

O Where Are You Going?
a new play

May 2, 2013

O Where Are You Going?
by Daniel Irving Rattner

Characters

MIKE, 20
KITTY, 18
MARLENE, 48
CAMERON, 20
THOMAS, 27

Setting

a Long Island home

Time

after the wedding

“O Where Are You Going?”
by W.H. Auden

“O where are you going?” said reader to rider,
“That valley is fatal when furnaces burn,
Yonder's the midden whose odours will madden,
That gap is the grave where the tall return.”

“O do you imagine,” said fearer to farer,
“That dusk will delay on your path to the pass,
Your diligent looking discover the lacking
Your footsteps feel from granite to grass?”

“O what was that bird,” said horror to hearer,
“Did you see that shape in the twisted trees?
Behind you swiftly the figure comes softly,
The spot on your skin is a shocking disease.”

“Out of this house,” said rider to reader,
“Yours never will,” said farer to fearer,
“They're looking for you,” said hearer to horror,
As he left them there, as he left them there.

I. Tuning the Orchestra

NOISE before LIGHTS: the mournful, plaintive cry of a train whistle. The sound of a train on its tracks turns into the tuning of an orchestra.

LIGHTS on:

MIKE circles the set. She stands on the threshold about to enter;

KITTY watches.

The LIGHTS go down as the cicadas begin to sing.

II. Home Again

LIGHTS on:

The playroom upstairs in a large home on Long Island. Large windows on the back wall look out on a sprawling lawn and a lake with a wood dock extending out onto the water a few feet. The door is stage left, a large desk sits stage right. Shelves with books and toys are spread across the room.

The room has yellow walls with elaborate molding. Pink curtains are draped around the windows. A couch, center stage with a white coffee table, is light blue. A large, comfortable armchair with floral patterns sits stage left of the couch. A large portrait of MIKE and KITTY (ages 8 and 6) and their parents, hangs on the back wall between the windows. The room hasn't been changed in about 12 years, so it looks slightly out of period.

MIKE sits in the same armchair. Her blonde hair is pulled back into a braid. She is dressed comfortably, no shoes. Her skin is tanned. There is something wild, feral perhaps, about her. She is turning flipping lazily through a book into an act of silent protest.

KITTY enters in a state. She is the kind of girl who is brought to tears by the sight of Christmas trees left out on the sidewalk in January. At the moment, she is dressed for a party: a pale pink dress, her blonde hair carefully arranged.

KITTY

Have you seen Morris?

MIKE

No.

I think he's hiding from me. KITTY

Let him. MIKE

I'm worried. KITTY

KITTY goes to look under MIKE's chair.

Did you check—? MIKE

Everywhere. KITTY

Downstairs? MIKE

Everywhere. KITTY

Are you sure? MIKE

Yes. KITTY

Then maybe he's hiding from you. MIKE

Beat.

Did you check downstairs? MIKE (CONT'D)

Under every table... KITTY

She goes to look under the chair again.
MIKE thwacks her with her book.

He's not down there!

MIKE

KITTY moves away, scornfully.

I can't believe he—I can't believe you let him—!

KITTY

Let him?

MIKE

Yes!

KITTY

What?

MIKE

Go through with this.

KITTY

Kitty...

MIKE

He would've listened to you.

KITTY

Please.

MIKE

If you had said something—

KITTY

Said something?

MIKE

If you had told him... That woman is—

KITTY

What?

MIKE

Not nice!

KITTY

Beat.

He's in love.
MIKE

I just want him to be happy.
KITTY

MIKE goes to look around.

This room hasn't changed at all.
MIKE

I can't believe you let him marry her.
KITTY

Sheryl?
MIKE

You haven't been here. You haven't seen—
KITTY

MIKE looks for a new book.

I've read all of these a thousand times.
MIKE

Beat.

It's been a year.
KITTY

Since what?
MIKE

Since the last time you were here.
KITTY

Don't—
MIKE

I'm sorry.
KITTY

Just—	MIKE
I wasn't.	KITTY
Kitty.	MIKE
Sorry.	KITTY
I'm sure Morris is fine.	MIKE
He's sensitive.	KITTY
He's a cat.	MIKE
People make him unhappy.	KITTY
It's a family trait.	MIKE
I thought about visiting you last spring.	KITTY
When?	MIKE
Sometime last spring. I thought about visiting you at school.	KITTY
You should have.	MIKE
Yeah?	KITTY
Could've been—nice.	MIKE

Maybe in the fall? KITTY

What? MIKE

I'll come visit you. KITTY

You should stay at school. MIKE

Oh. KITTY

Once you get there, you should stay at school. Settle in. Make friends. MIKE

Beat.

I can't believe you let him— KITTY

MIKE starts humming "Here comes the bride."

Mike... KITTY (CONT'D)

MIKE hums louder and moves towards KITTY.

It's not funny! KITTY (CONT'D)

A chase ensues. It might turn into a dance at some point. Laughing, then laughing through tears.

You were a very beautiful bridesmaid. MIKE

KITTY gets up.

Stop. KITTY

What? MIKE
(genuinely hurt)

Every time you compliment me... It sounds—sarcastic! KITTY

It wasn't. MIKE

Fine. KITTY

I promise—it wasn't. MIKE

I'm glad you're staying for the reception. KITTY

I'd get in trouble if I didn't. MIKE

Still— KITTY

I'll take the train back in the morning. MIKE

36 hours... KITTY

What? MIKE

We'll get you for a whole 36 hours. KITTY

MIKE starts to hum again.

It is a little funny. The two of them. MIKE

KITTY

Do you think she'll ask us to call her "Mom"?

MIKE

“μητέρ’ εἰ χρεῶν ταύτην
προσαυδᾶν”

*“mayter ee kreown tautayn
prosaudahn”*

KITTY crosses to the desk and pulls out
a box of records out from underneath.

KITTY

I found these last night. Do you remember them? How Mom used to play them
every night before we fell asleep.

KITTY picks her record. “Out of
Nowhere” by Ella Fitzgerald.

MIKE

I'm home again.

KITTY

These songs... every night...

MIKE

I realized last night—when I saw all those empty drawers in my room, I realized: I
don't live here anymore.

KITTY

Well, you know what Dad always says.

MIKE

“If you want a friend buy a dog”?

KITTY

No. “Nothing is ever quite what you expected.”

Pause.

Someone downstairs has told a *very*
funny joke. The noise of laughter makes
its way onstage.

MIKE

Sounds like the party's in full swing.

MIKE gets up to take the record off.

MIKE (CONT'D)

You should take these records to school with you.

KITTY

Mike—

MIKE
(concerned)

What is it?

KITTY

I don't think I'll have a record player with me at school.

III. Meeting Marlene

MARLENE (O.S)

(knocking on the door, calling out in a singsong voice)

Knock knock!

MARLENE lets herself into the room. She is middle-aged with rapidly graying frizzy brown hair. She has gotten quite dressed up but doesn't seem to have known what she was doing. Her dress is too big, her make-up poorly applied, and her hair is piled in a mess on top of her head.

Her eyes are a bit too close together, and when she speaks she draws out her vowels. She has a loud, nervous laugh, and rarely knows the right thing to say. She is a bit floppy, like a wilting flower.

MARLENE

Hiii. Can I hide? In here?

Pause. Neither KITTY nor MIKE responds.

MARLENE (CONT'D)

I'm Marleenee.

She looks at them expectantly.

MARLENE (CONT'D)

You don't remember me, do you?

KITTY

I'm sorry...

MARLENE

I used to babysit for you girls? Your father and I were good friends. To be honest, you know, I haven't talked to him in years. But I got his invitation—such a surprise!—and I thought it'd be nice to see him again, you know? And to see you two again?

KITTY

Oh, well I'm—

MARLENE

Kitty! (she turns to MIKE) And Mike. I remember...

KITTY

Of course.

KITTY moves forward and offers her hand to shake. MARLENE embraces her.

KITTY (CONT'D)

Nice to meet you, Marlene—or, see you... again.

MARLENE

I've known you girls since you were this big. (she gestures with her hand two feet off the ground) Or maybe this big. (same gesture, a few inches higher. Laughs nervously) I don't remember. Your father used to call me 'Marlene with the Missing Marbles'! (laughs nervously again) He was a funny one your father. Such a way with words! Ooh!

KITTY smiles at her; MIKE offers little in the way of encouragement.

MARLENE (CONT'D)

I lived only a few minutes away from here my whole life. I'd been moving around lately but now I'm back and then I ran into your father a few weeks ago—at the supermarket of all places. I never thought I'd see the day that man did his own

shopping but people change and anyways he mentioned the wedding and you two and I thought—

She laughs a little too loudly for a little too long.

MARLENE (CONT'D)

Hush Marlene!

Beat.

MARLENE (CONT'D)

Oh, yuck, I'm so in the way, aren't I? You don't want to have to hang out with an old babysitter, do you? I'm so sorry to bother you. Honestly, it's just that I hate adults. Yeesh. How long can you talk about politics for? Really? You know?

KITTY

Well, no adults up here. Would you like to sit?

MIKE

I'm going to go see if they need any help downstairs.

MIKE exits as KITTY watches her go and MARLENE takes her seat.

MARLENE

Are you just home for the wedding?

KITTY

No I—I live here.

MARLENE

Oh I just assumed...

KITTY

Mike's at school. I still live here with Dad and, you know.

MARLENE

Well hey, that's nice too.

Pause.

MARLENE (CONT'D)

Oh, and your father's new wife? How *is* she? The thing is, I haven't met her yet

but to be honest I bet your father picked well.

KITTY

She's very nice.

MARLENE

So when do you go to school?

KITTY

In the fall!

MARLENE

Would you look at that. Jeez, I am just so jealous of you. Enjoy things while you can, huh? These next few years are just going to be incredible. You've got no idea! Don't ever get old if you can help it.

A knock at the door. CAMERON enters timidly. He looks young for his age. He has a soft voice and still brown eyes. He wears a stuffy, too-big suit.

KITTY

Cameron! Hi!

CAMERON

Hi Kitty. Is—is Mike around?

He picks up MIKE's book.

KITTY

She just went downstairs. I'm sure she'll be right back. Oh, Cameron—this is Marlene, she used to—she was friends with my father. Marlene, this is Cameron—Mike's friend from high school.

MARLENE

Excellent to meet you Cameron.

MIKE enters.

CAMERON

Mike. Hi.

MIKE

Cameron. How's it going?

CAMERON

Good. Fine. Well, I guess. Your dad told me you'd be up here. I just wanted to say 'hi' or whatever.

MIKE

Right. 'Hi.'

MIKE reaches for the book in CAMERON's hand. He goes to hug her. He realizes his mistake.

CAMERON

I brought—

He searches his jacket pocket and realizes he's lost whatever he was looking for.

CAMERON (CONT'D)

Oh shoot. Don't go anywhere!

He runs out of the room.

Beat.

MIKE is now standing in the room with KITTY and MARLENE sitting on the couch. MIKE picks up her book and falls into the armchair. She reads.

MARLENE

So you're in school, Mike? What are you studying?

KITTY

Mike is a Classics major. She's practically fluent in Ancient Greek.

MIKE

Practically.

MARLENE

Well isn't that just something!

KITTY

And she speaks Latin.

MIKE

I *read* Latin.

MARLENE

Gosh that's amazing! Say something to me in Latin.

Pause. MIKE glares at KITTY.

MIKE

"Forsan et haec olim meminisse iuvabit."

Pause. MARLENE waits with baited breath.

MARLENE

(finally)

And what does it mean?

MIKE

"Perhaps, some day, even these things it will be pleasing for us to remember."

MARLENE

Well, jeez, that's just beautiful. Your father must be so proud of having such smart daughters.

Pause.

MARLENE (CONT'D)

Your father really went through with it, didn't he? Getting married again.

MIKE

It seems that way.

IV. The Messenger Sets Things In Motion

THOMAS enters. A waiter at the party, he is dressed in a white button down, and a black vest, tie, and pants. He has a broad chest and barely matted down hair. There is a slight drawl to his speech. He seems unapologetic about the space he takes up or the boom of his voice.

THOMAS

Hi. I'm sorry to—I don't meant to—interrupt but, are you, uh, the daughters—the groom's daughters.

Yes is everything—

KITTY

He just asked me to come get you is all.

THOMAS

Oh.

KITTY

He wants you downstairs.

THOMAS

Why?

MIKE

I'm not—I wouldn't know.

THOMAS

Well. Thank you.

MIKE

I should—

THOMAS

What?

MIKE

I guess this is my cue to leave, huh? Join the adults!

MARLENE

MARLENE gets up and goes to leave. She stops at the door and comes back. KITTY and MIKE watch her. MARLENE bends down to them, whispering as if a secret, passing it off as a joke.

The thing is. I don't really want to!

MARLENE (CONT'D)

She laughs as she turns and exits.

I should stay up here. I should wait until—

THOMAS

MIKE
You don't have to.

THOMAS
I'm just following orders.

MIKE
You would have fit in perfectly at Nuremberg.

THOMAS
I don't want to get in trouble.

KITTY
Mike, let's go.

THOMAS
I don't want to lose my job.

MIKE
Why did my dad send you?

THOMAS
What?

MIKE
Why didn't he come get us himself?

THOMAS
(he looks to KITTY)
I really wouldn't—

KITTY
Mike...

MIKE
I'm not dressed.
I can't—(she turns to THOMAS) you'll have to tell my Dad, I'm not dressed.

KITTY
You're just going to make him mad.

MIKE
If he wants—look, if he wants—he knows where I am.

KITTY turns and looks at THOMAS.
Back at MIKE. She gets to the door.

MIKE (CONT'D)

Kitty...

KITTY leaves. MIKE turns away.

Beat.

THOMAS leaves.

MIKE is alone. She notices the record player. She walks over to it. She turns "Out of Nowhere" back on. She hums. She sings along to the record.

V. I looked up at the stars/but try as I might/I couldn't make myself feel small

CAMERON enters the room. MIKE stands.

CAMERON

Hey.

MIKE

Oh. I was just about to go downstairs.

CAMERON holds out a clumsily wrapped package.

MIKE (CONT'D)

What's that?

CAMERON

A present.

MIKE

For—

CAMERON

You!

MIKE takes it and unwraps it.

CAMERON (CONT'D)

It's my school's monthly Audubon Society Newsletter. It's the bird/ watching—

MIKE

Watching group, I remember.

CAMERON

I wrote in article. I thought you might want to read it.

MIKE

Thanks.

MIKE puts the book down on the table.

CAMERON

What do you think?

CAMERON holds out his arms and shows off his suit.

CAMERON (CONT'D)

I had to borrow my dad's. It's not too big?

MIKE

It looks fine.

CAMERON

I outgrew my old suit. I put in on this afternoon and it ripped right down the back. How about that, right?

Beat.

CAMERON (CONT'D)

Congrats to your dad by the way! Getting married. That's... something.

MIKE

I should probably be down there.

CAMERON

Not if you don't want.

MIKE

He'll get mad.

Don't go if you don't want. CAMERON

I don't. MIKE

I know. CAMERON

CAMERON crosses to the window.

That lake? CAMERON (CONT'D)

Yeah? MIKE

It's really beautiful. CAMERON

Thanks. MIKE

I miss it. CAMERON

Our lake? MIKE

Or—all the time I spent out there. CAMERON

Yeah... MIKE

I learned to swim out there. CAMERON

You did? MIKE

CAMERON
Your dad taught me. When you guys first moved out here: My dad and I came over to welcome you to the neighborhood. We were standing out on the dock. My

dad said I wouldn't learn how to swim. Your dad pushed me in. I guess it was probably the first time you and I met.

MIKE

I forgot that story.

CAMERON

Anyways, I miss it like crazy. Whenever I come home I expect it to have—I don't know—dried up or something.

Beat.

CAMERON (CONT'D)

How's your dad?

MIKE

Good.

CAMERON

How's Kitty?

MIKE

She's fine I think.

CAMERON

Is it strange being home—with everything being so different?

MIKE scoffs. She crosses and sprawls out on the couch.

MIKE

Divorce changes everything. Marriage changes everything. And when he gets divorced again everything will change.

CAMERON

You don't think it'll last?

MIKE

She's 33, she weighs less than I do, and she writes *legal thrillers*.

CAMERON

Legal thrillers?

MIKE

You know, those paperbacks they sell in supermarket checkout lines? Apparently she's very good at it. Apparently they're very popular.

CAMERON

Have you read them?

MIKE

No.

CAMERON

You should! Might be nice—might be a nice thing... to do, I guess. (If she's going to a part of the family now.)

MIKE

She'll leave him once she realizes he dyes his hair.

CAMERON

Your mom's not here.

MIKE

She's on a silent retreat in Montana. It's this thing where they don't talk for like a week and just meditate.

CAMERON
(muttering)

I know what the word silent means.

MIKE
(ignoring CAMERON)

She does yoga with the sunrise every morning and aligns her chakras.

CAMERON

She's finding herself.

MIKE

She's 50.

CAMERON

She's trying to be happy.

MIKE

You are aggressively optimistic.

CAMERON

I don't know very many people here.

MIKE

Then why did you come?

CAMERON
(too goofily)

Open bar!

MIKE laughs. She gets up and goes to
CAMERON.

CAMERON (CONT'D)
(pleased with himself)

What?

She tightens the tie around his neck.

MIKE

You're still so goofy.

CAMERON loosens his tie.

CAMERON

Well you take yourself too seriously.

MIKE

That's a distinct possibility.

The laughing subsides. An awkward
silence.

MIKE (CONT'D)

I should be down there, huh?

CAMERON

The yard looks beautiful. All the lights—strung up.

MIKE

It cost a fortune.

CAMERON

It's so quiet out there. I remember being here in the summers and it being so loud from the... bugs, I guess?

MIKE

The cicadas.

CAMERON

I remember one summer it being so loud it was practically deafening.

MIKE

They only come out every seventeen years—the cicadas. The rest of the time they're buried underground and then, all at once, they come up and they perform this mating ritual and then they die.

CAMERON

So they're all dead now?

MIKE

Or—waiting. Plato believed they were once humans who danced and sang for so long that they stopped eating and drinking until they died.

CAMERON

Who?

MIKE

The cicadas.

CAMERON

Oh. That's nice—that'd be a nice way to die.

MIKE

And now they have to sing—only sing—as long as they live.

CAMERON

In the summers.

MIKE

Yeah.

CAMERON

I don't know what it is about summer that makes me feel like nothing's changed. As if every summer night were exactly the same as every other.

MIKE

It's the way it smells when it rains.

CAMERON

Summer makes me feel like a little kid.

MIKE

It makes me feel like a yo-yo on a string.

CAMERON

As if I could reach out and grab the past, hanging in the hot air.

MIKE

Back and forth, back and forth.

Beat.

MIKE (CONT'D)

I wish my dad would just sell the house already. Get a condo in Boca Raton and move down there.

CAMERON

Oh. I'm—

MIKE

I'd be more upset if it mattered.

I should go find Morris. He disappeared when everyone showed up and Kitty was practically in hysterics.

CAMERON

Are you gonna go to the party?

MIKE

Kitty's down there. She's the one that everyone likes talking to.

MIKE leaves. CAMERON stays on for a moment. He looks out the window, then leaves.

VI. Kitty's Toast

In another part of the stage, KITTY stands, holding a glass of champagne in a toast.

KITTY

My dad. What is there left to be said about my dad? That hasn't already been said about him, or to him—behind his back.

My dad—I'm sorry I didn't know I was going to have to talk tonight. I guess I should talk about him and Sheryl. About their future together.

Well—living here just me and my dad these last few years. You run out of stuff to say when you eat all your meals with the same person. Which is why we were lucky when Sheryl came along! Finally someone who talked at the dinner table. And she always has something to say—about her latest book or something exciting that happened at the dentist's...

And I know she makes my dad so happy because—I've never told anyone this story except for my sister Mike. But Easter, when I was seven: both my parents went out and bought candy for the Easter Egg hunt. When my dad came home from the store and all this candy my mom had gotten it turned into this huge fight—about her trying to buy us or make us love her more than him... I'm not sure. But even though they were furious with each other they put as much candy as they could into those tiny plastic eggs and hid them all over the yard. Mike and I didn't want them to be mad. We tried to find as many as we could but—there were more of them than we could count. I'm sure if any of you were to look hard enough tonight...!

Anyways, I was so sure my parents hated each other after that I decided I didn't want to stay at home anymore. I decided to run away. So I packed my little rolling suitcase and I carried it downstairs and I was tiptoeing right through that room when I saw my parents sitting in there—on those couches. And they were laughing and feeding each other from all those bags of leftover candy. And when I saw the way my dad looked at my mom I knew what love was. And so I went upstairs and unpacked my suitcase and I stayed.

And that's how I know he and Sheryl will be happy. Because I see him give her the same look he gave my mom that night. And this time he really means it. So to Dad and Sheryl.

KITTY runs back into the playroom and throws herself on the couch.

The sun sets. The lights fade as darkness fills the room.

VII. The Being Lost

In another part of the stage: CAMERON calls out for Morris. He stops. He whistles like a bird. Morris meows.

VIII. Another Land

Lights up on the playroom. THOMAS enters quietly. He sets a tray of food down on the table. KITTY starts.

THOMAS

I was just gonna leave this here. I thought—I dunno—I thought you might be hungry.

KITTY

Thanks.

THOMAS

Thomas. By the way.

KITTY

Were you watching?

THOMAS nods and smiles.

THOMAS

Yeh.

KITTY nods and looks down at her fingers twisting into knots.

Pause.

THOMAS (CONT'D)

Well aren'tcha gonna eat any of it?

KITTY looks up. She smiles. She picks up one of the hors d'oeuvres.

THOMAS (CONT'D)

I made the eggrolls.

KITTY

They're good.

THOMAS

Usually the waiters don't make the food, but I'm really good at the eggrolls so they let me do them for some extra cash.

KITTY

They're really very good.

As if to prove her point she reaches out for another one. She knocks over the tray, and food spills to the floor.

KITTY (CONT'D)

Sorry!

A fuss ensues. THOMAS and KITTY both kneel on the ground to pick up the food.

THOMAS

No worries! No worries...

KITTY

Sorry sorry.

THOMAS

I'll just get something—something to clean it up.

THOMAS exits quickly.

KITTY gets up and fixes her dress and hair quickly.

THOMAS returns with a bottle of seltzer and paper towels.

KITTY

Here let me.

KITTY takes the cleaning stuffs and begins working as THOMAS moves the table out of the way. THOMAS goes to kneel but stops. He stands up. He takes off his shirt (he wears a wifebeater

underneath). He kneels down to help
KITTY clean.

They clean in silence. KITTY watches
THOMAS.

KITTY (CONT'D)

You're supposed to blot.

She smiles and takes his hand, moving
it an up and down motion. THOMAS
grunts a "thanks."

KITTY (CONT'D)

What's that? Around your neck?

THOMAS

Huh?

KITTY

Sorry. You have a—?

She gestures: "necklace."

THOMAS

Oh.

KITTY

Sorry.

THOMAS

No.

He holds the necklace out.

KITTY

Sorry.

THOMAS

You apologize too much.

KITTY

Sorr—

It's a St. Christopher medallion.

THOMAS

Can I see it?

KITTY

KITTY reaches out and takes it in her hands.

Like a little magpie, aren'tcha?

THOMAS

The cleaning is temporarily abandoned.

It's beautiful. I never know if people wear these because they're religious or just for... decoration.

KITTY

It's religious. Uh, kinda.

THOMAS

I've never met anyone who was religious before.

KITTY

That's a crazy thing to say.

THOMAS

Why?

KITTY

No one. In your whole life?

THOMAS

My grandparents... My mom's parents. They used to make us pray before we went to sleep. I was always too afraid I'd leave someone out. What's it like?

KITTY

Being—?

THOMAS

THOMAS moves.

THOMAS (CONT'D)

How old are you?

KITTY

I'm 18.

THOMAS

I thought you were younger.

KITTY

I'm 18 and a half.

THOMAS

So you're in... college?

KITTY

Just graduated high school.

THOMAS

College in the fall then.

KITTY

Yup.

She holds the necklace back out to him.

KITTY (CONT'D)

St. Christopher?

THOMAS

The patron saint of travellers...

KITTY

Are you a traveller?

THOMAS

You betcha I am.

KITTY

I've never been anywhere.

THOMAS

I tried once to count all the places I've been but I've lost track. But I keep souvenirs—every place I've been, I take something and I leave something behind.

KITTY

Paris?

THOMAS

Yeah.

THOMAS starts counting on his fingers.

KITTY

Rome?

THOMAS
(nodding)

And Venice.
Istanbul, Varanasi, Delhi.
I spent six months taking care of sick people in Calcutta.

KITTY

What happened?

THOMAS

There were still sick people.
Anyways... Spain—Barcelona and Madrid. Munich, Berlin growing up. I'm running out of fingers.

KITTY

You grew up in—?

THOMAS

We moved out there when I was seven for my dad's work.

KITTY

Do you speak very many languages?

THOMAS

No, I've never been very good... Greek. I knew a little Greek once.
When I was in Athens—

KITTY

You lived in *Athens*?

THOMAS

When I was living in Athens I knew this woman—Daphne Papoulias. She had long blonde hair the color of burnt hay. We used to leave each other notes all in Greek. The last one—when she left—it said, “If you chase after me, I will turn into a laurel tree.” She had the most perfect little teeth.

KITTY

Did you keep them?

THOMAS

The...?

KITTY

Notes.

THOMAS

Yeah. Well, yeah but I can't, you know—I've forgotten all my Greek.

KITTY

I'm sorry.

THOMAS

It's fine. You just forget some things.

I still remember the sense, but—the words exactly... no. I'd need a translator but I don't want them to be for someone else. Though I guess they're not for me anymore either.

Beat.

THOMAS (CONT'D)

What's your name anyways?

KITTY

Catherine.

THOMAS

Catherine.

KITTY

Well, everyone calls me Kitty.

Kitty. THOMAS

Catherine. KITTY

Catherine... THOMAS

KITTY
I hate the name Kitty. I read in my mom's diary once that she thought she made a mistake naming me Kitty, that she thought it made me—*apathetic* or something.

Then: Catherine. THOMAS

You never answered my question. KITTY

You ask a lot of questions. THOMAS

The one about— KITTY

THOMAS
Right. It's like—it's waiting. It's waiting for answers. Answers to prayers, to questions, to—. It's waiting for the suffering and the being lost, for them to make sense.

And the travelling. KITTY

Yes. And the travelling. THOMAS

Long Island must be—it can't be anything like Greece. KITTY

You won't be here forever. THOMAS

KITTY lets out a strange, strangled laugh.

THOMAS (CONT'D)

Where are you going in the fall?

KITTY

I, um—

THOMAS

Yeah?

KITTY

I'm staying on the East Coast or... not—

THOMAS

Okay...

KITTY

No

THOMAS

You going—what, Midwest? California?

KITTY

No, I mean...

Beat.

KITTY (CONT'D)

I'm not going to school. In the fall.

THOMAS

Okay...

KITTY

I'm supposed to. I'm supposed to start but the thing is—I'm not enrolled anywhere.

I hadn't told anyone that.

THOMAS

So what are you gonna to do?

KITTY

I haven't—I haven't thought that far ahead.

THOMAS

Right on.

KITTY laughs.

THOMAS (CONT'D)

You should travel.

KITTY

I wouldn't know how.

THOMAS

If I can do it...

KITTY

I wouldn't even know how to begin.

THOMAS

Hey.

KITTY looks up.

THOMAS (CONT'D)

So you're scared. Because you see all that nothingness, that whole expanse, those untilled fields—and you wonder how you're going to fill it and who's going to show you how.

THOMAS (CONT'D)

Wanna hear something?

I'm crashing in the city with a friend of mine who's a painter—I have a friend who's a painter. He does crap. Abstract... junk, but I'm crashing with him and he works at MOMA right now. He got it so we could sneak it in real late at night to see the paintings. He wanted me to touch them. He thinks everyone should get the chance.

He told me it would be like touching the face of God.

So we snuck in real late at night. And we found his favorite piece—this one with the paint all thick and clumped together. I reached out and I touched the top of it and do you know what it felt like? Dried paint. Cold and chalky and a little rough. Dried fucking paint.

KITTY

You're not religious anymore.

THOMAS

You have an idea of someone—of Him. And if it's not yours, if it never was... I dunno—you just forget some things. I used to know Greek too. There is one poem I remember though. Do you wanna hear it?

KITTY nods.

THOMAS

“Είπες· «Θα πάγω σ' άλλη γή, θα
πάγω σ' άλλη θάλασσα,
Μια πόλις άλλη θα βρεθεί
καλλίτερη από αυτή.
Κάθε προσπάθεια μου μια
καταδίκη είναι γραφτή·
κ' είν' η καρδιά μου – σαν νεκρός
– θαμένη.
Ο νους μου ως πότε μες στον
μαρασμόν αυτόν θα μένει.
Οπου το μάτι μου γυρίσω, όπου κι
αν δω
ερείπια μαύρα της ζωής μου
βλέπω εδώ,
που τόσα χρόνια πέρασα και
ρήμαξα και χάλασα».

*“Eepes ‘tha pago s’altee hi, tha
pago s’altee thalassa
Mya polis alee tha vreehee
kalliteri apo afti.
Kathe prospatheia moo mya
katathikee eeveh grafti:
K’ayn’ ee karthia moo – san nekros
– thamenee.
O noose moo os pote mes ton
marasmo afton tha menee
Opoo to mati moo huriso, opoo ki
an tho
Eeepa Maura tees zoh-ees moo
vlepo etho,
Poo tosa kronia perasa ki
reemaxa ki chalasa.”*

“You said, ‘I will go to another land, I will go to another sea.
Another city will be found, better than this.
Wherever I turn my eyes, wherever I may look
I see the black ruins of my life here,
where I spent so many years, and ruined and wasted.”

KITTY

I like it.

THOMAS

I didn't write it.

KITTY

I didn't think you did.

THOMAS

There was another verse. But I don't remember how it goes.

KITTY

How did it—start? Ay...pes...

THOMAS

“Eepes”

KITTY

“Eepes”

He pulls the table back to its spot and sits facing KITTY who is on the couch.

THOMAS

You said. *“Tha pago sallee hi”*

KITTY

“Tha pago sallee hi”

THOMAS

I will go to another land...

Fade to black.

IX. Looking for Kitty

MIKE scans the crowd for KITTY. Then, off-stage, she hears:

MARLENE (O.S.)

Kitty! Kitty...

MIKE goes to hide, but MARLENE enters.

MARLENE

Oh sweetie! Your sister—where?

MIKE

I didn't see where—

MARLENE

Oh I felt terrible! I can't imagine how she must have felt...

Well—once. I was at a work function with my friend Bonnie from legal and she had this supervisor that she hated and, to be honest, I never go to these things, but she wanted some company so I went with her. And I was talking to one of the women there and I was telling her these *horror* stories *Bonnie* had told *me* about her *supervisor*, because you know, I just thought she was one of Bonnie's *coworkers*. Well of course I was talking to Bonnie's *supervisor* and I was just mortified!

MIKE goes to leave.

MARLENE (CONT'D)

Most people like that story.

MIKE

I'm not most people.

MARLENE
(seriously)

No—nothing's funny to you anymore is it. (suddenly she laughs) Nothing at all...

MIKE

I need to—to find—I need to find Kitty.

MARLENE grabs her hands.

MARLENE

Let me—

MIKE
(too firmly)

No

Beat.

MIKE (CONT'D)

I just meant—I'm going to check inside... maybe if you go down by the water, /maybe she'll be down there

MARLENE

The water! Do you remember we—?

MIKE

Yes.

MARLENE

You used to lie out in the sun for hours with me getting burned!

MIKE

It's funny the people you have to leave behind.

MIKE goes to leave.

MIKE (CONT'D)

Thank—you.

MIKE exits.

MARLENE

You're welcome.

MARLENE goes too.

X. Persephone, Queen of the Dead

THOMAS sits on the couch reading MIKE's book from the first scene. MIKE enters.

MIKE

Excuse me.

THOMAS

Sorry.

MIKE

Can I help you?

THOMAS

I'm just—/your sister—

MIKE

This room isn't exactly—

THOMAS

What?

MIKE

Open... to visitors.

I was—I brought your sister food.

THOMAS

Where is she?

MIKE

Downstairs.

THOMAS
(gesturing down the hall)

MIKE goes to leave, as she's going:

Well, thank you for your help—

MIKE

She's, um, she's talking to your father.

THOMAS

MIKE stops.

I want to make sure she's okay.

THOMAS

MIKE moves away.

Shouldn't you be working?

MIKE

It's all right.

THOMAS

Shouldn't you be downstairs working?

MIKE

It's fine.

THOMAS

They won't mind—? They don't mind you spending your time up here?

MIKE

This your book?

THOMAS

Yeah. MIKE

She reaches out for it. THOMAS
pretends not to notice.

You've been reading. THOMAS

Since the first grade. MIKE

It's good. Edith Hamilton? She's good. THOMAS

I was just reading it for the pictures. MIKE

You have notes in here. THOMAS

Can't you get in trouble? MIKE

For? THOMAS

Being up here. MIKE

Nah. THOMAS

I could get you in trouble./I could get you fired. MIKE

With who? You couldn't. THOMAS

My dad. MIKE

Your dad likes me. THOMAS

MIKE

How can you tell?

THOMAS

Sent me up here to get you two earlier. Very important task. Gave me twenty bucks to do it—

THOMAS realizes he has crossed a line.

MIKE laughs.

MIKE

Twenty bucks? What are you going to spend it on? Lottery tickets?

THOMAS

Rent.

Beat.

THOMAS (CONT'D)

I love seeing what people underline in books.

He flips it open.

THOMAS (CONT'D)

I love *marginalia*

MIKE

Don't.
How long has Kitty been gone?

THOMAS

The story she told—the one about Easter. Is it true?

MIKE

Why?

THOMAS

I liked it. I dunno it made me happy. It made me—homesick. I think all good stories should make you a little homesick.

MIKE

It was true.
Did my dad come up here?

Yes. THOMAS

You and Kitty were... talking? MIKE

Yeah. THOMAS

What about? MIKE

Stuff. THOMAS

I can see why. So eloquent. MIKE

MIKE picks up THOMAS' shirt from the chair and hands it to him.

“Stuff.” MIKE (CONT'D)

Sorry, we, uh, made kind of a mess. With the—food. THOMAS

Sheepish, THOMAS puts down the book to button up his shirt. MIKE goes for it.

THOMAS grabs it and begins to play keep away as MIKE lunges after it (the game can happen over the following lines as fitting)

You're not dressed for the party. THOMAS (CONT'D)

It's too humid to get dressed up. MIKE

You should move out West. It's a dry heat. THOMAS

Is that where you're from? MIKE

I'm, uh, I'm from a lot of places. THOMAS

What does that even mean? MIKE

I'm from California. THOMAS

MIKE uses the beat to reach for the book one more time.

She misses again.

THOMAS moves away, flips to a dog-eared page and reads:

THOMAS (CONT'D)
(reading MIKE's notes)

"I am Persephone. I am death. I have travelled to the Underworld, and I have left everyone behind."

THOMAS looks up at MIKE. She is not smiling.

Sorry. THOMAS (CONT'D)

He holds out the book to MIKE. She doesn't take it.

It's like reading someone's diary. MIKE

THOMAS drops the book onto the couch.

I think everyone should keep a diary just so someone else can read it. THOMAS

MIKE

I don't think I like that very much.

THOMAS

Persephone, Queen of the Underworld...

MIKE

Goddess of the Dead.

Beat.

THOMAS (CONT'D)

Why are you reading kids' stories?

MIKE

They're not—they're for school.

THOMAS

You study Classics?

MIKE

Yeah.

THOMAS

Why?

MIKE

I like the distance.

I've gotten very cynical since I went away to school.

THOMAS

Everyone does at your age.

MIKE puts down the book.

MIKE

They're going to be upset with you.

THOMAS

Who is?

MIKE

Your—boss. My dad. The people who need their drinks.

I can take care of my sister.

THOMAS

The problems when you're 20 don't feel so bad when you're—

MIKE

22?

THOMAS

27.

If you ask me: life's too short to worry so much.

MIKE

Short? No, I'm going to live much longer than I'll want to.

Did you know that every seven years all the cells in our body are completely replaced? Every seven years, we're someone completely different.

THOMAS

Everyone's a little lost at your age.

MIKE

I'm not *lost*.

THOMAS

Everyone's a little bit searching.

MIKE

What's taking Kitty so long...

THOMAS

She's all right.

MIKE

I have this image of her like—Penelope. In this house, all alone. Unraveling her weaving every night. Waiting for...

THOMAS

You?

MIKE

For something. For the *wars* to end...

I called her once. I'm sure she doesn't remember—she didn't pick up—and I heard the voice on her outgoing message and... I had forgotten what it sounded like. So—what am I cynical about? I—

Something catches in MIKE's throat. She turns away from THOMAS. He comes up behind her—a hand on her shoulder.

THOMAS

It's okay. It's okay.

She turns around. Whatever she was hiding flashes across her face and is gone.

MIKE
(realizing something)

Huh.

THOMAS
(smiling)

What?

MIKE
I've never noticed it before, but isn't it strange: people look so ugly up close.

THOMAS moves away from her as if burned and begins buttoning up his shirt.

THOMAS
God, you're really a piece of work, you know that?

MIKE crosses to him again.

MIKE
(relishing it)

Yes!

XI. Oh, pioneers...

CAMERON enters. He notices MIKE and THOMAS. MIKE moves away.

CAMERON
Oh.

CAMERON crosses to THOMAS. He stands up straight and holds out his hand.

CAMERON (CONT'D)

Cameron.

THOMAS

Thomas.

THOMAS looks at MIKE.

THOMAS (CONT'D)

Brother?

CAMERON

Friend.

THOMAS

I'll check on—

THOMAS exits.

CAMERON

Who was that?

MIKE

Caterer. He was looking for extra napkins or something.

CAMERON

Up here?

MIKE

He was lost. I don't think he's very good at his job.

CAMERON

Where's Kitty?

MIKE

Talking to my dad.

CAMERON

Is she all right?

I don't know, Cameron.

MIKE

I found Morris.

CAMERON

Where was he?

MIKE

Guess how I found Morris.

CAMERON

CAMERON whistles like a bird.

MIKE looks at him. CAMERON whistles again.

CAMERON (CONT'D)
That's how I found Morris! I just whistled and he came running out.

Beat.

CAMERON (CONT'D)
There's a whole party down there you're missing.

I'm not dressed.

MIKE

CAMERON
Then get dressed! For goodness sake! It's not that hard...

I don't have anything to wear.

MIKE

CAMERON
(singing)
"I would go out tonight/But I haven't got a stitch to we-ar!"

CAMERON starts dancing, moving towards MIKE.

I don't dance.

MIKE

CAMERON (CONT'D)

(singing)

“I would go out tonight/But I haven’t got a stitch to we-ar!”

CAMERON grabs MIKE’s hands and pulls her towards him, trying to make her dance. She shuffles begrudgingly.

KITTY enters.

CAMERON turns to her and tries to do the same thing with KITTY he did with MIKE.

CAMERON (CONT'D)

(singing)

“This man said “it’s gruesome/That someone so handsome should ca-are”

CAMERON notices he is the only one really enjoying this.

CAMERON (CONT'D)

The Smiths? You guys don’t know the Smiths?

(singing)

“I would go out tonight—”

MIKE

Singing it again won’t help.

KITTY lies down on the couch.
MIKE turns and looks at CAMERON. He slips out of the room silently.

Beat.

As KITTY settles on the couch, MIKE circles the room, unsure what to do. She puts her book back on the shelf. She sits in the chair.

Offstage, CAMERON whistles.
MIKE gets up and sits next to KITTY.

KITTY

I was thinking we could go on a trip somewhere this summer.

MIKE

Okay.

KITTY

Where would you want to go?

MIKE

Wherever.

KITTY

I want to go to Paris.

MIKE

I'd like that.

CAMERON whistles offstage again.

KITTY

We could go to Paris.

MIKE

It would be nice. Ask Dad.

KITTY

Or just you and I could go. We could sit it in cafés all day and read. And tell each other about what we're reading.

She tucks a strand of KITTY's hair behind her ear.

MIKE

Are those Mom's earrings?

KITTY stands.

KITTY

She said I could have them.

MIKE
(gesturing to the tray)

Who brought you the food?

KITTY lets out a little laugh.

KITTY

Do you think if Mom and Dad were religious they would have stayed married?

MIKE

What did he—?

KITTY

“Sheryl and I are very happy together. Sheryl and I are married now. And if you and Mike can’t accept—“

MIKE

Me! How did I—?

KITTY

That’s not the point.

MIKE

I didn’t do anything!

KITTY

This isn’t about you!

MIKE

Jesus... why are you getting so upset?

KITTY

I’m not. I’m—

MIKE

What happened? Did something happen?

Suddenly, MARLENE enters with CAMERON behind her.

CAMERON

Sorry.

MIKE

It’s fine.

MARLENE goes to KITTY.

MARLENE

Hi sweetie...

KITTY

Hi Marlene.

MARLENE

I was wondering where you got to! I looked for you after—but you got out of there so fast. Don't worry, you didn't miss much. How—how are you?

KITTY

I'm okay.

MARLENE

How about I go get you some fizzy water, hmm? And I'll put a little splash of vodka in there? I won't tell your father—it'll be our little secret.

KITTY

Thank you, but I'm okay.

Pause.

CAMERON

Guess where I went last fall? Every year in New Mexico, they have this hot air balloon convention. I went with my family. We went up in one of the balloons and it was the most incredible experience because one moment you're right there on the ground and the next you're just going up and up and you can't tell why or how you just know that the ground is getting further and further away. We should all go sometime.

MARLENE

That's a nice story.

Beat.

CAMERON

Well, I am sick and tired of not having fun. I am sick and tired of going to parties and not having fun and downstairs there is an open bar and live music and really good crab puffs.

MIKE

It used to be when your marriage ended you threw yourself in front of a train.

CAMERON

Jesus.

KITTY

Actually, Marlene, if you don't mind, I would love some water.

MARLENE

Oh! Of course. I'll be back in a jiff.

MARLENE exits, KITTY puts a record on the player. "Having a Party" by Sam Cooke, overlapping with:

MIKE

I just think—there wasn't any of this—starting over all the time. 'Cause if nothing has to be permanent there aren't any stakes and—

KITTY begins scratching the record.

MIKE (CONT'D)

Before, when you said we should have been religious. That wasn't it. We should have just been born 200 years ago. We should have been born 200 years ago and traveled out West and lived in the Ozarks and built new homes and been pioneers. We should've been pioneers.

Or we should have castes. It should be decided for us—what we do, who we marry so we don't lead ourselves and—

CAMERON

Castes?

MIKE

Yes.

CAMERON

Well that'd take the fun out of it.

MIKE

What's fun about—

CAMERON

I mean the work, the—effort. You can't just expect you automatically deserve to be happy. You gotta put a little effort into it. Once in a while.

MIKE

I don't want to be happy. I want to get through it.

The following lines happen quickly,
overlapping, the sisters trying to fight
over the music.

KITTY

You don't actually believe that.

MIKE

Sure I do.

KITTY

You don't. You're just saying—

MIKE

I promise I'm not!

KITTY

You're just saying it to be—difficult.

MIKE

I'm the difficult one?

KITTY

You want a reaction. You want to sound clever.

MIKE

I'm being honest with—myself, with—my situation.

KITTY

Do you hear yourself? Do you listen to what's coming out of your mouth?

CAMERON whistles. The girls stop.

The music is still playing. KITTY turns it
off.

MIKE

What has gotten into you tonight?

No response.

MIKE (CONT'D)

Look at me!

KITTY turns.

MIKE (CONT'D)

What has gotten into you tonight?

KITTY

You!

MIKE goes to cross to THOMAS' tray.
KITTY notices and smashes the record
in her hands.

KITTY (CONT'D)

No! I am sick and tired of you being like this. I am sick and tired of—

MIKE

Fine then. I'll stop being difficult and I'll change. And I'll go downstairs.

MIKE exits.

KITTY

I hate her when she gets like that. I sometimes can't believe how much I can hate her.

CAMERON

Siblings fight.

KITTY

It scares me a little how much I can hate her.

CAMERON

I tried to kill my brother once. And not like a toddler trying to kill a baby in his crib—I've heard about toddlers doing that when a new baby arrives, when they get jealous.

No I was 12 and Caleb was 8 and I was so mad at him. I couldn't even tell you what he did—it's funny the things we remember, huh?—but I was so mad at him. I sat on him and I had my hands around his neck and I honestly thought I might—

KITTY laughs.

CAMERON (CONT'D)

What?

KITTY

You're sweet. You're sweet is all.

CAMERON

Thanks.

Afterwards, after I—I was so upset I held my breath until I passed out. That was a good trick to learn. I used to have fainting spells all the time after that.

KITTY laughs even more.

KITTY

Do you want to look at the stars with me?

XII. Small-making

Downstairs, THOMAS is pouring MARLENE a glass of seltzer.

MARLENE

I never liked weddings. I was dumped at a wedding.

THOMAS begins pouring the vodka.

MARLENE (CONT'D)

Just a splash.

He stops.

MARLENE (CONT'D)

Well a touch more!

He pours in a little more.

MARLENE (CONT'D)

There.

MARLENE takes a sip.

MARLENE (CONT'D)

Just a taste test. Not for me.

THOMAS

Kitty?

Thought it might cheer her up. MARLENE

How is she? THOMAS

Peachy! MARLENE

MIKE enters. She stands silently behind them.

You're not their— THOMAS

What? MARLENE

Mother? Are you? THOMAS

Oh, no, just an old... babysitter! MARLENE
(laughs)

I don't know why I thought— THOMAS

It's sweet that you did. MARLENE

Beat.

You're the baby, aren't you? MARLENE (CONT'D)

Huh? THOMAS

Of your family. MARLENE

Oh. Yeah... Yes. THOMAS

MARLENE

I can always tell! I always can.

The littlest ones are always the sweetest. Always worrying about other people. I bet that's why you're in the food service industry.

THOMAS

Something like that.

Pause. MARLENE looks at THOMAS expectantly.

THOMAS (CONT'D)

Yup. Two sisters, two brothers. All out in California. With my mom.

MARLENE

Out in California? They must miss you terribly.

THOMAS

Yeah... They must.

MARLENE

Big families are... the thing is, my friend Bonnie from my work just had her *third*. And Bonnie's always wanted a big family. We talk about that now about how—we hear all these girls saying they don't want kids and we just don't know when that happened, when it became shameful to say you wanted to be a mother. Of course I don't know when this—unhappiness became *trendy* either! (she laughs, loudly) But babies are easy in comparison to... Give them a bottle, burp them, change their diapers and they're happy and they love you forever. (she laughs again) Anyways, Bonnie's 44 and just had her *third*. Modern science—how about that for something right?

THOMAS

I heard somewhere that every seven years all the cells in our body are completely replaced. Every seven years, we're someone different. Seems like it gives us more time... somehow, doesn't it?

MARLENE reaches out and pats THOMAS' cheek.

MARLENE

You must break a lot of hearts. You're an absolute doll.

MARLENE exits. MIKE approaches.

THOMAS notices her and turns back to wiping out the shaker.

MIKE

What was that?

THOMAS

I'm not even supposed to serve the drinks. She just recognized me from upstairs.

MIKE

You're quite the Good Samaritan, aren't you?

THOMAS

People like talking to people like me. They don't expect to see us again, so. Honestly, it's just nice when one of them makes *eye* contact...

MIKE

Bringing Kitty food.

THOMAS

How's she doing?

MIKE

I don't know. I don't—know.
I don't know.

Beat.

MIKE (CONT'D)

She wasn't—she isn't—another—*diary* for you to pry open.

THOMAS

That isn't what it was.

MIKE

Then what—were you just... *bored*?

THOMAS

There must be something in the water out here.
Or maybe it's just that you're overbred—like little lapdogs.

MIKE lets out a high-pitched 'arf' at him—as sarcastic as such a noise can be.

MIKE

Are you going to take me away from here then?

THOMAS

I'd rather take Kitty.

MIKE

What do you want from her?

THOMAS

I liked talking to her. Okay? She makes things... feel... good. And—

MIKE

She's a child.

THOMAS

So are you.

MIKE

If you're looking for answers—if you're looking for reasons, I don't have them for you.

THOMAS

It must be something in the water...

MIKE

And neither does Kitty.

THOMAS

No, with Kitty you just take one look at her and you see how scared y'all are.

MIKE

So?

THOMAS

So, I've been scared too.

MIKE

It's not that.

THOMAS
(laughing)

Please! you can't have a conversation without turning it into a *bloodsport*. And your sister's lying to everyone about not going to school—

Pause as this lands.

MIKE

What?

MIKE (CONT'D)

She—what?

THOMAS (CONT'D)

I didn't meant to get in the middle—

THOMAS (CONT'D)

I'm sorry.

MIKE (CONT'D)

When did she tell—

MIKE (CONT'D)

No it's—

THOMAS (CONT'D)

I'm sorry—

MIKE (CONT'D)

Stop apologizing. It doesn't mean anything to me.
I'd like a drink. If you're actually working here tonight.

Pause.

THOMAS

Well—

MIKE

You didn't believe me, earlier, did you? When I said I could get you fired? You had no right—it wasn't your place... to get involved. You had no right.

THOMAS lets out an 'arf.'

MIKE exits as the lights fade out and
onto upstairs:

XIII. Celestial Navigation

CAMERON and KITTY in the playroom lying on the floor. The lights are dim. They are looking up at plastic glow-in-the-dark stars pasted up on the walls and ceiling.

KITTY

Mike and I put these up when we were little. We tried to make the constellations.

She traces one with her hand.

KITTY (CONT'D)

There's Gemini.

CAMERON

Is that Orion's belt?

KITTY

Yeah!

CAMERON

You guys did a nice job.

KITTY

Some of them fell off.

CAMERON

I'm surprised they still glow at all.

KITTY

They have a lot of chemicals in them I guess.

CAMERON

I always forget you can see the stars out here. (I mean the real ones).
I can't—at school in the city.

The first thing I did as soon as I got home was I went outside and I lay on the grass and I looked up at the stars, but try as I might I couldn't make myself feel small.

KITTY

Wouldn't it be nice to know how to navigate by the stars?

CAMERON

I never understood...

KITTY

To know which star was the North star...

CAMERON

I took an astronomy class at school, but I never understood.

KITTY

How do birds navigate?

CAMERON

Hmm?

KITTY

When they go south for the winter. Do they—go south for the winter?

CAMERON

Yeah.

KITTY

How do they navigate?

CAMERON taps his finger to his head.

CAMERON

Magnetic fields.

KITTY

Really?

CAMERON nods and whistles. He remembers—

CAMERON

I found Morris!

KITTY

How was he?

CAMERON

Good, I think. He seemed okay.

KITTY

He used to run away a lot. He was a stray—we found him when we first moved out here. The first time he was in the house, he wouldn't stop running around—hissing and spitting. He cut Mike's hands when she tried to pick him up, so deep she still has the scars. Mike was very impressed by him.

If I were going to get reincarnated, I think I'd like to come back as a cat.

CAMERON laughs.

KITTY (CONT'D)

What?

CAMERON

Then you'd be Kitty the Cat!

CAMERON turns on the record player.
"Bewitched, Bothered, and Bewildered"
by Ella Fitzgerald.

CAMERON (CONT'D)

Maybe I should've just stayed up here tonight.

KITTY

I wonder where Mike went.

CAMERON

Downstairs?

KITTY

I suppose.

CAMERON stands and offers out his
hand to KITTY.

CAMERON

C'mon Kitty Cat. We can still have a good time tonight.

She takes his hand and he pulls her up.

CAMERON (CONT'D)

I can teach you how to dance!

CAMERON and KITTY perform a sort of
waltz.

They laugh and CAMERON hugs KITTY
closer. KITTY squeezes CAMERON to
her and their dancing becomes simply
swaying. CAMERON chuckles "Kitty the
Cat" to himself. ("I'm wild again/a
simpering, whimpering child
again/bewitched, bothered, and
bewildered, am I...").

And they separate. They look at each
other. ("Couldn't sleep/And wouldn't

sleep/Then love came and told me I shouldn't sleep")

KITTY crosses to the window.
CAMERON becomes fascinated with a picture on a side table.

CAMERON goes to leave, but is stopped at the door by:

KITTY

I think Mike is on the dock.

CAMERON

Yeah.

KITTY nods. CAMERON exits. KITTY watches the window for a few minutes. A smile crosses her face. She runs out of the room.

In another part of the stage, THOMAS crosses with a flashlight, searching, calling out for the egg and chuckling. He finds it.

Back in the playroom, MARLENE enters with a glass of water.

MARLENE

Here we are! With just a little *pick-me-up*.

She notices the playroom is empty, and as she stands in the middle of the room, the sounds of the party swell up—laughter, ice cubes in glasses clinking, music. And then it fades and lights up on:

XIV. The Dock

MIKE sits on the edge of the dock. Her shoes are off and she dangles her toes just above the water. She hums to herself. CAMERON approaches. He hesitates a moment before speaking, attempting nonchalance. He's snuck a few drinks

from the open bar. There is a strained, affected banter to the dialogue between the two.

CAMERON

You know, I don't think you're supposed to wear black to a wedding.

MIKE

It's a solemn occasion.

CAMERON

Is it?

MIKE

I'm in mourning. For my childhood.

CAMERON

That must be sad for you.

MIKE

Don't mock me.

CAMERON

Never.

MIKE

I didn't tell you but I like your tie.

CAMERON

Thanks.

MIKE

It reminds me of wallpaper.

CAMERON

I'm leaving—

MIKE

No. I'm sorry. Stay.

CAMERON

I've just been trying to keep you company tonight.

MIKE

I know

CAMERON

You've been avoiding me all night.

MIKE

I'm sorry!

CAMERON

You're not talking to anyone. And no one wants to talk to you because you've had such a shitty expression on your face.

MIKE

I said I'm sorry

CAMERON

And I come just trying to make conversation and keep you company—*again*. To talk to you—

MIKE

I know. I'm sorry. I said I know and that I'm sorry.

CAMERON

Well I really don't want to stay if you're just going to jump on me.

MIKE

It's over! I'm done. Sit. Keep me company—I'm entirely alone. I'll talk to you about whatever you want.

Pause.

CAMERON

I'm sorry your life is sad.

Pause.

MIKE

I actually do like your tie. It's very... official.

CAMERON gets up to go.

MIKE (CONT'D)

I'm sorry. Please. Keep me company for a little bit? You've been the only one all night who'd talk to me. I'm officially *persona non grata*: the leftover daughter at her father's second wedding. Even the spinster aunts are giving me pitying looks from afar and their lives are horrible.

CAMERON

Be careful. You'll be one of them someday.

MIKE

Don't I know it.

Pause.

MIKE (CONT'D)

I'm thinking of running away.

CAMERON

Oh?

MIKE

I'm thinking of joining the circus.

CAMERON

They'd take you. You'd fit in with the freaks. You could have your own exhibit: the neurotic, over-educated, over-analyzed, over-analytical upper-middle class white girl. You're one-of-a-kind, dontcha know?

MIKE

You think?

CAMERON

I think.

MIKE

You think.

Pause.

MIKE (CONT'D)

You know that thing where you say a word so many times it starts to sound weird? Think. Think. Think think think think think think

CAMERON

Think think think think

MIKE

Thinkthinkinkthink

Now it sounds like sink. CAMERON

Fascinating. MIKE

I'm just trying to... participate. CAMERON

You think? MIKE

Sometimes it's incredibly exhausting having a conversation with you. CAMERON

I'm sorry. MIKE

Like trying to talk to a tennis ball machine. Boom. Boom. Boom. CAMERON

You'll catch up someday. MIKE

You thi— CAMERON

Don't you dare. MIKE

Pause.

MIKE (CONT'D)
Do you know what's wild?: Buffalo buffalo Buffalo buffalo buffalo buffalo Buffalo buffalo. That's a sentence!

How? CAMERON

It's complicated. How invested are you in knowing the answer? MIKE

Not very I guess. CAMERON

MIKE

Fine then.

CAMERON

Did you know that American Buffalo are actually Bison?

MIKE

Whatever. A buffalo is a buffalo is a—

CAMERON

Bison.

Beat.

CAMERON (CONT'D)

Why do you want to join the circus?

MIKE

Could be fun. I've never been to the circus but they have popcorn, and acrobats, and elephants. What's that saying? Elephants never forget? Imagine that. Being able to recall everything that's ever happened to you. You're having a bad day and you can just slip into a perfect memory of a day when there was sand between your toes and the future was written on the wind.

MIKE stands and pulls off her dress.
She wears only a slip.

CAMERON

The water must be freezing.

MIKE

Summer's almost over; this is your last chance to swim. The water's only going to get colder.

CAMERON

I don't have a bathing suit.

MIKE

That's your excuse for everything: "I don't have a bathing suit."

CAMERON

I have no idea when you got this weird.

MIKE

Oh darling, poor fool, don't you know? I was always this weird.

Pause, as the ripples on the water settle. MIKE puts her dress back on.

MIKE (CONT'D)

I've changed since I knew you, haven't I?

CAMERON

You have. I have too.

MIKE

Yes, but I mean really changed. I feel like an entirely different person. There's no consistency. My body feels like someone else's, my mind feels like someone else's.

Noticing, she reaches out and touches his cheek.

MIKE (CONT'D)

Since when did you start having to shave?

CAMERON leans into kiss MIKE. She pulls back.

MIKE (CONT'D)

(softly)

Oh—

CAMERON

I'm sorry.

MIKE

No—

CAMERON

I just thought—

MIKE

Maybe we should—go back—to the party.

CAMERON

I'm sorry.

MIKE

It's fine. I just—don't do that. Please.

CAMERON

I thought you—

MIKE

I didn't—

CAMERON

I was looking at you and I thought—

Pause.

CAMERON (CONT'D)

(with newfound force)

I was looking at you and I thought, "She looks so lonely." /And I thought, "I can fix that."

MIKE

I'm sorry? (*indignant*) Who are you—

CAMERON

That came out wrong I guess.

MIKE

Who do you—? You know nothing about me.

CAMERON

Nothing? You just told me *everything*.

MIKE

Oh, please. I didn't tell you anything. I was making conversation because you wouldn't leave me alone.

CAMERON

But you are lonely, aren't you?

MIKE

No.

CAMERON

I can fix that!

MIKE

I'm not lonely.

CAMERON

You're alone...

MIKE

I'm fine on my own.

CAMERON

But you're not. You're not! You're so sad I can see it in your eyes and I can tell. I can make your loneliness go away.

MIKE

I don't want it to go away. I like my loneliness. It keeps me company.

CAMERON

Don't you want someone to make you better?

MIKE

You're being incredibly patronizing right now, and I'm not sure that I fully appreciate it.

She gets up to go. He stands too. This stops her.

CAMERON

(softly)

Do you remember that night? The summer after we graduated? Everyone else was skinny dipping, but you said you were getting sick and wouldn't go in the water. So I sat with you on the rocks, on the beach.

MIKE

(she knows where this is going)

I remember.

CAMERON

If I had tried to kiss you that night. If I had kissed you that night on the rocks on the beach, would you have let me?

MIKE

(a whisper)

Yes.

CAMERON

Then—

MIKE

But everything was different then.

CAMERON

Why?

MIKE

I know it sounds— I know that when I'm 80 the difference between 18 and 20 will be nothing, but now it's everything. And I never want to have to be 80. I didn't want to be 20!

CAMERON

For a minute just don't think just don't talk.

MIKE

All I know is that things felt possible then.

CAMERON

And they don't now?

MIKE
(quietly)

No.

CAMERON

You're ridiculous! Do you know that? There's something wrong with you.

MIKE

You can go whenever. I'm not stopping you.

He doesn't budge. She turns to leave.
CAMERON grabs her arm, kisses her
MIKE breaks away.

MIKE

I said don't!

CAMERON

Don't you ever just want to *try* something, *do* something, *be* someone?

MIKE

I can't. I don't have a bathing suit.

CAMERON shakes his head and turns away and leaves slowly. MIKE sits back at the edge of the dock. She takes off her dress again, dips her toe in the water. It really is too cold. MIKE storms offstage.

XV. Souvenirs

THOMAS walks into the playroom. He stands between the coffee table and the couch. He takes of his medallion and rests it on the table. He picks up his tray and turns to go. At that moment, KITTY enters.

THOMAS
(holding up the tray)

I needed this back. I think everyone's getting ready to go.

KITTY

I was trying to find you downstairs. It was really nice of you to bring me that food earlier.

THOMAS shrugs.

THOMAS

I'm the youngest of five. I get it.

KITTY

I've been thinking about that poem all night. I was thinking I could convince my dad to have a Labor Day party and hire the same caterers.

She laughs.

THOMAS

Wouldn't do you much good.

KITTY

What do you mean?

THOMAS

I got fired.

KITTY
(horrified)

Why?

THOMAS
I haven't exactly been working very hard tonight.

KITTY
Let me say something—

THOMAS
No.

KITTY
You shouldn't be *fired* for taking care of—

THOMAS
It's fine! It's... good.
Boy oh boy, does your sister love you.

KITTY
What do you mean?

THOMAS
I dunno. I gotta take off.

KITTY
What are you going to do? Where are you going to go?

THOMAS
Out west. To California.
I've been travelling for a long time.

KITTY
I could pray for you? If you taught me how. I could pray for you if that would help?

THOMAS
I'm gonna be all right.

KITTY
Thomas—

THOMAS
(playing)
Catherine?

KITTY
I don't know what I'm doing.

THOMAS

Me neither.

THOMAS crosses to her. He pulls out a pen, takes her hand and writes on it.

THOMAS (CONT'D)

When you end up in Athens, call this number and tell them you're a friend of mine.

KITTY

I will.

THOMAS

Αντίο.

Antio.

KITTY

Are you sure you don't want me to—?

THOMAS smiles and pulls out of his pocket a tiny plastic egg, faded almost to white.

THOMAS

I'm gonna be all right.

The bushes out by the water down there are full of them. I've looked a lot of places, and I never thought I'd find it here. I liked your toast a lot tonight. I know it wasn't the most popular speech of the night but it was a good story.

He shakes the egg.

THOMAS (CONT'D)

But now the Lord has risen! And I'm going home. Chocolate's probably stale though.

He leaves shaking the egg so it rattles. KITTY sits down. She finds the medallion THOMAS left her. She puts it on.

XVI. Everything ends

MIKE enters and sees KITTY sitting.

You're still sitting up here. MIKE

Oh, leave me alone. KITTY

How's Marlene the Beauty Queen? MIKE

Why do you have to be so cruel? KITTY

Christ, what's wrong with you? MIKE

Did Cameron leave? KITTY

I think so. MIKE

Did you scare him away? KITTY

Who knows? MIKE

Did you do something? KITTY

I didn't do anything. MIKE

Really? KITTY

Why are you always on my case? MIKE

Dad had Thomas fired. KITTY

What? MIKE

I mean I don't know but—Dad had Thomas fired. KITTY

Kitty— MIKE

I can't believe he— KITTY

Kitty! MIKE

He can be so cruel KITTY

Kitty, Dad didn't have Thomas fired. I did. MIKE

You? KITTY

I told Dad... I told Dad he had been inappropriate and— MIKE

Why? KITTY

Because he was! MIKE

You're miserable. You know that? You're a miserable small person. KITTY

KITTY goes to leave.

You didn't tell me. MIKE

What? KITTY

You didn't tell me you weren't going to school next year. MIKE

You—you didn't ask... KITTY

Kitty. MIKE

You didn't. KITTY

I assumed! MIKE

Everyone did. KITTY

Well of course. Jesus—well of course! MIKE

Beat.

What happened? MIKE (CONT'D)

I didn't— KITTY

She stops. She smiles in disbelief.

I don't know the word. KITTY (CONT'D)

Word for what? MIKE

I can't even tell you if I don't know the word... KITTY

MIKE

Kitty!

KITTY

I didn't—say yes! I didn't—to any of the schools that accepted me. I didn't choose one. I didn't say yes. I didn't—matriculate! (gleefully) that's the word! I didn't matriculate.

MIKE

Why?

KITTY

I couldn't decide—I didn't know if I wanted to and the deadlines passed and I let them pass and

MIKE

And no one—?

KITTY

Who would've asked? Dad asked, Mom asked, my friends asked, but who would've pushed? And I lied.

MIKE

To me.

KITTY

To everyone.

MIKE

You lied... to *me*

KITTY

Yes! To *you*. I lied. To you. And you've never?

The door opens. MARLENE enters. She is very drunk. She has lost an earring.

MARLENE

Excuuuse me. I can't find my umbrella.

MIKE

And apparently we're running a lost and found up here.

It takes MARLENE a second to process

who MIKE is and what she has said.
Once it has all been figured out, she
leans towards her:

MARLENE

You know what you are? You're a cascarabia! A grump! A grouch! A good-for-nothing old man who has bedbugs and hates everyone!

MIKE storms out in a huff. MARLENE goes to sit on the couch, muttering the word "cascarabia" and laughing as she goes. Once seated, her eyes close quickly.

KITTY

(crossing to MARLENE)

Marlene? Marlene?

There is no response from the woman on the couch. KITTY sits down next to her.

KITTY (CONT'D)

Marlene, can I tell you something?

KITTY waits for a response. She doesn't get one.

KITTY (CONT'D)

I know my sister is a pain, but she's the only one I've got.

One day last spring, when my dad and Sheryl were away and I was home alone... I left to go to Mike up at school. I don't know why. And I got in at the station to make my connection up there, but I never got on the second train. I couldn't. I sat there with my suitcases watching people coming and going until there weren't any more trains. I got a hotel room in midtown. \$126 a night. I stayed there for three days but I ran out of money and...

Pause.

KITTY (CONT'D)

Anyways, I went back. But those days, alone, in the hotel room. I don't know.

MARLENE has begun to snore a little.

KITTY gently shakes her shoulder.

KITTY (CONT'D)

Marlene? Do you need me to drive you home?

MARLENE

(waking)

What? Oh. No. You're so sweet, you know that? I have a taxi coming.

MARLENE stands up and makes her way to the door, turns around, loses her balance. KITTY catches her. MARLENE stands and looks KITTY in the eyes.

MARLENE (CONT'D)

It was nice seeing you girls again. I—I want to give you some advice before I go. The thing is: I'm older and wiser, and so, honestly, I can help you. Some help, from the older generation to the younger one: Don't ever want anyone. You don't need 'em, and you're better off alone. The sooner you get that figured out the easier things will be. Don't wait till you're 48 to figure it out. It's no fun.

(her voice drops, searchingly, quietly)

When I ever have a daughter, I want her to be just like you.

(laughs)

I think I would be a great mother.

KITTY helps MARLENE out the door, then sinks onto the couch. Head in her hands. She looks very small. MIKE enters. KITTY looks up.

KITTY

Where did you go.

MIKE

Downstairs.

Beat.

MIKE (CONT'D)

To see if Cameron left. He did.

KITTY

I'm sorry. You deserve it though.

I know. MIKE

Marlene left. KITTY

Why would I care? MIKE

KITTY looks exhausted. She pushes past MIKE to leave but MIKE grabs her and keeps her from leaving.

Kitty—! MIKE (CONT'D)

KITTY struggles to leave.

I'm going to go now. I'm going to leave—I'm going to take Marlene home or... KITTY

They fight, KITTY trying to leave, MIKE stopping her.

Please. MIKE

KITTY relents.

You had Thomas fired. KITTY

I'm sorry. MIKE

And you're awful to Marlene. KITTY

I didn't mean it. MIKE

And Cameron— KITTY

Beat.

KITTY (CONT'D)

You do this to yourself.

MIKE

I know I do.

KITTY

Some people are happy. Why can't you be? Sometimes you make it so—

MIKE

Difficult.

KITTY

Yes!

MIKE notices KITTY's new necklace
and takes it in her hands.

KITTY (CONT'D)

I'm going to be okay. All right?

MIKE nods.

KITTY (CONT'D)

Don't you remember our summers here together? We had so many rituals then together. I don't think I have any memories from when I was little that don't have you in them.

I don't want to lose you, Mike. I know you can't understand, but when you left for school—it was as if I was looking the other direction and when I turned around again you had disappeared.

MIKE

I think I really fucked things up today.

KITTY
(quietly)

Why?

MIKE

I wouldn't be me if I didn't...

KITTY

No—tell me.

MIKE

(finding it funny and sad all at the same time)

Don't you get it—don't you see? I wish I knew. I wish I had a good reason. But I've been disappointed. In high school, when we knew each other in high school. And then I kept being disappointed and—I keep waiting for things—and I'm tired for waiting for things—to get better—to make sense, and—it's nothing that happened. It's everything that didn't.

There's no word for that, that nostalgia for the future—for things that never were. That feeling that if you had done things differently, maybe you could be happy.

KITTY

Nothing is ever quite what you expected.

MIKE

Exactly.

Beat.

KITTY

No—I can't believe that. Please—I won't.

MIKE

I really fucked things up today.

KITTY

You did. But it's just one day.

MIKE

One day never changed anyone's life.

KITTY

No...

MIKE

Tomorrow will be better.

KITTY nods sadly.

MIKE goes to her and sits with her on the couch. After a moment, MIKE places

her hand on KITTY's. KITTY begins to cry and buries her face in MIKE's shoulder. MIKE holds her close, and softly, slowly at first begins to sing.

MIKE
(singing)

*If you should go back to your nowhere
Leaving me with a memory
I'll always wait, for your return out of nowhere
Hoping you'll bring your love to me.*

END OF PLAY