little handout so I can keep a roof over my head, even though I won't do anything to change it.

KATHLEEN

Nance, I wasn't talking about you.

LYDIA

I'm grateful to have this family together again. I know we haven't always seen eye to eye, but it means so much that we're here, trying to build something together. I never get to see cousins or anything, because my dad's family doesn't talk to us, so I guess you showing up here means a lot to me. And I hope you can stay a few days before you go back out East and meet the whole family/and-

NANCE (urgently)

If it snows, you can take Raymond snowshoeing!

KATHLEEN

He would love that. Wouldn't you, Raymond?

RAYMOND

Mm.

KATHLEEN

I'm grateful for my son. I know everyone has different comfort levels with death, but I'd like to acknowledge the hell I've been through. Frank's death was so sudden and just about the worst thing I've ever experienced, but Raymond has been a rock. For that, and for our health, I am grateful.

NANCE

Hear, hear.

LYDIA

Raymond?

RAYMOND

Um...

A long beat.

KATHLEEN

Any day now, sweetie.

RAYMOND

I'm thankful for the food.

LYDIA

Already been said. Mom alluded to it.

RAYMOND

I... can't think of anything else. I'm sorry.

KATHLEEN

Um, that's silly. You have plenty to be thankful for.

RAYMOND

Everyone's already said everything I was going to say. The food, family, health...

KATHLEEN

You can think of something.

RAYMOND

I'm like... having a brain freeze.

KATHLEEN

Raymond. This is obnoxious.

I seriously can't think of anything!

RAYMOND

It's okay. It's just a game.

LYDIA

It's not okay. You're being very rude.

KATHLEEN

Mom!

RAYMOND

Just say something.

KATHLEEN

It's okay, son.

NANCE

What about that nice girl you met on the campaign, Fiona?

KATHLEEN

Seriously?

RAYMOND

What about your college education?

LYDIA

Yes! What about that?

KATHLEEN

Fine. My college education. I'm thankful for my college education, even if it didn't make me anything except a burden on my parents.

RAYMOND

A beat.

Well. Should we all take a selfie?

KATHLEEN

Why?

NANCE

For Facebook, for Instagram, for the memories!

KATHLEEN

Nance looks skeptical.

KATHLEEN

Oh come on... you always say you wish we had more pictures!

LYDIA

You look nice, Mom, come on.

They gather for a photo, and Kathleen snaps a selfie.

KATHLEEN

Less teeth, Raymond.

She takes another photo, then examines it.

KATHLEEN

Well, Raymond is clearly glaring at me, but I guess it will have to do.

RAYMOND

You know what? I think I will have a beer.

NANCE

Lydia. Get him a beer.

Lydia gets up and walks to the kitchen.

NANCE

Drink a lot of beer in college?

RAYMOND

Yeah, a little bit.

NANCE

You prefer the hard stuff?

RAYMOND

Kind of.

NANCE

Lydia! Bring a bottle of that whiskey.

KATHLEEN

No, no...

NANCE

Suit yourself. Two glasses.

Lydia returns with a bottle of whiskey and two glasses. Nance pours.

LYDIA

I didn't not go to college because I was dumb.

NANCE

Of course not. You had to take care of Grandpa.

LYDIA

I had the grades. I worked at Chick-fil-A for two summers, trying to save up. I spent so much of it on application fees, then my car got totaled....

KATHLEEN

Didn't you apply for fee waivers?

LYDIA

I thought it would jinx me. Getting a handout.

KATHLEEN

I'm sure that's not true.

LYDIA

It's just funny... I was always so jealous of you going to college. I thought it would fix everything.

NANCE

And how exactly is that funny?

LYDIA

Because Raymond went... and he seems so unhappy.

A beat. Raymond raises his glass.

RAYMOND

To unhappiness, I guess.

NANCE

Hear, hear!

Nance and Raymond down their drinks.

KATHLEEN

Here's a question I never thought I'd be asking: do you tag your dead husband on Instagram?

RAYMOND

Why would you do that, Mom?

KATHLEEN

I can't pretend nothing's ever happened, *Raymond*. Just act like everything's fine and we've moved on? It's our first Thanksgiving without him, people are watching. He deserves... a mention. No tag. A tag is too much. (*typing*) "First Thanksgiving without @frankaarons, but family is forever."

NANCE

Family is forever.

Kathleen posts and sets her phone down, satisfied.

KATHLEEN

The food was delicious, Nance.

NANCE

You liked it? It wasn't overdone?

KATHLEEN

Oh no, it was perfect! Wasn't the food good, Raymond?

She kicks Raymond.

RAYMOND

Yes! Even better than Grandma Lee and Grandpa Jack make.

NANCE (*mocking*)

"Grandma Lee and Grandpa Jack."

RAYMOND

Sorry?

NANCE

Well, it's no secret you favored them over us.

RAYMOND

They were closer. Geographically.

LYDIA

Is there extra turkey?

NANCE

In the kitchen.

Lydia exits to the kitchen.

NANCE

How many Christmases did you celebrate with them? And how many with us?

RAYMOND

Well, they celebrate Hanukkah, so technically zero.

Lydia reemerges from the kitchen with a ziplock bag full of turkey, tosses it in a cooler, and exits upstairs.

NANCE

You're Jewish now, Kathleen?

KATHLEEN

Frank was Jewish. I'm not.

NANCE

Do you know much about Judaism, Raymond?

RAYMOND

A little bit.

NANCE

A little bit! That's hardly enough for a college-educated boy.

Nance pours two more drinks.

NANCE

You look like you're afraid of what's going to come out of my mouth!

RAYMOND

Why would you think that?

NANCE

You've got the most transparent face. Cheers.

Nance and Raymond down another drink. Lydia reenters with an empty bucket.

NANCE

Many people say that Christianity is just Jewishness perfected, but I actually think the Jews capture spiritual life far better than Christians do.

RAYMOND (burping)

Totally.

NANCE

Judaism wades more into the mysteries of life and death, and has a more ancient understanding of the blurred lines between the two.

KATHLEEN

Raymond, I'm cutting you off—

NANCE

It sheds a light on the spiritual realm that Christianity doesn't. It makes you feel like you're not crazy for believing in certain things. You know the Hebrew terms *ibbur* and *dybbuk*?

RAYMOND

I guess I haven't gotten that far on Hebrew Duolingo.

NANCE

Hm. Your Jewish grandparents never talked about it with you?

RAYMOND

They aren't very religious. More culturally Jewish.

NANCE

It's a shame. Jews find a way to explain so many of life's mysteries.

LYDIA

And death's.

Lydia rejoins the table.

LYDIA

The Jewish faith gives credibility to all kinds of ideas connecting the living to the dead.

RAYMOND

Connecting how?

LYDIA

Having a natural relationship with passed spirits. Like connecting to nature or God or—

NANCE

And they're easier to summon, following Jewish theological ideas.

KATHLEEN

Are you joking?

LYDIA

No. It's true. I've read all about summoning spirits of the—

KATHLEEN

Summoning? We *are* just talking about ghosts right?

LYDIA

What do you mean?

KATHLEEN

You're not experimenting with anything involving any *Latin*?

RAYMOND

Latin?

KATHLEEN

Otherwise I'd be left feeling... unprotected.

LYDIA

Ha. Ha.

NANCE

There's a priest down the street, sweetie. You don't have to worry about any demons in the house.

KATHLEEN

I don't worry about things that aren't real.

LYDIA

Mom and I disagree on demons. Sorry, Mom. I don't necessarily believe God created demons himself. Humans can summon them, but He wouldn't create something intentionally evil.

KATHLEEN

Again, I don't worry about things that aren't real.

NANCE

You always love to doubt anything extraordinary, Kath.

KATHLEEN

And you love to believe in bullshit. Summoning? *Demons*? I thought you were still at least on the fringes of the mainstream.

NANCE

We are.

KATHLEEN

Are you still... Charismatic Christian, or whatever you are?

NANCE

That's our root. We're melding.

KATHLEEN

What does that mean?

NANCE

I'm exploring other theologies as well to follow my interests.

RAYMOND

Charismatic Christian? Isn't that like Pentecostal?

NANCE

I suppose it is.

RAYMOND

Do you... do you mind me asking if you speak in—

NANCE

In tongues? We speak in heavenly dialects, when the Holy Spirit enters us. We all did growing up.

RAYMOND

All of you?

NANCE

Your mother never kicked the habit.

LYDIA

Is that what that is?

KATHLEEN

No. That's medical.

NANCE

It's left-over.

KATHLEEN

It's medical, not residual.

NANCE

You were doing it earlier.

KATHLEEN

THAT'S MEDICAL.

RAYMOND

You told me you'd been peppering since I was born.

NANCE

She's always done it. It's in our blood—

God damn you. **KATHLEEN**

Don't take the Lord's name in vain. **NANCE**

I can say what I like, I own this house. **KATHLEEN**

Okay! /That's— **RAYMOND**

Is that true? **LYDIA**

Don't bring that up in front of/my daughter— **NANCE**

Well, don't bring up my condition. **KATHLEEN**

It's not a condition, it's a mark from— **NANCE**

Stop it. **KATHLEEN**

It's a mark from/God who you— **NANCE**

It's a mark from a God who isn't real. **KATHLEEN**

GOD IS REAL. **NANCE**

Come on, Mom. **RAYMOND**

AND GOD IS LISTENING. **NANCE**

God is a lie used to keep us content with our miserable lives— **KATHLEEN**

NANCE

You didn't always feel that way, Kathleen. Don't you remember? Don't you?

KATHLEEN

We should've listened to the doctors and lobotomized you when we had the chance.

RAYMOND

MOM.

NANCE

Your mom was more bought in than all of us. I remember her on the altar, speaking in heaven—

KATHLEEN

I was a *child*. I did what they told me to do, what they groomed us to believe!

NANCE

You remember what it felt like up there, connected to something bigger than yourself—

KATHLEEN

YOU ARE OUT OF YOUR MIND!

Nance rises and begins speaking in tongues, intentionally goading Kathleen to remember.

NANCE

Corrabbua esta moresta mamba miesta kiara enda mairresta brianda le shacama ambua tura embrienday reaal—

KATHLEEN

Stop it, Nancy.

NANCE

Ibott ey ey ey meistre bes goza a ka kaya shacama dia kond maka shonda ra shonda!

KATHLEEN

Please *ease ease ease ease seize seize seize stop stop stop stop op* please!

NANCE

Ki bio resta rebaba thurmummiti therminglus hestia olala jest helter skelter skull brawl miestra—

Raymond interrupts at the top of his lungs.

RAYMOND

And you wonder why I wanted to spend Thanksgiving in New York? My other family doesn't end Thanksgiving dinner **SPEAKING IN TONGUES**. Do you know what we do? We play **SCRABBLE** like a normal family. My dad's dead and you think I want to spend my holidays sorting through your ancient family drama, when I have an actual storm raging inside of me?

RAYMOND (cont'd)

Every day I wake up feeling nothing but regret and hopelessness and maybe it's because of what I'm surrounding myself with! Look at you! **LOOK AT YOU!** Instead of rehashing the past, why don't we just get this over with so we can get out. You're not here because you want to be. Tell them you're selling the house, Mom. Tell the **FUCKING TRUTH FOR ONCE IN YOUR LIFE—**

SIT DOWN, BOY.

NANCE (with the authority of a patriarch)

A beat. Kathleen looks at Nance very strangely.

RAYMOND

I'm sorry, everyone. I'm very sorry. It's been a very rough few months for us. All of us.

LYDIA

I understand.

RAYMOND

This isn't about you. I've been having some... I wasn't doing very well before my dad died. And... I hate that he saw me in shame.

NANCE

You're not in shame. We are so proud of everything you've done. We've been proud of you from afar for so long. I'd tell people at the rotary, my grandson, at an Ivy League school. Who would've thought!

LYDIA

(Your nephew.)

NANCE

That's what family is for. You don't have to prove to us that your life is worthy. Because you already are. Fuck 'em.

RAYMOND (choked up against his own will)

Thanks, Aunt Nance.

NANCE (a sudden shift)

Okay, that's enough.

RAYMOND

You're right. Sorry.

NANCE

Enough stroking the boy off.

A pause.

Do you want help clearing up here?

KATHLEEN

No, it's fine.

NANCE

I'll just rinse it and put it in the dishwasher.

KATHLEEN

We don't have a dishwasher.

LYDIA

That's right. I can just—

KATHLEEN

A crash from upstairs.

What was that?

KATHLEEN

The wind. The house makes funny noises sometimes.

NANCE

It sounded like something big.

KATHLEEN

Lydia, do you want to go check and see if everything looks okay upstairs?

NANCE

Lydia exits upstairs.

Raymond, can you grab the dishes?

KATHLEEN

Raymond grunts and begins gathering the dishes and exits to the kitchen.

Sell this house?

NANCE

I... we don't need to talk about this now.

KATHLEEN

NANCE

I admire your boy. He's forthright.

KATHLEEN

Anyone can be forthright after two shots in five minutes.

NANCE

You and Frank let us live here. You promised we could—

KATHLEEN

And now Frank's dead. Things have changed. It's time to downsize to an apartment or a townhouse or—

Nance begins to laugh.

NANCE

You have a health insurance plan *for your dog!* You can't tell me you need money.

KATHLEEN

It's none of your business whether we need it or not.

NANCE

Spare me. What did Frank do? Gamble? Snort coke? Get mixed up with loose women?

KATHLEEN

It's our property. We can do what we like with it.

NANCE

You work for Goldman Sachs.

Kathleen shakes her head quietly.

NANCE

No?

Lydia returns.

LYDIA

It was just Baby Frances.

NANCE

That's good. Is everything/okay—?

LYDIA

Sleeping now.

Sorry... who is Baby Frances?
KATHLEEN

My 14-month-old.
LYDIA

A beat.

Your 14-month-old what?
KATHLEEN

Baby Frances is my daughter.
LYDIA

I'm sorry... is this a joke?
KATHLEEN

NANCE
It's not something we're proud of, Kath. We don't want to send my sister who already thinks we're rednecks a Christmas card saying "my daughter had sex out of wedlock and she's raising her bastard daughter, come on home for the holidays!"

Oh my. Well, that's wonderful.
KATHLEEN

I wouldn't call it wonderful. I'd call it inevitable.
NANCE

Thank you, Mom.
LYDIA (furious)

So... Nance! You're a grandma! You must be so proud—
KATHLEEN

NANCE (under her breath)
Proud my daughter's ridden every man from here to Joplin?

She loves being a grandma.
LYDIA

I'd rather I'd taken your phone away and kept you off Tender and all the sex apps you use.
NANCE

Raymond re-enters.

RAYMOND

What's going on?

KATHLEEN

Ummm. Well! Big news. Lydia is a mommy! And Nance is a grandma to a little girl!

LYDIA

I don't use sex apps.

RAYMOND

Are you... are you serious?

NANCE

We didn't want to tell you right when you got here.

RAYMOND (delighted)

Can I meet her?

LYDIA (pleased)

When she wakes up, of course. I can show you her, if you're quiet.

RAYMOND

I love babies.

LYDIA

She'd love to meet you.

Lydia and Raymond exit.

NANCE

This is why... we can't...

KATHLEEN

I see...

NANCE

Not with Baby Frances.

KATHLEEN

Kind of a convenient thing to leave out before we arrive.

NANCE

Oh, does my granddaughter ruin your plans to evict us?

KATHLEEN

I'm protecting my financial future.

NANCE

But what about your *other* family? Frank's parents... the Jewish ones?

KATHLEEN

We've already asked.

NANCE

Are they a little... *tight* with money?

KATHLEEN

They've already helped more than a few times. And they just bought a timeshare in Tampa.

NANCE

It's funny how the rich always seem to be tightening their belts to afford more earthly possessions. With us Christians, it's family first.

KATHLEEN

It has nothing to do with—

NANCE

What about Goldman Sachs?

KATHLEEN

I quit after Dad died.

NANCE

Well, now you can get your job back.

KATHLEEN

I'm almost retirement age. It's not like I can just—

NANCE

What is it like, then?

KATHLEEN

It's a bit rich, hearing this from someone who refuses to work.

NANCE

I'm on disability, sweetheart.

KATHLEEN

Liver disease doesn't keep you from binge drinking. Why can't you work as a nanny or a maid—?

NANCE

Why can't you?

KATHLEEN

You think ten dollars an hour could ever make ends meet for me?

NANCE

Poor Kath, having to give up your tennis club membership.

KATHLEEN

I know you think I look down on you, and I sincerely do not. But my needs and your needs are very different. I have the responsibility of being a part *of of of* society! To participate, I *need* enough to keep my tennis club membership. To send birthday gifts, thank-you gifts, wedding gifts! I need money for fancy clothes to wear to my fancy lunches with my fancy friends so they don't suspect I'm on the outs. I need money for the Botox that keeps my forehead from betraying just how worried I am all the goddamn time Now I can't even afford the good prosciutto. And none of my rich friends will bail me out because once you beg, you've lost face, they're afraid your failure will infect them, I'll reek of the downswing, and I'll have to go at it alone *lone lone loan loan* and hustle and claw and humiliate *ate ate hate hate hate* myself and I hate it, and I hate that my husband is gone and I hate that I feel like I have no purpose and I hate *hate hate* that I've ended up back here in the same place that I started!

NANCE

And I love that you finally know what it's like, living like the rest of us.

Lights down.

SCENE 4

Lydia and Raymond sit on the porch, rocking Baby Frances in a small bassinet.

I'm not a slut, you know.

LYDIA

Okay.

RAYMOND

I hate when my mom says that.

LYDIA

I would too.

RAYMOND

She's wrong.

LYDIA

Sure.

RAYMOND

By today's standards anyway. I mean, like, how many people is too many to have been with?

LYDIA

It depends on your age, I think.

RAYMOND

How many have you been with? More than five?

LYDIA

Mm.

RAYMOND

Double digits?

LYDIA

Um... let's talk about something else.

RAYMOND

I'm just asking.

LYDIA

Can I ask *you* a question?

RAYMOND

Depends.

LYDIA

How much was that truck?

RAYMOND

None of your business.

LYDIA

I've had sex with twenty-one people. You started the personal questions.

RAYMOND

Ha.

LYDIA

What is it, a Chevrolet?

RAYMOND

2016 Silverado. Used.

LYDIA

How many miles?

RAYMOND

Sixty thousand.

LYDIA

Raymond takes out his phone and starts typing.

LYDIA

What are you doing?

RAYMOND

I'm valuing the car.

LYDIA

Fine. Fine. It cost the number of people you've had sex with/times a thousand—

RAYMOND

Twenty one hundred?

LYDIA

Thousand.

RAYMOND

Jesus.

LYDIA

Plus the number of people I've had sex with times a thousand.

RAYMOND

You're telling me... this is a *two hundred* thousand dollar truck?

She smacks his arm, not angrily.

LYDIA

Twenty *two* thousand dollars.

RAYMOND

That means...

LYDIA

I told you. I'm not a slut.

RAYMOND (looking down at Frances)

Wow. You made that one count. But at least you have something cute to show for it. She's such a good sleeper.

LYDIA

Yeah... Frances is worth the stretch marks. And the dirty looks whenever I go into town.

RAYMOND

Plenty of people have kids out of marriage.

LYDIA

We're basically not allowed at church anymore.

RAYMOND

Because you had sex?

LYDIA

No, they like that deep down. It keeps things interesting. They scold you, but they all know the rules are for suckers.

RAYMOND

Shots fired!

LYDIA

No, it's the magic they hate.

RAYMOND

Magic?

LYDIA

Magic.

RAYMOND

What, are you like Wiccan or Pagan?

LYDIA

No, no, no, that stuff isn't real. We're talking the OG magic.

RAYMOND

What's the OG magic? Harry Potter?

LYDIA

Older. It's your kind of magic, I guess? Hebrew magic? Jewish magic.

RAYMOND

I can't tell if you're joking.

LYDIA

It's the very foundation of all religions. But no one knows the true nature, the ancient power from the first years of creation. I tried to explain to them, at church. We have this at our fingertips.

RAYMOND

You told your church you were experimenting with witchcraft? Bet they loved that.

LYDIA

That's because they don't think! They don't question beyond what they're told, or or or study, or inquire or anything! This magic, it's not bad, it's not evil. It's the foundation of our human family, born of Adam and Eve, fanned out all over the globe. It belongs to us! It's promised to us.

RAYMOND

I guess I missed a few passages of the Torah—

LYDIA

Not the Torah. It's the Sefer HaRazim.

RAYMOND

Is that a Star Wars character?

Lydia laughs, a little too hard, a little too long.

LYDIA

It's a spell book. Given to Noah by the angel Raziel.

RAYMOND

I seem to have forgotten him... was he in the unabridged version?

LYDIA

He taught Noah the same magic Christ would use to raise Lazarus. Magic to raise the dead.

RAYMOND

You're freaking me out a little.

LYDIA

I thought you were open-minded.

RAYMOND

I am.

LYDIA

You sound like the people at our church. They're all for fellowship, all for embracing you as a person, until you do something they don't like.

RAYMOND

That's not what I'm like.

LYDIA

It's like what they did to Pearl, this old lady who went to our church. Her husband dies, she's left with nothing. Lost her house. Oh, big fundraiser for Pearl! They let her live in the church annex, give her food, all's good until they find out that she was doing mag—things the church didn't like. No family, no kids, nowhere to go. They kicked her out. I don't think she ever got her money.

RAYMOND

Wait—where did she go?

LYDIA

She was living on the street until... I don't know. So yeah. The church is really welcoming. As long as you follow their rules. And don't ask too many questions.

RAYMOND

I'm not going to lie. Life after death has been a pretty tempting prospect recently... but then I hear stuff like that and remember it's all bullshit.

LYDIA

You miss your father?

RAYMOND

Of course.

LYDIA

There wasn't closure. Was there?

Raymond's phone vibrates. He reads it, then—

RAYMOND

He was in an Uber pool. The driver drove through a red light into an intersection and hit a city bus. Everyone in the car died, except for the girl sitting next to him, which is ironic because she wasn't wearing a seatbelt. She was maybe 18. Really shaken up.

LYDIA

An 18-year-old girl was with him?

RAYMOND

Mom always told him he was cheap and he should take a Uber Black Car, but he says he liked meeting other people Ubering around the city. He was social that way.

LYDIA

And do you feel like he knew you? Before he died.

RAYMOND

Me?

LYDIA

Do you feel like he knew the person you had the potential to become?

RAYMOND

I... no. He didn't.

Raymond looks to the truck again.

LYDIA

My Dad hasn't spoken to us since he left. Didn't even want to meet Frances.

RAYMOND

Where is Uncle Josiah now?

LYDIA

Montana? Working on an oil rig. Doesn't want anything to do with us. It feels like men make the mess and then we're left to pick up the pieces. Don't be one of those men, Raymond.

RAYMOND

Yeah, don't worry about that for me.

LYDIA

Who was that girl your mom brought up? At dinner.

RAYMOND

Oh. A girl I knew on a campaign. Before I was fired.

LYDIA

You got fired? Why?

RAYMOND

It's complicated.

LYDIA

Were you dating?

RAYMOND

I mean... no...

LYDIA

Didn't want to put labels on things?

RAYMOND

Not exactly... God. Okay. Well. Fine. Here's the truth. When I was at Columbia, I dated guys. There. I came out to my friends, I was a slut about town, and I'm glad I did it. No regrets. But... in New York there's a certain lack of commitment. It's tough to find somebody to curl up with and watch a movie and know they're going to text you back the next day. Someone you can trust. A lot of people make you think they're going to be a companion, but they're just trying to get inside your pants. And I wanted a companion. But it seemed like no one wanted to be mine. So I was bored and started volunteering on this Congressional campaign in Queens. I kept applying for jobs out of college, literally any job, but there was always something wrong. They wouldn't email me back, I'd say the wrong thing in the interview, whatever. And I didn't have like a cool network to rely on, because I was too busy "finding myself" to make a lot of friends in college. So, anyway, within like three weeks of volunteering there, they hired me! Full time! It was me and two other people in the office. One was Conor. One was Fiona.

LYDIA (oooooh!)

Fioooooona!

RAYMOND

And she was awesome. We were into the same things, loved to talk about movies and she even laughed at the same random memes I did. We'd stay in the office talking 'til like 3 in the morning and soon we started exchanging books and stuff. She was the first girl I told I had been with guys who made me feel okay about it. Like she didn't trivialize me or infantilize me or make me feel like less of a man. And she was the first person I thought, hey, maybe this is the answer. So I start making little moves to let her know I'm interested. Brushing her arm, biting her shoulder—

LYDIA

I'm sorry, *what?*

RAYMOND

It's cute, I promise you!!!

LYDIA

That's crazy.

RAYMOND

I know that! Now I know that. So at first she's kind of receptive, then she starts laughing it off, then she's not responding to my texts as quickly as she used to, and starts saying that we can't stay in the office as late, so I keep asking her out to drinks, and she'll go, but then she'll make up some excuse and blow me off, and one time she shows me her Bumble account and asks me to help with it and I'm like "are you friend-zoning me?" and she's like "we can be a throuple," which is—

LYDIA

Like Tiger King.

RAYMOND

Sure. So... I don't know why. But I told my dad about her. And *he* tells me to get more aggressive. Said that girls respond better to confidence, to making the first move. Which... isn't my strong suit. Okay. So one night we're both in the back room of the office, and I decide to just go for it. I push her against a stack of papers to kiss her. But I was nervous, so I ended up kind of lunging at her, and knocked her into these boxes of files which toppled over, and I fell on top of her, and she really hurt her arm, and I ended up kissing her chin.

LYDIA

So they fired you for knocking stuff over?

RAYMOND

Nope. They fired me for sexual harassment.

LYDIA

No!

RAYMOND

She said I was getting increasingly territorial and aggressive, and it didn't help that I didn't know she had been going off to hook up with Conor every night after she was with me. I was just a pawn to make him jealous. So they both ganged up on me and acted like I was some creep and then I had to tell them I was gay, which is maybe reductive because I think I'm a 4 on the Kinsey Scale, but it protected me legally I think, so they said if I resign we can sweep the whole thing under the rug so needless to say that kind of fucked me up. And I haven't been able to get a job since. Then I had to tell my dad what happened. And the look on his face... it was like I wasn't his son. And I blamed him. Then he died.

LYDIA

I always assumed he was a great dad to you.

A beat.

RAYMOND

Yeah... so anyway, that's what being masc got me. So I guess it's never going to happen for me. Although... maybe I just gotta get behind the wheel of a bigass truck to feel like a big man.

LYDIA

Today might be your lucky day.

RAYMOND

Do you have the keys?

LYDIA

Yes.

RAYMOND

Toss them here.

LYDIA

What, so you can steal it?

RAYMOND

I need it to make me feel secure in my masculinity.

LYDIA

Impress all the boys with it.

RAYMOND

Is that why *you* bought it?

LYDIA

We need it.

RAYMOND (playfully)

I wouldn't get too attached.

LYDIA

Oh, so your mom is going to take our house *and* our truck?

RAYMOND

I was joking.

LYDIA

I know one thing.

RAYMOND

What's that?

LYDIA (serious)

My mom will never, ever leave this house.

RAYMOND

Well I know my mom is not messing around. And I'd suggest you take her seriously.

LYDIA

Or what?

RAYMOND

Or things could get ugly.

LYDIA

Are you threatening us?

RAYMOND

I'm not. She is. By proxy.

Lydia approaches him. Gazes at him.

LYDIA

You're a good person, Raymond. You just need someone to guide you.

Raymond turns away.

LYDIA

Hey. I trust you. Catch.

Lydia tosses him the keys to the truck.

SCENE 5

Lights up on Kathleen and Nance playing the card game Cribbage at the dining room table.

KATHLEEN (counting her hand)

Fifteen two, fifteen four... and there ain't no more.

NANCE

Ha!

KATHLEEN

What do you have?

NANCE

Fifteen two, fifteen four, and a double run for twelve.

KATHLEEN

I was so close to a run.

NANCE

And so close to getting skunked.

The sound of a garage door going up.

KATHLEEN

Oh, they're back.

NANCE

Good for Baby Frances to get some fresh air. She really seems to have taken to Raymond.

The sound of a door opening.

NANCE

You home, Lydia?

RAYMOND (off)

We're back!

NANCE

Is it nice out?

LYDIA (off)

Warm for November. Frances is tired, I'm going to put her to bed.

RAYMOND (off)

She wants me to read her a story!

Kathleen puts a hand over her heart. So sweet.

KATHLEEN

Your crib.

NANCE

Fifteen two, fifteen four, fifteen /six...

KATHLEEN

How dare you.

NANCE

And a pair is eight.

KATHLEEN

You always get better crib cards than me.

NANCE

At least I have *something* that's better than you.

A beat. Kathleen shuffles, deals, and discards two cards into Nance's crib then has her cut the deck.

KATHLEEN

I can't believe you didn't tell us about Frances.

NANCE

I thought it would color the conversation.

KATHLEEN

We know better than to interrogate Lydia.

NANCE

Well at least someone has some decency. When we go to town or church, it's "who's the father?" or "is he paying child support?" It's part of why we stopped going to church and started doing our own theological exploration at home.

KATHLEEN

If you don't mind me asking...

NANCE

All she told me was he's not local.

KATHLEEN

How do you think they met?

NANCE

Oh I don't know. Probably charmed her while she was working at the Chick-fil-A out in Rolla.

KATHLEEN

Must've tipped her well.

NANCE

You've never been to Chick-fil-A, have you?

KATHLEEN

How do you know that?

NANCE

You don't tip.

KATHLEEN

I haven't. I started boycotting it. When they came out as anti-gay.

NANCE

They support traditional marriage—

KATHLEEN

They would fire an employee for/being—

NANCE

No, they would not.

KATHLEEN

You sound just like Dad...

NANCE

They keep the Sabbath holy every week and pay better than/any other—

KATHLEEN

It matters where you give your money. If you support them/you support—

NANCE

I don't support it. It's in the Bible, plain as day.

KATHLEEN

Where?

NANCE

Sodom and /Gomorrah—

KATHLEEN

Lot and his daughters, “protecting” the angels from the crowds of men.

Nance goes to the bookshelf and pulls out a Bible.
She begins flipping pages.

NANCE

“Where are the men who came to you tonight? Bring them to us so we can have sex with them.”

KATHLEEN

It’s about rape, not them being men—!

NANCE

Leviticus called it an “abomination”/and—

KATHLEEN

And so Lot offered up his daughters instead! No consent from them!

NANCE

To prevent sodomy!

KATHLEEN

And God turned Lot’s wife (unnamed by the way!) into a pillar of salt for looking back/at the—

NANCE

So? She disobeyed him!

KATHLEEN

And do you know what was part of “God’s plan” in the next chapter?

Kathleen overtakes the Bible and flips to a new page.

KATHLEEN

Everyone looks over this! After God “destroys the city” in the very next chapter, Lot has sex with **BOTH OF HIS DAUGHTERS**. Mom and Dad drilled these books into our heads and I listened! This man, this “moral man” sacrifices his daughters to protect something that isn’t even real, then shows no qualms about—

NANCE

You see things through your *agenda*—

KATHLEEN

Why are women always pawns?

NANCE

Why are you getting so worked up?

KATHLEEN

Because people use the Bible to justify evil, and they use it to punish good! I have a son who hates himself because of what's in that book. And our father... never questioned his morality. Never.

NANCE

You never got to know him.

KATHLEEN

Because if you let him close he crossed lines!

NANCE

YOU ARE AN UNGRATEFUL LIAR.

A beat. Kathleen looks shocked.
A cackle from the bedroom.

KATHLEEN

What was that?

NANCE

Television in Lydia's room.

The sound of footsteps upstairs. Nance pours a drink.

NANCE

Men are flawed. You know this. Do you know what I went through before Josiah walked out? It's our job to manage imperfect men.

KATHLEEN

How did "managing" him work out for you? He walked out on you ten years ago.

NANCE

How did it work out for *you* Kathleen? Were you a model wife?

KATHLEEN

No! I was not. But look at our mother. A doormat. A fucking doormat. Drank herself to death at sixty. Sixty!!! I promised myself I wouldn't be like her—

NANCE

That you are not.

KATHLEEN

But I married a man just like Dad. Strong and wrong.

NANCE

I was jealous of you and Frank. He was always so generous when you came to visit. Bringing gifts, taking walks with Raymond and Lydia, staying up late talking to us.

KATHLEEN

Frank just covered it up more convincingly.

NANCE

Oh, then I saw his ruthless side. You two did things with the inheritance that I didn't think family was capable of. But in person... he could screw you over, then flash that smile. Made you feel like the only person in the world. And somehow you forgave him.

KATHLEEN

He could charm the best of them.

NANCE

Especially women. (*Off of Kathleen's look.*) I felt that he was a little flirtatious with me sometimes.

KATHLEEN (laughing at the delusion)

You always struck me as a little *old* for him.

NANCE

I'm younger than you!

KATHLEEN

You don't look it!

NANCE

Well, I'm not riddled with botox.

KATHLEEN

No, you're too busy pickling yourself with alcohol sold in plastic bottles.

NANCE

Following in Mom's footsteps. You should try it.

Nance pours her a drink. Kathleen sips.

KATHLEEN

Being married to Frank was like being a detective. Constantly checking alibis, confirming where he was going. He was private about so many things. Work trips, bank accounts... sometimes things didn't add up. But he made you feel crazy for not trusting...

NANCE

So, Saint Frank is not so saint-like after all.

KATHLEEN

Look at you, all smug.

NANCE

It's not a competition. Well. Not anymore.

Nance pours herself another drink.

KATHLEEN

I caught Frank messaging a teenager. Last year. He left his phone unlocked, and I saw Instagram. And I just wanted to know. So I open the messages, and I realize it isn't even his profile. It was a duplicate account, and he's got all these unopened photos... I was so horrified.

NANCE

So that's why you quit your job at Goldman Sachs.

KATHLEEN

We needed time to work on our marriage. Build trust again.

Nance starts to laugh.

NANCE

And that's where the money went? Paying off angry parents?

KATHLEEN

He had bad investments.

NANCE

Did he ever pay off some young girl to keep her mouth shut?

KATHLEEN

There was a lot of money missing. And I don't know where.

Kathleen downs her drink.

KATHLEEN

And who can I trust? I'm so... alone.

Nance looks at Kathleen, for the first time seeing her vulnerability.

NANCE

I felt that way too, Kath. And I found a way.

KATHLEEN

Let me guess. Jesus.

NANCE

No. Something better. Something immediate. Something *real*. It saved me.

KATHLEEN

There's nothing worth saving here.

NANCE

It connected me to Dad. Allowed me to understand.

KATHLEEN

I don't want to/understand!

NANCE

He was a hardheaded man. But strong, very/strong.

KATHLEEN

I want to move on!

NANCE

From what?

KATHLEEN

From everything! From prayer circles and talks about purity and speaking in tongues and drunken fights and crying and the crackle of beer cans and bath time and *III* I don't want to think about it anymore! He wouldn't listen, wouldn't admit anything, especially when he was wrong.

NANCE

Better strong and wrong than weak like... well, like...

KATHLEEN

Like who?

NANCE

You know.

KATHLEEN

Like Raymond?

A beat. Nance smiles with triumph and malice.

KATHLEEN

You are just like Dad.

Kathleen picks up Nance's glass of whiskey... and pitches it in her face. Nance's hands fly to her stinging eyes as she shrieks.

KATHLEEN

I hope that burns.

Lydia enters from the stairs.

LYDIA

What's going on?

KATHLEEN

Your mom had a little too much to drink.

LYDIA

What's wrong with her eyes?

NANCE

Just a little... little spill...

KATHLEEN

Where is Raymond?

LYDIA

He and Frances both fell asleep reading a story. I took a bunch of pictures.

KATHLEEN

This is what happens when he drinks. Falls asleep. Excuse me.

Kathleen exits. Nance wipes her eyes with napkins.

NANCE

She's coming unhinged. Acting like a five year old again... it's so infantile.

LYDIA

I don't think they're joking about the house.

NANCE

Shhhhh. We're going to tell them we're giving it to them.

LYDIA

When do we tell them about Grandpa?

NANCE

After we calm her down a bit.

LYDIA

She'll never calm down.

NANCE

She will. When she feels like she has control.

LYDIA

She's too unpredictable. I think he's the one we should be working on.

NANCE

I know my sister. She has so much pent-up anger, she'll need to let it out.

LYDIA

He's looking for something to believe in. And he'll believe in this, I know it, and convince her—

The sound of a door opening.

NANCE

Kathleen?

KATHLEEN (offstage)

I forgot something outside!

LYDIA

He'll believe in this. You watch.

The sound of a door slamming shut. Lights up on Kathleen and Raymond outside.

RAYMOND

Twenty-two thousand, according to her.

KATHLEEN

I could probably get more for it. Did you get the keys?

RAYMOND

This is psycho, Mom.

KATHLEEN

I know you're always on your phone, so don't pretend you didn't see my—

RAYMOND

Why does it matter if I got the keys?

KATHLEEN

So if things take a turn, I can take the rental car, and you can take the truck.

RAYMOND

Mom, that's beyond unethical.

KATHLEEN

It's a negotiating tactic.

RAYMOND

It's stealing.

KATHLEEN

It's repossessing. They are squatters in my house, I can—

RAYMOND

They're family. They have a baby!

KATHLEEN

Raymond, it's simple. This is my house. I bought it, I let them live in it rent-free. We did the right thing, now I'm owed it.

RAYMOND

You really think this will work?

KATHLEEN

I... It will show them we're serious. I don't know. What other choice do we have? I'm not going to squander my reputation to crawl and beg around New York when we have a solution right here, something that is owed to us, income to fix our crisis.

RAYMOND

I don't know about you, Mom, but it's going to take a lot more than money to fix my crisis.

KATHLEEN

I don't understand why you're not more grateful right now! I'm not putting any blame or burden on you, I'm not pressuring you, or asking you to go out and find money yourself.

RAYMOND

And why not?

KATHLEEN

Because I know you're in pain!

RAYMOND

If you really know that, you have a funny way of showing it.

Raymond pulls out the keys to the truck.

RAYMOND

I'll be waiting on your orders to hijack the truck, captain.

Kathleen looks at Raymond. Opens her mouth.
Closes it.

RAYMOND

It's late. You should go to sleep.

KATHLEEN

Okay, let's go in.

RAYMOND

I'll um, meet you in there.

Kathleen nods and goes to head inside.

KATHLEEN

I... I love you, Raymond. A lot.

RAYMOND

Yeah. Me too, Mom.

KATHLEEN

I'm just... trying to do what I think he would've /done...

RAYMOND

I know.

Kathleen exits. Raymond stands outside for a moment, waiting for her to leave.

Then Raymond's face crumples. He lets out a sob, and begins to dissolve into tears.

Suddenly, he stops. He exhales three times, as though breathing through pain.

His jaw clenches. He stops crying.

His grief-stricken face is suddenly resolute, fierce.

Raymond exits into the house.

SCENE 6

The middle of the night. Raymond is asleep in the living room. Lydia stands over him in a nightdress reciting, as if in a trance.

LYDIA

I adjure you to bring the planet of Frank and his star near to the star and planet of Raymond so his love will be tied with the heart of Frank's son.

Lydia pricks Raymond's finger and dabs a cloth on it. It is covered in blood. Suddenly, the sound of a baby crying. Raymond shakes awake.

RAYMOND

No!

He sits, panting.

RAYMOND

What are you doing? Who's crying?

LYDIA

It's Baby Frances.

RAYMOND

Are you going to check on her?

LYDIA

I probably should.

Lydia gets up and runs into Kathleen on the way to the bathroom. Raymond turns on a lamp.

LYDIA (offstage)

Hi Aunt Kathy.

KATHLEEN (offstage)

Oh! Lydia. I was just going to the bathroom.

LYDIA (offstage)

Sleep tight.

Raymond calms down, checks his phone. Starts scrolling. The sound of the power going out. The lamp goes dark. Raymond doesn't notice. Lydia returns as Raymond laughs at something.

What's so funny?

LYDIA

I just saw the pictures of me and Frances you sent!

RAYMOND

So cute, right?

LYDIA

Shit. Shit!

RAYMOND

What?

LYDIA

My screen... it's got blood on it.

RAYMOND

Oh no. Is it cracked?

LYDIA

I don't think so? Maybe it's like a microcrack or something.

RAYMOND

A beat. She looks at him and they burst out laughing.

Microcrack!

LYDIA

I need the world's tiniest thong. To cover my microcrack.

RAYMOND

Here, wipe your hand off with this...

LYDIA

She holds up a small blanket.

Um... isn't this Frances's blanket?

RAYMOND

We wash it all the time.

LYDIA

He dabs at his hand.

RAYMOND

My phone stopped charging.

LYDIA

I think the electricity is out...

RAYMOND

Weird. It was working like five minutes ago.

LYDIA

I'm just going to light some candles 'til it comes back on.

Lydia begins to light some candles on the table.

RAYMOND

You're not going to use this in some sort of witchcraft ceremony are you?

LYDIA

"Some sort of witchcraft ceremony."

RAYMOND

Conjure an evil spirit to come after me and my mom for taking the house?

LYDIA (suddenly serious)

I would never.

RAYMOND

I was having the weirdest dream.

LYDIA

About what?

RAYMOND

I was in a church, and people were laughing at me. I wanted them to stop. I have that dream a lot. But this time, they stopped laughing. Something changed inside of me; something, I don't know, rose up. And suddenly they were scared of me. And I wanted them to laugh again. Because seeing their faces... it was chilling. Then someone started crying... but I think that was Baby Frances.

LYDIA

You are an open book, you know that?

RAYMOND

What's that supposed to mean?

LYDIA

You and your mom. Maybe it's because you have money. Anything that crosses your mind, any outburst, any fear. You say it out loud. You feel safe doing so.

RAYMOND

I mean, we don't say everything that crosses our mind. Or else things would get very awkward. But, yeah, sorry. Telling people your dreams is one of the most selfish things you can do.

LYDIA

Not at all. Dreams are very instructive.

RAYMOND

Oh, I know what my subconscious is telling me...

LYDIA

They say ibburs visit us in our dreams. Before they're conjured.

RAYMOND

What? Oh. That's that thing.

LYDIA

Spirits of our ancestors. Sent to guide us.

RAYMOND

Right.

LYDIA

Raymond. It's the most amazing thing.

RAYMOND

What?

LYDIA

We are so powerful.

RAYMOND

Okay. I think I might head back to sleep.

LYDIA

It's real. I've seen a spirit impregnate a body.

RAYMOND

You're freaking me out again.

LYDIA

I shouldn't be! There aren't just malevolent spirits, dybbuks, there are ibburs, the spirits of saints or the righteous who can enter your very soul and coexist with you.

RAYMOND

You've seen it done?

LYDIA

I've done it.

RAYMOND

Really?

LYDIA

Yes. Just for a second. I had an ibbur inside of me.

RAYMOND

Who was it?

LYDIA

It was Grandma Peggy. She died before we were born, and I always wanted to meet her.

RAYMOND (slightly sarcastic)

Wow. Wow. That's amazing.

LYDIA

It was. She was so kind, so gentle...

RAYMOND (very sarcastic)

What an incredible experience for you!

LYDIA

Now you're making fun of me.

RAYMOND

Have you ever conjured an evil spirit?

LYDIA

I—just one. For my dad. After he didn't want to meet Frances.

RAYMOND

How did that work out?

LYDIA

I couldn't do too much harm to him. He's still a fat loser/but he—

RAYMOND

Aw, get your money back for that/evil spirit!

LYDIA

But he just had his leg amputated. Because of diabetes. So I like to think something happened.

A beat. Raymond sighs.

RAYMOND

What's it like then? Having someone else inside of you, or believing you did?

LYDIA

It's like communion. Like what people are looking for in sex, but will never feel.

RAYMOND

You know, sometimes I'd do anything to feel like I have someone there with me. In the low points, the darker times. Just someone to give me guidance and experience all this bullshit with.

LYDIA

Do you want to try it?

RAYMOND

I... I don't believe in that stuff.

LYDIA

You don't believe in anything?

RAYMOND

No.

LYDIA

So it's all just nothingness? No luck, no fortune, no miracles...

RAYMOND

Nope. Well one time I went to a psychic. Down on Astor Place with Conor and Fiona before... things happened. But the psychic put on a pretty good show. Got all morose. Said I was cursed. And, you know, I believed her. Because things started to go bad for me. Like suddenly there was something out there in the ether, blocking every chance I have to *be someone* or *become something*. But then I think, maybe I've just concentrated my luck early on. I've been on the up my whole life, doing well in school, Columbia, doing everything right, but it's like there's some curse that's been placed on me and I don't know how to shake it to actually make something of my life!

LYDIA

That's a very privileged thing to say.

RAYMOND

No, it's not.

LYDIA

Well, why do you have to be successful?

RAYMOND

I want to provide for myself.

LYDIA

Mom's on disability. Does that make her less than you?

RAYMOND

No! That's not what I mean.

LYDIA

Because you're a man then?

RAYMOND

That has nothing to do with it. I just don't want to be looked down on—

LYDIA

A man's greatest fear. Being laughed at.

RAYMOND

No.

LYDIA

Listen to yourself. "Cursed" because you don't have a job you want. Because some girl laughed at you. You know what I think? I think it was never about her, it was about how you wanted to feel about yourself. It was about power.

RAYMOND

I only did that because my dad wanted me to!

LYDIA

Well now your dad's dead!

RAYMOND

I know that!

LYDIA

He doesn't have to be.

A beat. Raymond decides he's misheard.

Who fucked you over?

RAYMOND

Ha. Ha.

LYDIA

A beat. Lydia has finished lighting candles. The room is alight, almost as though it's become a small chapel.

You know what doesn't make sense to me?

RAYMOND

What?

LYDIA

How a man could never want to meet his daughter.

RAYMOND

I think... once you see their face... you fall in love. He didn't want to.

LYDIA

Right.

RAYMOND

I mean, you fell in love. You can see in the picture...

LYDIA

Yeah. I guess I did.

RAYMOND

You two look just like...

LYDIA

Lydia holds out the picture on the phone. He smiles. Then suddenly he sees something new, yet something he's known all along. Something that terrifies him.

How old is Baby Frances?

RAYMOND

Fourteen months.

LYDIA

And Grandpa's funeral was... two years ago.

RAYMOND

LYDIA

Yes.

RAYMOND

Lydia... who fucked you over?

She turns away.

RAYMOND

The day we left, after the funeral, you were crying. Who fucked you over?

A beat.

RAYMOND

Was it my dad?

LYDIA

Do you still have my keys?

Silence, then the sound of a door creaking open. A beat. Suddenly, another door opens. Kathleen screams. The sound of a punch. A bang. Nance and Kathleen enter. Kathleen is bleeding.

KATHLEEN (hysterical)

Who the fuck is that??

NANCE

What are you doing sneaking around at 3:30 in the morning, huh?

KATHLEEN

You hit me!

Kathleen grabs a napkin and puts it to her lip.

KATHLEEN

I heard something moving in Dad's room.

NANCE

There is nothing in Dad's room!

KATHLEEN

I was sitting on the toilet for thirty minutes listening to something scuffling around.

NANCE

That was Baby Frances.

KATHLEEN

Baby Frances is in your room! Who did I see in there? *What aren't you telling us?*

LYDIA

Aunt Kathleen, we're going to give you the house. It's all going to be okay.

RAYMOND

They think they're witches, Mom.

Something starts banging on the walls from the other room. Nance looks at Lydia accusingly.

LYDIA

I fed her!

KATHLEEN

Raymond, grab your bags.

RAYMOND

It's 3:30 in the morning.

KATHLEEN

There is a a a a *thing* in my old bedroom!

LYDIA

She's not a thing. Her name was Pearl. We call her Gran now.

NANCE

She helped us bring Mom back, Kathleen.

LYDIA

She's a medium. She helped me conjure spirits. She's hosting Grandma Peggy's spirit right now.

Kathleen scoffs and starts typing on her phone.

RAYMOND

Lydia. You know this isn't real.

LYDIA

It is real, Raymond. I swear on Baby Frances I'm not lying.

KATHLEEN

I booked a room in town. Let's go.

NANCE

I know you're afraid.

KATHLEEN

I'm not afraid. I'm mad at myself for falling for the whole holiday charade. Once a year everyone pretends they're part of a happy family against all evidence, but we were never happy *clearly* and we might as well stop pretending.

NANCE

We're family, Kath/leen—

KATHLEEN

We are siblings. The only thing that connected us was a common childhood—grab my bag from my room Raymond—and a common set of awful parents. A common roll of the dice. Besides this house, we have nothing that binds us now that Dad's dead.

Raymond exits to Lydia's room. Kathleen goes to grab her coat from the back of the dining room chair.

NANCE

Am I dead, Kathleen?

A beat.

KATHLEEN

Yes. Dad's dead.

NANCE

He's here.

KATHLEEN

RAYMOND!

RAYMOND (offstage)

I'm coming!

NANCE

Dad's here.

KATHLEEN

RAYMOND whatthefuckareyoudoing! Let's go!

NANCE

Dad's inside me.

KATHLEEN

Holy shit. RAYMOND! I'm taking the rental! Do you have the keys?

RAYMOND (offstage)

I'M PACKING YOUR MAKEUP BAG!

KATHLEEN

LEAVE IT!

The candles flicker. Lydia begins to hum.

NANCE

I was there when you were born Kathleen. Seven pounds, six ounces.

Kathleen runs towards the door, but Lydia blocks her.

NANCE

I sang you to sleep every night, my baby girl.

RAYMOND (offstage)

I'm coming!

Nance begins to sing a haunting lullaby, not unlike Billy Joel's "Goodnight My Angel."

NANCE (singing)

"Wherever you are, wherever you roam—"

KATHLEEN

Stop.

NANCE (singing)

"you know you can always call me home."

Raymond reenters. He, like Kathleen, is transfixed and haunted. Kathleen looks at Lydia and shakes her head in disbelief.

NANCE (singing)

**"But when the trail takes its toll,
I'll be with you always
There inside your soul."**

KATHLEEN

Why are you doing this, Nance?

NANCE

Come hug your father goodbye. That's all I ask.

I'm not playing this game.

KATHLEEN

I never hated you, Kathleen.

NANCE

Oh, god.

KATHLEEN

A picture frame falls off the wall.

It might be real, Mom.

RAYMOND

Why are you saying that?

KATHLEEN

Don't you feel the wind? Inside the house?

RAYMOND

There's a window open, there must be.

KATHLEEN

What if it's real?

RAYMOND

Come hug your father goodbye.

NANCE

Do it, Mom.

RAYMOND

Kathleen tentatively steps forward.

I'm so sorry.

NANCE

Kathleen hugs Nance. She instantly inhales, then lets out a cry.

Oh my god.

KATHLEEN

You see?

NANCE

Oh my god!!!

KATHLEEN

He's here.

NANCE

Daddy?

KATHLEEN

We both are.

NANCE

How...

KATHLEEN

He's an ibbur. Gran helped us/conjure—

LYDIA

A what?

KATHLEEN

An ibbur. We conjured his spirit to share Mom's body.

LYDIA

And I love you, sweetheart.

NANCE

KATHLEEN

After all these years... the bullshit you've tried to force on me...

LYDIA

The Christian Church shows no curiosity to the mysteries of this life. The ancient texts of Judaism are the manual to communion with our ancestors.

KATHLEEN

And now you're playing on my guilt and my fears—

LYDIA

This magic is real. Raymond, listen to me.

KATHLEEN

And taking advantage of Raymond when he's weak, when he's vulnerable...

RAYMOND (quietly)

I am not weak.

LYDIA

It's from the *Sefer HaRazim*, taken from the Books of the Mysteries, given to Noah, the son of Lamech, son of/Methuselah—

KATHLEEN

No! No. Enough.

LYDIA

—son of Enoch, son of Jared, son of Mehallalel, son of/Kenan—

KATHLEEN

ENOUGH!

A beat.

KATHLEEN

You've taken this too far to be forgiven. You are all sick.

NANCE

Sweetheart, this will take time.

KATHLEEN

You need to snap out of this, now.

Kathleen stalks to the kitchen. Nance follows her.

NANCE

Sweetheart, don't you see? I brought you here so we can have a second chance.

The sound of Kathleen rummaging through pots and pans.

NANCE (offstage)

Sweetheart, what are you looking for?

KATHLEEN (offstage)

This.

The sound of Kathleen striking Nance across the head with a pan. The sound of Nance crumpling to the ground. Lydia walks into the kitchen. Kathleen emerges, holding a pan spattered with blood.

KATHLEEN

Time to go, Raymond.

Kathleen stalks to the door, but Raymond stays still.

KATHLEEN

Let's take the truck and go.

But Raymond remains, deep in thought.

KATHLEEN

Raymond, I will leave you.

But Raymond is silent. Lydia emerges from the kitchen, hands covered in blood.

KATHLEEN

Lydia, I'm sorry. She's breathing. Just knocked out, but we need to—

LYDIA

This will all be much easier without her.

Beat.

KATHLEEN

What will be easier?

LYDIA

It was always about Grandpa for her. She didn't know what you being here meant. To me.

KATHLEEN

Raymond. Let's go.

LYDIA

Frances needs her father. *(to Raymond)* We all do.

A beat.

RAYMOND

You think you can bring my father back.

LYDIA

Yes.

KATHLEEN

No!!

RAYMOND

That's what this is about, isn't it?

THIS IS NOT REAL. **KATHLEEN**

I saw it in your body. **RAYMOND**

Saw what? **KATHLEEN**

Catharsis. **RAYMOND**

Cathar—? I felt *afraid*. I felt *disgusted*. **KATHLEEN**

I want you to do it. **RAYMOND**

KATHLEEN
Raymond, I know you're feeling a lot of things right now. I know I haven't been there for you like I should, but she's playing on your emotions.

I want you to conjure his spirit. **RAYMOND**

NO! It's not real— **KATHLEEN**

Maybe I want it to be real! **RAYMOND**

Please please please don't fall for this *this this this this*— **KATHLEEN**

LYDIA
Do you want to see your husband again, Aunt Kathy?

He's dead. Forever. **KATHLEEN**

Lydia shakes her head.

LYDIA
Raymond, your father will need a host. Are you willing to—

RAYMOND

Yes.

LYDIA

Then we must move swiftly.

KATHLEEN

Help *help hellp hellp hell hell hell...*

Lydia goes to the bookshelf and removes a copy of the *Sefer HaRazim*. Gran goes to Raymond and touches his chest, still laughing. Lydia touches his back, reading from the book. Gran mumbles along.

LYDIA

Taken from the Books of the Mysteries, given to Noah, the son of Lamech, son of Methuselah, son of Enoch, son of Jared, son of Mehallalel, son of Kenan, son of Enosh, son of Seth, son of Adam, by Razel the angel in the year when he came into the ark but before his entrance! And he learned from it how to do wondrous deeds, and learned secrets of knowledge and how to master the investigation of the strata of the heavens, to go about in all that is in their seven abodes.

Kathleen is coming out of her fit.

LYDIA

I ask of you, angels who rule the fates of the children of Adam and Eve, that you do my will and bring in conjunction the planet of Raymond son of Frank into conjunction with the planet of Frank, father of Frances. I/adjure you spirit—

KATHLEEN (realizing)

Oh my god. Frances. Oh my god!!!

LYDIA

—of the ram bearer who dwells among the graves upon the bones of the dead, that you will accept from my hand this offering and do my will and bring me the spirit of Frank, father of Frances, Frank who is among the dead.

Lydia holds up the bloodied blanket. Something breaks in Kathleen. She covers her mouth and begins to silently sob.

LYDIA

Raise him up so that he will speak to me without fear and tell me true things without concealment. Let him not be afraid of me and let him give me what I need from him.

RAYMOND

Something's... something's wrong...

Raymond is shivering. Lines start to overlap.

LYDIA

Come, ibbur.

Come, ibbur.

Come, ibbur.

I ask of you, angels who rule the fates of the children of Adam and Eve, that you do my will!

Raymond stops moving, frozen. Gran falls to the ground.

LYDIA

The ibbur of Frank, Father of Frances.

RAYMOND

Hello?

LYDIA

Frank.

RAYMOND

Where am I?

LYDIA

Your daughter is here. You are safe. You are under my control.

RAYMOND

I was strangling the driver, I don't know why.

LYDIA

That was the spirit I sent, but it was to bring you back to us.

RAYMOND

We crashed. Then I was asleep in the dark.

LYDIA

Your daughter needs you.

RAYMOND

Why am I awake?

KATHLEEN

Raymond, it's not real. You're playing pretend. It's like hypnosis.

LYDIA

She doesn't want you here. I want you here. I need you here.

RAYMOND

Is Raymond here?

I'm here, Dad.

Who else is here?

Mom, Lydia—

WHO ELSE IS HERE?

Mom, Lydia, Baby Frances—

THERE WAS SOMEONE FOLLOWING ME.

No one's following you, Dad—

SOMEONE FOLLOWED ME HERE.

Dad, you're scaring me.

I WANT TO GET OUT.

I'm sorry, Dad. I'm sorry.

I DON'T WANT TO BE HERE. I DON'T WANT TO BE HERE.

Dad. DAD. LOOK AT ME.

KATHLEEN

God... it's not. It's not real. None of this is real. *It's it's it's* nothing more than endorphins and adrenaline that our brains are *scram scram* scrambling to make sense of, it's the high that people ride when they're frenzied in a mob or speaking in tongues or gunning down *down down a/crowd* or—

LYDIA

It's time to meet your daughter.

RAYMOND

My daughter...

How could you? How could you do it?

No one is safe...

You *had* a child. You already had a child.

It was following me...

Why wasn't it enough?

I smell its breath, see its blind eyes...

WASN'T I ENOUGH?

הורג

Dad?

IT'S HERE.

Dad, who was that?

LET ME GO. LET ME OUT.

LYDIA

Ibbur! You are under my control!

RAYMOND

YOU. CONTROL. NOTHING.

Raymond grabs Lydia's wrist. She screams, terrified by what she sees in his face.

LYDIA

Let me go.

He pulls her close.

RAYMOND

I'LL SHOW
THOSE FUCKERS

WHO

I AM

גורר

Dad?

No. Please. Don't. Don't. Don't—

That's not me!

—kill me!

LYDIA (horrified)

The dybbuk.

RAYMOND

It won't leave until it has killed

I'm sorry I failed you.

DON'T SHOW YOUR FEAR,

Dad, please, I need you to—

YOUR WEAKNESS OR

—tell me you love me—

IT WILL KILL YOU!

KATHLEEN (to Lydia)

I'll kill you if you keep hurting him, I will kill you.

LYDIA (frightened, lost control of the situation)

I just wanted him to meet his daughter.

KATHLEEN

Raymond. Whatever you need to play out, whatever you need to do to feel what you're feeling... it's okay. I'm here.

RAYMOND

IT'S BEHIND YOU!

Dad.

FIGHT IT.

I'm so lost.

RAYMOND (cont'd)

FACE IT LIKE A MAN.

I'll try.

KATHLEEN

I'm feeling what you are. I'm lost too.

LYDIA

He loved Frances, Aunt Kathleen. He sent us money every month—

RAYMOND

ITS HANDS ARE ON YOUR THROAT!

Raymond puts his hands to his neck, as if slowly suffocating. Lydia begins desperately reading the spell book, trying to put it right. The lines overlap.

LYDIA

Noah, son of Lamech, son of Methuselah, son of Enoch, son of Jared, son of Mehallalel, son of Kenan, son of Enosh, son of Seth, son of Adam—

RAYMOND

The cycle...

I feel it strangling me...strangling you...

This house...

Where do you end?

Our inheritance...

Where do I begin?

What's left of you?

הורג

KATHLEEN

We're lost together now.

RAYMOND (running out of air)

What are you doing...?

Take your place...

There's no air.

Make me proud to call you—

There's no air...

my son.

I can't...

I will...

הורג

הורג

No. No. No. NO NO NO NO. YOU CAN'T LET IT KILL—

Raymond suddenly gasps a gigantic breath of air, as if inhaling something into his body, then collapses onto the floor.

LYDIA

Frank!

Kathleen and Lydia rush to Raymond.

KATHLEEN

Raymond?

They pull Raymond into a seated position.

KATHLEEN

Raymond, sweetheart. I'm here. I'm here now.

Raymond lets out a laugh: Ha. Ha.

LYDIA

Frank? Are you in there?

KATHLEEN

Get away from him.

LYDIA

Who are you? Who's in there?

Raymond looks confused, blinking at both women.

LYDIA

Is it dead? Tell me Frank, is it dead?

KATHLEEN

He's not Frank. He's Raymond.

Raymond looks at both women and solemnly nods.

LYDIA

What do you mean?

Raymond speaks with a newfound authority.

RAYMOND

The others are dead.

He looks at Lydia, as though for the first time.

RAYMOND

I was strong enough.

LYDIA

Who's inside of you? Who?

Kathleen turns Raymond away, shielding him from Lydia.

KATHLEEN

Raymond. Tell me what you're feeling.

Raymond smiles, as if a glorious revelation has been bestowed upon him by the angel Raziel himself.

RAYMOND

I have... such clarity.

A beat. A new Raymond looks to Kathleen. She gasps at something she sees in his face as the lights go black.

End of play.