

# FAULT LINES

By  
George Sapio

## FAULT LINES

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## FAULT LINES

*With unending thanks to my wife and best friend, Maura Stephens.*

## FAULT LINES

*Fault Lines* received its 1st production at Fall Creek Theatre Studios, Ithaca, New York, in March 2013 featuring the following cast:

Shawn..... Brett Bossard  
Anastasia ..... Lauren Boehm  
Ginger ..... Holly Adams  
Teresa ..... Maura Stephens

Director ..... Camilla Schade  
Stage manager..... A.J. Sage

*Fault Lines* received its 2nd production on a six-city tour of Costa Rica in February 2019 featuring the following cast:

Shawn..... George Sapio  
Stazi..... Anthar Darwish  
Ginger ..... Sophie Segers  
Teresa ..... Anette Hallett

Director ..... Maura Stephens  
Stage manager..... Victoria Parada Alfaro

Cast: 3 Women, 1 Man

SHAWN	40s, aspiring chef, Ginger's husband
STAZI	40, youngest sister, forensic pathologist
GINGER	43, middle sister, counselor
TERESA	50, oldest sister, Catholic nun

TIME: Recent past

SETTING: Stazi's home. Living room with view of entrances to kitchen, hallway, front porch.

*Note:* A slash mark ("/") indicates that the next actor interrupts/speaks over.

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# FAULT LINES

ACT 1  
SCENE 1

*STAZI on couch, GINGER next to her. SHAWN enters from kitchen with a mug of hot chocolate, which he gives to Stazi.*

**SHAWN.** Can't believe you were here the whole time.

**STAZI.** I was in the kitchen and I heard a window break. I came out here and there was a man reaching in. He saw me. He opened the window and started to come in. I ran down the basement. I heard him trying to open the door, but he couldn't. Then he started tearing the place apart.

**SHAWN.** What did he get?

**GINGER.** TV. DVD player. The police said just to report it to the insurance company and let them replace everything. They'll probably never catch the guy.

**SHAWN.** Jeepers. Poor kid.

**STAZI.** Thank you for the chocolate.

**SHAWN.** You're welcome. Better drink it before it gets cold.

**STAZI.** I can't. I have an allergy. I get hives and some pretty harsh rectal itching if I drink it. My eyelids swell up pretty badly, too, and I get confused about things. Plus, if this is a major brand, then it probably means that they used child slave labor to pick the beans.

**SHAWN.** I'm sorry! Jeez, lemme take it away.

**STAZI.** No. I like holding it. It's warm. And I like the smell.

**SHAWN.** Okay. I guess. You just relax. (*Nods at Ginger. She joins him; they cross away.*)

**SHAWN.** Did you call Mother Superior?

**GINGER.** No. And would you stop calling her that?

**SHAWN.** When she stops calling me "Emeril."

**GINGER.** She's kidding. You know that.

**SHAWN.** She's not. You know that.

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**GINGER.** She'll be over for dinner anyway. Besides, you can kick Emeril's ass in the kitchen any day.

**SHAWN.** I love you.

**GINGER.** I love you, too.

**SHAWN.** I'm gonna go hang garlic on the door.

**GINGER.** That's for vampires. *(They turn back to Stazi.)*

**SHAWN.** Well, at least it was just the TV and the DVD player. Nothing of any real value was taken.

*(Stazi breaks into a loud bout of sobbing.)*

Stazi, I'm sorry! I should have realized how important they were to you. *(To Ginger.)* What did I say? I'll just go finish cleaning the kitchen. Start dinner. *(Exits to kitchen.)*

**GINGER.** *(To Stazi.)* Honey? Whaddya say we go out early tomorrow and shop for a new TV? We'll get you a nice big one. How would that be?

**STAZI.** I'm not a child.

**GINGER.** I'm sorry.

**STAZI.** I know I'm weird.

**GINGER.** Stop that. You're not weird.

**STAZI.** Teresa thinks I'm weird.

**GINGER.** Teresa's married to God. She has no right to call anyone else weird.

**STAZI.** Mom never stopped telling me I was weird. "Anastasia, you're weird. Who would want to marry you, you freak?"

**GINGER.** Mom was wrong, Stazi. It will happen, honey.

**STAZI.** Not at my age. Studies show that when you hit 40, your chances of finding a partner decrease exponentially day by day. And not only does your mind get more depressed, but your body starts to get depressed, too. Muscles start to sag faster, immune system begins to fail—

**GINGER.** Stazi, wait . . .

**STAZI.** —you put on weight, eyesight goes downhill, estrogen levels start to fluctuate all over the place—

**GINGER.** Stazi . . .

**STAZI.** —mental acuity decreases dramatically and your vagina loses elasticity and the ability to lubricate. In ten years I'm gonna be a confused, blind, flabby, hysterical bitch with a desiccated vagina.

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**GINGER.** Thinking that way is counterproductive to a healthy homeostasis. He's out there.

**STAZI.** I wouldn't even know what to do. It's been a really long time since anybody's . . . you know . . .

**GINGER.** I think you're worrying too much here. It's not like you forget how.

**STAZI.** You got lucky.

**GINGER.** I know. But it took me a while. And, unlike our dear eldest sister . . .

**STAZI/GINGER.** "Whose spouse created the universe!"

**GINGER.** Should I be jealous because Shawn isn't God?

**STAZI.** Probably not. You call him that sometimes, though.

**GINGER.** No, I don't. When?

**STAZI.** Last Thursday. Around 1:30 am.

**GINGER.** Oh my god!!

**STAZI.** I think you were an octave higher than that.

*(They crack up. Shawn enters, looking around.)*

**STAZI.** What are you looking for?

**SHAWN.** Oh, nothing. Not important. *(Exits.)*

**GINGER.** Look. I know we're imposing on you . . .

**STAZI.** I told you already. I don't mind. I'm glad I could help.

**GINGER.** And as soon as Shawn gets settled in a new job . . . and I pick up some more clients.

**STAZI.** But I like having you here. The last six weeks have been really nice.

Otherwise it's just me. And it's bad enough being alone. I got used to it. But now I look at you two and I feel even more alone than I thought I was. But I love having you here. I really do.

**GINGER.** We will move out, you know.

**STAZI.** I know.

**GINGER.** Soon, probably.

**STAZI.** You got lucky.

**GINGER.** Come on. Let's tidy the place up.

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### SCENE 2

*Stazi and Shawn cleaning up, but not getting much done.*

**SHAWN.** It was harrowing. I get there, meet the head chef, tour the kitchen. You gotta see this place. Holy moley. It's huge. Must be a dozen stations, ovens and burners everywhere, pots hanging everyplace. It's a miracle anyone can even move in there. Talk about loud: everyone's yelling orders, scrambling for ingredients, hollering that their broccoli is wilting, the béarnaise is overheated. It's a zoo.

**STAZI.** Sounds crazy.

**SHAWN.** So they stick me at a station and start throwing orders at me. Deliberately overloading me to see how fast I'd crack. Sautéed scallops in white wine sauce, braised veal medallions, hollandaise sauce. It didn't stop for hours. One hundred and two orders. When it was all over they said they'd never tasted food like I made it.

**STAZI.** You're brilliant. I have tasted some really good food, but you do something with it that's unbelievable.

**SHAWN.** That's because I have a secret ingredient.

**STAZI.** What is it?

**SHAWN.** I put a ton of MSG in everything I cook.

**STAZI.** Oh, that's gross! You do not!

**SHAWN.** I don't.

**STAZI.** Anything I can eat there?

**SHAWN.** Not really. But I talked to them about that afterwards. They're definitely open to vegetarian options. They're just not known as a veggie place.

**STAZI.** Charred dead animal flesh. They'd get my business if they went veggie.

**SHAWN.** I told them that. Said my sister-in-law is a vegematarian and so are thousands of her friends.

**STAZI.** "Thousands." Right. So what happened?

**SHAWN.** They want me to start Friday.

**STAZI.** That's wonderful! I'm so happy for you. But I am going to miss your meals. I've never enjoyed eating so much in my life.

**SHAWN.** I'll still cook for you. Whaddya think?

**STAZI.** You'll be too busy. You'll be wiped out after a shift at that place. You could teach me, though. I'd love to learn.



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**SHAWN.** You got it.

**STAZI.** So what's your secret weapon?

**SHAWN.** Uh-uh. Never telling.

**STAZI.** Well, I don't care. Just keep on using it. Whatever it is. *(Ginger enters in a bathrobe.)*

**GINGER.** Hey— *(Stazi jumps and screams.)*

**GINGER.** I'm sorry, Stazi!

**STAZI.** No, it's me. I'm just a little jumpy. Sorry.

**GINGER.** Shawn, honey, want me to cook tonight? You must be exhausted.

**SHAWN.** Nope. Sunday dinners are now a tradition. In fact I was just going out. There are a few things I need to replace. The burglar threw all my vegetables on the floor. There are sneaker marks on my radicchio.

*(Doorbell rings. TERESA enters. She is dressed secularly but wears a wimple.)*

**TERESA.** As usual, Stazi, your house is a pigsty.

**STAZI.** I was robbed.

**TERESA.** Oh, shit. When?

**STAZI.** Today.

**TERESA.** Why didn't anybody call me?

**GINGER.** Nobody was hurt. You were coming over anyway.

**TERESA.** Are you okay? *(Crosses to Stazi and hugs her.)*

**STAZI.** I'm fine.

**TERESA.** What did they take?

**SHAWN.** TV. DVD player.

**TERESA.** So nothing important. *(Stazi turns away; Teresa doesn't notice.)* That's good. Did you call the police?

**SHAWN/GINGER.** Yes.

**TERESA.** They make a report?

**SHAWN/GINGER.** Yes.

**TERESA.** Any chance of catching the guy? Just one of you, please? *(Neither answers.)*

**TERESA.** Well?

**GINGER.** Which one of us do you want to answer you?

**TERESA.** No wonder Mom was so disappointed in you. You can't even answer a simple question.

**GINGER.** No, they will not catch the guy and no, they will not get the stuff back.

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**TERESA.** Come give me a hug. I'm not infected. *(Ginger crosses and they hug, if not very affectionately on Ginger's part.)*

**TERESA.** You should have called me immediately. And cover yourself up. I can see your boobs. *(Turning to Shawn.)* How are you, Emeril?

**SHAWN.** Fine. In fact I was just going out for some supplies. Including garlic. *(Kisses Ginger and exits.)*

**TERESA.** Well, I guess we're all a little sensitive today.

**GINGER.** We were robbed, T.

**TERESA.** Are you still crying, Stazi?

**GINGER.** A stranger destroyed her house while she had to hide in the basement, okay?

**TERESA.** You must be a wreck. *(She hugs Stazi.)* But you always have been the touchiest one. Well, don't worry. We'll help you clean up and put everything right. And then Emeril will cook you one of his wonderful meals and you'll feel a lot better. Tomorrow we'll go out and get you some nice new locks and an alarm system. Ginger, maybe you should dress and start helping us clean the place up. I'll be right back, Stazi. I need to go take a dump. *(Teresa exits. Stazi and Ginger look at each other, then start to laugh. Ginger exits. Stazi waits till the room is clear, then begins to frantically search the room for something. Defeated, she looks upwards.)*

**STAZI.** I'm sorry. I'm so sorry.

### SCENE 3

*Stazi and Teresa cleaning up, but not getting much done.*

**TERESA.** I thought you got rid of this thing years ago.

**STAZI.** That was from Mom's honeymoon.

**TERESA.** It's a snow globe. Of Manitoba. Snow falling on a moose.

**STAZI.** Just put it on the shelf over there, okay?

**TERESA.** This is like being back at Mom's house. Why are you keeping all this shit?

**STAZI.** I don't know.

**TERESA.** Whatever.

**STAZI.** Just chalk it up to Stazi the freak.

**TERESA.** You realize you're the one who said that, right? Not me.

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**STAZI.** But it's what everyone thinks.

**TERESA.** When did you learn to read minds?

**STAZI.** Can you not badger me today, please?

**TERESA.** I am not badgering you. Can you stop being so oversensitive?

**STAZI.** I AM NOT OVERSENSITIVE!!!

**TERESA.** My mistake. I apologize. What are you looking for?

**STAZI.** Nothing.

**TERESA.** You keep going into the kitchen. Then you come back out. You look in the cabinets. You look behind the doors. You hardly ever pick anything up.

**STAZI.** It's nothing.

**TERESA.** Well then you should be little miss chipper cheery, cuz *that's* all you're finding.

**STAZI.** I'm sorry.

**TERESA.** Stop apologizing. I'm trying to help.

**STAZI.** I know. I'm sorry.

**TERESA.** I'm going out for a cigarette. (*Teresa exits. Stazi keeps looking, but gets frustrated. Begins throwing stuff everywhere. She stops. Sits. Teresa re-enters.*)

**TERESA.** Well, I see progress was made. And if you say "I'm sorry," I'll strangle you with my rosary. You wanna tell me what's wrong?

**STAZI.** I can't.

**TERESA.** You don't trust me?

**STAZI.** Partly.

**TERESA.** I'm your sister.

**STAZI.** That's not it. I keep thinking that everything I say to you goes straight to God's ears.

**TERESA.** Well, that's just stupid.

**STAZI.** Thanks.

**TERESA.** You're a forensic pathologist. A damn good one. You are supposed to be sensible.

**STAZI.** Mom said it all the time. "Our Divine Lord hears everything you say to Sister Teresa." I think it stuck.

**TERESA.** That woman took everything way too seriously. Ever since the day I got nun-erized she thought I was some kind of holy hotline. Forget that nonsense, okay?

**STAZI.** I can't tell you. I can't tell anybody.

**TERESA.** Come on, Stazi. Let me help. I really want to.

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**STAZI.** Look, I don't trust you, okay? It's like talking to Mom. You always criticize.

**TERESA.** How can you accuse me of reminding you of Mom when you're the one who has all of her shit all over the place. Snow globes, furniture, pictures. This place is a freakin' shrine.

**STAZI.** I just couldn't throw it away.

**TERESA.** You've had it for five years, Stazi.

**STAZI.** So? *(Ginger enters.)*

**GINGER.** I thought we cleaned this stuff up already.

**TERESA.** Hurricane Stazi had one of her moments. *(Stazi flees to kitchen.)*

**GINGER.** That was nice.

**TERESA.** I do not believe you two. I am your sister. You both treat me like I was some kind of . . . booby trap.

**GINGER.** Well, maybe there's a good reason for it.

**TERESA.** I'm too critical.

**GINGER.** Yeah. There's that.

**TERESA.** Oh brother. You don't get it.

**GINGER.** No. We get it. It's your way of communicating.

**TERESA.** "Communicating."

**GINGER.** Fine, then. Talking to us like Mom did. Like we were your idiot children.

**TERESA.** Sometimes you act like idiot children.

**GINGER.** We are who we are.

**TERESA.** Really. Who else would you be?

**GINGER.** Stazi's been through a negatively impactful experience. Her house was broken into. Her personal space was invaded.

**TERESA.** And she's gonna whine about it forever?

**GINGER.** It happened today.

**TERESA.** I understand that. But if we just mollycoddle her, we're not doing her any good. You know how fragile she is.

**GINGER.** She gets upset when we argue. It hurts her.

**TERESA.** What doesn't?

**GINGER.** So calling her "stupid" is better?

**TERESA.** You heard that.

**GINGER.** I was listening behind the door.

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**TERESA.** Okay, okay. I could be a little more . . .

**GINGER.** Could you? Ya know, I don't think I'll wait for that miracle.

**TERESA.** As it so happens, I have an issue I was hoping to bring up with you two.

**GINGER.** Life-threatening?

**TERESA.** No.

**GINGER.** Then it will have to wait. You're not going to preempt her calamity with yours.

**TERESA.** Wow.

**STAZI (OS).** Darn it! Darn it! *(Sounds of wreckage from the kitchen.)*

**GINGER.** I have this. You stay here.

*(Ginger exits. Teresa picks up some DVD boxes from floor.)*

**TERESA.** *Bridget Jones's Diary. Under the Tuscan Sun. My Best Friend's Wedding.* Jeez, Stazi. You are desperate. *(Teresa places videos in a bookcase and finds a paper bag with more DVDs.)*

**TERESA.** *Breast Side Story?* Must be a typo. *Riding Miss Daisy.* What? *Chitty Chitty Gang*—! Oh my God. Why would she have . . . *(Recognizes a face on the DVD box.)* Wait . . . what? It can't be. Ginger?! *(Noise from kitchen; she hurriedly puts the videos back in the bag and jams them into the cabinet. Picks up her bag and starts to exit. Ginger leads Stazi onstage.)*

**GINGER.** Leaving?

**TERESA.** I . . . I thought I was being not useful here.

**GINGER.** Yeah, well. Leaving is one way out of it. Bye.

**STAZI.** Don't leave. Please, Teresa.

**TERESA.** I'll stay if you want me to. *(Ginger sits Stazi on couch, sits next to her. Teresa stays far away from Ginger.)*

**GINGER.** Why did you start throwing things? You know we're here to help you clean up.

**STAZI.** I . . . I lost . . . I can't say it.

**GINGER.** You can say anything to me. I mean us, Stazi. We'll understand anything you tell us. Right, T?

**TERESA.** . . . yes . . .

**GINGER.** Well, that was encouraging.

**TERESA.** I'm sorry. I need to leave. *(Teresa begins to exit.)*

**STAZI.** No! Stay! Teresa!

**TERESA.** I'm sorry. I can't.

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**GINGER.** Chickenshit. Coward.

**STAZI.** Ginger, stop! Teresa, don't go! (*Stazi blocks Teresa from leaving.*)

**GINGER.** Let her go, Stazi. (*Crosses toward Teresa.*) Let her run away.

**TERESA.** Stay away from me!

**GINGER.** Fine. She ran away to a convent first, now she runs away from this.

**TERESA.** I'll come back when little miss stone thrower isn't here. Look who got married and became oh-so blameless.

**GINGER.** That's just great coming from Mother Superior, never a sensitive moment in her life. Always a comment, always a judgment.

**TERESA.** Well, one of us had to have some kind of grounding.

**GINGER.** Yeah. Living in a convent gives you grounding.

**TERESA.** (*Drops handbag.*) It certainly beats looking at life while lying in a jail cell. Or on your back.

**GINGER.** At least I did look at life.

**TERESA.** Yes, you did. Three episodes in drug rehab. Who knows what else some of us never found out about.

**GINGER.** Mind. Your. Business.

**STAZI.** Stop it!

**TERESA.** Look who talks about judging others.

**GINGER.** You're like Mom, all over. You are her. Constantly criticizing. Never a word of encouragement.

**TERESA.** I was the one bailing you out, if you remember. You were off somewhere, getting stoned. Racking up . . . boyfriends like it was going out of style.

**GINGER.** I changed.

**TERESA.** Did you really?

**GINGER.** Yes.

**TERESA.** Do we know everything about you?

**GINGER.** What I don't tell you is none of your business.

**TERESA.** Fair enough. Is it Shawn's business? Did you tell your husband?

**GINGER.** If you breathe one word about anything in my past . . . you will regret it.

**TERESA.** That shows what you know. I would never, ever say anything of the kind. I merely asked because I was hoping you would say that you had the guts to tell your husband who you really are. Or were.

**GINGER.** I hate you.

**TERESA.** Yes. I can see that.

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**GINGER.** You're not any better than us.

**TERESA.** Never said I was.

**GINGER.** Never needed to.

**TERESA.** Never thought I was.

**GINGER.** Really.

**TERESA.** Why do you have this vendetta against me? I really do not understand.

**STAZI.** (*Breaking in.*) Because Mom loved you and hated us.

**TERESA.** That is such bullshit.

**STAZI.** No. It's not. She went to church every day. She was fanatical.

**TERESA.** Oh, I get it . . .

**STAZI.** You fulfilled her dream. She had a daughter who was a nun. She was so proud of you. Ginger got tired of the never-ending criticism and left. I stayed. And well, Mom never appreciated anything I did. I wanted to join the Peace Corps. Who can criticize that choice? Mom, of course. Why would I want to go spend my life with "those people?" I became a vegetarian because I couldn't bear the idea of animals being tortured, mistreated, or injected with chemicals and hormones. You think she would have appreciated that, right? You know what she said? "If you can eat our Lord's body every week, you can eat a stupid cow." Next time I went to church, I had an image of Jesus's head on a cow's body holding a big sign that said "Eat me," and I ran out. Mom never forgave me for not going back. (*TERESA begins to laugh.*)

**TERESA.** I love you, Stazi. So much. Well, you can rest easy. The both of you. Pretty soon we'll all be in the same boat. Mom will look down and disown all of us.

**GINGER.** What does that mean?

**TERESA.** I'm leaving the convent.

## SCENE 4

*Shawn and Ginger cleaning up, but not getting much done.*

**SHAWN.** Holy moley.

**GINGER.** Yeah. No kidding.

**SHAWN.** She say why?

**GINGER.** Said she'd tell us all at dinner.

**SHAWN.** Holy moley.

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**GINGER.** It got pretty rough today.

**SHAWN.** How's Stazi?

**GINGER.** She's in her room trying to nap.

**SHAWN.** How are you?

**GINGER.** I'm okay. Listen, Shawn. Can I ask you a question?

**SHAWN.** Ask away.

**GINGER.** I'm serious.

**SHAWN.** I am too. Whazzup?

**GINGER.** I'm actually not sure of the question.

**SHAWN.** Uh-oh. One of those.

**GINGER.** Yeah. I just think I need to tell you a couple of things . . .

**SHAWN.** What things?

**GINGER.** About me.

**SHAWN.** I love you.

**GINGER.** I know. But / I still kinda feel like . . .

**SHAWN.** No. I love you.

**GINGER.** Lemme speak, okay?

**SHAWN.** I will. I just want you to know that I love you. You're gonna tell me things about yourself that I don't know, right? Come clean? Bare it all, no holds barred?

**GINGER.** This isn't easy.

**SHAWN.** Unless it involves outstanding warrants, I don't care. Plus, we can't afford a lawyer right now anyway.

**GINGER.** I was a . . . I did a few . . . Shawn, I had a pretty wild life before I met you.

**SHAWN.** Okay.

**GINGER.** I mean I had a lot of . . . adventures.

**SHAWN.** Okay.

**GINGER.** I got in a lot of trouble. A lot of trouble.

**SHAWN.** I know that. You told me.

**GINGER.** This is stuff I haven't told you.

**SHAWN.** I'll ask it again. Any outstanding warrants?

**GINGER.** No, Shawn! Will you stop / making fun of this?

**SHAWN.** Then I don't care! I don't.

**GINGER.** Well, you should know some things.



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**SHAWN.** I sense the looming, glooming shade of Mother Superior here.

**GINGER.** She brought up a good point, Shawn.

**SHAWN.** Who cares?

**GINGER.** I do. She just made me think that I haven't been as open with you as I should be.

**SHAWN.** Look. Ya wanna tell me, fine. Great. I'll be happy to hear all about it. You have always been my best friend. I trust you. Everything before us is just history. So we'll have a few talks. Stop worrying. Do you still love me?

**GINGER.** Omigod yes.

**SHAWN.** Fine. Then stop worrying. *(Stands.)* Okay? And I'm gonna put a pound of salt in Teresa's fish stew tonight. Turn her into Lot's wife. *(Kicks Teresa's bag.)*

Whose bag is this?

**GINGER.** Teresa's.

**SHAWN.** I'm just gonna move it out of the way. *(Sees something inside of it.)*

Umm. Are you absolutely sure this is Teresa's?

**GINGER.** Of course. Who else would carry half a junkshop around with her?

**SHAWN.** You're sure it's not Stazi's, maybe?

**GINGER.** Shawn, it's Teresa's. I know her bag. Why?

**SHAWN.** 'Cause . . . ummm. Uhhh . . .

**GINGER.** What's the matter?

**SHAWN.** I think I know why she's leaving the order. *(Pulls out a long string of condoms.)*

**GINGER.** Holy shit!!

**SHAWN.** There's like two dozen in here! *(Sound of a door opening, closing. Shawn looks around for a place to drop the bag, tosses it to Ginger. Ginger looks wildly around. Teresa enters.)*

**TERESA.** What are you doing with my bag?

**GINGER.** We were . . .

**TERESA.** Cleaning. I'm sorry for leaving it in the way. *(Teresa takes bag.)*

**SHAWN.** *(Holding back laughter.)* I gotta go to the gourmet outlet. Back in an hour. I'm out of salt. *(Shawn exits.)*

**TERESA.** I really should go.

**GINGER.** No. Stay.

**TERESA.** I'm just making everyone uncomfortable.

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**GINGER.** You've been doing that for years. Why stop now? I'm sorry. That was uncalled for.

**TERESA.** The truth is always called for. Just hard to face sometimes.

**GINGER.** Stazi would be very upset if you left.

**TERESA.** She come out yet?

**GINGER.** No.

**TERESA.** I keep thinking she'll understand my jokes. But she doesn't.

**GINGER.** What jokes?

**TERESA.** Very funny. I just happen to have Mom's sense of humor.

**GINGER.** Mom didn't have a sense of humor.

**TERESA.** Yeah. Maybe not. Look, Ginger. I found what Stazi was looking for.

**GINGER.** You did? Ohhh. Well that explains it. That must have been funny.

**TERESA.** Do you really think so? Well. I put them back exactly where I found them.

**GINGER.** You did? Are you sure?

**TERESA.** Very sure. Now enough of that, please.

**GINGER.** Wait. What exactly was it you found?

**TERESA.** If you don't know then it's obviously none of your business.

**GINGER.** No, seriously. Come on.

**TERESA.** Just let me handle it, okay?

**GINGER.** Fine. You handle it. The way you have to handle everything.

**TERESA.** I'm serious. Don't mention it to her. You know how prone she is to embarrassment.

**GINGER.** Okay. I won't.

**TERESA.** Ever.

**GINGER.** OKAY!

**TERESA.** Please.

**GINGER.** Okay. No questions.

**TERESA.** Thank you.

**GINGER.** *(Beat.)* It'll drive me crazy, you know.

**TERESA.** Let's move the couch back.

**GINGER.** It must be something pretty sensitive. *(No answer.)* Pretty sensitive, I mean, for Stazi. *(No answer.)* Okay, okay. Fine. *(Ginger moves her end of the couch and finds an ornately labeled condiment tin bearing the logo "Norwegian Cardamom.")*

## FAULT LINES

**GINGER.** Wow! Remember these?

**TERESA.** “Norwegian Cardamom.” We got these for Mom’s 60th.

**GINGER.** They were a joke. Fake condiment containers.

**TERESA.** And she didn’t get it.

**GINGER.** Took us ten minutes to explain it to her.

**TERESA.** She just looked at us like we each had two heads. What were the other ones?

**GINGER.** “English Nutmeg.”

**TERESA.** Right. And my favorite:

**GINGER/TERESA.** “Irish Curry.” (*Ginger places can on table.*)

**GINGER.** She was a terrible cook.

**TERESA.** Was she ever. Nothing was done until it had been boiled to that horrible shade of gray. (*Stazi enters, yawning.*) How ya feeling, Pumpkin? (*Stazi sees the “Norwegian Cardamom” can. She grabs it, runs to the other side of the room.*)

**GINGER.** Okaaaay. You can have the can. Sorry. Should know better than to touch Mom’s old stuff.

**TERESA.** Pumpkin, it’s only a silly can. Really. (*Stazi mutters a reply.*)

**GINGER.** What?

**STAZI.** It’s not a silly can.

**TERESA.** Okay. It’s not silly.

**GINGER.** Stazi, come on. It’s one of Mom’s things. We understand that. But you can’t hang on to everything / of hers forever.

**STAZI.** Leave me alone!

**TERESA.** This is getting out of hand. Stazi, put the can down.

**STAZI.** No!

**GINGER.** I agree with Teresa. You really need to start creating a therapeutically emotional distance from Mom’s stuff. Give me the can, honey.

**STAZI.** NO!

**TERESA.** You need to calm down. Sit down, Pumpkin. We promise we won’t take it from you. But you need to talk about it.

**GINGER.** We’ll keep our distance, okay? Sit on the couch. Nobody will touch the can unless you give us permission. (*Stazi sits, keeping the can wrapped in her arms.*)

**TERESA.** (*To Ginger.*) And here I thought the TV was the big loss.

**STAZI.** I don’t care about the TV. I never watched it anyway.

## FAULT LINES

**GINGER.** Is this what you were looking for all day?

**TERESA.** The woman slices up corpses every other day but freaks out over a kitchen canister.

**GINGER.** Stazi? Honey? What's in the can?

**STAZI.** You are going to be so mad at me.

**GINGER.** Oh, no. No, we won't.

**TERESA.** Wait a minute. I have a feeling we will. What did you do this time?

**STAZI.** (*Small voice.*) Nothing. It's just a silly can.

**GINGER.** Talk to us, Stazi. Come on.

**STAZI.** Oh boy. Umm. Do you remember when Mom died?

**TERESA.** With disturbing clarity. What about it?

**STAZI.** And we went to the beach to spread her ashes?

**GINGER.** Oh yeah. Rained like hell afterwards.

**STAZI.** It wasn't her ashes.

**TERESA.** That wouldn't be . . . Mom . . . in the can? (*Stazi nods.*)

**TERESA/GINGER.** Holy shit.

**TERESA.** What, pray tell, actually went into the ocean?

**STAZI.** Ashes from my wood stove.

**TERESA.** I'm gonna break a vow today. I can feel it.

**GINGER.** Stazi . . . why?

**STAZI.** I wasn't ready to . . . I didn't want . . . I was alone.

**GINGER.** We all were!

**STAZI.** No! You weren't. Teresa had her nuns. A whole convent full. You were . . . well, you had your friends. All I had was Mom. I thought . . . maybe later . . . when I wasn't alone . . . I could go to the beach . . . It would have ended up the same, right? She would have gone where she wanted, just a little later than we planned.

**TERESA.** Oh for God's sake!

**GINGER.** Okay. Stazi, normally I'm happy to validate and support your choices. But this time I think I want to smack you in the head.

**TERESA.** I do not believe Mom is still in that stupid can.

**GINGER.** Is that . . . all of her?

**STAZI.** Cremation leaves approximately three to four and a half percent of the original body in weight.

**TERESA.** Finally. Rationality. The pathologist speaks.

**GINGER.** How much did Mom weigh when she died?

## FAULT LINES

**STAZI.** About 150 pounds.

**GINGER.** So now she's about six pounds.

**TERESA.** Why are we having this conversation?

**GINGER.** Because that can does not weigh six pounds. Seemed light.

**TERESA.** Open it up.

**STAZI.** No!

**GINGER.** You're morbid. All I'm saying is that can is way lighter than six pounds.

**TERESA.** What? You think Mom evaporated?

**STAZI.** Ashes don't evaporate. It does feel light . . . *(Stazi opens the can, looks confused.)* I don't understand.

**GINGER.** There's only a little left.

**TERESA.** What happened?

**STAZI.** I don't know. I could swear this can was full. *(Shawn enters.)*

**SHAWN.** I'm screwed.

**GINGER.** What's the matter?

**SHAWN.** I have been all over town, I've been searching the internet, and nobody knows what I'm talking about. *(Sees cardamom can.)* Omigod! You found it! Yes!

**GINGER.** Found what? *(Shawn takes can from Stazi.)*

**SHAWN.** I thought it was all over. Stazi, this stuff is my secret cooking ingredient! *(Shawn exits. The three women shriek and run like hell after him.)*

## END OF ACT ONE

***THE PLAY IS NOT OVER!! TO FIND OUT HOW IT ENDS –  
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