

# THE WISH

*By*  
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# THE WISH

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THE WISH

*For Hannah, Emily, and Todd*

*With thanks to Jake and the Pipeline Playwrights*

## THE WISH

CAST: 3 Women, 1 Man

BONNIE CONRAD	late 20s, bubbly
LYLA CONRAD	around 30, lesbian, Bonnie's older sister
BARBARA CONRAD	50, once-beautiful, Bonnie's & Lyla's mother, haughty Southern accent
RICHARD CONRAD	50s, scrappy, Bonnie's & Lyla's father

Characters may be any race/ethnicity.

TIME: Around 2018.

PLACE: The Conrad's old vacation cabin, secluded and deep in the woods.

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## SCENE 1

*The exterior of the Conrad family's long-disused vacation cabin. The solid front door is closed, and a rusty, tattered screen door hangs by one hinge against the bug-eaten wallboards. Afternoon sun filters through thick tree trunks, and autumn leaves coat the listing front porch. Distant tires crunch on gravel, grow louder, stop just offstage. A car door shuts loudly.*

**BARBARA.** *(Off stage.)* What's with this goddamned blindfold? I know exactly where we are.

**LYLA.** *(Off stage.)* Let me come around, Mom. Just wait a second and I'll help you. *(The other car door shuts forcefully. LYLA and BARBARA enter. Lyla sports heavy boots, a black leather coat and several piercings. She carries a large, colorful designer purse uncomfortably and leads a blindfolded Barbara toward the porch. Barbara is frayed elegance in a long, belted trench and scuffed heels.)*

**BARBARA.** I can smell the lake from here. Jesus Christ it's cold. Did you grab my bag? *(Lyla places her mother's hands over the purse. Barbara snatches it.)*

**LYLA.** And I bet Bonnie can smell the bourbon on your breath from in there. She'll love that.

**BARBARA.** It's my birthday. I will do whatever I damn well please.

**LYLA.** Same as any other day then. *(Barbara pulls off the blindfold, throws it at Lyla.)*

**BARBARA.** This is ridiculous.

**LYLA.** Put that back on. You know how she gets if you don't play along.

**BARBARA.** My eyes need to breathe a minute. *(Barbara brushes off one of the porch steps with a scowl, lowers herself ungracefully. Lyla digs her phone out of a pocket, holds it up trying to get a signal. Nothing. She puts the phone away, checks her watch.)*

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**LYLA.** I guess we've got a minute, but don't take--

**BARBARA.** Fifty. Jesus. I mean I don't look that old... *(A beat. Lyla finally takes the hint.)*

**LYLA.** Not a day over 49.

**BARBARA.** So generous of you.

**LYLA.** Mollifying you is Bonnie's thing, not mine.

**BARBARA.** What's the big surprise anyway?

**LYLA.** No idea. That is also Bonnie's thing. I'm sure Little Miss Perfect has crafted a well-organized and detailed plan--

**BARBARA.** As she does.

**LYLA.** --and I'm sure your gift will be thoughtful and memorable.

**BARBARA.** She's always making artsy-fartsy nonsense. Hand-glazed mugs, embroidered pillows, that big wood plank, looks like she ripped it off a barn with her bare hands and painted it with some crap about 'family.' It's all so... cute. I don't do cute.

**LYLA.** No.

**BARBARA.** But once she gets something in her head there's no stopping her.

**LYLA.** Hello, Kettle. Pot here.

**BARBARA.** Hmph.

**LYLA.** Anyway. All I know is what she texted me, said to have you here by two. Which it is getting well past.

**BARBARA.** The guest of honor is never late.

**LYLA.** Don't worry, she won't blame you. *(Beat.)* It's been a long time since I made it to one of these--

**BARBARA.** Couldn't come up with an excuse this year?

**LYLA.** Can't say I've missed it. But, hey, this is your big 5-0.

**BARBARA.** Ugh.

**LYLA.** The sooner we get this over with, the sooner I can leave. *(Beat.)* Was that out loud? I mean, "Happy Birthday, Mom!"

**BARBARA.** Ha. And what thoughtful, personal thing did you get for me?

**LYLA.** A membership on SilverSingles.com.

**BARBARA.** Hilarious.

**LYLA.** Mr. Right could be just a click away.

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**BARBARA.** I'd settle for Mr. Right Now. You know I tried one of those dating sites a few years ago.

**LYLA.** How'd that work out for ya?

**BARBARA.** I spent so long setting up my profile, trying to be clever and enticing... a little flirty but not slutty. I was very specific about the men I'd be willing to date. Not fat, not bald, not married currently, and not married more than twice. Not living with his mother. Or in his ex-wife's basement. I had to toss in that little addendum after walking out on a guy at Chili's. Didn't even finish my margarita. *Yes, I know.* No tattoos. No foreigners. No hippies or military. Military men are so controlling. I hate that. The guy has to be a Christian, but not part of one of those evangelical cults where they call each other "brother this" and "sister that." The usual pets are fine, but no birds. I hate birds in the house. It makes me sad to see those colorful little things in cages. *(Beat.)* Besides that, they're loud, they shit all over everything, and they live for fucking ever.

**LYLA.** That's quite a checklist.

**BARBARA.** I went on a few other dates. No second dates. Two of them had the nerve to tell me I looked nothing like my profile picture. Assholes. I mean, I haven't changed that much in ten years.

**LYLA.** Unbelievable. *(Lyla holds up the blindfold, Barbara ties it back on as she continues.)*

**BARBARA.** God it's been so long since I was with a man.

**LYLA.** Me too.

**BARBARA.** Don't start. You know I don't like talking about the "lifestyle" you've chosen.

**LYLA.** It's not a choice, Mom. How many times do I have to say it? Do you ever even think about--

**BARBARA.** Not now, Lyla. Please, just give it a rest and let me enjoy celebrating my birthday with my two girls.

**LYLA.** Nice. Okay. Fine. It's your day. Let's not keep Bonnie waiting any longer. *(In the black interior of the cabin, BONNIE strikes a match, illuminating only her excited face as she lights candles on a giant birthday cake.)*

**BARBARA.** This cabin. I used to love it. It's been, God, what? Ten years since we were here?

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**LYLA.** At least. Since before dad--

**BARBARA.** Right. Of course. Anyway. This better be good. *(Barbara and Lyla go inside.)*

### SCENE 2

*Interior of the family's cabin. As the door bangs shut, a few lamps shed an uncomfortable light on the large main room, as if a dimmer switch is stuck in the middle. Bright balloons bob near the mantle, a "Happy Birthday" banner hangs over the fireplace, and a couple party hats wait next to the cake on the dining table. A bowl of punch and some cups top a side table. Several canvas tote bags filled with party supplies, hats, and gloves dot the space. Rounding things out is a sofa and an easy chair or two, each upholstered in a dark, scratchy fabric. Hand-crocheted afghans clash with the furniture. The space feels tight, but neat and navigable. Opposite the front door is an opening to the kitchen. Another door near the fireplace suggests a bedroom and a bathroom beyond. Bonnie, in a warm coat, blows a noisemaker and tosses confetti over Barbara and Lyla.*

**BONNIE.** SURPRISE! You're late, Lyla. But it's fine. I guess. Surprise, Mom! *(Barbara tears off her blindfold. As their eyes adjust to the light, Barbara and Lyla take in the festive atmosphere, their gaze landing on RICHARD, slumped unconscious, tied up in the dining chair facing them. His hands, chest, and ankles are bound with rope, his mouth covered with duct tape, eyeglasses askew. He wears boxers, a rumpled dress shirt, one black sock, and a party hat strapped to his head matching Bonnie's.)*

**BARBARA.** What the hell, Bonnie? Jesus Christ! Is that...?

**LYLA.** Daddy?

**BONNIE.** Happy Birthday!

**LYLA.** What the fuck have you done?

**BONNIE.** It's mom's wish. Remember? Mom?

**BARBARA.** What are you talking about?

**BONNIE.** Your wish, Mom. You know. For a jillion years you've been saying it. "I wish I could see him just one more time. I want to look the bastard in the eye and ask him a few questions."



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**BARBARA.** My wish. Jesus, Bonnie. *(Beat.)* How... how did you even find him? God knows I tried.

**BONNIE.** *(Excited.)* The internet. It's amazing what you can find if you dig deep enough. It wasn't easy. Let me tell you. He moved around a lot. I mean, wow. Once I found him, things sort of fell into place. He was over in Pine Grove. Can you believe it?

**LYLA.** So close.

**BONNIE.** A little stalking, a little rope... Seriously? It was way easier than I thought. YouTube has a video for everything. *(They all study Richard.)*

**BARBARA.** Is he asleep, or--?

**BONNIE.** Horse tranquilizer. I swiped a vial from the animal clinic, they won't miss it. Even if they did, they'd never suspect me. I mixed up sort of a cocktail actually. A little M-99 goes a long way. He's not as big as I remembered. *(Beat.)* Like I said. Things just fell into place. The stars aligned.

**BARBARA.** The stars. Well, this is certainly a--

**LYLA.** Felony. *(Bonnie ignores her sister, beams at her mother. Lyla throws up her hands, strides to the unlit fireplace, takes out a pack of cigarettes.)*

**BONNIE.** I thought you quit.

**LYLA.** I thought you were sane.

**BONNIE.** Anywaaaaay. Happy Birthday, Mom.

**BARBARA.** We'll see. Thinking about your father hasn't made me happy in a long, long time. Seeing him tied up there is a damn good start, though. What's next, slow torture?

**BONNIE.** Oh! Just a second. *(Bonnie exits to the kitchen, returns with a huge chef's knife.)*

**BARBARA.** Jesus, it was a joke!

**BONNIE.** Relax. It's for the cake.

**BARBARA.** Fuck the cake. I need a drink. *(Barbara pulls a mostly full bottle of bourbon from her purse, takes a long swig. Bonnie sighs heavily.)* And take off that stupid party hat. Yours and his. For Christ's sake.

**BONNIE.** It's your party. *(Bonnie slams the knife on the table, removes the hats.)*

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**BARBARA.** *(To Lyla.)* And I thought you were the crazy one. All that goth, biker gang-looking crap. That tattoo on your wrist, of... what was it? Oh yeah, a question mark or someth--

**LYLA.** It's a semi-colon.

**BARBARA.** Whatever that means. Your "anxiety." *(Barbara uses air quotes, then waves her hands vigorously over the candles, putting them out. Richard stirs, everyone jumps.)*

**BONNIE.** Don't worry, he's not going anywhere. I still remember my knots from Girl Scouts.

**BARBARA.** Of course you do.

**LYLA.** But, why? Why is he here?

**BARBARA and BONNIE.** The wish!

**LYLA.** I'm not talking about the goddamned wish. Just for a minute, let's pretend you're not going to jail. I mean, what do you think is going to happen here?

**BONNIE.** When he wakes up, I'll--

**LYLA.** You'll, what?

**BONNIE.** I guess we'll explain the situation.

**LYLA.** We?

**BONNIE.** I. I will explain.

**LYLA.** Oh, I see. "Hi, Daddy. Sorry I had to kidnap you, but it's mom's birthday. She's been a much more bitter drunk since you left, and she just has a few questions."

**BARBARA.** Ha!

**BONNIE.** Well, not exact--

**LYLA.** And how, in this twisted little fantasy of yours, did you envision his reaction?

**BONNIE.** He'll be angry.

**LYLA.** You think?

**BONNIE.** At first. But then we'll help him understand. We don't want to hurt him or anything. We just want--

**BARBARA.** Answers. We want some long-overdue answers.

**LYLA.** And then what? We all go back to our "normal" lives?

**BONNIE.** Let's see what he says! Maybe we can forgive him. Maybe we can be a fam--

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**LYLA.** Stop. Just stop.

**BONNIE.** We've been broken since he left.

**LYLA.** We were broken long before that. And we are way better off without him.

**BARBARA.** Bullshit. We were happy before he left.

**LYLA.** Happy!? Wow. You two are... I don't have words for what you are. For whatever this is. *(Lyla stomps toward the door.)*

**BONNIE.** You're leaving?

**LYLA.** I want no part of this. Let's go, Mom.

**BONNIE.** You have questions, too, Lyla. I know you--

**LYLA.** No. You clearly do not know me. I have worked too fucking hard to put all of that behind me. To put him behind me. Them. I'm out. *(To Barbara.)* The bus is leaving.

**BONNIE.** Wait! Please! I've been planning this for so long. *(Bonnie catches her arm before she reaches the door. Lyla snatches it away.)*

**LYLA.** You've been "planning this for so long?" Not really a compelling reason for me to die in prison. I hope you have a backup plan. Mom, are you coming? *(Lyla opens the door. Barbara waffles.)*

**BONNIE.** Give me an hour! Would you please just let mom have this? It's her 50th birthday. One hour. I will take full blame for anything that happens.

**BARBARA.** Please, Lyla. You know you want some answers, too. *(Beat.)* About Alice.

**LYLA.** Ha! Alice! *(Beat.)* Alice. *(Lyla breathes deeply, glares at her mother, sister, finally her father, roughly wipes a tear from her eye.)* One hour. Not a second longer. Then I'm getting in my car and going back to my life. After that, I don't want to hear from you again. Either of you. *(Lyla resumes her spot at the fireplace, takes a deep drag. Barbara circles Richard, examines him closely. She snags a balloon, pops it next to his head. He shifts, she looks hopeful, smug. He slumps.)*

**BARBARA.** How long is he going to be like that, anyway?

**BONNIE.** I'm... not sure. I've never done this before. Maybe just another minute or two. I thought it'd wear off by now. *(Barbara scoops a giant gob of icing from the side of the cake, stuffs it in her mouth.)*

**BONNIE.** It's not time for cake yet.

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**BARBARA.** It's my cake. *(She sucks another big gob of icing from her fingers.)* Mmmmm... that is divine. And I adore the sugar paste Forget-Me-Nots on the top, perfect. Did you get it from that little bakery on Bobwhite Trail? The one with the purple awning?

**BONNIE.** Of course. It's your favorite. *(Beat.)* You really look beautiful today, mom.

**BARBARA.** Why, thank you, baby. I think I'll stick with this hair color. *(Beat.)* You know, I'm pretty sure they're all illegal in the cake shop, and short. And so fat. Everything they bake is to die for, so I get it. They need to learn to speak English if they're going to come here, though. There's no sense in trying to talk to them, so I just point. *(Her bottle of bourbon is always within reach. She swigs.)*

**BARBARA.** *(Singing.)* Happy Birthday to me... Happy Birthday to meeeeeee... *(Back to normal.)* You look good, Bonnie. You lose a few pounds?

**BONNIE.** Actually, yes--

**BARBARA.** No. I can see it's just your coat covering you up. You should probably skip the cake. You were always chubby. Not always, I guess. You were actually quite beautiful as a child. Both you girls. Just like me, slim and spry. I don't know what happened. You hit puberty, Bonnie, and whomp! You got huge, like that blueberry girl in Willy Wonka. Do you know how hard it was to shop for you? They didn't make plump sizes for teens back then. And no amount of makeup made any difference, even with those contouring tips I showed you. Have you given up? Keep trying, honey. You'll get it.

**LYLA.** Mom! *(Bonnie struggles to let the words slide off, exits to the kitchen.)*

**BARBARA.** *(Points at Lyla.)* And you! You went and cut off all that silky, shiny, long hair I was so proud of. "Locks of Love." Whatever. I loved brushing and braiding your hair, when you'd let me. Then whack! All gone. No, wait, first you had that dumbass mohawk. And then those combat boots stomping around making marks on my hardwood. Black lipstick... and a nose ring. For awhile there you wanted us to call you Lyle. Ha! Your father was like "why not?" but I shot that down real fast.

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**LYLA.** *(Yelling to the kitchen.)* Hey sis, check your agenda. Was "unbridled verbal abuse" before or after cake? *(Turning on Barbara.)* You be nice! I can take your shit, but she can't. All you do is kick her in the face. She got you your favorite cake, she cleaned and decorated this dilapidated shack... She even kidnapped daddy just for you! *(Beat.)* Wow. That is a sentence I never thought I'd say.

**BARBARA.** Okay, okay. She is sooooo sensitive. *(Beat.)* Jesus Christ, it's cold in here. Get a fire going why don't you, while you're brooding over there. You're so good at brooding. Make yourself useful. *(Lyla pitches a few logs into the fireplace. Bonnie rushes in from the kitchen, wiping her nose with a tissue.)*

**BONNIE.** What are you doing?!

**LYLA.** Making myself useful.

**BONNIE.** We can't make a fire.

**BARBARA.** Why the hell not? You afraid some little squirrel might've built a nest in the chimney? Too bad so sad. I'm freezing.

**BONNIE.** No. Yes, but... no. Where there's fire, there's smoke. No one else should be close by this time of year, but I would rather not risk drawing attention to us right now. *(Bonnie grabs a tote bag from under the side table, digs around, tosses her mom some gloves and a gray woolen beanie. She continues digging in the bag as she speaks.)*

**BONNIE.** Put those on. You're not going to be here that long anyway.

**BARBARA.** Fine. *(Inspecting the beanie.)* But, do you have something more... something I'd actually wear? Maybe in green, or violet?

**LYLA.** Just put on the fucking hat-- *(Already prepared, Bonnie pulls out a green hat, throws it at Barbara, snatches the gray one and shoves it on Richard's head.)*

**BARBARA.** You've thought of everything.

**BONNIE.** Shhh! I think it's wearing off. *(Richard groans, slowly comes to. Lyla backs into the shadow of the kitchen doorway behind him. Richard tries to speak, struggles as his eyes adjust to the light. He locks eyes with Barbara, freezes.)*

**BARBARA.** Helloooo, Richard. *(He takes in his surroundings, the ropes, his lack of clothes, then struggles with his bindings, making loud but muffled threats behind the duct tape.)*

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**BONNIE.** Shhh, Daddy. It's okay. Shhh.

**BARBARA.** You know where you are, Richard. No one can hear you but us.

**BONNIE.** We're not going to hurt you. (*Barbara walks over and smacks him upside the head.*)

**BONNIE.** Mom! We said we weren't going to--

**BARBARA.** You said. You didn't ask me.

**BONNIE.** You think he'll answer your questions now?

**BARBARA.** Who knows? But I wasn't about to pass up a chance like that.

**BONNIE.** Tell him you're sorry. (*Incredulous stares from both parents.*)  
Say it.

**BARBARA.** That is never going to happen. (*Richard resumes his fuming.*)

**BARBARA.** I'm not sorry. At all. (*Long beat.*) But I won't hit you again, Richard. For now. (*Richard simmers.*)

**BONNIE.** Good. Okay. Let's all just take a deep breath. Mom, would you sit over there somewhere. Please. (*Barbara sprawls on the sofa.*)

**BONNIE.** Thank you. This will be much easier for everyone if we all calm down.

**BARBARA.** Fine. Let's do this.

**BONNIE.** Okay. (*Deep breath.*) Hi, Daddy. Hi. Um. Right. Well--

**BARBARA.** Just get on with it, for Christ's sake.

**BONNIE.** This is harder than I thought.

**BARBARA.** I know you've played out every possible scenario a thousand times in your obsessive little head. Pick one.

**BONNIE.** Gah! Okay. Like I said: Hi, Daddy. We're not going to hurt you. Anymore. We just want to talk. All right? (*Richard gives them both a long, angry look.*)

**BONNIE.** (*To Lyla.*) Should I take the tape off now?

**LYLA.** How else are we going to talk to dear old dad? (*Lyla comes out from behind her father, glares at him, both middle fingers extended as she walks to the fireplace.*)

**BARBARA.** Just a second. Do you have more duct tape? (*Bonnie digs in the tote.*)

**BONNIE.** I think so. Yes, right here. Why? (*Barbara snatches the roll of tape.*)

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**BARBARA.** *(To Richard.)* If you start yelling, I swear I will duct tape your entire head. You will wish you were bald. And when I'm done with you, you will be. A win-win.

**BONNIE.** Nobody can hear him.

**BARBARA and LYLA.** I can. *(Bonnie works to remove the tape.)*

**BONNIE.** Sorry, Daddy. I'm trying to make it--

**LYLA.** Just rip it.

**BONNIE.** Then he will scream.

**BARBARA.** He deserves some pain. Lots and lots of pain. *(The tape comes off. Bonnie adjusts his glasses on his face, backs away, awkwardly tries to find a place to light between her parents, fails.)*

**RICHARD.** What the HELL is going on here? Somebody better get these fucking ropes off me RIGHT NOW! *(Barbara loudly rips a strip of tape from the roll. He quiets.)*

**BARBARA.** You look the same.

**RICHARD.** You don't.

**BARBARA.** Grayer. Fatter. Though you were handsome. Once.

**BONNIE.** Mom? Didn't you have some questions?

**RICHARD.** I have some questions. May I?

**LYLA.** Tick tock.

**BARBARA.** You're here to answer questions, not ask them. So just sit back and--

**RICHARD.** No! How did I even get here? I've got no goddamn pants and one sock. I don't even know what day it is. *(Bonnie looks around for his other sock.)*

**BARBARA.** Of course you don't. You never did remember anything important to me. As for how you got here, Bonnie drugged you and threw you into her car.

**RICHARD.** You did this, Bunny?

**LYLA.** All by her crazyass self. And something with a horse. Can we just get on with--

**RICHARD.** WHY AM I HERE?

**BARBARA.** Look around you. Balloons, streamers, a cake. You're my birthday wish come true. A present from your younger daughter, tied up in a tight little bow. Surprise.

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**RICHARD.** *(Beat. A deep breath.)* Surprise indeed. How did you even find me? I changed my name.

**BONNIE.** *(Same excited tone as before.)* Yes you did. The internet. It's amazing what you can--

**BARBARA.** Does it matter? You're here, and you're not going anywhere until you answer some questions. If we believe you, if we're content with your answers, then... *(She raises her bottle in his direction, drinks.)*

**RICHARD.** Then?

**BONNIE.** We let you go. Right, mom? We let him go.

**BARBARA.** You're the one with the agenda, Bunny. Check your day planner.

**RICHARD.** You have all lost your fucking minds--

**LYLA.** Just those two.

**RICHARD.** --and you are going to rot in jail for a very long time. As soon as I get out of here--

**BONNIE.** *(Calmly.)* No, Daddy.

**RICHARD.** No?!

**BONNIE.** No. That is not how this will go. You owe us--

**RICHARD.** You better untie me, right now, or I sw--

**BONNIE.** YOU OWE US an explanation! Once we are satisfied, you can go. Unless you'd rather stay, of course. And you will never call the police.

**RICHARD.** What makes you think you can-- *(Bonnie jams the giant knife through the cake and into the table, where it sticks.)*

**BONNIE.** *(Coldly.)* Look where you are, Daddy. I found you once.

*(Bonnie exits to the kitchen. Tense silence as those words hang in the air for a moment. She returns with a ladle, her smile screwed back on.)* You all want punch?

**BARBARA.** Thanks, honey. That would be lovely. *(Bonnie ladles some into a cup, serves Barbara. Richard gets a to-go cup with a straw.)*

**RICHARD.** You've thought of everything.

**BONNIE.** Lyla? Punch?

**LYLA.** Can we just get this done? *(Barbara pours liquor into her punch, points the bottle at the others.)*

**BARBARA.** A little extra punch for your punch? No? Good.

**BONNIE.** Mom.



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**BARBARA.** Why?

**BONNIE.** So he can go--

**BARBARA.** That's it. That's my first question. Why?

**RICHARD.** Why what?

**BARBARA.** *(Unleashing her anger.)* Why did you do it? Why did you leave? Why did you have to run away with that little whore? Why--

**RICHARD.** She isn't--

**LYLA.** *(Simultaneous with Richard's line.)* She wasn't--

**BARBARA.** Why did you marry me in the first place? It's not like you weren't getting the milk for free before we were even engaged. If you couldn't keep your mediocre pecker in your pants, why go through the charade of a wedding, settling down, having kids. Why, Richard. Why are you--

**RICHARD.** WHYYYYYY do you think I can answer you if you won't clamp your horrid, pickled face shut for even a millisecond!

**BARBARA.** You're one to talk about a pickle! *(She stabs a finger in the direction of his groin.)*

**RICHARD.** JUMBO DILL!

**BARBARA.** BABEEE GHERKINNNN!

**BONNIE.** ENOUGH! *(Lyla laughs hard, the other three take a moment to calm down.)*

**BONNIE.** *(Exasperated.)* Pickles. Ugh. And ew.

**RICHARD.** Oh, right. How can you hate pickles? They're just... pickles.

**BONNIE.** Cucumbers are just fine as cucumbers.

**LYLA.** Sweet pickles on a sandwich, with peanut butter and cheddar cheese. Add a little mayo if you're feeling adventuresome. What? It's good. *(To herself.)* Alice--

**RICHARD.** We like what we like. *(Beat, then to Barbara.)* Your grandma Winifred used to make the best bread and butter pickles. That woman. She put me to work the first time you brought me to visit. I was in my Sunday best, slicked hair. I'd spent an hour polishing my dress shoes.

**BARBARA.** I'll admit you looked very dashing.

**RICHARD.** For about a minute. Then she handed me a bucket, pointed to the tomato patch, and said, "I'm fixin' to fry up some green ones. Bring me a dozen of the best you can find."

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**BARBARA.** She was testing you.

**RICHARD.** Obviously. I still don't know if I passed.

**BARBARA.** Few ever did. She was impossible to please, especially in her old age. A kind word about anyone or anything was as rare as hen's teeth.

**LYLA.** Great-granny Winnie always reminded me of you.

**BARBARA.** Oh yes, I definitely took after her. She was thin and elegant. We have the same eyes, and she always carried herself with grace. Even after she put on a few pounds and your great-granddaddy Montgomery wrecked his John Deere trying to pull a hay wagon around a groundhog hole. He was not right in the head after that, but he was a good man.

**LYLA.** He put his false teeth in the cat's water bowl. Cricket was not amused.

**BONNIE.** Ugh. He tried to eat plastic grapes. When he went to put them back, a line of drool clung to his fingers and hung from his mouth to the bowl. *(Beat.)* I never understood why there was a bowl of plastic fruit on the kitchen table. Lemons and grapes and pears.

**LYLA.** Oh my.

**BARBARA.** If I recall correctly, Richard, your grandpa died buck-naked in his mistress's bed with a hole in his head. The apple apparently did not fall--

**RICHARD.** You know what? I am starving.

**BONNIE.** You have been unconscious for quite some time.

**RICHARD.** That cake is looking pretty good, Bunny.

**BONNIE.** Of course! *(Checks her watch.)* We can do that now.

**RICHARD.** But... first... and... I know this is awkward. *(Beat.)* I really have to pee.

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