

**HER INSIDE LIFE**

by

George F. Walker

**NEW DRAFT MAY 23, 2017**

Copyright SEPT 2015  
For all rights etc.  
Contact  
Great North Artists  
(renazimmerman@gnaminc.com)  
416 925-2051

SCENE 1

LOW INCOME FIVE STOREY APARTMENT BUILDING

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

IN THE DARKNESS WE HEAR THE BUILDINGS 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. Where 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...

(MORE)

VIOLET (CONT'D)

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?

(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. 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 identify it.

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. 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 tea, Cathy?

CATHY

You were on a commune? When you were in your teens or... 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 take LSD, Violet.

VIOLET

(exiting kitchen)  
That would tie it all up for you, wouldn't it? LSD.

CATHY

Well there are numerous studies tying schizophrenia to--

VIOLET

Relax, honey. I was just messing with you. I was never anywhere near a commune. I never did drugs of any kind.

CATHY

Really?

VIOLET

Yes. So I guess you're back to the drawing board.

Violet starts back to the kitchen.

CATHY

I need a key to your apartment.

Violet stops and looks at her.

VIOLET

Why? Because I made a joke?

CATHY

I need a key.

VIOLET

No you don't.

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...

(MORE)

VIOLET (CONT'D)

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. They hear the alarm and they leave the building

VIOLET

That can't be true. Every time?

CATHY

Well when they hear fire engines coming, for sure.

VIOLET

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 an infringement 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

Well for the foreseeable future, yes. 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... meaning capable of showing that-

VIOLET

I can make my own decisions? But I can't, can I? I can't be who I want to be. Live where I want to live. Put or not 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. But 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. Then finally...

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 son Mac, late 20s, is looking around the apartment. Violet is in the kitchen.

MAC

Are you eating?

VIOLET

No I'm cleaning.

MAC

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

VIOLET

What's that mean? Well. Are you asking if I eat salads? Why would I start now? 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.

MAC

Mum. Just tell me what you do eat, okay

VIOLET

Do you want me to make you a list? I'll do that 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.

MAC

Relax. 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.

MAC

What's that?

VIOLET

Lunch.

MAC

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

VIOLET  
Yes. Your favourite.

MAC  
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 son a plate of Oreo  
cookies for lunch.

She returns with two bowls.

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

MAC  
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.

MAX  
Not allowed?

VIOLET  
By myself. I don't trust my  
abilities to cope in the stressful  
environment of a super market.



MAX

How about a smaller store?

VIOLET

I'm working up to that. But just to be sure exactly where I am with the shopping anxiety I'm not allowing myself to leave the apartment yet.

MAX

But if you did, you... could.

VIOLET

Oh yes. And I will eventually. I have plans.

MAX

What kind of plans?

VIOLET

Big ones. It all comes down to proper management of my medication. Too much, and I might as well be in a coma for all I feel. Too little, and well things get...

MAX

Dangerous?

VIOLET

Adventurous. How are the kids?

MAX

They're good.

VIOLET

Can you bring them by sometime?

MAX

We're talking about that.

VIOLET

Yes, of course. Denise should have a say.

MAX

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

VIOLET

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

MAX

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

VIOLET

Sure. Whatever. So how far along are you and *Cathy* in terms of making that decision?

MAX

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

VIOLET

I miss them.

MAX

I know. And Denise is all for it.

VIOLET

I love her. I love the kind of mother she's become. Especially considering her dismal family background. And I love that she supports your career even when you're not fully applying yourself.

MAX

Yeah she's been very--

VIOLET

Kind. She's an exceptionally kind person. If your father had been one tenth as kind, he might still be alive today.

MAX

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 some degree of kindness towards anyone 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.

MAC

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.

(MORE)

VIOLET (CONT'D)

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. No. 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. 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?

MAC

You murdered him, Mum.

VIOLET

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

Blackout.

## SCENE 3

Cathy and Mac. The shower is running.

MAC

I think you should let her see my kids.

CATHY

I will. Just as soon as we get her more stabilized.

MAC

How long will that take?

CATHY

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

MAC

They miss her. Shawna especially.

CATHY

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

MAC

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?

MAC

Just after her hearing. She was in the hospital.

CATHY

And that went okay?

MAC

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

CATHY

And how was *she*?

MAC

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

CATHY

Yeah I've seen that. That's for her puppet show.

MAC

Yeah. She was trying to explain 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)

Did the pinky finger have a shotgun at its disposal?

MAC

No but it was definitely getting very worked up. The kids didn't get any of it. They just wanted to be with her, I think. They're 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.

MAC

We've talked about burnout. They've seen *their* mum after a bad day so...

CATHY

Not exactly the same thing, but there's definitely an epidemic of middle aged women out there going over the edge. And I'm talking about women who, for the most part, didn't go through half of what your mother did with your father. Sometimes when I heard those women talk about their lives it seemed that they were just having a perfectly normal response to how they'd been treated in the world. One woman maintained that her condition was caused by dusting.

MAC

Dusting...

CATHY

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

MAC

Jesus...

CATHY

Yeah... Okay, look here's the news of the day. Leo's out of prison.

MAC

Really? For good behaviour?

CATHY

That, and serving the mandatory part of his sentence.

MAC

Okay. 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.

MAC

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

CATHY

She knows she didn't kill him. She just liked 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.

MAC

And now?

CATHY

You mean today? Who knows? But awhile 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--

MAC

So she suddenly remembered all this?

CATHY

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

MAC

You mean a sign that she was getting better.

CATHY

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

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

VIOLET

So have you decided anything?

MAC

About what?

VIOLET

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

MAC

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 Mac)

But what she really means, what she almost always 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

Go ahead. I'm all ears.

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

CATHY

Leo got out of prison yesterday.

VIOLET

(smiles)

Really.

CATHY

Yes.

VIOLET

So there's a prison for corpses is there?

MAC

Mum.

VIOLET

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

MAC

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

VIOLET

Close enough.

CATHY

Not really.



MAC

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. Do you think that would be a good idea?

CATHY

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.

MAC

(quietly, to CATHY)

What's she doing?

CATHY

Looking for the recipe?

MAC

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

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 stories like that?

A knock on the door.

VIOLET (CONT'D)  
Well let's see, why don't we.

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 was 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 that 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.

(MORE)

LEO (CONT'D)

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 good 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.

(MORE)

VIOLET (CONT'D)

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 stuff 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 man, 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. 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

Or just someone who looked like him 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 I've got waiting for my report on your current state that you did, and then maybe we could pull back on your medication.

VIOLET

That's some incentive.

CATHY

Yes it is.

VIOLET

It sounds like a bribe.

CATHY

Well I guess it might be.

VIOLET

Not standard procedure, I'm guessing.

CATHY

We need to move ahead somehow. 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, at least to some degree. So if you'd just give over to admitting it... 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're totally fucking nuts, Vi. 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 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're even more nuts now. Look at me. 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

To hear the truth! 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.

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. MAC comes in. Sees them and stops. Looks closely at Leo.

MAC

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

She stirs, opens her eyes.

VIOLET

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

MAC

Cathy made me a set of keys.

VIOLET

Okay. But that might actually be unethical.

MAC

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

VIOLET

In case what, dear?

MAC

(points to Leo)  
In case something like his happened. Why've you done this, Mum.

VIOLET

I need to have his full attention. Oh, 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 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.

MAC

Is he okay?



VIOLET

I don't really care.

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

MAC

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 stuff in it. Stuff that knocks you out. And keeps you that way. Hi, Mac. I told you she was capable of some really scary shit.

VIOLET

Told him? Told him when?

LEO

When he visited me inside.

VIOLET

(to Mac)

You went to see him while he was in prison?

MAC

He's my uncle.

VIOLET

So what? Most criminals have relatives of some kind. Doesn't mean they have to 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.

MAC

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.

MAC  
(pointing at something on  
the couch)  
What's that?

VIOLET  
A hunting knife. Just in case he  
got loose.

MAC  
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.

MAC  
Wait a minute. You went out?

VIOLET  
Well Army Surplus doesn't deliver.  
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 MAC)  
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 Mac)  
Means he was a janitor.

LEO  
I took care of the boiler.

VIOLET  
Janitor. You were a school janitor.  
(to Mac)  
Which would have been fine if he  
was a good one.  
(MORE)

VIOLET (CONT'D)

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 Mac)

Okay, kiddo. Untie me.

VIOLET

(to Mac)

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

LEO

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

Mac. Just untie me, okay. That stuff she gave me is making me wanna puke.

VIOLET

Go ahead. "Puke." Who cares.

(to MAC)

He already wet himself.

MAC

(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.

MAC

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 MAC)

Look. Untie me. And I'll forget this bullshit ever happened.

VIOLET

(off)

Don't do it, honey!

LEO

Come on, Mac!

MAC

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. And 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.

LEO

The "diaries..." Okay. 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.

MAC

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 MAC)

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

MAC

And Nanna knew this.

VIOLET

(points)

It's all in these diaries.

LEO

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

VIOLET

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

LEO

And that meant we were killers for  
hire.

(to MAC)

Look, Mac.

(MORE)

LEO (CONT'D)

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, Mac. 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?

MAC

You mean they haven't already been translated for you?

VIOLET

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

MAC

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 counselling all those kids in my school who were determined not to reach their 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. It really did. So go get me that dictionary. Bring it back here. Give me a fighting chance to get the truth out of that guy in there, and then you can just leave.

MAC

Leave. But with Leo still tied up.

VIOLET

It's a compromise solution.

MAC

He'll tell people I let you keep him captive.

VIOLET

No one will believe anything he says. 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.

MAC

Mum.

VIOLET

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

MAC

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!!

MAC

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

VIOLET

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

MAC

Calm down, Mum. I was just--

VIOLET

Okay, right. I mean even if you are an idiot, you're my son and I should show you nothing but love. It's just that sometimes when I look at you or I hear you ask questions like that, you remind me of your father. And I have to suppress an urge to hurt you a little. You understand that, don't you.

MAC

Yeah. I guess so.

VIOLET

Good. Now off you go.

He leaves.

Blackout.



## SCENE 7

MAC is on the floor searching the Lithuanian dictionary.  
VIOLET is on the couch behind him massaging his shoulders.

VIOLET

He seemed like a decent fellow when we met. He was even sort of charming. But that's just one of their tricks. He also exuded a false aura of intelligence. He must have learned that from some actor in the movies. Anyway I was in the mood for romance, as they used to say. I was in pre burnout mode at my job. And becoming the school's guidance counsellor was a quick dive into the first circle of hell. Nothing I did or said to those troubled young people seemed to help, and I was looking for a little joy. 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 views about immigrants. He was brutal about them. Completely unforgiving of all their ways, their trouble with the language. 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...

MAC

I think I've got it. There's a title for all of this. It's a six-part story.

VIOLET

What's it called?

MAC

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

VIOLET

Yes. And Henrikus was your father.

MAC

He changed it to Keith?

VIOLET

Not officially. He just started asking people to call him that.

MAC

Did he give any reason?

VIOLET

You mean an explanation. No he never explained any of the strange things he did. Like putting pepper on grapefruit, or drawing pictures of rats.

MAC

What?

VIOLET

I have nothing to add about that.

(points)

Try to translate that opening paragraph.

MAC

Okay. But it'll take some time.

VIOLET

It's important. I might have to use it as evidence. If I can put Leo in prison for the rest of his life, I'm hopeful that my mental state will improve.

MAC

You seem okay today.

VIOLET

It's the medication. I'm better in terms of clarity. But it makes me lose touch with my true self.

MAC

Okay. But... what is that, Mum? Your true self. I mean really.

VIOLET

Hard to describe. But it includes a vibrant inner life.

He kisses her hand which rests on his shoulder.

MAC

I love you.

VIOLET

Do you? Still.

MAC

Yes. I love you. Even when you're not sharing your vibrant inner life with me.

VIOLET

What a nice thing to say.

She kisses the top of his head.

A loud groaning from the bedroom.

MAC

I guess he woke up.

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 MAC. MAC is putting the diaries back in the box.

CATHY  
Family stuff?

MAC  
Yeah.

CATHY  
Letters? Photos?

MAC  
Some. Yeah.

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

MAC  
Well here's hoping.

CATHY  
It's great that you're seeing her a  
lot.

MAC  
Yeah.

CATHY looks at him.

CATHY  
How long were you in therapy?

MAC  
I wasn't.

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

MAC  
That was very thoughtful of him.  
But I had my wife to talk to. She  
has a fair share of asshole men in  
her family.

CATHY  
None like your father though?

MAC  
No. My father was a special kind of  
guy.

CATHY

So you still think your mum was right about him.

MAC

I've always tried to lean in that direction, yeah.

CATHY

Even in light of her condition.

MAC

It's been a struggle. And sometimes I think I need to challenge her about it. But well... her condition was caused by her knowing what he did, right.

CATHY

Not according to people at the school where she worked.

MAC

That was just stress. She felt like she was letting her students down. Look the truth is, what I saw of my father's behaviour means I don't have big a problem believing he was a cold-hearted killer.

CATHY

You'd seen him hurt people.

MAC

Yeah.

CATHY

Did he hurt you?

MAC

Occasionally. It stopped when I was big enough to hit him back. I was never his main target though.

CATHY

Are you saying that was your mother?

MAC

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.

CATHY

And you heard that from your mother?

MAC

It was a well known fact. I mean in the neighbourhood.

CATHY

And no one ever stepped in?

MAC

No they loved cruel stupid shit like that around there. Not all of them, but there were a lot of mean people. Older men for sure. I think they were upset about missing the party.

CATHY

What party?

MAC

All the good times they could have had butchering people if they'd stayed where they came from. They could have been Nazis, right. The Eastern European countries were full of them. Per capita, more than Germany, some of them.

CATHY

Is that true?

MAC

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.

MAC

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

CATHY

She'll get used to them. If she keeps taking them every day they'll help her function.

MAC

Well I'll try to make sure she does. But she can be pretty stubborn.

CATHY

And sneaky.

MAC

Yeah...

CATHY

We can manage this. I know it doesn't seem that way but--

MAC

I believe you. I just think it would help if you started believing *her*. You know, 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.

MAC

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.

CATHY

I'm sorry?

MAC

It's... Danish. The best butter there is. Right, mum?

VIOLET

Sure.

(to Cathy)

He has very strong opinions about food products.

CATHY

Well he *is* a chef.

MAC

Was a chef.

CATHY

Oh. What are you now?

MAC

An unemployed chef.

CATHY

So what happened?

MAC

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.

MAC

It doesn't always work.

CATHY

Does that mean you *did* stab him?

MAC

No. I was just--

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.

MAC

Habit?

LEO screams from the bedroom.



CATHY  
Was that her?

MAC  
Who else could it be?

CATHY  
Good question.

CATHY heads for the bedroom door.

MAC  
Cathy...

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

MAC (CONT'D)  
Jesus...

Blackout.

## SCENE 8

LEO is on the couch. Still a bit groggy.

CATHY is wiping his face with a damp cloth.

MAC is bringing Leo 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.

MAC

She needed to find out.

CATHY

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

VIOLET

You make it sound so petty.

(to Mac)

You'll have to be more specific.

MAC

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

CATHY

What diary?

MAC

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

LEO

That's just crazy.

MAC

We've been reading it.

LEO

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

MAC

We translated it.

LEO

What?

VIOLET

The original is in your native tongue, Leo.

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.

MAC

We're still at it. We bought a dictionary. And it's slow going but-

VIOLET

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 just brother stuff.

MAC

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.

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.

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

LEO  
What proof? Proof of what? Jesus.  
Come on.

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?

MAC  
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.

(MORE)

VIOLET (CONT'D)

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.

MAC

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 son was one of my students. Did you know that?

LEO

(quietly)

No...

MAC

What.

LEO

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

VIOLET

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

MAC

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 woulda been the wiser.

CATHY

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.

He starts out, stops.

LEO (CONT'D)

(to Violet)

I feel better telling you. It's been a real hardship to keep 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 again.

Leo leaves the apartment.

CATHY  
Pathetic.

MAC  
Yeah. How does this affect her... situation.

CATHY  
You mean with the law?

MAC  
Yeah.

CATHY  
I haven't got a clue about that. And as far as her mental state is concerned...

MAC  
We'll just have to see if it helps?

CATHY  
Yes.

Cathy looks at Violet.

CATHY (CONT'D)  
Mac, 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 MAC)  
In the bedroom then?



MAC

Sure.

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 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!

(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. Asshole. Loser. 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, nasty 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... So get yourself together, Violet. Do you want to live or not? That's the question... Okay but it's the kind of question a person should not have to answer under pressure. Because sometimes in rare moments of... silence, let's call it, I could go either way on that.

(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 to them 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 mean... 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. Right. There was a time when no one knew who was doing those killings and Keith... told me he thought it could be you.

LEO  
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'd kill you and  
leave evidence that pointed to you  
being the one who'd committed all  
those murders. 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 from the  
cops. I mean when I saw Mac and  
your nurse head off I was pretty  
sure they were on their way to turn  
me in.

VIOLET  
Mac 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 was  
actually 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 cops about me.

VIOLET

Well at least not Mac and Cathy.

LEO

And what about you?

VIOLET

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

LEO

But this time you have proof.

VIOLET

Proof of what? That a poor bullied insecure creature felt forced to help his sick vicious brother kill a bunch of gamblers who couldn't pay their debts...

LEO

Then there was that family. I mean I didn't actually do anything but--

VIOLET

But you didn't stop him, and you'll just have to live with that, wont you. It might help you to keep remembering what Keith did to you. I mean you were pretty...

LEO

Fucked up.

VIOLET

Yes.

LEO

Still am, kinda. Like you in a lot of ways...

VIOLET

No. Not like me. I'm much worse off. We have to get that straight or there's no point continuing this conversation. I'm barely hanging on here, and what little clarity I've exhibited is because I took my medication this morning. Well only half of it.

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 a phase I was going  
through. Because of the spiders.  
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. 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  
All right. 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 also said I only took half a pill  
so--

CATHY  
Is that true, Vi?

VIOLET  
I think so.

LEO  
Looking for me. I guess 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. I think I'll need to be  
accompanied to the police station.

VIOLET  
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.  
(MORE)



CATHY (CONT'D)

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 probably going back to  
prison for awhile. 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.

They all leave.

Blackout.

## SCENE 11

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

MAC

How you doing in there, Mum?

VIOLET

I'm fine, sweetie.

MAC

You don't have to fuss, you know.

VIOLET

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

MAC

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.

MAC

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

VIOLET

If you say so.

MAC

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 this for years. Wanted them both to be old enough to enjoy it. Whatya think?

MAC

I think it's great.

VIOLET

You do?

MAC

Totally...

VIOLET

Whatya think Cathy will make of it?

MAC

She'll probably be a bit concerned.

VIOLET

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

MAC

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

VIOLET

They'll love it, right.

MAC

Yeah...

VIOLET

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

She honks her nose.

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

MAC

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

CATHY

(a bit concerned)  
Oh... okay.

MAC

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?

CATHY

(to Mac)

You better go down there.

MAC

Yeah....

Mac rushes out.

VIOLET

Was it something you said or not?

CATHY

Someone took a video of you menacing those kids with your 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 Denise's friends texted her the video... which has gone viral, by the way.

VIOLET

(sitting)

Viral.

CATHY

It means---

VIOLET

I know what it means. Why do you think I don't know what it means? ... I guess I won't be seeing them anytime soon then.

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.

VIOLET  
For how long?

CATHY  
I don't know. But it also means  
you're going to be monitored more  
closely.

VIOLET  
In a hospital?

CATHY  
Well unless you'll agree to let 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.

CATHY  
(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?

CATHY  
(stopping)  
I wouldn't let that happen.

She looks at Violet. Comes back in. Sits beside her.

CATHY (CONT'D)

I'll always try to do what's best for you. I care about you very 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?

CATHY

You mean besides your family. Well... I love you.

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 too. 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.

CATHY

Why do you insist on focusing on them? 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?

VIOLET

They're in prison. They were both honour students, but now they're in prison... 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.

(off her look)  
They killed Jeff's parents. No one knew why. And they never said.

CATHY  
And now they're in...

VIOLET  
(touching her temple)  
Here. They're in here.

CATHY  
And the others?

VIOLET  
Others? You mean in my head. They're not recognizable. Jeff and Marcus are the ones I hear clearly. All the others are just making noise. Bickering, cajoling, loud, angry, guttural heaving breaths of a heartless killer and the pitiful yelping of his victims...

(off her nose)  
You can take that off 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? Seriously?

CATHY  
Yes. Maybe the kids only laugh because they're nervous.

VIOLET  
Gee, Cathy. I was only kidding about that.  
(MORE)

VIOLET (CONT'D)

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 for  
you. Say something like... well  
here we are in a very difficult  
real life situation, each having a  
part to play and a need to stay  
connected. Both personally and  
professionally. 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 very foolish,  
and even painful not to.

CATHY

We don't give up, Vi. Okay?

Violet just looks at her. Cathy takes her hand.

Blackout.

THE END