

ACT I

Scene 1

Avery and Sybil are in the kitchen. Avery is sitting at the table. Sybil is pacing.

AVERY

I don't know what to do-- it's so boring. Ya know you can go out, if ya wants. Probably got a man waiting somewhere.

SYBIL

I'm babysitting you.

AVERY

Don't you want to do something better with your night off from the Inn, there Miss Maid? I'm sixteen, I don't need a babysitter.

SYBIL

Tell that to your mother.

AVERY

What's she afraid I'm gonna run off or something.

Beat.

SYBIL

Remember that time when you were four and you packed a bag and said you were moving to St. John's?

AVERY

No, I don't remember. What did I do?

SYBIL

Well, you had your little bag packed, we were having supper, and you stomped out and announced that you were running away. Said you could take care of yourself.

AVERY

Why did I want to runaway?

SYBIL

Your mother had given you one of your shots that day. You squirmed and fought her and said you didn't want anymore and that your bum was sore from the needles. And that you wanted to be called James from now on.

AVERY

James?

(CONTINUED)

SYBIL

You were obsessed with this soldier toy called Commando James.

AVERY

How did it end?

SYBIL

Well Lily told you that if you were gonna runaway, you should at least have a bath first. That no one would want to help a dirty child. So she put you in the tub and by the time she had you washed up and dried off you fell asleep.

AVERY

Too bad. Maybe I'd be a Jimmy now if I had to go through with it.

SYBIL

Don't go getting on with that.

AVERY

Oh no, don't bring that up. Don't rock the skiff.

Beat.

You sure woulda been delighted if I left.

SYBIL

Snot nose little youngster going around throwing fits and causing scenes the whole time? Friggin right I would have.

AVERY

My god, you're some sweet Auntie Syb.

SYBIL

Alright, shag this. I'm going out for a while. I'll be back before your mother and Charlie get home. Don't say a word about it.

AVERY

If there's one thing we can do right in this house it's keep our mouths shut. Go on out of it.

Scene 2

FLASHBACK. 1944, Bond Harbor.

Lily and ADRIAN are in the kitchen. ADRIAN has a large object under a bed sheet- it's a surprise for Lily.

LILY

(Giddy)
Come on, will ya? Just show me.

ADRIAN

I still have a few kinks to work out, but for the most part it's finished.

LILY

I want to know what you've been doing out in that shed for so long. Was starting to think maybe ya had some missus out there with ya.

ADRIAN

Sure I have the best woman around. What would I be downgrading for?

Lily grabs the edge of the sheet.

LILY

Come on!

ADRIAN

Stand back. Let me do it.

Lily steps back, holding her hands behind her back.

Beat.

ADRIAN grabs the sheet like he's about to unveil the gift, but fakes her out.

LILY

Adrian!

ADRIAN

But it's just so fun, seeing you all riled up.

Beat.

Okay, okay...

ADRIAN whips the sheet off to reveal a beautiful cabinet, hand-carved details.

Lily gasps, her hand over her mouth.

LILY

You didn't!

ADRIAN

What do you think? I wasn't sure...that it'd be your taste, ya know. The modern stuff is a lot simpler...

Lily runs her hand over the cabinet, admiring.

LILY

I've never seen anything like it.

ADRIAN

You likes it then?

Lily takes ADRIAN's hands and kisses them gently.

LILY

Love. I loves it.

ADRIAN

I'm sorry I didn't have it done last month, before our wedding.

LILY

Don't be so foolish.

Lily slips her fingers under the drawer handle and tugs, the drawer doesn't open. She grips it with more force, yanks. It still doesn't open.

ADRIAN takes the handle.

ADRIAN

Here.

ADRIAN lifts the drawer slightly and it slides out easily.

ADRIAN

There's a bit of a trick to it.

He shuts the drawer again.

ADRIAN

Watch.

He repeats the drawer trick, Lily watches closely.

ADRIAN

Give it a try.

Lily follows his example. Not as smooth, but she gets the drawer open.

ADRIAN

If you don't want anyone getting into it, they won't.

LILY

We can hide our secret things from the youngsters when we have them.

ADRIAN

And from Sybil.

LILY

We can leave notes for each other.

ADRIAN

Love notes.

LILY

I can keep my negligees in there...

ADRIAN

Tell me more...

ADRIAN and Lily stand together, her hands on his shoulders, his hands around her waist.

ADRIAN

I can't wait to have youngsters to hide things from.

LILY

I hope the first one is boy, just like you.

ADRIAN

I want a house full of little girls that are just like their Mom.

LILY

He or she, whichever...

ADRIAN

We'll be happy with either.

LILY

You're gonna make an extraordinary father.

ADRIAN

Let's go see if we can make me one...

Lily and ADRIAN exit.

Scene 3

PRESENT 1960. Lily, 37, and Sybil, 25, are in their kitchen in Bond Harbor.

Avery, 16, is in her bedroom digging through a drawer.

Lily is busy buzzing around the kitchen preparing supper. Sybil is painting her nails.

LILY

Avery, what are you doing in there? Come out and give us a hand, luh.

Avery takes out a syringe, pulls the cap off.

AVERY

Hang on. I'm in here doing drugs.

LILY

My lord, don't let anyone hear you saying that.

AVERY

Well I am.

Avery pulls her pants down a little and jabs her butt, hard, with the needle.

She smiles.

Avery joins the women in the kitchen.

With Lily's back turned, Sybil pokes Avery where she'd just injected herself.

AVERY

Oww! That hurt you little shagger.

LILY

It's a brand new school year. Time to start fresh, love. Start over. Take that eraser on the back of your pencil and scrub er all clean.

AVERY

(Eye-rolling)
You sounds like the Priest. Wants a real baptism.

SYBIL

Any cute fellas in your class?

AVERY

All the same ones since Kindergarten. Only now they're taller and pimply.

SYBIL

What about teachers, then? Either fine looking one?

LILY

Sybil! Don't go putting nonsense in her head.

AVERY

Oh yeah, cause that's me. You can just open me head up and pour in whatever ya wants. No mind of my own...

LILY

That's not what I mean, darling.

Beat.

I think you should try out a couple of after school activities. Choir, or theatre...or what about the yearbook committee?

AVERY

I'd rather go out in the backyard and let the chickens peck my eyes out.

Lily sighs.

AVERY picks up Sybil's nailpolish bottle and sizes it up.

AVERY

Sybil, what are you putting that dirt on your fingers for? Must have a date, do ya?

SYBIL

No I don't have a date. I have my dart game later, at the hall.

AVERY

You're going to chase men, then?

SYBIL

Lily, do you hear the sass coming out of your child?

LILY

Tell your Aunt you're sorry.

AVERY

Mom...

LILY

Do it.

AVERY

Uhh...I'm deeply and woefully sorry Sybil.

With Lily's back turned, Sybil sticks her tongue out at Avery.

Enter Charlie, 42.

CHARLIE

The sight of you three after looking at hairy arsed men all day...

Lily greets Charlie with a kiss.

LILY

How was your day? You're late.

CHARLIE

Got a few extra hours there on the end of it. It smells like baby angels in here. What do you got cooking?

AVERY

We got that rotten ol pea soup and dough b'ys.

CHARLIE

How was your first day back to school? Manage to keep the back of your hands clear of the ruler?

AVERY

(Proud of herself)
That's what I did.

CHARLIE

Keep it up.

AVERY

I will. (To Lily) See how sensible Charlie is?

LILY

I hope for more for you than not-getting-punished.

CHARLIE

Course we do, sweetheart.

Charlie goes to the cabinet. Takes off his work gloves and tries to open the cabinet door. He can't get it.

Seeing this familiar scene, Avery rushes over and takes the handles. Avery opens the drawer easily.

Charlie puts his gloves inside and closes the drawer gently.

CHARLIE

(Gently)
Thank you.

AVERY

Welcome. Figure we have plenty of splits out there in the shed. Didn't need you turning that cabinet into more.

Sybil and Charlie laugh. Lily does not.

LILY

We need to plan a trip to St. John's. Grade 10, this is your year for the Father/ Daughter dance. Need to get you a dress.

AVERY looks at her mother like she has ten heads.

LILY

And a suit for you too, Charlie. A new jacket at least...

SYBIL

I remember my Father/ Daughter dance. I had this gorgeous ballerina length dress that was all full with petticoats. It was the palest purple with little pearl buttons and I felt just like Natalie Wood.

Daddy wore a charcoal suit. Remember Lily?

LILY

You were a sight for sore eyes. Could hardly catch my breath.

SYBIL

And you'll have to have a date...What about Kent?

AVERY

Mind out now. Gross. Kent is my best friend...

CHARLIE

She don't need any date. We'll have all the fun ourselves.

Charlie takes Avery's hand and tries to dance with her, twirl her around. She's completely clumsy.

AVERY

Give it up, will ya?

SYBIL

(To Charlie)

Maybe if you'd buck up and marry my sister, make a proper woman out of her...then Avery wouldn't have to go to the dance with a fill-in father.

AVERY, LILY, AND CHARLIE

Sybil!

SYBIL

Ahh for the love of God. You're some touchy bunch. I'm outta here anyway.

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Sybil exits.

AVERY

Have fun on the hunt...

Charlie and Avery settle around the table for supper.

LILY

Do you have anything in mind? Like a color or style that you'd like.

AVERY

Nope.

LILY

Well...we can try on a bunch and see what fits.

Lily exits.

When Charlie sees that the coast is clear he takes a small carving Carving Knife from his pocket.

CHARLIE

This was your father's. I found it out in the shed. He was some hand at it, carving. I bet you could be too.

He gives Avery the Carving Knife. She turns it over in her hands like treasure.

AVERY

It's a thing of beauty. But mudder won't want me at it. Ya knows how nervous she is. She'd have me behind a glass case if she could.

CHARLIE

I guess we just won't tell her.

Charlie winks at Avery.

AVERY

Thank you, Charlie. I promise I'll be careful.