

HER INSIDE LIFE (2)

by

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SCENE 1

LOW INCOME FIVE STOREY APARTMENT BUILDING

A small two bedroom apartment. Simply furnished. Reasonably tidy.

IN THE DARKNESS WE HEAR THE BUILDING'S FIRE ALARM AND SEVERAL SIRENS DOWN ON THE STREET.

Violet, early 50s, is sitting on her couch and seems to be trying to block out the sound by humming to herself.

Suddenly she stands, goes into the kitchen, checks all the burners and the oven. Nothing on.

She returns to the couch. Sits. Stands. Returns to the kitchen and checks the oven and burners again. Still nothing wrong.

She returns to the couch.

A knock on the door.

She ignores it.

Another knock. Louder.

She tries to ignore this one too. But it's harder.

CATHY

(from the hall)

Violet!

(she knocks)

Violet!...

(she knocks)

Vi! Open the door! You have to let me in. There's a fire in the building. You have to leave. Did you hear me?! There's a fire!

VIOLET

(to herself)

Well it's not in here.

(to Cathy)

I checked my stove! It's fine!

CATHY

(off)

Let me in!

VIOLET

No. Go away. You're making me nervous.

CATHY

(off)

I mean it, Vi. If you don't let me in, you're not going to be allowed to stay here.

VIOLET

You mean while the fire is still going?

CATHY

(off)

I mean ever. You'll have to go back to the hospital.

VIOLET

That's out of the question.

CATHY

(off)

No! It's not. Now let me in.

VIOLET

Okay but you'll have to calm down a little. Like I said, you're making me nervous.

CATHY

(off)

Jesus. There's a fire in the building, Violet!!

VIOLET

Okay. But how is getting so upset about it going to help?

CATHY

(more calmly)

Vi. Please. Will you please just let me in?

VIOLET

Well there you go.

(starting to the door)

Just asking nicely changes the whole situation.

She unlocks and opens the door. Cathy, late 30s, enters and follows Violet back to her couch.

CATHY
Vi. What are you...?

Violet sits down.

CATHY (CONT'D)
No no don't do that. We have to
leave. They're evacuating the
building.

VIOLET
Why?

CATHY
Because there's a fire!

VIOLET
Well that's not my fault. Check the
stove yourself if you don't believe
me.

CATHY
Violet. Please listen to me.

VIOLET
I am. I am listening to you.

Sirens stop.

VIOLET (CONT'D)
Well there you go. It's all over,
whatever it was. You can leave now.

CATHY
Did you take your medication this
morning?

VIOLET
Of course.

CATHY
Are you sure?

VIOLET
Absolutely.

CATHY
Can I see the pill bottle?

VIOLET
Why? Do you think I'm lying?

CATHY
No I think you might be mistaken.

VIOLET

Well even if I am, how could you tell?

CATHY

You mean other than from your behaviour.

VIOLET

Whatever that means. It's not like you count the pills, is it? Or do you? Do you come here every day and count my pills?

Cathy heads for the bathroom.

VIOLET (CONT'D)

It's not in there.

Sounds of Cathy going through the medicine chest.

VIOLET (CONT'D)

I said, it's not in there!

Cathy comes out of the bathroom

CATHY

So where is it then?

VIOLET

I'm not sure. But it's definitely not in the bathroom. I keep it separate.

CATHY

Separate from what?

VIOLET

From all the things that *don't* hurt me.

CATHY

Your medication doesn't hurt you.

VIOLET

That's what you think, is it? Do you want to try it sometime?

CATHY

Tell me where your medication is, or I'm taking you back to the hospital.

VIOLET

You'll have to say that again. You didn't phrase it right.

CATHY

Sorry?

VIOLET

You're not supposed to say things that imply that you have control over me. Instead of saying "you're taking me" you should have said "we're going." You know... like it's my idea too. You're supposed to know better, Cathy. You're not all that new at this.

CATHY

No. I'm not. And you're right. So tell me where you keep your medication, or we're going back to the hospital.

VIOLET

On whose authority?

CATHY

Mine.

VIOLET

There you go again. We both know you can't initiate that action without getting authorization from your superiors.

CATHY

And who are they?

VIOLET

That team of doctors who've been running my life for several years now.

CATHY

They're not my superiors. We're a team.

VIOLET

Sure you are. You know, Cathy sometimes you talk to me like you think I'm not very smart,

CATHY

I know you're smart, Vi. Believe me.

VIOLET

I taught school for almost twenty years.

CATHY

I know that.

VIOLET

English literature. Dickens, Shakespeare, Jane Austen, Graham Greene... Did I say Dickens?

CATHY

Yes. But you left out Dylan Thomas.

VIOLET

That Welsh fraud? Why would I include him?

CATHY

Well you liked him up until last week.

VIOLET

I think you're very wrong about that. But I'm used to you being wrong so--

CATHY

Are you going to make me search the whole apartment?

VIOLET

For what?

CATHY

I'm onto you, Vi. You try to divert me by changing the subject, and you do it very well. But making sure you take your medication is an important part of my job so--

VIOLET

Still on about that, are you?

CATHY

(sitting next to her)
Have you stopped taking it all together. Or have you just cut back?

(MORE)

CATHY (CONT'D)
(off her blank stare)
Violet?

VIOLET
Cut back.

CATHY
To what? Every second day?

VIOLET
Something like that?

CATHY
Meaning?

VIOLET
Occasionally.

CATHY
(exasperated now)
Which is?

VIOLET
When I think I need it. Okay? I
take a goddamn pill when I think I
need one.

CATHY
And what determines that. What is
it that makes you think it might be
a good idea for you to take one of
your pills?

VIOLET
When I think I might be losing
touch with reality.

CATHY
Okay. Give me an example of that.

VIOLET
When?

CATHY
Now. I want you to give me one
right now.

VIOLET
I can't remember one at the moment.
It hasn't happened for awhile.

CATHY
It just did. Sirens were blaring
down on the street.
(MORE)

CATHY (CONT'D)

The building's fire alarm was going off. And you just checked your stove.

VIOLET

What else should I have done?

CATHY

Remember all those safety procedures we went over when I first moved you in?

VIOLET

You mean when you *helped* me move in.

CATHY

Yes. Sorry. When I helped you move in we went through a list of things to do when the fire alarm sounds. The first and most important one is that you go to a stairwell and... get the hell out of the building!

VIOLET

Shhh. Too much. Too upset. Too loud.

CATHY

You're right. Sorry. But do remember me telling you that? If the fire alarm goes off, you leave.

VIOLET

Yes. I do remember. I know I should do that. But I have... I have...

CATHY

You have what?

VIOLET

Well you're the expert, so you know what I have. Or hasn't this come up?

CATHY

Hasn't what come up?

VIOLET

The problem I have with leaving the building.

CATHY

You're always allowed to leave the building to go sit in the garden. And you're definitely allowed to leave it if it's on fire.

VIOLET

That's not the problem I'm referring to. I'm talking about the problem I've developed recently with it.

CATHY

How recently?

VIOLET

Well a few minutes ago apparently. I mean leaving the *apartment* is hard enough. Just getting to the garbage chute... But when I heard all that noise--

CATHY

That noise being the alarm and the sirens.

VIOLET

Which was still noise, so I don't understand your need to interrupt me just so you could say that again.

CATHY

Okay. I get that. So you heard all that... noise and...

VIOLET

And I knew I'd be required to leave the building. That's when it hit me that I had a serious issue with doing that.

CATHY

Okay.

VIOLET

Which I suppose is something else we have to "deal" with now.

CATHY

Yes. Right. But in the meantime you can probably deal with it yourself.

VIOLET
Myself? Really?

CATHY
To some extent, yes. With some help
from your meds.

VIOLET
Well that's new. Are you saying I
won't have to have a meeting with
my doctors for a re-evaluation?

CATHY
I'm saying it will be easier if
you're on your meds. And I'm also
saying that even if it isn't easier
or *easy enough*, it's still
something you *have* to make yourself
overcome in an emergency.

VIOLET
Wow. Well as they used to say on
the commune..."that's some heavy
shit."

CATHY
(standing)
What commune?

VIOLET
I think I'll make tea.
(heads for kitchen)
Would you like a cup of tea, Cathy?

CATHY
When were you were on a commune? In
your teens? For how long?

VIOLET
Long enough to experience some of
things being offered in an
alternative life style.

CATHY
What's that mean? Did you take
drugs when you were there? Did you
ever take LSD, Violet.

Violet is exiting the kitchen.

CATHY (CONT'D)
Because there are numerous studies
tying schizophrenia to--

VIOLET

Relax. I was messing with you. I've never been anywhere near a commune. And by the way, doctors have been asking me for years if I ever took LSD. So I know al about those "studies." Kettle' boiling.

Violet starts back to the kitchen.

CATHY

I need a key to your apartment.

VIOLET

(from kitchen)

No you don't.

Kettle is off.

CATHY

If you're going to stay here, yes I do. I want you to give me a key, so I can get a copy made.

VIOLET

How about if I promise to leave every time that stupid alarm goes off...

(exiting kitchen)

... which is sometimes five times a day because a few of the teenagers in here are idiots.

CATHY

People do.

VIOLET

People do what?

CATHY

They leave. When they hear the alarm and the fire engines, they leave the building.

VIOLET

Every time?

CATHY

Jesus weeps. Yes! Every time.

VIOLET

(shrugs)

Okay. If that's the way they choose to lead their lives, but I--

CATHY

I'm getting your key copied.

VIOLET

I think that's a contravention of my legal and constitutional rights.

CATHY

It's not actually. You have almost no rights now.

VIOLET

How can that be true?

CATHY

We've been over this several times. The court found you not criminally responsible but also still a potential danger to society. And that means--

VIOLET

I've got you in my life forever.

CATHY

It... means you are to be monitored closely, and you are required to be on medication until such time as you are--

VIOLET

Dead.

CATHY

No. Ready.

VIOLET

Ready to die?

CATHY

No ready... and capable of showing us that-

VIOLET

I can make my own decisions? But I can't, can I? Not really. I can't be who I want to be. Live where I want to live. Decide not to put certain substances into my body. None of those things. And all because of what? Something I've done in the past.

CATHY

And you know what that was, don't you. You haven't forgotten.

VIOLET

Of course not. And I had very good reasons for taking that action, as you well know. Reasons that were never given the weight they deserved by your precious court.

CATHY

I know you think that but--

VIOLET

Well would you kill *your* husband and *your* brother-in-law without having a reason to justify what you'd done?

CATHY

I need your key.

They look at each other.

CATHY (CONT'D)

I mean it, Vi. I need it.

VIOLET

Okay...

Violet takes a key on a chain out of her pocket. Hands it to Cathy.

CATHY

Just promise me you won't abuse the privilege.

Cathy smiles. Leaves.

Violet seems very worried.

She looks around.

Moves in a circle.

Stops.

Sits on the couch.

Blackout.

Scene 2

Violet's daughter Maddy, late 20s, is looking around the apartment. Violet is in the kitchen.

VIOLET

(from kitchen)

I control what I can control. I control my stove, so I won't start a fire in here.

(exits kitchen with spray cleaner and sponge)

I control the water temperature in my shower so I don't scald myself. I check my thermostat to maintain a moderate temperature in my environment at all times. If I spill a substance on the floor I clean it up, so I don't slip, fall and break a bone..

(returns to kitchen)

What happens outside my living area I have no control over so I try to not to worry about it. There are people outside my living area who do dangerous things. There are people out in the world who are harming us in ways we can't even fathom.

(exits kitchen)

I've tried in the past to fight against those people and those things, but that caused me great pain and uncertainty and also a loss of my freedom. So I checked my stove and I think that should be the end of my responsibilities in that matter.

MADDY

Are you eating?

VIOLET

No I'm cleaning.

MADDY

I mean when you eat... do you eat well.

VIOLET

(from kitchen)

Are you asking if I eat salads?

(exiting kitchen)

Why would I start now?

(MORE)

VIOLET (CONT'D)

You know, some people think that salads are only suitable for cows. Creatures that have two stomachs. Because you need at least two stomachs to digest that stuff properly. Just like you'd need for grass.

MADDY

Mum?

VIOLET

Yes, darling?

MADDY

Knock it off. I don't want to talk about creatures with two stomachs. Just tell me what you eat, okay.

VIOLET

I'll make you a list if it makes you feel better. A list of all the food I eat. Plus whatever garbage has been added to that food. Everything that I consume and how often I consume it.

MADDY

I'm just worried about you.

VIOLET

No reason for that, honey. I'm doing great.

Violet comes out of the kitchen with a plate of Oreo cookies. Stacked very high.

MADDY

What's that?

VIOLET

Lunch.

MADDY

Okay. But it's just Oreos. Nothing but Oreo cookies.

VIOLET

Yes. Your favourite.

MADDY

Mum?

VIOLET
It's a joke for chrissake.

Takes them back to the kitchen.

VIOLET (CONT'D)
As if, even on my worst day, I'd
serve my daughter a plate of Oreo
cookies for lunch.

She returns with two bowls.

VIOLET (CONT'D)
Soup. Minestrone. Better?

MADDY
Yeah. Except the bowls are empty.

VIOLET
Gotcha again.

Heading back to kitchen

VIOLET (CONT'D)
A fairly severe bipolar disorder...
or even schizophrenia or whatever
it is...
(returning with a pot)
I'm supposed to have...
(pouring the soup in the
bowls)
...does not vanquish a person's
sense of humour. I mean not
necessarily. Or not entirely. In
fact, it can even enhance it.
(off the soup)
That's from a can. Sorry. But I can
only offer you what's brought to me
by my "psychiatric" social worker.
She's not much on nutrition for
some reason, and I'm not allowed to
go shopping yet.

MADDY
Not allowed by whom?

VIOLET
Myself. I don't trust my ability to
cope in the stressful environment
of a super market. I seem to
remember that you have a similar
problem.

MADDY
I got over it.

VIOLET
Really? How?

MADDY
I only go shopping when I'm drunk
now.

VIOLET
That was a joke, right.

Maddy shrugs

VIOLET (CONT'D)
Well it wasn't funny.

MADDY
Okay. So now you know how it feels.
How about a smaller store?

VIOLET
Oh no. I tried going there when I
first moved in. It's run by an
older Korean woman.

MADDY
You don't like Koreans?

VIOLET
I love Koreans. My favourite
student was Korean. It's just that
the woman in the store didn't
understand my questions.

MADDY
Well maybe next time don't ask her
any.

VIOLET
My questions weren't frivolous,
Maddy. I didn't know where all the
items I need were.

MADDY
It's a very small store, Mum. Maybe
next time just look a little
harder.

VIOLET
And if that doesn't work? You see
my point? Shopping no matter where
you do it, can be very unsettling.

MADDY

Not if you keep a flask of vodka in your bag.

VIOLET

I'm starting to think you're not joking about that.

MADDY

It's just a test, Mum. I need to know if I can ever be just a little bit honest with you. You know, and not treat you like you're...

VIOLET

Crazy.

MADDY

Sensitive.

VIOLET

Sensitive to the point of being crazy. Anyway, that's all being dealt with. My... sensitivity. My shopping anxiety... not allowing myself to leave the apartment. Cathy and I have plans.

MADDY

What kind of plans?

VIOLET

Big ones. Well hers are big. Mine are more modest. It all comes down to proper management of my medication. Too much, and I might as well be in a coma. Too little, and well things get...

MADDY

Dangerous?

VIOLET

Adventurous. How are the kids?

MADDY

They're good.

VIOLET

Can you bring them by sometime?

MADDY

We're talking about that.

VIOLET

Yes, of course. Dennis should have a say.

MADDY

Right. But I meant Cathy and I are talking about it.

VIOLET

Cathy has a say about if and when I can see my grandchildren.

MADDY

Yeah. She does, Mum. I think you know that.

VIOLET

Sure. Whatever. Well she certainly has her hand firmly on every part of my existence, doesn't she? So how far along are you and Cathy in terms of making that decision?

MADDY

I'm not sure. The kids want to see you, so that's not an issue.

VIOLET

I miss them.

MADDY

I know. And Dennis is all for it.

VIOLET

I love him. I love the kind of father he's become. Especially considering his dismal family background. And I love that he supports your career even when you're not fully applying yourself.

MADDY

Yeah he's been very--

VIOLET

Kind. He's an exceptionally kind person.

MADDY

Yeah. He's a saint. It's a wonder he puts up with me. I mean I can barely put up with myself so--

VIOLET

If your father had been one tenth as kind, he might still be alive today.

MADDY

Mum. Please don't start.

VIOLET

I'm just saying that the man had many flaws. He was deceitful, greedy and kind of stupid. But it was his inability to show any degree of kindness towards other people that did him in.

They look at each other.

VIOLET (CONT'D)

So it's really up to Cathy then. If she's okay with it, I get to see my grandchildren.

MADDY

Yeah. But I don't think she's totally against it. She's just--

VIOLET

Cautious. Very cautious. And as personality traits go, that's not so bad. Not nearly so bad as impatience, which by the way was another of your father's flaws and probably the one that got him killed.

MADDY

Mum, this isn't going to help either of us.

VIOLET

Why not?

MADDY

Because it might not be--

VIOLET

Accurate? Oh. Right. Sorry. It was *mine*. It was actually my impatience that doomed him. I mean you can only take hearing about and even witnessing so many of a person's misdeeds before you take action.

(MORE)

VIOLET (CONT'D)

Especially after you've tried to warn the authorities about him and they've ignored you, or even worse, blamed your illness for what you were telling them about a man who was so clearly a danger to society. And then later when your patience runs out and you're forced to take matters into your own hands, instead of investigating why you did what you did, they put you in front of a judge who condemns you to a life of supervision and constant medical intervention. Is that fair?

MADDY

You murdered him, Mum.

VIOLET

Well someone had to, honey. He was a serial killer.

Blackout.

SCENE 3

Cathy and Maddy. The shower is running.

MADDY

I'm sorry I called. I didn't mean for you to rush over.

CATHY

You sounded upset. You think she's worse?

MADDY

I'm not sure. Maybe it's me. It's like... you know, how at some point in your life you start to see a lot of yourself in your parent... or even the other way around. Because sometimes when she's talking, I--

CATHY

She's ill.

MADDY

I know but--

CATHY

She's ill. You're not ill. You're just... overwhelmed.

MADDY

I think it might help if you let her see my kids.

CATHY

Help you?

MADDY

No. Well yeah, maybe. I feel pretty guilty about her not having any contact with them.

CATHY

She will eventually. As soon as we get her more stabilized.

MADDY

Okay but... how long is that going to take?

CATHY

Well first she'll have to start trusting that her doctors and I know more about her medication than she does.

MADDY

They miss her. Shawna especially.

CATHY

Sure. But if she's having a bad day she could scare them. Or even--

MADDY

She'd never hurt them.

CATHY

Not intentionally, no. But the psychotic break she had was so intense and so prolonged that we don't-- When was the last time they saw her?

MADDY

Just after her hearing. She was in the hospital.

CATHY

And that went okay?

MADDY

Well there was a policeman outside her door. That kinda freaked them out.

CATHY

And how was *she*?

MADDY

She was excited to see them. She'd painted all her fingers.

CATHY

Really. Did she say why?

MADDY

Yeah. It was for her puppet show puppet show.

CATHY

She did a puppet show for them. Was it fun?

MADDY

I don't think it was meant to be fun. It was... an educational puppet show. She was trying to explain to the children what was going on with her. My dad was the thumb, and he was a very large bad man. And she was the pinky finger trying to stand up to him. I stopped it when I realized where it was going.

CATHY

(a weak smile)

Was the pinky finger about to produce a shotgun?

MADDY

I don't know. But it was definitely getting very worked up. Shaking. Kinds twisting around...

(she demonstrates)

Trying to get to the thumb.

(MORE)

MADDY (CONT'D)

It was scary and weird. The kids didn't get any of it.

CATHY

Did they laugh?

MADDY

No but they didn't run out of the room screaming either, which is what *I* felt like doing.

(shrugs)

They just wanted to be with her, I think. They're kinda used to her behaviour. They were both born after she had to leave teaching.

CATHY

Have you ever talked to them about that? Why she left.

MADDY

We've talked about burnout. And they've seen *me* after a bad shift at the restaurant.

CATHY

Not exactly the same thing.

MADDY

Really. Try making a chef's special creme caramel with the asshat shouting in your ear.

CATHY

My point is, you mother is the extreme edge of trend, I think. There's an epidemic out there. A lot middle aged women seem to be on the verge of totally losing it. And I'm talking about women who didn't go through half of what your mother did with your father. I mean even before she...

MADDY

Blew his head off?

CATHY

When I hear some of those women talk about their lives it's like they're just having a normal response to how they're being treated in the world.

(MORE)

CATHY (CONT'D)

One woman thought her condition was caused by dusting.

MADDY

Dusting...

CATHY

Yeah. It took up way too much of her time. Especially "those fucking book shelves!"

MADDY

Jesus...

CATHY

Yeah... Okay, look here's the news of the day. I was going to call and give you a heads up, but here I am so... Leo's out of prison.

MADDY

Really? Why? For good behaviour?

CATHY

Maybe.

MADDY

He doesn't know where she is, does he?

CATHY

No, of course not. But I'm thinking I might tell her he's out. It could help her get some things straight.

MADDY

Well I don't know if it'll help her, but it's definitely gonna shock her. She thinks she killed him.

CATHY

No. She just likes thinking that she did. It was important for her to believe that both your father and your uncle Leo were no longer walking amongst us.

MADDY

And now?

CATHY

You mean today? Who knows what she's thinking about that now.

(MORE)

CATHY (CONT'D)

But a few months ago, when we had her stabilized, she told me she figured it was really only Keith who was the contract killer and that Leo just... helped him somehow. She still thought that Leo had to be made accountable but--

MADDY

So she suddenly remembered all this? Why wasn't I told?

CATHY

You couldn't be found. Even your husband didn't know where you were.

MADDY

Yeah I needed some time on my own.

Cathy just looks at her.

CATHY

Anyway... she stayed on her meds long enough to connect to reality. It was a good sign.

MADDY

That she was getting better.

CATHY

She'll never get better. But if we can keep her on her meds...

Violet comes out of the bathroom in a robe, post shower, her hair in a towel.

VIOLET

So have you decided anything?

MADDY

About what?

VIOLET

About me, honey. What else would you be talking about?

MADDY

Cathy thinks it's just a matter of time until we can bring Shawna and Kyle to see you.

VIOLET

Really. Well isn't she a sweetheart.

CATHY

Did you enjoy your shower?

VIOLET

Immensely.

CATHY

You were in there for quite a while.

VIOLET

It's my favourite place on the planet. Why? Were you worried I was doing something drastic to myself?

CATHY

You're not self-destructive, Violet. We know that.

VIOLET

Do we?

CATHY

I meant my team and I. So you can stop trying to convince me otherwise. Come on over. We need to talk.

VIOLET

Oh. Well talking would be wonderful. I've sincerely enjoyed the few occasions when we've actually done that.

(to Maddy)

What she really means is that she needs to *tell* me something. Tell me how to correct something in my behaviour. How to understand something about my situation. How to comply with my legal and medical obligations...

CATHY

Violet. Come. Sit.

Violet does.

VIOLET

(smiles)

I'm all ears.

Cathy and Maddy exchange a look. Cathy turns and smiles at Violet.

CATHY
Leo got out of prison yesterday.

VIOLET
(smiles again)
Really.

CATHY
Yes.

VIOLET
So there's a prison for corpses is
there?

MADDY
Mum.

VIOLET
I killed him. I shot them both in
the head.

MADDY
You shot Dad in the head. You shot
Uncle Leo in the neck.

VIOLET
Close enough.

CATHY
Not really.

MADDY
He's alive.

CATHY
Which is something you already
knew, Violet.

VIOLET
Okay. What else do I know?

CATHY
I'm sorry?

VIOLET
I mean what else do I know that
I've forgotten I know.

CATHY
Just that. He's alive. And I wanted
you to know that he's out of
prison.

VIOLET

So that I can have him over for dinner?

CATHY

So that you'll know what's going on. What really is. And what isn't.

VIOLET

All right. But back to that dinner thing.

(to Maddy)

Do you think that would be a good idea?

MADDY

Not really.

CATHY

(to Violet)

Do you?

VIOLET

Well I did try to kill him. So I guess a lot of people might think I owe him an apology. I seem to remember he liked beef stroganoff. Yes. I could make that!

(heads to kitchen)

I've got a great recipe somewhere.

MADDY

(quietly, to CATHY)

What's she doing?

CATHY

Looking for the recipe.

MADDY

I mean, do you think she believes you about Leo being alive?

CATHY

Let's assume she does, and take it from there.

Violet comes back into the room.

VIOLET

(comes back carrying a large knife)

Couldn't find the recipe. But I found this instead.

(MORE)

VIOLET (CONT'D)

Is it okay if I don't cook for him
and I just finish the job this
time?

Maddy looks at Cathy.

Blackout.

SCENE 4

VIOLET is setting the table for two and giggling.

VIOLET

(talking to the other
place setting)

What a harrowing story. And you're
not even homosexual as far as I
know. I mean if you were, then all
that sodomy that was committed on
you in prison might have been, at
least potentially, enjoyable. Not
that gay men enjoy being raped. No
one enjoys being raped. I think I
just got confused about that. It's
actually me. *I'd* be the one
enjoying you getting raped. Do you
have any more rape stories like
that one? Or even worse.

A knock on the door.

VIOLET (CONT'D)
Well let's find out.

She answers the door and lets LEO, late 40s, tough and lean, into her apartment.

VIOLET (CONT'D)
Leo. Hello. Nice of you to come. I was worried you wouldn't get my message.

LEO
What message. We talked on the phone.

VIOLET
Oh. That was actually your voice? Not a recording?

LEO
Jesus. Same old Vi.

VIOLET
Same as when?

LEO
Never mind.

VIOLET
I hope you like beef stew. I'm behind in my shopping, so it's out of a can.
(looks at him closely)
No... you look okay.

LEO
What?

VIOLET
I mean compared to how you could look.

LEO
And how is that?

VIOLET
Dead. You could look dead.

LEO
Yeah well you tried your best.

VIOLET
Yes I did. And I might have been wrong to do that.

LEO

You were definitely wrong. I had nothing to do with what Keith was up to.

VIOLET

There was evidence to the contrary.

LEO

No there wasn't. It was all in your fucked-up mind.

VIOLET

Well they must have believed some of what I told them, or you wouldn't have wound up in prison.

LEO

That was for an unrelated matter. And it only came to light because you tried to implicate me in those murders Keith committed.

VIOLET

Oh yeah. Something about... what? Something about... Help me out here, will you.

LEO

Extortion. I was extorting people.

VIOLET

Right. But not killing them?

LEO

No.

VIOLET

Or so it appeared.

LEO

Well none of them were dead, so it "appeared" pretty clear, didn't it.

VIOLET

Let's eat. Do you like beef stew?

LEO

You already asked me that.

VIOLET

And what did you answer?

LEO

I didn't.

VIOLET

So what's the big deal about me asking you again? Jesus, you're touchy. Is it from all that sodomization?

LEO

Look, you said you wanted to talk about something important.

VIOLET

Right. Then I invited you to lunch.

LEO

I came for the talk. Not to eat.

VIOLET

You have to eat before we talk. Especially after I went to all this trouble.

LEO

The trouble of opening a can.

VIOLET

The trouble of finding out what pisshole motel you were staying in and then getting myself into a mental state whereby I could invite you into my home in order to get a few things settled without getting myself so upset that I can't be responsible for my actions.

LEO

That sounds like a threat. They tell me you're under a lot of restrictions, that you've been declared mentally incompetent or something, that you've been going through a lot of treatment.

VIOLET

Yes. It's been quite an adventure.

VIOLET is dishing out the stew from a pot.

VIOLET (CONT'D)

Bread?

LEO

Sure.

She pushes the loaf of bread on the table towards him.

VIOLET

Help yourself to the butter. I remember you were always big on butter. Butter is probably a luxury in prison, right.

LEO

Yeah it is.

VIOLET

Okay. So slather it on then.

He does. Takes a bite.

VIOLET (CONT'D)

Good, eh?

LEO

(eating)

Yeah.

VIOLET

Dip it. Dip it in the stew. I remember you liked doing that. You liked dipping things into other things. Keith thought it exposed your lower class roots, but you didn't seem to care.

LEO

No I didn't.

VIOLET

Yeah that was the one time you ignored him and stood up for yourself. Too bad it was something as silly as butter that brought you to it. But whatever, you were finally going to be who you were, low class warts and all. And the hell with anyone who had a problem with that.

LEO

Like you.

VIOLET

I never cared what you came from
Leo. I just hated what you'd
become.

LEO

You mean a crook.

VIOLET

And a vicious killer. Don't forget
that part.

LEO

Of for chrissake Violet. How long
are you... going... to...

VIOLET

Something wrong?

LEO

I feel a little...

He passes out and falls off his chair.

VIOLET

Yeah. Too much butter will do that
to you. Well that kind of butter
anyway.

She begins to drag him by his ankles down the hall towards
the bedroom.

VIOLET (CONT'D)

Hope I didn't put too much of that
in. It wouldn't kill you but it
would make you very stupid. Too
stupid to talk any sense. And we
can't have both of us being like
that, can we.

She drags him into the bedroom.

VIOLET (CONT'D)

How would we ever come to a
reckoning?

She returns. Picks up the butter dish, takes an extension
cord from a kitchen drawer, the chair on wheels from the
small desk in a corner, and returns to the bedroom

Blackout.

SCENE 5

CATHY and VIOLET are sharing a bowl of popcorn. They eat popcorn very differently, each a little suspicious of the other's method.

CATHY

There are several kinds of anxiety disorders. People with those disorders respond to certain situations with fear and dread which can manifest in a rapid heartbeat or periods of extreme sweating.

VIOLET

I don't have that.

CATHY

No you probably don't. Then there are mood disorders, which involve persistent feelings of sadness fluctuating with periods of extreme and/or manic happiness.

VIOLET

I could have that.

CATHY

Yes. You could. But then there are psychotic disorders. And they involve distorted awareness and thinking. That is, hallucinations and delusions.

VIOLET

You think that's the one, don't you.

CATHY

You killed your husband because you believed he was a serial murderer. You tried to kill your brother-in-law because you thought he was his accomplice.

VIOLET

So the hallucination was...?

CATHY

Seeing your husband shoot an elderly couple in that bakery.

VIOLET

Which I did.

CATHY

Which you hallucinated. Keith was not anywhere near the bakery when that happened.

VIOLET

If you say so.

CATHY

You heard evidence in court that corroborated that.

VIOLET

If you say so.

CATHY

I say so because it's the truth.

VIOLET

If you say so.

CATHY

Violet. Listen to me--

VIOLET

In a minute. First tell me something. That couple was shot by someone, right?

CATHY

Yes.

VIOLET

And I saw that?

CATHY

Yes. You were there. In the back of the store when a masked man came in, robbed them, shot them, and ran out to a waiting car.

VIOLET

So that's not an hallucination.

CATHY

No it's not. But Keith doing the killing and Leo waiting in the getaway car. That's a delusion.

VIOLET

So a delusion can be caused by something that's not an hallucination.

CATHY

Yes. No. That's not--

VIOLET

Here's what I think. I think it's delusional *not* to think it was Keith. I think the people who say they saw Keith in the Lonely Clerk Tavern, where he usually was at that time of day... they were hallucinating.

CATHY

Violet. We're trying to maintain a connection to reality here. If we can't do that we have to re-evaluate the efficacy of both your medication and your therapy.

VIOLET

Wouldn't it be easier for all of us if you just believed me.

(MORE)

VIOLET (CONT'D)

Those people could have just imagined seeing Keith there because he usually *was*.

CATHY

So they were... what? Seeing a mirage? A ghostly image?

VIOLET

Don't be silly. It was just someone who looked like Keith sitting where Keith always sat. I think you should consider my theory.

CATHY

Why.

VIOLET

Why not?

CATHY

Because several doctors, a judge, a prosecutor have all said repeatedly that your theory is a response to your mental illness. You had a psychotic break. You wanted an excuse to kill your abusive husband, and you manufactured it. Won't you try to just admit that possibility for me. I could tell the team of doctors that you did, and then maybe we could pull back on your medication.

VIOLET

That's some incentive. Or is it a bribe.

CATHY

We need to show them that you're making progress.

VIOLET

Even when I'm not.

CATHY

Well all that's pretty subjective. I believe the restrictions on you should be... relaxed. I think you need to try to get yourself back into the world to some degree. So if you'd just give over to admitting that it...

(MORE)

CATHY (CONT'D)
probably wasn't your husband who
killed that couple...

VIOLET
Sorry. No can do. Not that I don't
appreciate the offer. But I'm
seriously invested in holding on to
my version.

CATHY
What's that mean?

VIOLET
I'm not sure. It was probably just
more psychotic, bipolar raving.

CATHY
(checking watch)
I have to go.
(standing)
I'll be back tomorrow.

VIOLET
What time?

CATHY
I'm not sure.

VIOLET
Just roughly. Morning. Afternoon.
When the sun sets?

CATHY
Probably afternoon.

VIOLET
Early or late afternoon?

CATHY
Probably late.

VIOLET
Three or four?

CATHY
Closer to four.

VIOLET
Okay. So let's say three forty-five
probably.

CATHY
Approximately.

VIOLET
And probably.

CATHY
Okay. Yes. Probably.

VIOLET
Good.
(standing)
Are you okay?

CATHY
I'm fine. Are you?

VIOLET
Couldn't be better.
(off her look)
Just kidding. Of course I can be
better. I know that. And I'm
working hard on doing that. Not
hard enough. But don't lose faith.

CATHY
I won't.

CATHY leaves.

VIOLET rushes into the bedroom. And almost immediately
returns pushing a gagged and tied LEO on a the chair with
wheels.

VIOLET
I bet you thought she'd never
leave.

She removes his gag.

LEO
I have to take a piss.

VIOLET
Well I'm not going to untie you. Do
you want me to insert a catheter.

LEO
No I don't want you to insert a
fucking catheter.

VIOLET
Good. I'd have to make one from
scratch, and who knows how well
that would turn out? I guess you'll
just have to wet yourself.

LEO
Untie me. Let me go.

VIOLET
Why would I do that?

LEO
Because there's no point in keeping me here like this, for godsake.

VIOLET
Of course there is. I've got a world of people who won't believe me about what you and your brother were up to. I need you to tell them the truth.

LEO
Which is what I've done for the last three years. Every time you've had another "piece of evidence" or some recollection of what I did and said, I've had to tell some cop the truth, and they'd check it out. Okay? I've been questioned, checked out, and checked out some more. I'm innocent of the things you say I've done.

VIOLET
Oh you are, are you?

LEO
Yes I fucking am! And you're nuts!! You were nuts when they threw you outta that school you worked in, you were nuts when you tricked Keith into marrying you, and you were nuts when you fucking killed him.

VIOLET
Really? Are you sure about that?

LEO
Yeah I am. You could have just turned him into the cops, but you were nuts. And you still are. Look what you've done to me, Violet. You spiked the fucking butter so you could get me tied to this chair. Why would a sane person do something like that!?

VIOLET

Because I need to hear the truth.
It's not like I don't have reasons
to doubt myself, you know. I have
episodes and strange thoughts and
all kinds of impulses that make me
do or say things, so I have a lot
to overcome to hold on to my
version of events.

(pats his head)

Please, Leo. I'm just asking for a
little help here.

Leo starts to cry. Violet wipes away one of his tears.

VIOLET (CONT'D)

Don't cry. Crying doesn't help. It
never helped me and I've cried a
lot.

Blackout.

SCENE 6

VIOLET is curled up on the couch. LEO is asleep in the chair.
Still tied up. And gagged again.

A key in the door. Maddy comes in. Sees them and stops. Looks
closely at Leo.

MADDY

Ah Jesus...
(shaking Violet)
Mum... Mum!

She stirs, opens her eyes.

VIOLET

Oh hi, honey.
(sits up a bit)
How'd you get in?

MADDY

Cathy made me a set of keys.

VIOLET

Okay. But that might actually be
unethical.

MADDY

She wanted me to be able to get in here, in case.

VIOLET

In case what, dear?

MADDY

(points to Leo)

In case something like this happened. What have you done to him?

VIOLET

I needed him heavily sedated. He'll be okay unless I over did it. Are you scared, darling? If you're scared you can just leave.

MADDY

No. I can't just leave. I tried leaving a little while ago, and that didn't work out. It just made me sadder and more confused than I already was.

VIOLET

I have no idea what you're talking about, dear.

MADDY

Yeah well, I'm starting to think that doesn't really matter anymore.

VIOLET

You could be right. I still love you though.

MADDY

That's good.

VIOLET

Do you still love me?

MADDY

Absolutely.

(off Leo)

So... Mum... what were you hoping to accomplish by doing this?

VIOLET

You mean to him? Well I need to have his full attention.

(MORE)

VIOLET (CONT'D)

Or do you mean why have I done it in this particular way. Well things get out of control for me sometimes. I have an idea, then I have an idea how to go about that idea. But then before you know it, something happens that doesn't necessarily relate to what I intended to do in the first place... But this isn't like that. This is basically what I intended. So I think I might be getting better.

MADDY

I think we should try to wake him up.

VIOLET

Be my guest.

Maddy shakes LEO. Takes the gag out of his mouth.

MADDY

This smells like butter.

VIOLET

Yes. He loves the stuff. It was an act of kindness on my part.

LEO

(waking up)

It's... got something in it... that knocks you out. And keeps you that way. Hi, Maddy. I told you she was capable of some really scary shit.

VIOLET

Told her? Told her when?

LEO

When she visited me inside.

VIOLET

(to Maddy)

You went to see him while he was in prison?

MADDY

He's my uncle.

VIOLET

So what? Most criminals have relatives of some kind.

(MORE)

VIOLET (CONT'D)

Doesn't mean they should waste their time visiting them. Did you take him things? Cookies and candy and whatever. You did, didn't you. Don't get me wrong, I'm glad you're big-hearted, but show some judgement for godsdake.

LEO

I don't feel so good.

MADDY

What did you give him, mum?

VIOLET

It's a very strong sedative I was given awhile back when they thought I was just hysterical.

MADDY

(pointing at something on the couch)

What's that?

VIOLET

A hunting knife. Just in case he got loose.

MADDY

Where'd you get it?

VIOLET

Army Surplus. I wanted a rifle but they wouldn't give me one unless I passed a security check. And there wasn't much hope of that, was there.

MADDY

Wait a minute. You went out?

VIOLET

Well Army Surplus doesn't deliver. So I had no choice if I wanted to make sure I'd live through this. It's just a precaution really.

LEO

(still trying to focus)

That's bull. She threatened to cut off my nuts with it.

VIOLET

(to Maddy)

The way he talks. "Cut off my nuts"
How did I get mixed up with that
family. I've got three degrees for
god's sake.

LEO

So what? I was a stationary
engineer.

VIOLET

(to Maddy)

Means he was a janitor.

LEO

I took care of the boiler.

VIOLET

Janitor. You were a school janitor.

(to Maddy)

Which would have been fine if he
was a good one. Good ones can make
a difference in a school, in terms
of safety and cleanliness. He
wasn't a good one.

LEO

Screw you. You know what you are. I
mean, besides a lunatic. You're a
snob!

(to Maddy)

Okay, kiddo. Untie me.

VIOLET

(to Maddy)

No. Don't do that. He knows I'm on
to him, and he'll try to silence
us.

LEO

(to Maddy)

Okay. We can sit here forever and
listen to the crap coming out of
her mouth, or you can untie me and
we can all go about our business.

VIOLET

Which for him means killing us
both.

LEO

Maddy. Just untie me, okay.
Whatever she gave me is making me
wanna puke.

VIOLET

Go ahead. "Puke." Who cares.
(to Maddy)
He already wet himself.

MADDY

(looking)
Jesus.

LEO

She wouldn't let me go to the
toilet.

VIOLET

I offered to push the chair up
close and aim his penis for him,
but he didn't like that idea.
(to LEO)
Go ahead. Vomit. Mess yourself.
Whatever. You're not going anywhere
until you confess to your crimes.

MADDY

Mum. We can't keep him here against
his will.

VIOLET

You might change your mind when I
show you the evidence.

She heads for the bedroom.

LEO

What evidence? There is no goddamn
evidence!
(to Maddy)
Look. Untie me. And I'll forget
this bullshit ever happened.

VIOLET

(off)
Don't do it, honey!

LEO

Come on, Maddy!

MADDY

Let's just see what she has. If we
humour her for awhile it'll be
easier for all of us.

Violet returns with a large box. Turns it over and lets the
contents spill out onto the floor.

LEO

What the fuck's all that?

VIOLET

Your mother's diaries. She kept her
eyes on you and your brother until
the day she died. And when she knew
that day was close at hand she gave
them to me for safe keeping. I
figure it was to provide whatever
proof I needed against you.

LEO

She kept diaries. You actually want
me to believe that woman kept
diaries.

VIOLET

(off the box)

Well there's the proof. Right in
that box?

LEO

Her "diaries"

VIOLET

Yeah.

LEO

Right. And what language are they
in?

VIOLET

What's it matter?

LEO

Well do you speak Lithuanian.
Because she couldn't write more
than ten words in English.

VIOLET

I had them translated.

MADDY

Who by?

VIOLET

I have friends who speak many different languages.

LEO

Right. And all of them are in your goddamn head. Who do you know here in the real world who speaks Lithuanian.

VIOLET

Lithuanian. English. Icelandic. What's it matter. The woman maybe couldn't write in English, but she spoke it well enough to let me know what she thought of you and that she highly suspected what you and Keith were up to.

(to Maddy)

Assassins. Killers. They were hired killers. They worked for anyone who could pay their fee.

MADDY

And Nanna knew this?

VIOLET

(points)

It's all in there.

LEO

Bullshit. She had nothing to do with us. We saw her maybe twice a year, Maddy.

VIOLET

She was a very intuitive woman. Plus there were rumours. They both had a well-known tendency to violence. People in the neighbourhood were afraid of him.

LEO

And that meant we were killers for hire?

(to Maddy)

Look, Maddy. Get this into your head, okay. You have to let me go or you're in even more trouble than she is. I mean you're not a certified loon, so you can be held responsible.

VIOLET

I've heard enough of him for now.
Just the sound of his voice makes
me want to harm him.

She is wheeling him towards the bedroom

LEO

I mean it, Maddy. You'll be in deep
shit.

She rolls him in. Closes the door.

We can hear him protest incoherently through the door.

VIOLET

(returning)

Okay. We better get started. We
need to go through all these. But
we're going to need a Lithuanian-
English dictionary. Can you go get
one?

MADDY

You mean they haven't actually been
translated for you.

VIOLET

Well how the hell would I arrange
that confined to a psych ward?

MADDY

Look, Mum... I'm trying not to
upset you. I've even tried to
believe what you're saying. But
Leo's right. I could get in a lot
of trouble if I let you keep him
prisoner here.

VIOLET

Okay. I hear all that. I've
processed it. And I understand the
core issue. But Leo's the solution
to a lot of things that have gone
wrong for me. Yes, I had some
problems from when I was dealing
with all those kids in my school
who were determined not to reach
their full potential. That was
deeply depressing, and it made me
feel like an abysmal failure. But
your father and your uncle...

(MORE)

VIOLET (CONT'D)

what they were up to sent me to a whole new level on the mental health chart... And the fact that I wasn't taken seriously about that... well it made cracks in my brain.

MADDY

Cracks.

VIOLET

Yeah.

MADDY

In your brain.

VIOLET

Yeah. Do you want me to tell you what that felt like?

MADDY

No, Mum. I never want to hear what that felt like.

(crying)

Promise me that you'll never tell me, okay.

VIOLET

What's wrong, honey.

MADDY

Just promise, okay.

VIOLET

Okay. Sure. That's a deal. Now go get me that dictionary. Bring it back here. And give me a fighting chance to get the truth out of that guy in there. Then you can just leave.

MADDY

Leave. But with Leo still tied up.

VIOLET

It's a compromise solution.

MADDY

No it's not. He'll tell people I let you keep him captive.

VIOLET

No one will believe anything he says.

(MORE)

VIOLET (CONT'D)

Look I think I have proof in black and white that he's a lying thug who at the very least was your father's assistant in fifteen or so murders.

MADDY

Mum.

VIOLET

Please, honey. The dictionary. It's crucial to my investigation. Please.

MADDY

Yeah... okay. But promise you won't hurt him.

VIOLET

Of course I won't hurt him. He has to answer to a higher power than me. He has to answer to a jury of his peers!!

MADDY

Okay. Good. Where do I get that? The dictionary.

VIOLET

Bookstore. Library. Maybe online. Use your initiative. Maybe Google it. Use your basic intelligence. You're not an idiot, are you!!

MADDY

Calm down, Mum. I was just--

VIOLET

Okay, right. I mean even if you are a bit of an idiot, you're my daughter and I should show you nothing but love.

MADDY

Well as long as it's not too much effort.

VIOLET

It's just that sometimes when I look at you or I hear you ask questions like that, you remind me of your father.

(MORE)

VIOLET (CONT'D)

And I have to suppress an urge to hurt you a little. You understand that, don't you.

MADDY

Sure. He used to say that to me too.

VIOLET

That he wanted to hurt you?

MADDY

That he thought I might be too much like you. He'd catch me daydreaming, and he'd snap his fingers in front of my face. "Careful girl, whatever you're thinking there, you should stop. You're mother gets that blank look on her face a lot. And she's barely hanging on to reality, isn't she?"

VIOLET

He said that?

MADDY

All the time. He said you were crazy. You said he was a murderer. Those were fun times.
(looks at her)
I'll be back as soon as I can.

She grabs the box and leaves.

Blackout.

SCENE 7

Maddy is on the floor reading from a small pile of papers. VIOLET is on the couch behind her, massaging her shoulders.

VIOLET

Both my parents had died that year and I was desperate to put some joy into my life. Just the kind of person a sociopath like your father targets. The first sign that I was in trouble was when he started voicing his horrible views about immigrants. He was brutal and unforgiving about their trouble with the language.

(MORE)

VIOLET (CONT'D)

I tried to point out that his parents were in exactly the same shape when they came over. "I know" was his reply. "And that's why I hated being around them." His father was very ill at this time, and neither of his sons wanted anything to do with him. I'd help his mother when I could, but I was not in great shape myself. Being the wife of an evil sonofabitch isn't easy. But then you came along and that helped for awhile. No way was I going to become mentally incapacitated when I had a child to care for. Anyway--

MADDY

(off one of the pages)
There's a title for all of this. Maybe she was planning to publish it?

VIOLET

As a warning probably. What's it called?

MADDY

The Disturbing Story of Henrikus and Leonas. Leonas is Uncle Leo, right.

VIOLET

Yes. And Henrikus was your father.

MADDY

So where did the name Keith come from?

VIOLET

He just started asking people to call him that.

MADDY

Why?

VIOLET

Who knows? He never explained any of the strange things he did. Like putting pepper on grapefruit, or drawing pictures of rats.

MADDY

What?

VIOLET

I have nothing to add to that.

MADDY

Why would a mother issue a warning to the world about her children?

VIOLET

What are you talking about? Don't you have the capacity for any kind of analysis?

MADDY

You have to stop that, okay. I'm not stupid.

VIOLET

Of course you're not. Anyone who suggests otherwise will have to answer to me. My point is, she must have known how dangerous her boys were. God bless her, those diaries can be used as evidence to put Leo in prison for the rest of his life. Notice how clearly I'm thinking about things today?

MADDY

Yes you seem a little--

VIOLET

I took my medication. It helps me achieve a degree of clarity. But it makes me lose touch with my vibrant inner life.

MADDY

Okay. And what's that like? Your inner life.

VIOLET

It's hard to describe. And also, it's really none of your business.

Maddy kisses Violet's hand which rests on her shoulder.

MADDY

I love you, Mum.

VIOLET

It's nice that you keep saying that even if it's not the truth. I know it must be hard for you sometimes.

MADDY

It is. But I still love you. Even when you're not sharing your vibrant inner life with me.

VIOLET

What a lovely thing to say.

She kisses the top of her head.

A loud groaning from the bedroom.

MADDY

Sounds like he's awake.

VIOLET

Yeah.

She takes the butter from the kitchen table. Puts her hand in it. Takes a fist-full and heads for the bedroom.

VIOLET (CONT'D)

This should keep him quiet for awhile.

Blackout.

SCENE 8

CATHY and Maddy. Maddy is putting the diary papers back in the box.

CATHY

Family stuff?

MADDY

Yeah.

CATHY

Letters? Photos?

MADDY

Some...

CATHY

That's good. Getting her to reconnect to things like that is a good thing.

MADDY

Well here's hoping.

CATHY

It's good that you're seeing her a more often.

MADDY

Yeah.

CATHY looks at her.

CATHY

How long were you in therapy?

MADDY

I wasn't.

CATHY

Oh...

MADDY

What's that mean? "Oh."

CATHY

I was in court when the judge strongly suggested that you talk to someone.

MADDY

That was very thoughtful of him. But I had my husband to talk to.

CATHY

About your mother?

MADDY

And my father. He has a few "difficult" men in his family. None as bad as my father though. He was a special kind of guy.

CATHY

So you still think your mum is right about him.

MADDY

Well what caused her mental breakdown? It had to be her knowing what he did, right.

CATHY

Not according to people at the school where she worked.

MADDY

She felt like she was letting her students down. It depressed her, but it didn't... Look, I saw the way my father behaved sometimes. So I don't have that big a problem believing he did those things.

CATHY

You'd seen him hurt people.

MADDY

Yeah.

CATHY

Did he hurt you?

MADDY

I thought he was about to on a few occasions. But I wasn't his main target.

CATHY

That was your mother?

MADDY

If I'd ever seen him hit my mother, I'd have killed him myself. It was Leo he liked to abuse. Ever since they were kids apparently.

CATHY

And you heard that from your mother?

MADDY

Yeah. But she says all the neighbours knew about it.

CATHY

And no one ever stepped in?

MADDY

They were used to cruel shit around there.

(MORE)

MADDY (CONT'D)

There were a lot of nasty, angry old men in that community. I think they were upset about missing the party.

CATHY

What party?

MADDY

If they'd stayed where they were from they could have been Nazis. I mean officially. The Eastern European countries were full of them. Per capita, more than Germany, some of them.

CATHY

Is that true?

MADDY

Well that's what my dad said. And he said it with a lot of pride too.

CATHY

(gesturing to bedroom)
Should we look in on her.

MADDY

No she's okay. Those pills just knock her out.

CATHY

She'll get used to them. And if she keeps taking them they'll help her function. Believe me.

MADDY

Okay. But maybe it would help if you started believing *her*. About my father and his brother.

VIOLET comes out of the bedroom. Carrying the dish of butter.

VIOLET

I'll second that opinion.

CATHY

Hi, there.

MADDY

Have a good nap?

VIOLET

I dreamed of a better world.

CATHY
Really. What's it like?

VIOLET
Looks the same. But all the
assholes are gone.

CATHY
What's the butter for?

VIOLET
I put it on my eyelids before I go
to sleep. Find it relaxing.

CATHY
I'll have to try that.

VIOLET
I'll give you some before you go.

CATHY
That's okay. I've got butter at
home.

VIOLET
Not like this.

MADDY
She means it's... Danish. Best
butter there is. Right, mum?

VIOLET
If you say so.
(to Cathy)
She has very strong opinions about
food products.

CATHY
Well she *is* a chef.

MADDY
Was a chef.

CATHY
Oh. What are you now?

MADDY
An unemployed chef.

CATHY
So what happened?

MADDY

I got tired of being yelled at.
The head chef was one of those
assholes the world has to get rid
of.

VIOLET

You didn't stab him, did you. You
know our agreement about that. Just
count to ten.

MADDY

It doesn't always work.

CATHY

Does that mean you *did* stab him?

A commotion from the bedroom.

VIOLET

Excuse me. Something must have
fallen off a shelf.

She goes into the bedroom. Closes the door.

CATHY

Why did she take the butter in
there with her.

MADDY

Habit?

LEO screams from the bedroom.

CATHY

Was that her?

MADDY

Who else could it be?

CATHY

Good question.

CATHY heads for the bedroom door.

MADDY

Cathy...

But she is already on her way in. Maddy just lowers her head.

MADDY (CONT'D)

Jesus...

Blackout.

SCENE 8

LEO is on the couch. Still a bit groggy. His hands are tied with duct tape.

CATHY is wiping his face with a damp cloth.

Maddy is bringing him a glass of water from the kitchen.

VIOLET is standing near Leo. Watching him intently.

VIOLET
(to Leo)
Ready to talk?

LEO
Go to hell.

VIOLET
Just checking.

CATHY
What made you think you'd get away
with this?

VIOLET
I'm crazy. I can get away with
anything.

LEO
She needs to be put away, for
chrissake. Why's she allowed to be
on the loose like this?

VIOLET
Yeah I thought they were taking
quite a risk myself.

MADDY
(to Cathy)
She needed to find out.

CATHY
Find out what? If she was still
capable of doing something this
reckless?

VIOLET
You make it sound so petty.
(to Maddy)
You'll have to be more specific.

MADDY
She needed to find out if he wasn't
actually involved in the murders.

CATHY
And?

VIOLET
He's a pretty stubborn guy. At
first I wanted to water board him.
(MORE)

VIOLET (CONT'D)

But the farther we got into the diary the more pity I felt for him.

CATHY

What diary?

MADDY

His mother kept a record of their lives. His and my father's.

LEO

That's just crazy.

MADDY

We've been reading it.

LEO

Whatya mean reading it? I told you, she couldn't write English.

MADDY

We translated it.

LEO

What?

VIOLET

Well the original is in your native tongue, as you well know.

LEO

I don't have a fucking native tongue.

VIOLET

You *did*. Lithuanian. When you were little. You spoke it for the first four years of your life. It's in the diary.

LEO

In the diary. In Lithuanian. And you translated it.

MADDY

We're still at it. We got some help online. It's slow going but--

VIOLET

(to Leo)

But we already know a lot about how your brother treated you.

LEO

You mean that he was a little rough on me sometimes. That was nothing.

MADDY

According to Nanna he put you in the hospital three times. They thought grampa was responsible for awhile.

LEO

That sad little man. No one could've thought that. Jesus. I would've straightened them out if I'd heard anyone talking that bullshit. I loved my pop. And he loved me.

VIOLET

Then why didn't he protect you from Keith? It's all in the diary, Leo. Keith beat you up repeatedly. And no one stopped him.

LEO

Yeah okay... Okay, well my mum was scared of him, and my pop woulda, but it didn't start up until after he got sick and could hardly get out of bed. What's the point of all this stuff about me and Keith.

VIOLET

You were terrified of him.

LEO

When we were kids for chrissake. That all stopped when we grew up.

CATHY

(to Violet)

You don't think that's true.

VIOLET

Keith was still pushing him around when we were married. You're a victim of domestic violence, Leo.

LEO

Fuck off.

VIOLET

You were traumatized. That's why you continued doing everything he told you. Even when he told you to help him--

LEO

(to Cathy)

I want you to inform the authorities about what she's done to me.

CATHY

My job is to assist in her journey to good mental health. That wouldn't help.

VIOLET

She means I'm on to something.

LEO

Fuck it.

(standing)

I'll do it myself then.

MADDY

That'd probably be a mistake. She's got proof now.

LEO

Proof of what? Jesus. Gimme a break here. This is just--

VIOLET

Sit down.

LEO

Look don't tell me what to do okay? I'm tired of you asking me questions. I'm tired of you assuming things. And I'm tired of you telling me what the fuck to do. Like to just piss my pants... or suck on butter. Or--

CATHY

Suck on butter?

MADDY

Let's leave the butter out of it, okay?

VIOLET

Leo.

LEO

What.

VIOLET

Sit down. I mean it. We need to resolve this matter right here. Right now. I've got all these things happening in my head. All these thoughts, memories, suspicions. And lots of voices telling me what to think about all those things. I need it all to go away. I need to silence the voices of suspicion.

Leo sits.

LEO

(to Cathy)

She's been talking like that to me for two whole days... that "voices of suspicion" crap. She has to stop. It makes me want to rip my ears off. Can you please *please* make her stop.

CATHY

No. But maybe you can.

MADDY

Just tell her she was right about what my dad did. All those killings.

VIOLET

The old couple in the bakery. That woman lawyer. The entire family down the street. Their daughter was one of my students. Did you know that?

LEO

(quietly)

No...

MADDY

What?

LEO

No. I didn't.
(to Violet)
I'm sorry...

VIOLET

Killing that girl was the thing
that set me off.

(to Cathy)

I blew Keith away a week after that
happened.

CATHY

You knew he'd done it.

VIOLET

I asked him.

CATHY

And he admitted it?

VIOLET

No. But he didn't deny it.

LEO

I'm sorry.

VIOLET

Yeah you said that.

LEO

That was supposed to just be the
father. He owed someone a lot of
money. But the family, that girl...
I never drove him after that. I
mean I wouldn't have even if you
hadn't killed him.

MADDY

And that's really all you did for
him. Drive?

LEO

Yeah. And it was bullshit. He
didn't need a getaway car. He was
very good at it. He could usually
just walk away quietly and no one
was ever the wiser.

MADDY

Sounds like he just wanted you to
be involved.

LEO

I guess. Yeah. Keep me on a leash?
That kind of thing?

CATHY

Yes. That kind of thing.

LEO

Okay. Okay then. So... that's that, right.

(to Violet)

I feel better telling you. It's been a real hardship keeping it to myself. By the way, I won't do so good in prison. I didn't do that good the first time, and this would be worse.

VIOLET

I know.

LEO

I never did any killing. Honest.

VIOLET

I know.

LEO

I won't do so good in prison.

VIOLET

You said that already.

LEO

Yeah but I thought it was worth mentioning it again.

MADDY

Wait a minute.

Maddy cuts off the duct tape around his wrists.

LEO

Thanks... Can I go now? ... Nobody's saying anything. Does that mean I *can't* go? ... Okay so I'm just gonna go then...

Leo leaves the apartment.

VIOLET

Well that clears all that up. Good for me, right.

MADDY

(to Cathy)

How does this affect her... situation.

CATHY

You mean with the law. I haven't got a clue about that. And as far as her mental state is concerned...

MADDY

We'll just have to see if it helps?

CATHY

Yes. I guess we will.

Cathy looks at Violet.

CATHY (CONT'D)

Maddy, we need to talk about her medication and a few other things.

VIOLET

Not in front of me, you don't. I've heard enough about my "treatment" and my situation to last a lifetime.

CATHY

(to Maddy)

In the bedroom then.

They both head for the bedroom.

VIOLET

Thank you.

CATHY

You're welcome.

VIOLET is just sitting there.

VIOLET

(to herself)

Silence. How about that,
(touches her temple)
Even in here...

(smiles)

It's been quite awhile.

Blackout.

SCENE 9

Darkness. The building's fire alarm is going off.

Light.

Violet is on the couch, rocking back and forth. Covering her ears.

VIOLET
Okay. Okay. Just turn it off...
come on, turn it off!
(MORE)

VIOLET (CONT'D)

(rocking)

You little bastards. I knew your father from when he was at my school He'd come into my office, slouch down in a chair and just look at me like he wanted to punch me in the face. Who was I to tell him to work a little harder, maybe try a math tutor. I even had the audacity to offer him some help myself even though it wasn't my subject. The little jerk. He was just mean and nasty. And now he has kids that are just like him. Little nasty bastards who have no respect for anything, including a person's need for a degree of tranquility... Ahhh! Turn it off!!

(heads for kitchen
muttering)

Bastards, rotten little pricks...
(returns with the large
knife)

Okay I guess it's up to me then.
(goes towards the door,
stops)

Why? Why is it up to me? Well Violet, it's really quite simple. It's up to you because no one else seems to be doing anything.

(unlocks the lock)

Well when you put it like that...
(hand on the knob)

No wait.

(hurries to kitchen,
checks her stove)

Well it's not that, so...
(back to door)

But if I get down there and find those disrespectful little bastards hanging around outside and laughing like they usually do, I'm going to have to take some action.

She opens the door. Smoke billows in. She quickly closes it.

VIOLET (CONT'D)

Okay. This is real. This time it's real, so... get yourself together, Violet. Do you want to live or not? Well that's the kind of question a person shouldn't have to answer under pressure. Because I could go either way on that.

(MORE)

VIOLET (CONT'D)

(opens and closes door
quickly)

Yeah still real... So... let's just
assume, to be on the safe side,
that you don't want to die, at
least not yet, that despite the
confusion in your head and the
heartbreaking sadness of a wasted
life, both personally and
professionally, that you might want
to live a little longer. At least
until you get to see your
grandchildren again...

She opens the door and rushes out with her knife held
tightly.

Blackout

SCENE 10

Violet is helping Leo into the apartment.

He has been roughed up. A bloody nose, a welt under his eye.

VIOLET

You were very brave out there.

LEO

They shouldn't have been taunting
you like that.

VIOLET

(helping him sit)

Well I guess threatening to castrate them got them kind of worked up. I mean after I explained what that was.

LEO

Whatever. They should be more understanding of your condition.

VIOLET

Pease don't refer to my condition as a condition. There's just something about the word that--

LEO

I just meant... well even when you were accusing me of all that stuff with Keith I cut you a certain amount of slack.

VIOLET

That was big of you. Considering that everything I said was true.

LEO

Not all of it. You started out saying I was a killer.

VIOLET

I'm sure I had a reason for that.

LEO

Yeah, you were out of your head.

VIOLET

No it was something else.

(thinks)

It was Keith. Yes. There was a time when no one knew who was doing those killings... and Keith told me he thought it could be you.

LEO

No. Why would he do that?

VIOLET

I'll have to think about that for awhile. What were you doing hanging around in front of the building?

LEO

I never left.

VIOLET

...Because he was planning to kill you.

LEO

What?

VIOLET

That's the why. He was planting suspicions about you in people's heads. And then once he'd done that, he'd plant evidence that pointed to you being the person who'd committed all those murders. And then he'd kill you, and make it look like self defense. At least that's what I'd do. What do you mean you never left?

LEO

Well I didn't know where to go. I didn't know if I should just head home or go into hiding. I mean when I saw Maddy and your nurse head off I was pretty sure they were on their way to turn me in to the cops.

VIOLET

Maddy had to pick up the kids from school. Cathy was probably going shopping. And she hasn't got anything on her mind except what to do with me. I feel bad about giving those kids down there such a hard time. Especially since there actually was a fire.

LEO

In the garbage chute, right?

VIOLET

Right. And of course the little bastards could have set it. But the alarm went off on its own, and that was my issue. I mean my issue with them was the alarm. I have others, of course. Where was I?

LEO

You don't think anyone's going to the police about me.

VIOLET
Well at least not Maddy and Cathy.

LEO
And what about you?

VIOLET
The last time I reported someone to
the police I wound up in a psych
ward.

Cathy comes in, carrying a bag of groceries.

CATHY
What's he doing here?

VIOLET
He saved my life.

LEO
I got a little banged up in the
process.

CATHY
You're talking about the incident
in front of the building.

VIOLET
Yes I am. What have you got there?
More lousy canned goods?

CATHY
You told me you only wanted to eat
food from a can.

VIOLET
That was because of the spiders.
(to Leo)
I was afraid there were spiders
hiding in all the fresh vegetables.

CATHY
Right.

VIOLET
Right. But you convinced me that
there weren't.

CATHY
I did? You know, you have to tell
me when that happens, Violet.
(MORE)

CATHY (CONT'D)

When I tell you something that's actually real or true, you have to let me know that it's sunk in, okay?

VIOLET

Sure. No need to make a big deal about it though.

CATHY

Got it. So fresh fruit and vegetables are okay then.

VIOLET

Like I just said, yeah.

CATHY

(to Leo)

The police are looking for you.

LEO

(to Violet)

You said she wasn't going to report me.

VIOLET

I guess I was wrong.

LEO

Looking for me. Jesus... I mean they might think I'm armed.

CATHY

I didn't tell them you were armed. I just told them you were an accomplice in a number of murders.

VIOLET

That sounds worse than it is.

CATHY

I think it sounds just about right actually.

LEO

Okay but the thing is, it could mean they'll be ready to shoot me on sight.

VIOLET

(to Cathy)

He's right. He'll need to be accompanied to the police station.

(MORE)

VIOLET (CONT'D)

(to Leo)
She'll do it.

CATHY

No I wont.

VIOLET

It would be the decent thing.

CATHY

I'm not taking this guy to the police station. If I have to take anyone it'll be you. They want to talk to you too.

VIOLET

About?

CATHY

About brandishing that knife around all those kids. I tried to explain your situation. But they still want to see you.

VIOLET

I'm okay with that. I had my reasons. And I'll have no problem telling them what they were.

LEO

You can take us both.

VIOLET

I was just about to suggest that.
(looks at Cathy)
Let's go.

She starts for the door. Leo falls in behind her.

LEO

I'm pretty nervous about what's going to happen.

VIOLET

Yeah you're going back to prison for sure. But I'm going to testify and tell them about that abusive situation with your brother.

LEO

Yeah. I think I maybe had that... post traumatic stress thing at the time.

VIOLET
 Absolutely, you did.
 (to Cathy)
 You coming or not?

CATHY
 (on the move)
 You're giving yourself permission
 to leave the apartment?

VIOLET
 Yeah well I already broke that
 agreement with myself this morning,
 didn't I.

CATHY
 Yes.

VIOLET
 So why bring it up again?

CATHY
 I was just--

VIOLET
 (leaving)
 You were just what? Making a point?
 I think you should apologize.

CATHY
 (leaving)
 Okay. I'm sorry.

Leo follows them out. Closes door behind hi,

A beat

Violet comes back in. Sits on the couch.

Cathy comes in.

CATHY (CONT'D)
 What's wrong?

VIOLET
 Promise me you won't let them put
 me back in the hospital.

CATHY
 Violet.

VIOLET
 No. I don't ask much from you, but
 I'm asking this. Promise.

CATHY
Okay. I promise.

VIOLET
Good.

Violet stands and leaves. Cathy follows her. Closes the door behind her

Blackout.

SCENE 11

Maddy is waiting for Violet to come out of the bedroom.

MADDY
How you doing in there, Mum?

VIOLET
I'm fine, sweetie.

MADDY
You don't have to fuss, you know.

VIOLET

Sure I do. Want to look just right for Dennis and the kids. You sure they're on the way?

MADDY

Cathy's bringing them. She wanted a chance to talk to the kids first.

VIOLET

I don't like the sound of that. Suppose she exaggerates my health issues. She's inclined to do that, you know. And it might make the children nervous.

MADDY

She's a professional, Mum. She knows how to handle these things.

VIOLET

If you say so.

MADDY

The kids are really looking forward to this.

VIOLET

So am I. It's going to be terrific fun. Really terrific... fun.
(out of the bedroom)
Ta-dah!!

She is dressed in a clown outfit. The total package, nose. Hair. Cheeks, Big shoes.

VIOLET (CONT'D)

I've been saving all this for years. Wanted them both to be old enough to enjoy it. Whatya think?

MADDY

I think it's great.

VIOLET

You do?

MADDY

Totally...

VIOLET

Whatya think Cathy will make of it?

MADDY
She'll probably be a bit concerned.

VIOLET
Yeah. Dosage. We'll need to have a long talk about my dosage.

MADDY
Probably. But I think it's great. And the kids...

VIOLET
They'll love it, right.

MADDY
Yeah...

VIOLET
Well that's all that matters, isn't it.

She honks her nose.

Cathy knocks and enters. Sees Violet. Stops. Stares.

MADDY
It's just something special she's doing for her grandchildren.

CATHY
(a bit concerned)
Oh... okay.

MADDY
Where are they?

CATHY
Down in my car.

VIOLET
Why didn't you bring them up?

CATHY
They... changed their mind.

VIOLET
Because of something you said?

MADDY
(to Cathy)
What happened?

CATHY

Someone took a video of her
menacing those kids with her knife.
It was on the news.

VIOLET

Really? Such a small thing to be
featured on the news. I mean with
the world about to explode and all.

CATHY

One of Dennis's friends texted him
the video.

MADDY

And he showed it to the kids?
Idiot...

Maddy takes out her cell. Punches speed dial.

CATHY

It's gone viral, by the way.

MADDY

Great...
(into phone)
Hey. What the hell were you
thinking...
(heads into the bedroom)
Well maybe we could have talked
about it first ... Whatya mean why?

She's gone.

VIOLET

(sitting)
Viral.

CATHY

It means---

VIOLET

I know what it means... I guess I
won't be seeing them anytime soon.

CATHY

There are consequences for our
behaviour. Even when we're not
entirely responsible for that
behaviour.

VIOLET

Was that one of those things you
say that I need to acknowledge?

CATHY

Yes.

VIOLET

Okay. I understand what you're saying.

CATHY

And what it means?

VIOLET

I suppose it means I have to be more heavily medicated.

CATHY

Not more heavily. Just more consistently. And it also means you're going to be monitored more closely.

VIOLET

In a hospital?

CATHY

Well unless you'll agree to letting a health worker move in here.

VIOLET

You?

CATHY

No.

VIOLET

Well that's good. The proximity might damage our friendship.

CATHY

We have people who do that short term.

VIOLET

Well that's quite a choice, isn't it. Give up my privacy by being in a hospital. Or give it up in the comfort of my own home.

Maddy comes back in.

MADDY

I can fix this, but it'll take some time.

CATHY

Okay well...

(starting out)

Don't forget. You've got a court appearance tomorrow morning. I'll pick you up at 9:30.

VIOLET

Are they going to put me in jail?

MADDY

(to Cathy)

What's she talking about?

CATHY

(stopping)

I wouldn't let that happen.

MADDY

Neither will I.

They both look at Violet. Go and sit beside her on the couch.

CATHY

I'll always try to do what's best for you. I care about you very much, Violet. Please try to believe that. We all do. All the doctors who work on your case. All the people who love you.

VIOLET

Who are they?

MADDY

You mean besides your family?

CATHY

And me. I love you too.

Violet takes off her nose. Puts it on Cathy.

VIOLET

Say that again.

CATHY

I love you. And I admire you too. And so do many of those other teachers you worked with. They admire you as well. Not to mention all those young people you taught.

VIOLET

Especially the ones I couldn't help. I'm sure they have great respect for my capability.

MADDY

What about the ones you *did* help?

VIOLET

Well they aren't in here.
(touches her temple)
Only Jeff Delaney and Marcus Steen are in here.

CATHY

What happened to them?

MADDY

Prison. They were both honour students, but now they're in prison. Mum, you had nothing to do with that.

VIOLET

I saw them drifting. Drugs. Strange secretive absences from school. I knew something was going on, but there were so many others more obviously in need. I thought, "They're smart. They'll self correct."

CATHY

But they didn't.

VIOLET

No. But they definitely did what they set out to do, so there's that.

MADDY

(to Cathy)
They killed Jeff's parents. No one knew why. And they never said.

VIOLET

And now they're in...
(touching her temple)
Here. Those boys are in here.

CATHY

And the others?

VIOLET

You mean in my head. Well there's the horrible bellowing of the heartless killer I married and the pitiful yelping of his victims...

MADDY

Mum...

VIOLET

It's okay.

(to Cathy)

You can take that off your nose now. It's starting to make me nervous.

CATHY

(takes it off)

Why a clown anyway? Why not a pirate or a... vampire?

VIOLET

I wanted to make them laugh. Clowns make kids laugh. Don't know why. They're obviously the work of the devil.

CATHY

I agree.

VIOLET

You do? Gee I was only kidding about that. You might need some help yourself when you finish with me.

CATHY

I don't think I'm ever going to finish with you, Vi. I think we're stuck with each other for a long time.

VIOLET

You probably didn't mean that in a bad way. So try to re-phrase it, okay.

MADDY

(to Cathy)

Yeah, say something like... well here we are in a difficult real life situation, each with a need to stay connected. Both personally and professionally.

VIOLET

(continuing)

Both in our own way struggling for answers. Both in our own way trying to make the best of very difficult, very complex circumstances...

CATHY

And we keep trying. We don't give up.

VIOLET

Even when it seems foolish, and even painful not to.

MADDY

(puts on the nose)

We don't ever give up, Mum. Okay?

Violet just looks at her. Maddy takes her hand. Cathy takes her other hand.

Blackout.

THE END