

The Great Plan of Happiness

By Mindy Curtis

THE GREAT PLAN OF HAPPINESS

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THE GREAT PLAN OF HAPPINESS

The Great Plan of Happiness was originally produced in 2019 at the Janesville Performing Arts Center in Janesville, WI by Stage One, Inc. featuring the following cast and crew:

Cassie Warren.....Amanda Rodriguez
Marilee Warren.....Pat Hall
Heber Warren.....Shelton Tripp
McKayee Warren.....Alexyn Cervantes
Brandilynn Warren.....Julia Bloom
Daniel Warren.....Jay Goodwin
Haylee Simons.....Alexia Hollis
Anna Jolley.....Jennae Fairman
Director.....Ron Brown
Producer.....Michael Stalsberg

The Great Plan of Happiness received its second production in 2021 at Wasatch Theatre Company in Salt Lake City, UT featuring the following cast and crew:

Cassie Warren.....Cezanne Smith
Marilee Warren.....Lori Smith
Heber Warren.....Jordan Palmer
McKayee Warren.....Olivia Kirby
Brandilynn Warren.....Sydney Shoell
Daniel Warren.....Aaron Sparks
Haylee Simons.....Megan Bishop
Anna Jolley.....Emily Spikes
Director.....Zac Curtis
Producer.....Jim Martin

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CAST OF CHARACTERS

CASSIE WARREN A Mormon woman; late 20s.

MARILEE WARREN Cassie's mother; late 50s.

HEBER WARREN Cassie's brother; early 30s.

MCKAYEE WARREN Cassie's sister; 18 years old.

BRANDILYNN WARREN Heber's wife; late 20s.

DANIEL WARREN Cassie's uncle; mid-late 50s.

HAYLEE SIMONS Cassie's best friend; late 20s.

ANNA JOLLEY An acquaintance; late 20s.

DARRIN WARREN (V.O.) Cassie's father; deceased.

PILOT (V.O.) The pilot of a plane.

TIME: Mid-July of 2015.

PLACE: The Warren home in Highland, Utah and various nearby locations.

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ACT 1 SCENE 1

An airplane is descending into Salt Lake City International Airport, daytime. CASSIE is sitting next to the window. She holds a small notebook, a pen, and Harper Lee's book, "Go Set a Watchman."

PILOT. (V.O.) Ladies and gentlemen, we are beginning our final descent into Salt Lake City, where the local time is 10:18 AM and the temperature is a toasty ninety-nine degrees. We will be landing in approximately ten minutes. Please make sure your seat backs and tray tables are in their full upright position. Make sure your seat belt is securely fastened, and all carry-on luggage is stowed underneath the seat in front of you or in the overhead bins. Flight attendants are currently passing through the cabin to make a final compliance check and pick up any remaining garbage. If you need connecting flight information, please see the gate agent in the airport terminal. If Salt Lake City is your final destination, welcome home.

(Cassie alternates between looking out the window at the landscape below her and writing. As she writes, we hear her newly penned poem in the voice of her father, DARRIN. As Darrin reads, maybe we see him, maybe we do not. He may be as present or as distant as desired.)

DARRIN. (V.O.)

The Grid. A perfect plan.
Predictable and safe.
The mountains hug in.
The routes are clear.
The roads are straight.
The path is apparent.
If you choose to get lost,

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let the grid guide you home. To safety. *(Cassie finishes her poem and continues to look out the window at the suburban sprawl below.)*

PILOT. (V.O.) Flight attendants, please prepare for landing.

SCENE 2

Cassie and HEBER are coming home to the Warren family's home in Highland, Utah. Heber carries Cassie's large suitcase while Cassie carries her purse. The kitchen is spotless and in perfect fashion for a Mormon home. Pictures of Cassie's family adorn the walls along with adorable crafts that display inspirational and spiritual catch phrases. Pictures of Jesus, Joseph Smith, and LDS temples are prominent. A Salt City Candle burns on the kitchen table. Next to the candle, a tray of small sandwiches, fruit, veggies, and cookies is set along with bottles of water and cans of non-caffeinated soda. We hear Cassie and Heber arguing outside the door as they unlock it and enter.

CASSIE. (Offstage.) It blows my mind that you don't know who Sir Ian McKellen is.

HEBER. (Offstage.) He's an old, stuffy British actor. Got it. *(They enter the room.)*

CASSIE. He's a *phenomenal* British actor. He's Gandalf and Magneto and the guy from the Da Vinci Code and he's *not* Dumbledore. Your lack of basic cultural knowledge makes my right brain sad.

HEBER. Hey now, I just drove an hour each way to save you from being stranded at the airport. *(They set down the luggage.)*

CASSIE. You are right. What I meant to say was "thank you."

HEBER. You're welcome. *(They finally settle in and start to eat the food left on the table.)* One of the perks of owning your company is the control of your schedule. And I figured Mom would have some awesome Mom food here. I freakin' love these tiny chicken sandwiches she makes. Again, Brandilynn says she's sorry she had to bail on you.

CASSIE. Heber, your wife is the kindest person I've met. I'm sure she had the best reason for abandoning me at the airport.

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HEBER. She did. Taeleigh tried to kill the baby.

CASSIE. What? Your daughter tried to kill your baby?

HEBER. It sounds like it. *(He pulls out his phone.)* The text just says "Tay almost killed Traedun. Seriously, he almost died. I'm freaking out. Can you get Cassie?" and I replied "Yes."

CASSIE. And you didn't follow up on that? That is horrifying!

HEBER. That? Oh, that's mild.

CASSIE. Huh. How old is Tayleigh now? Four?

HEBER. Four? Is she four?

CASSIE. Uh, yeah, as soon as she was born, I moved out to Chicago for grad school. So, yeah. She has to have just turned four.

HEBER. Four it is. She's four.

CASSIE. So glad you are keeping count. Anyway, thanks for picking me up.

HEBER. And...Cass...I... *(His upbeat tone subsides.)* Well, it's nice you could come, Cass. This week is going to be tough for everyone, but I know it's going to be hard on Mom. It will be nice for her to have you here.

CASSIE. Yeah. Yeah. It's good for me to be here, too. This time of year is always...painful. It will be good for us to all be together.

HEBER. Yeah. It will. *(A beat.)* It may sound corny, or whatever, but having you here makes the family feel complete again...as complete as possible.

CASSIE. *(Sincere yet light.)* Aw! Thanks. I do actually miss you guys.

HEBER. *(Resuming their playful tone.)* When I notice you are gone, I miss you too.

CASSIE. Thanks. It's okay that *you* forget about me. McKayee has been texting me all week making plans for when I'm here. So, I still have one sibling who cares.

HEBER. I'm glad you two stay close.

CASSIE. Yeah, well, she is my only sister and my only sibling who gives me the time of day, so...

HEBER. Believe it or not I enjoy seeing you. It's just whenever you come back, I always seem to be working, with the kids, or at the church. And you are always off visiting some friend or something.

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CASSIE. Yeah, well, this time will be pretty chill. I'll see Haylee at some point. She is still my best friend despite never seeing or talking to her and having practically nothing in common anymore. And I'm having lunch tomorrow with Uncle Daniel. But other than that, I don't have plans. Just hang out here, write a bit, be around for Mom on...the day. Celebrate the twenty-fourth with you guys. Then fly back.

HEBER. Oh. *(A beat.)* Where are you going with Uncle Daniel?

CASSIE. *(No beat.)* Probably Café Rio. I try to eat there every time I visit. Or multiple times. Or every day. You are welcome to join us.

HEBER. That's okay. I mean, I wish I could, but I'll be at work.

CASSIE. What about your flexible schedule? It's lunch. You have to eat. When was the last time you saw him? Dad's funeral?

HEBER. No, I saw him at... *(He thinks for a bit.)*

CASSIE. ...Uh huh.

HEBER. He was here when you left for Chicago.

CASSIE. And we just established that was four years ago.

HEBER. You're better at keeping in touch with people than I am.

CASSIE. Yes, that is true.

HEBER. Because I have two kids!

CASSIE. You had *one* kid until a few months ago. And I live halfway across the country.

HEBER. And I'm a jerk who hates everyone.

CASSIE. Also, true. I should feel lucky this conversation is even happening.

HEBER. You should.

CASSIE. And I do.

HEBER. Welcome home!

CASSIE. Thanks! I may not be here for the happiest of reasons, but I am happy to be here. *(She opens a soda.)*

HEBER. I'll take one of those. *(Cassie passes him her soda and opens a new one for herself. They drink.)*

CASSIE. You are probably always at church now huh? How is being the Second Counselor in the bishopric? Does it feel powerful?

HEBER. I'm the First Counselor.

CASSIE. Oh! So sorry for demoting you.

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HEBER. Mostly it's tiring. Maybe if I slept at night, I would be able to enjoy it more.

CASSIE. That's fair.

HEBER. No, it's great though. You get to know the people in the ward, and you get to help people strengthen their testimonies and come closer to God.

CASSIE. That's cool.

HEBER. It is. And it has strengthened my testimony of the truthfulness of the Church and how it works for and helps people find happiness and brings them closer to The Lord.

CASSIE. That's great. Really great. And deep. Very deep.

HEBER. It is. I'm becoming a deeper man. What is your calling in your ward?

CASSIE. When I go?

HEBER. You don't go to church?

CASSIE. No, I go...like...eighty percent of the time. And I stay for all the meetings like...sixty percent of the time.

HEBER. And what is your excuse for not going to church?

CASSIE. I just told you. I *do* go to church! Definitely more than half the time.

HEBER. I didn't realize that the new commandment was "Thou shalt keep the Sabbath Day holy, definitely more than half the time."

CASSIE. Don't judge me. It's different than going to church here where you can't walk out your front door without falling into a church building. It's super far away. I have to take the "L" and change trains and then walk for ten minutes. And I go to the singles ward where everyone is old and weird and single and on a mad manhunt for their "eternal companion."

HEBER. So, they are like you.

CASSIE. Yeah. And I'm awful. Would you travel an hour each way to spend three hours at church with a room full of people like me?

HEBER. Oh, come on, it's not like going to church for three hours with two screaming kids right in the middle of nap time is cake either. But it's a commandment. And it makes me a better, deeper, person. So, I do it. Every. Sunday.

CASSIE. Well, you clearly win the "Better Mormon Award."

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HEBER. Clearly.

CASSIE. But, to answer your question, when I do go, I am the sacrament greeter. And I am amazing at it.

HEBER. Ah, the ol' greeter calling. The one they give you when you don't go consistently.

CASSIE. Seriously? You just can't... *(They hear a car pull up outside. Cassie looks out the window. She is happy to change the subject and also shows genuine excitement.)* Ah! Mom is home with McKayee! Man, it's hard to believe she graduated from high school.

HEBER. Yep. And now she's a Cougar!

CASSIE. Ugh! don't remind me.

HEBER. Now you will *officially* be the only member of our family who didn't graduate from BYU.

CASSIE. Don't worry. I got plenty of flack about it from Dad. "Tuition is a large portion of my benefits as a BYU professor. Why am I working so hard there if you aren't going to use it?" I gotta say Utah State has done me well though. Go Aggies!

HEBER. *(Louder and prouder than Cassie.)* Go Cougs! *(Singing and clapping.)* Rise and shout the Cougars are out...

CASSIE. Ew! Stop!

HEBER. ...along the trail to fame and glory. Rise and shout our cheers will ring out as you unfold your victory story...

CASSIE. *(Through his singing.)* Thank you. Very impressive... *(MCKAYEE and MARILEE enter as Heber sings and cheers. Marilee is carrying a large bag of binders, books, and papers as well as several bags from Michaels craft store. They join Heber in finishing his song.)*

HEBER. *(He's joined by Marilee and McKayee.)* ...On you go to vanquish the foe for Alma Mater's sons and daughters. As we join in song, in praise of you our faith is strong. We raise our colors high in the blue and cheer our Cougars of BYU.

HEBER, MARILLE and MCKAYEE. *(They raise their right fists in the air as they cheer.)* Rah rah, rah rah rah! Rah rah, rah rah rah! Rah rah, rah rah rah. *(Rolling their hands.)* Go Cougars! *(They cheer and shout.)*

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CASSIE. Very nice. You made your point. I will never be part of your “Cougar Club.”

MARILEE. Oh, Sweetie! We don't mean to exclude you. It's just that you have to sing the whole thing once it's started.

MCKAYEE. Or it's just not right.

CASSIE. I've heard you need to see your Bishop to repent for it.

HEBER. How would you know? You don't even go to church.

MARILEE. What? Cassie? You don't go to church?

CASSIE. Yes! I go to church! *(She glares at Heber in frustration.)* Why would you say that? I haven't even said hello to her yet! *(To Marilee.)* I just told him I don't always make it to all the meetings all the time because it's so far away. But I still go to church!

MARILEE. You need to go to church.

CASSIE. I know. I go to church.

MCKAYEE. Hello Cass!

MARILEE. Welcome home!

CASSIE. Hi McKayee! Thanks Mom! It's good to be home. *(She hugs McKayee and Marilee.)*

MCKAYEE. I'm so glad you are here! And sorry I'm in a rush, but I have to head to work soon, so I'm gonna run upstairs to change and I'll be right back.

CASSIE. It's fine. I'm not company. I don't need to be entertained.

MCKAYEE. Good thing, since I don't have any time to entertain you.

CASSIE. Good thing!

MCKAYEE. I'll be down in a bit. *(McKayee exits into the house.)*

CASSIE. Oh! *(Yelling after McKayee.)* McKayee! Don't let me forget I have something for you!

MCKAYEE. *(Offstage.)* Okay! Thanks!

CASSIE. You are home earlier than I thought! We were just hanging out, eating your sandwiches, smelling your candle, and talking about you!

MARILEE. Well, I have been talking about you too. Pretty much all day, Sweetheart! *(Marilee sits down at the table next to her bags. As she talks, she takes out her binders, books, and papers. She pulls scrapbook paper out of the Michaels bag and organizes her things.)*

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CASSIE. Well, that seems highly unnecessary. Who wants to hear about me all day?

MARILEE. Oh, I've been to a few different meetings today planning stake youth conference and everyone is very proud of you honey! Immediately landing a professor position in Chicago after completing your master's degree is a big accomplishment whether you think it is or not. So, I'm going to brag about it, whether you want me to or not.

CASSIE. Brag away! I live in a different state and rarely see these people anymore.

MARILEE. Thanks for the permission, Darling. *(Heber's phone rings.)*

HEBER. Work calls. I need to take this.

MARILEE. Of course, Honey. *(Heber exits into the house.)*

MARILEE. Did you know McKayee has a new job now?

CASSIE. Oh yeah! She texted me. She is at Tucanos down in Provo. Right?

MARILEE. Yep.

CASSIE. Nice! That's a huge step up. Oooh, I wonder if she gets a family discount. Maybe I can actually afford to eat there now. As much as I love Café Rio, Tucanos is even better.

MARILEE. I think she does. You'll have to ask her.

CASSIE. Well, it looks like the stake young women are keeping you plenty busy. When are they going to release you from that calling?

MARILEE. Oh, I've only been the Stake Young Women's President for three years or so. So, it will be a couple of years, I think. I love being with the youth. It's my secret to staying so young and hip.

CASSIE. Well, it's definitely working for you, so I say stick with it. *(Marilee sifts through her paperwork.)* You are planning stake youth conference now?

MARILEE. In the final stages. It's the last few days of July, right after you leave.

CASSIE. That's right. I recall this conversation. What's the theme again?

MARILEE. Take a STAND. And STAND stands for Stay True And Never Deviate.

CASSIE. Ah yes. It's clever. *(She approaches the subject slowly.)* Hey Mom, let me know if I can help you while I'm here. I know...I mean, I'm

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here so we can be together...because I know this week will be...tough ...for all of us.

MARILEE. *(Acknowledging her daughter's thoughtfulness while hoping to avoid a discussion about her husband's death.)* Thanks Honey.

CASSIE. And I don't have much planned. So let me know what you need. Okay? If you want to talk, or drive up the canyon like we used to, or even if you just need me to make some adorable crafts, or maybe write cute sayings on handouts...I used to be so good at that kind of...stuff.

MARILEE. Do you have a second now?

CASSIE. I do.

MARILEE. Wonderful. *(She pulls out supplies and demonstrates as she explains.)* Okay, I need these quotes cut out and then this paper cut into squares. Then the quotes glued to this paper with these little bows right here.

CASSIE. I can do this.

MARILEE. There are forty of them.

CASSIE. That's nothing. I'm on it. I'm here to help. That's why I'm here.

MARILEE. Thanks! There is certainly a lot to do. *(Cassie starts cutting and working on the project while Marilee pulls out a book full of Mormon craft ideas. She flips through the book and tags ideas she likes while they speak.)*

CASSIE. You know, my favorite youth conference was when you were still the Ward Young Women's President; you set up the cultural hall with the Iron Rod going through it and The Tree of Life on the stage and The Great and Spacious Building in the corner. And you make us walk along holding to The Rod with all the adults in the ward dressed up and acting like wicked people in little vignettes tempting us to leave The Rod with prizes and treats and candy.

MARILEE. Yes. I was particularly proud of that one. I'm glad you remember it.

CASSIE. I totally left The Rod so Brother Worthington would give me a doughnut.

MARILEE. Oh Honey, you did not.

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CASSIE. Yes. I did. It was a bear claw filled with custard. And it was extremely worth it. And then...was it...Sister Madsen gave me a poster of the Mona Lisa. It is currently hanging on the wall of my apartment.

MARILEE. My own daughter left The Rod!

CASSIE. But then I found out you guys were giving free movie tickets to the people who made it to The Tree, so I snuck onto the stage into the tree group and got movie tickets anyway.

MARILEE. Cassie!

CASSIE. And Heber saw me sneak in and was so mad at me. He totally ripped into me for cheating and taking all the prizes. Seriously, he was so mad!

MARILEE. Well, he should have been. You cheated and then lied about it.

CASSIE. At a made-up youth conference role-play activity.

MARILEE. Well, I hope you still learned the lesson we were trying to teach you. (*Heber enters.*)

CASSIE. I did if the lesson was next time I should be sneakier and not get caught.

HEBER. Get caught at what?

CASSIE. At letting go of The Iron Rod at that youth conference activity and getting both the heathen prizes and The Tree of Life prizes.

HEBER. How you cheated and let go of The Rod to get your doughnuts and still got the movie tickets? That was messed up.

CASSIE. If by messed up you mean smart, then sure.

HEBER. It was smart to lie, do whatever you wanted to, and still get all the rewards?

CASSIE. It was an *activity* that wasn't real.

MARILEE. And it was fifteen years ago.

HEBER. That doesn't mean it wasn't messed up. I held to The Rod and I didn't get any doughnuts. But, of course, you got away with it and got everything you wanted because you always broke the rules, and no one cared.

CASSIE. Woah! That is some serious repressed aggression there...

HEBER. No, it's not. I didn't care. I don't care. If you feel good about cheating and lying and not going to church, I'm good with it too.

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CASSIE. Oh my gosh! I go to church!

MARILEE. (*Cutting them off.*) Okay, you two. I am no longer a mother to teenagers.

HEBER. Well, technically McKayee is still a teenager...

MARILEE. (*With authority.*) Stop. (*He falls silent.*) Heber, do you need to go to work?

HEBER. No, I think they have it handled. It's a Friday, and the day is almost over anyway. Brandilynn is going to swing by here with the kids in a bit, so I'll wait for her and then I'll go.

MARILEE. Oh good. Cassie, the kids are getting so big. They are just beautiful.

CASSIE. I know! I love all the pictures you send me.

MARILEE. I love those babies! (*To Heber.*) Feel free to eat the rest of the sandwiches.

HEBER. Thanks. I plan to. (*He shoves another sandwich in his mouth.*)

CASSIE. (*Teasing Heber.*) That's right. Just eat your feelings. Everything will be fine. (*Heber throws a sandwich at Cassie's head and she ducks it. Marilee stares at him, and he quickly goes to pick it up. McKayee comes in from the house dressed in a Tucanos shirt and black pants.*)

CASSIE. How is it possible that you look that beautiful ready to go and serve people food at a restaurant?

MCKAYEE. It helps with tips.

CASSIE. Congrats on the new job! That's so exciting!

MCKAYEE. Thanks! When I graduated from high school, I figured I should graduate from IHOP as well.

CASSIE. And also, congrats on graduating high school! I'm *so* sorry I couldn't make it to the graduation. Summer classes started that same week and I'm not in the financial position to turn down work.

MCKAYEE. It's fine. I know you had to teach.

HEBER. I was there with both of my screaming kids though, so that made up for it.

MARILEE. It was a beautiful ceremony, and she looked stunning under all her merit cords and honor sashes.

CASSIE. (*To Marilee.*) I saw the pictures. (*To McKayee.*) Oh! Your gift! I didn't forget to get my favorite sister a gift! (*She goes to her bag to search*

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for the gift. She pulls her notebook, her copy of "Go Set a Watchman" and a few other things out of her bag and sets them on the coffee table as she searches.) I didn't send it in the mail because I thought that was impersonal. Also, because I'm disorganized and a little lazy. *(Cassie finds the card she is looking for and gives it to McKayee who begins to open it.)*

MCKAYEE. Thanks Cass. You didn't have to get me anything.

CASSIE. Yes, I did. And of course I wanted to. This is one of the few times in life that people are going to give you gifts and money for doing what you were planning on doing anyway. Enjoy it. It's a big deal.

(McKayee opens the card and pulls a Target gift card and a handful of pictures from the card.)

CASSIE. I know a Target gift card is so impersonal. But it's what you want and need, I promise. So, I included some pictures for a personal touch.

HEBER. *(Moving to McKayee to look at the pictures.)* Actual printed pictures on photo paper. Impressive. We just gave her cash, so I guess you win "The Better Sibling Award."

CASSIE. Of course I do. That was never even a question.

MCKAYEE. *(Looking through the photos.)* Oh! I haven't seen some of these forever. *(She sits down next to Marilee to show her the photos.)* Look at these, Mom!

MARILEE. *(Marilee takes the stack of pictures and holds them out to be able to see them clearly.)* Oh, my goodness. That haircut! What was I thinking?

CASSIE. You were thinking that it was the year 2000, and we were just glad to have survived the nineties, and were grateful robots didn't take over the world on New Year's Eve.

MARILEE. Yes, that was it. Heber, look at you in this one, Honey! *(She passes Heber the photo.)* Oh, and look at your father in this one. He was so handsome. *(They all stop to look intently at the picture. Looking at this picture is hard for all of them, but especially for Marilee. She struggles to maintain her composure in front of her children.)*

MCKAYEE. He is so handsome.

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MARILEE. Yes. Of course. *(To Cassie.)* Sweetheart, these are beautiful. What a thoughtful gift. *(McKayee flips to a new photo.)* Was this after his funeral?

CASSIE. Um, yeah. I think it was. *(They also look at this picture intently, but with a little more hurt. Marilee finally loses her battle to keep from crying and starts to quietly, but audibly, weep.)*

MCKAYEE. *(Noticing Marilee is crying.)* Oh! Mom! *(She puts her arms around her mother. She holds her close.)* This week sucks. It's ...it's just gonna suck.

CASSIE. *(She sits close to her mother and puts her arm around her shoulder, along with McKayee. She also struggles to fight her emotions.)*

We are here for you, Mom. It's... I can't believe it's been ten years.

MARILEE. I didn't think this would be so...so painful still. But...it's just...just seeing his face there, and all his passion and energy, and kindness, I just...my heart still jolts every time I hear a phone ring. And it's been a decade now and any time any of you gets into a car... And just hearing the voice of the police officer on the phone, and...and the drive to the station, and...

HEBER. *(Stopping her.)* Mom, you don't need to relive all that. Nothing is different about this week than any other week since the accident.

MARILEE. *(Taking a breath, holding McKayee and Cassie's hands.)*

You are right, Honey. Of course you are right.

CASSIE. But there isn't anything wrong with being sad and allowing yourself to grieve again.

MARILEE. I know, Sweetie.

MCKAYEE. Mom, we are here. And we aren't going anywhere. And Dad is here too. He is always aware of us, and taking care of us, like he always was. We have an eternal family. We are all sealed together for time and all eternity. Nothing can take that away from us. Nothing on this earth or that we will experience in this lifetime is stronger than our family.

MARILEE. You are so smart, sweetie, and so strong. Your faith is such a blessing to me. It really is...

HEBER. You know, Dad would be completely disgusted at this. Us sitting here, painfully reliving the worst day of all of our lives.

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MCKAYEE. "What are you all sitting there crying for? God never said life would be easy..."

MCKAYEE and HEBER. *(Together in unison.)* "...he only said it would be worth it!"

CASSIE. I can still hear him saying that.

HEBER. Try having it yelled at you from the sidelines of a church ball game while a goliath from Lehi stuffs your layup for the twentieth time in a row.

MARILEE. Your father meant well. He loved all of you so much. *(A beat.)* I'm so glad you kids are here. His energy and passion are so evident in all of you.

CASSIE. Mom, I'm sorry if those pictures were too much right now. I can take them...

MARILEE. No, Honey. They are lovely. I haven't seen some of those for so long.

MCKAYEE. Seriously. Thanks, Cass. It will be great to have these at school. *(McKayee picks up the stack of pictures and thumbs through a few of them. We hear a car pull up outside.)*

HEBER. *(Crossing to the window.)* That must be Brandilynn. You'll have to excuse me for a second. I'm going to run to the bathroom before the kids get in here because I won't have a chance once they do. *(Heber exits into the house. McKayee has pulled out her phone and begins texting.)*

CASSIE. That's a thing? That is terrifying!

MARILEE. *(To Cassie.)* Honey, did you really tell Heber you don't go to church? It's important you keep going to church when living in the big city.

CASSIE. What? No. Heber is just still mad that I got donuts fifteen years ago and he didn't. I go to church!

MARILEE. Good. And you are praying and reading your scriptures?

CASSIE. Yes, Mom. I am. As often as humanly possible. Thanks for checking up on me.

MARILEE. You should do it every day.

CASSIE. Yes, I realize that is the ideal. Mom. I've heard it once or twice somewhere. I promise I'm not an apostate just because I live in Chicago and have a creative writing degree.

THE GREAT PLAN OF HAPPINESS

MARILEE. I know Honey. It's just so easy to let your values slide as you get busy and life changes.

CASSIE. Yes. I'm realizing that, and thank you for the pep talk. Don't worry about me. Really, I'm fine.

MCKAYEE. *(Finishing her text.)* Cass, I'm so glad you're here and thanks for the gift. I have to get to work. It seems like it's going to be a busy shift. *(BRANDILYNN enters from outside in a rush. Heber enters from the house.)*

BRANDILYNN. Hi everyone! Hello Cassie! *(Brandilynn and Cassie greet and hug.)*

CASSIE. Hello, hello!

BRANDILYNN. I am *so* sorry about the airport, my kids were literally trying to kill each other.

CASSIE. So I heard.

HEBER. I told her how evil they are.

MARILEE. They are babies. Babies can't be evil.

BRANDILYNN. I wish that were true, I do. Hi Marilee. *(Brandilynn and Marilee hug.)*

MARILEE. Hi Sweetheart. Where are Taeliegh and Traedun?

BRANDILYNN. Asleep in the car, and I am *not* waking them. Don't worry! I'm parked right there in the shade with the AC on full blast and the windows just slightly cracked. I can see the kids. *(Glancing toward the window.)* They are in my direct line of sight. They are alive and they are fine. And I'm heading back out there right now. I just wanted to drop in and say hello for a quick second.

MCKAYEE. I'm heading to work. I can't stay either.

BRANDILYNN. I'm probably parked in your way. But I'm moving the car right now.

MCKAYEE. Where are you headed?

BRANDILYNN. Nowhere. I'm just going to get a Dirty Diet Coke at Swig and drive around listening to the radio while the kids sleep. It's my "me time."

CASSIE. Sounds fun.

BRANDILYNN. It's not. It's essentially prison on wheels. In 100-degree heat.

THE GREAT PLAN OF HAPPINESS

HEBER. Why don't I come with you? I can pick up my car tomorrow or something.

BRANDILYNN. Actually, we are coming up to go to church in this ward for that mission farewell on Sunday. So, if we don't need the car tomorrow, we can just get it then.

HEBER. (*Thinking.*) Yeah, that should work...

CASSIE. And if it's here, I can drive it to run some errands and go to lunch tomorrow? Right?

HEBER. I don't know... Do you still remember how to drive, Big City Girl?

CASSIE. I think I can manage. Or I'll wreck your car. I guess we'll find out.

BRANDILYNN. Cassie, of course you can drive Heber's car. Why don't you just keep it while you are here and give him a chance to pull out the motorcycle to drive to work.

HEBER. Yes! You can borrow my car as long as you want if it means she'll let me drive the motorcycle!

BRANDILYNN. Done.

MARILEE. You drive that motorcycle safely, Heber. And you wear a helmet.

HEBER. Yes, Mom.

BRANDILYNN. We have to go now before your neighbors call the cops on us for child neglect.

HEBER. Call the cops on *you*. It wasn't my choice to leave the kids in the car for these two minutes.

BRANDILYNN. But you knew a whole minute ago, so now you are also neglectful.

MCKAYEE. I've got to go too. Until I move down there, the drive is not short. And I-15 traffic is nuts.

HEBER. Bye, Cass.

BRANDILYNN. Bye. Glad you are here!

CASSIE. Bye. Good to see you, Brandilynn. Thanks for getting me, Heber.

HEBER. Anytime, Cheater!

MARILEE. Goodbye. Kiss the babies for me.

THE GREAT PLAN OF HAPPINESS

BRANDILYNN and HEBER. Will do. Bye! (*Heber and Brandilynn exit.*)

MCKAYEE. Alright, as much as I don't want to, I really have to leave.

CASSIE. Have fun at work. Just let me know when you want to hang out and hike and stuff.

MCKAYEE. Oh, yeah! I will. Um...unfortunately I did get scheduled a lot this week and I really need the money. And the summer online classes I'm taking are having finals soon...so I may not have as much time as I hoped, but I'll have some time for sure...at some point.

CASSIE. Whenever works.

MCKAYEE. Great! I'll see you guys later, or tomorrow. Depending on how late you stay up.

MARILEE. I will be asleep. Drive safely, Darling.

MCKAYEE. I will, Mom.

CASSIE. Oh! I know you have to go, but I wanted to ask you. I'm going to lunch with Uncle Daniel tomorrow. Do you work tomorrow? If we come to Tucanos, can you get us a discount?

MCKAYEE. Oh, um, yeah. I start work at one tomorrow. So, if you come after that I can hook you up. I haven't seen Uncle Daniel in...a long time. (*Pause.*) It would be great to see him.

CASSIE. He didn't come to your graduation party?

MARILEE. She didn't have a graduation party. We just had a small family dinner.

CASSIE. Oh, okay. He is family though.

MARILEE. Of course he is. I mean it was just us, Heber, Brandilynn and the kids. We have such a large extended family; it's such an effort to get them all together. We sent him her graduation announcement and her picture in the mail though...we certainly thought about him. We just didn't have a party.

MCKAYEE. You two should come to Tucanos tomorrow.

CASSIE. Yeah. Okay. We didn't set a time so I'll see if he can do two o'clock and if he can make the drive to Provo.

MCKAYEE. Great. Bye. Love you, Cass. (*They hug.*) Love you, Mom. (*McKayee exits.*)

THE GREAT PLAN OF HAPPINESS

CASSIE. That's great she has a better job. That will certainly be nice during college.

MARILEE. Yes. I'm so proud of her. She is such a strong young woman.

CASSIE. She really is. Mostly because of you.

MARILEE. Your Father and I did our best with all of you.

CASSIE. Of course you did. McKayee was just so young when the accident happened and Heber and I were both out of the house when he died. I'm sure it's hard to raise a kid alone and you've been great at it.

MARILEE. Thank you, Honey. But she wasn't a baby. She was...eight when he died?

CASSIE. Yeah. Dad had just baptized her a few months earlier.

MARILEE. What a blessing she got that. She has pretty much raised herself since then.

CASSIE. That I believe. But she has a great Mom.

MARILEE. And she has such wonderful church leaders and friends. I can't be more grateful to the ward family for taking care of us the way they have.

CASSIE. Me too. I have never worried about you guys here. I have missed you, of course, but never worried.

MARILEE. Good, we have been fine.

CASSIE. I know. *(Pause.)* Me too.

MARILEE. I know Honey. Here, let me help finish these *(She begins helping Cassie finish gluing the quotes and bows to the papers.)* I hope you are making some good friends in Chicago. Are you dating anyone?

CASSIE. Um, yeah. Kinda. Not anyone serious, but I've been out with a few guys off and on.

MARILEE. Oh, guys plural? Guys from church?

CASSIE. Oh, well, no. There's no one at church who...

MARILEE. No? Where did you meet these guys? These guys aren't LDS?

CASSIE. Well, no, I mean, if you met the guys in the Chicago Singles Ward, you would realize why.

MARILEE. I know Honey. You're smart and make good choices. I'm just asking. I'm interested in your life. Chicago is so different from here.

CASSIE. That's for sure.

THE GREAT PLAN OF HAPPINESS

MARILEE. I just worry you won't find the right people in your life, a worthy man for you, while you are living there.

CASSIE. Well, I'm not dating anyone seriously. But I am around good people. I meet good people. I'm a college professor. I'm not "running with the wrong crowd."

MARILEE. Of course you're not.

CASSIE. *(Searching for a new topic and seeing her book on the table.)*
I'm reading Harper Lee's new book!

MARILEE. Oh, you are? I heard she had a new book coming out. How is it? It's pretty amazing that she wrote a book again after fifty years.

CASSIE. She actually wrote it in the 1950s and her agent submitted it to the publisher before *To Kill a Mockingbird*. They didn't pick it up, but loved her writing and asked her agent if she had anything else to submit. She gave them *To Kill a Mockingbird*. Just last year her lawyer found this manuscript in her bank vault, and she agreed to submit the manuscript for publication again. The only changes made to it were a few copy edits.

MARILEE. Wow. You are very knowledgeable about it.

CASSIE. Well, that information is all in the back of the book. I imagine I'll get time to finish it while I'm here. Then I can leave it here for you to read.

MARILEE. That would be lovely, Sweetie. Thanks! *(After a beat.)* I hope you have a good time with your Uncle Daniel tomorrow.

CASSIE. Oh yeah. I will.

MARILEE. I'm proud of you for taking such initiative to get together with him.

CASSIE. I like to see him. You know since Dad died, we've seen him so much less. It's a weird relationship — your dead Dad's gay brother. But we've always had a strong connection. And since Grandma and Grandpa have passed, he's the only part of Dad's family we have. You know?

MARILEE. Yes. Well I'm very grateful for you because I feel I've been so bad at keeping in touch with him and he's such a sweet man. But you're right that it is very different now. There's no manual on how to maintain relationships with your deceased husband's family members.

THE GREAT PLAN OF HAPPINESS

CASSIE. That's a shame. (*Joking.*) Maybe I should write one. It's a gap in the literature, for sure. You know, you can come with us. We are just going to lunch. We don't have anything special planned.

MARILEE. Oh. Thanks Honey, but the Presidency and I are getting together tomorrow afternoon for a Hobby Lobby trip.

CASSIE. To get the things you couldn't find at Michaels?

MARILEE. Exactly.

CASSIE. What time are you going? I have to ask him if he can get together after one and drive to Provo anyway, I could ask him if later is better. I'm sure he'd love to see you. I imagine this time of year and this week will be hard for him too. I mean, Dad was his only sibling.

MARILEE. I know. Honey, I know. It's just that...tomorrow is going to be another very busy day. This conference is only two weeks away and we have so much to prepare. Tell him hello for me though, okay.

CASSIE. (*With some defeat.*) It sounds like youth conference is going to be pretty amazing this year.

MARILEE. I hope so.

CASSIE. If you are in charge, I'm sure they'll remember it forever. And keep souvenirs hung on their walls until they are twenty-nine. (*They finish gluing the quotes.*) Well, that's forty. I did it. See. Proof I'm still a good Mormon woman. It doesn't matter how often you go to church or who you date if you can craft with the best of 'em!

MARILEE. Hmm. Well, thank you for your help, Honey.

CASSIE. Of course.

MARILEE. Since that went so fast, I have a few errands to run and people to visit. Do you want to come with me?

CASSIE. I think I'll stay here. I'd like to relax for a bit. I got up at four this morning for the flight. (*Marilee stands and cleans up the table from their craft work. Cassie helps her.*)

MARILEE. Okay Honey. I have to pick up a few things for dinner at the grocery store. Is there anything you want?

CASSIE. No, I'll eat whatever you have in the house and I know where the store is. I have Heber's car now, so I can paint Highland, Utah red! And if I get restless, maybe even American Fork.

MARILEE. Okay, just text me if you think of anything.

THE GREAT PLAN OF HAPPINESS

CASSIE. Okay, I will.

MARILEE. It's such a blessing to have you home right now. *(She hugs Cassie.)*

CASSIE. Yeah. It's good to be here. Let me know what else I can do to help you with your church stuff. Or just with whatever.

MARILEE. I definitely will, Sweetheart.

CASSIE. Okay, I'll see you later Mom. I love you.

MARILEE. Bye, Sweetie. I love you too. *(Marilee takes her purse and exits out the backdoor. Cassie takes a breath and settles into the silence of the room and being in the house alone. After a moment she glances at "Go Set a Watchman." She opens her book to her mark, sits back and takes the opportunity to read.)*

DARRIN. (V.O.)

“And then he thinks he knows
The hills where his life rose
And the Sea where it goes.”

SCENE 3

Tucanos in Provo. The next day at lunch. Cassie and DANIEL are seated at a table finishing their meal.

DANIEL. Oh, my heavens! The food here is so good. It's insane.

CASSIE. Thanks to McKayee for getting a job at a Brazilian grill with an endless amount of amazing food.

DANIEL. Amen.

CASSIE. And thanks to you for making the timing work to drive down to Provo from Salt Lake.

DANIEL. Any time. And thanks to you for arranging this lovely lunch date.

CASSIE. Any time. I'm glad we could make it happen.

DANIEL. Of course. I love hearing all about Chicago and your new job and your writing.

THE GREAT PLAN OF HAPPINESS

CASSIE. And making me feel bad because now I'm realizing I have been the only one talking and I haven't asked you how things are going with...whatever it is you do...with computers and numbers and stuff.

DANIEL. Oh, accounting is fine. And not much worth talking about. Don't worry.

CASSIE. But Elliot is worth talking about. How is he?

DANIEL. He's doing well. Thanks.

CASSIE. He should have come today.

DANIEL. He is traveling for work. He's in some horribly humid southern state right now. There are only so many interesting happenings to photograph and write about in Utah.

CASSIE. Very true. I know I've said it before, but I feel so terrible that I couldn't be at your wedding.

DANIEL. That's sweet, Honey. And it means a lot, it does. Very few people from our families were there.

CASSIE. I know. And that's one of the reasons I feel so badly about it.

DANIEL. You live halfway across the country. And we realize there was minimal warning for our wedding.

CASSIE. Yes, but the rest of my family doesn't live halfway across the country.

DANIEL. Our wedding was for us, so we weren't offended that there was an intimate crowd and small ceremony. We let people know about it, but we didn't send official invitations. It's not their fault for not coming. It's what we wanted. It's what we knew it would be.

CASSIE. From the card in the mail and the pictures you sent me it looks like it was lovely.

DANIEL. It was. Thanks. We were astonished, really. We didn't expect to ever be married. We knew we were committed to one another, so we thought we didn't *need* to be married. We always hoped we could be, but ...and then when the federal court ruling came down, we just, we made it happen. As quickly as possible. The ceremony was for us. Not for anyone else.

CASSIE. It really was amazing. The court ruling. I'm so happy that you are able to be happy.

DANIEL. We were happy before. It's just...it's more equal now.

THE GREAT PLAN OF HAPPINESS

CASSIE. Yeah. That makes sense.

DANIEL. And now the Supreme Court ruling. I'm incredibly surprised by and proud of our judicial system.

CASSIE. Yeah. It's kind of unbelievable. (*McKayee enters and approaches their table wearing her Tucanos uniform.*)

MCKAYEE. Did you two enjoy your meal?

DANIEL. I won't need to eat for the rest of the weekend.

CASSIE. Yes. Thanks so much for being our server. And thanks for letting us use your discount. Do you bring us our check, or do we go up to the counter?

MCKAYEE. Oh, don't worry about it. I took care of it already.

DANIEL. We can pay. I want to pay.

CASSIE. I can totally pay. (*To McKayee.*) Don't get in trouble for us.

MCKAYEE. I won't. I didn't do anything shady; I just took care of it already. I wish I could have joined you and been able to talk. But at least I can contribute this way.

DANIEL. You didn't need to pay. You're a college student.

CASSIE. We both have jobs. I have a job.

MCKAYEE. I know. I have a job too, and it's done.

CASSIE. Well, what can I do?

MCKAYEE. You can say thank you.

CASSIE. Thank you.

DANIEL. Thank you, Sweetie. We'll leave a good tip. It's so good to see both of you. It's such a treat for me.

MCKAYEE. Me too. And thanks again for the card and gift at graduation.

DANIEL. Of course.

MCKAYEE. We didn't have a party, just a small dinner with a few of us.

DANIEL. I know, Honey. I'm very proud of you.

MCKAYEE. Thanks. I have to get to my other tables, but feel free to stay as long as you'd like. If you get hungry again, just have them bring you more food. Can I refill your drinks?

CASSIE. No, I'm good.

DANIEL. I'm fine. Thanks.

MCKAYEE. Okay. Flag me down if you need anything.

CASSIE. We will. Have fun.

THE GREAT PLAN OF HAPPINESS

MCKAYEE. I will. (*Sarcastically.*) Work is so fun. (*McKayee gives them her best waitress smile and exits.*)

DANIEL. She is so, incredibly beautiful.

CASSIE. And so ridiculously smart. And kind. And just an overall amazing person. Essentially, she is a mini, girly version of my dad.

DANIEL. Yes. I can see that in her. She is going to be very successful in whatever she puts her mind to, that one.

CASSIE. If she weren't my little sister, she would make me sick with jealousy. Well...she still does make me sick with jealousy, but since I love her, it's not such an active or debilitating of a sickness.

DANIEL. I was always jealous of your father.

CASSIE. Oh yeah?

DANIEL. It's what siblings do. Especially when your sibling is as extraordinarily charming and as "perfect" as he was. He was older and smarter and more popular and, not surprisingly, always had much better luck with the ladies.

CASSIE. Well, that's hardly a fair comparison.

DANIEL. Yes, I see that now. But I didn't know it then. And there were times I hated him for it. I mean *truly* hated him. I wanted to be like him so badly. To be comfortable in my own skin and with who I was.

CASSIE. (*A bit taken aback by her uncle's candidness.*) Really? I can't even imagine that.

DANIEL. We all feel inadequate to some degree.

CASSIE. Yes. Yes, we do.

DANIEL. (*Changing the topic.*) It's very nice of you to keep me updated on your life and keep in touch.

CASSIE. Thanks. I feel like I'm not very good at it.

DANIEL. I always appreciate your texts and emails.

CASSIE. That is nice of you. Usually, I just get lectured by people that I need to be on Facebook. I just, I can't with Facebook. It just feels so fake and...creepy. Reading about people's daily life, and intimate moments. Seeing pictures of their kids and meals and workouts. I feel like I am standing in the darkness outside their house and staring into their open window at their private lives. It's unsettling. So, I'm glad you appreciate my "old school" texts and emails.

THE GREAT PLAN OF HAPPINESS

DANIEL. I do. (*HAYLEE enters and crosses directly to their table.*)

HAYLEE. Cassie! It is you! I didn't even realize you were home.

CASSIE. Oh my gosh! Haylee! (*Cassie stands from the table and the two hug.*)

CASSIE. What are you doing here?

HAYLEE. Having lunch.

CASSIE. Of course you are! I'm sorry. (*She turns to Daniel.*) Uncle Daniel, this is Haylee. My dear friend from college and high school...and junior high. She is literally the one other person I wanted to see on my visit. And, weirdly enough, here she is.

DANIEL. I would say that is odd, but really, that's Happy Valley for you!

CASSIE. It's so happy!

DANIEL. Isn't it though?

CASSIE. Haylee, this is my Uncle Daniel. We are eating here mostly because McKayee works here now.

HAYLEE. She does? That is great! We just got here, I will make sure to find her. What are you doing in Utah?

CASSIE. I'm just here to visit my family...and for Pioneer Day...

HAYLEE. Oh, great!

CASSIE. ...and, well, actually it's also the anniversary of...of the accident. I mean, since you were around when it happened, I don't feel too weird about...

HAYLEE. Oh my gosh! Cassie, I'm sorry. (*She gives Cassie a heartfelt hug.*) Are you okay? Is everything okay?

CASSIE. Yeah, it's fine it's just, I didn't want to be alone in Chicago and my mom appreciates the company too.

HAYLEE. I bet she does. Oh Cassie, you just let me know if you need anything, okay? Or your mom? Just send me a text any time.

CASSIE. Okay, thanks Haylee. We'll be fine though. So, are you here with Spencer and your kids? I bet they are so big now.

HAYLEE. No, they're at home. I'm here with my friend Anna. Oh! And you would appreciate this! We are the chairs of our book club and are meeting to set our new school year's reading calendar. Are you so proud of me?

CASSIE. Book club chair? Of like, a book club at the library?

THE GREAT PLAN OF HAPPINESS

HAYLEE. It's our Relief Society book club.

CASSIE. Oh, I didn't realize that was a thing.

HAYLEE. It's such a great way to keep reading and also get to know the women in the ward better.

CASSIE. Well, that's great. Now that I am aware that Relief Society book club is a thing, I am very proud of you for being the chair.

HAYLEE. Thank you. You have always been my reading inspiration.

CASSIE. Of course I have. It's so good to see you. You look wonderful. As always. You are my "looking good" inspiration. I would still be slicking my hair back into a ponytail with claw bangs if it weren't for you.

HAYLEE. I will accept credit for that. Your hair looks amazing.

CASSIE. It's at least passable now.

HAYLEE. You know, you should meet Anna. You would like her so much. She lives in our ward. I'm sure you will see her on Sunday but let me grab her to say hello.

CASSIE. Okay, sure! (*Haylee exits.*)

CASSIE. That is truly crazy. Sorry, I didn't expect to interrupt our meal.

DANIEL. It's fine. She's darling.

CASSIE. Yeah, she is. We've been friends since junior high when we moved into the same neighborhood. We even went to Utah State together and were roommates. But only for a year. Then she got engaged and moved back down here.

DANIEL. (*Incredulously.*) No! I don't believe it!

CASSIE. I know. And now she has three kids. The oldest one is almost, um, ten...I think. It's so insane to think that it is even a possibility to have three kids before turning thirty.

DANIEL. Well, it's not a possibility for *you* now. So that should make you feel better.

CASSIE. It does. Thanks! (*Haylee and ANNA enter.*)

HAYLEE. Cassie, this is Anna Jolley. Anna, Cassie Warren.

CASSIE. Hi! Nice to meet you. (*Cassie stands and starts to shake Anna's hand. Anna, instead gives Cassie a solid hug.*)

ANNA. You too. I've heard so much about you!

CASSIE. Oh! Well, I'm not that bad, I promise.

THE GREAT PLAN OF HAPPINESS

ANNA. No! Very good things. From your mom mostly. She talks about you all the time.

CASSIE. Oh, yes, she mentioned that.

HAYLEE. Your mom hasn't changed a bit, Cass.

ANNA. You are back East in...

CASSIE. Well, Chicago. So, the Midwest.

ANNA. Right. It's so nice to meet you.

CASSIE. This is my Uncle Daniel. *(Anna waves to Daniel. He greets her back.)*

ANNA. Hi.

DANIEL. Hello.

ANNA. Sorry to intrude on your meal.

DANIEL. Not at all.

CASSIE. We are done eating now. Just chatting.

ANNA. The food is so amazing here. It's our treat to ourselves for a great year of book club!

HAYLEE. Yes. I truly had my doubts we'd make it through the year.

ANNA. Me too.

CASSIE. Well, hopefully it's fun. Book clubs are supposed to be fun.

ANNA. Oh totally.

HAYLEE. Just a lot of work for the chairs.

CASSIE. I can imagine it could be...

HAYLEE. We took a little break for the summer, and we are meeting today to plan the next round of books once school starts up again.

ANNA. We have such a wide variety of ladies in the club and the Relief Society. It sounds silly, but I feel so much pressure over it.

HAYLEE. No, I feel it too. I do. There are some high expectations from some of the women for sure. Hey! I know! Cassie, would you be willing to give us some help and advice in our selections? You are so good at that kind of stuff! *(To Anna.)* Cassie has a master's degree in creative writing and is an English professor.

ANNA. Yes, I know!

CASSIE. Of course you know.

HAYLEE. It would be so great if you gave us some advice on book selections.

THE GREAT PLAN OF HAPPINESS

CASSIE. Oh, well...

ANNA. That would be so great!

HAYLEE. We can come up with a broad list and some ideas today and then maybe we can get together next week, and you could bring some of your thoughts too and help us make the best choices?

CASSIE. Um, yeah... I guess I could... Why not?

ANNA. When do you leave?

CASSIE. I'm here for a week and a half, until right after the twenty-fourth.

ANNA. Right, Pioneer Day. Of course.

CASSIE. Of course.

HAYLEE. Okay, that would be awesome. We'll chat today and I'll text you and we'll find a time to meet, maybe in the evening next week.

CASSIE. Yeah. Okay. I can make that work.

HAYLEE. Ah! You are the best! Thank you so much!

ANNA. Yes, thank you!

CASSIE. Okay. I'll see you both soon then.

ANNA. Yes. I'm in your mom and Haylee's ward, so I'll see you tomorrow at church?

CASSIE. Oh. Right. Yeah, you should.

ANNA. I'm teaching Gospel Doctrine. Book of Mormon Lesson 30. Alma Chapter 40. So, pre-read tonight!

CASSIE. Great! I'll be there.

ANNA. So nice to meet you. See you tomorrow.

HAYLEE. I'm so glad I ran into you.

CASSIE. You too. *(Cassie and Haylee hug.)*

HAYLEE. See you tomorrow.

CASSIE. Bye. *(Haylee and Anna exit. Cassie sits down at the table.)*

DANIEL. They seem very nice.

CASSIE. Yeah... They are. Well, Haylee is one of my favorite people in the world. Anna seems nice too...though I'm not going to pre-read for Sunday school.

DANIEL. Darling, I am the last person in the world who will judge you for not reading for Sunday school. *(A short moment passes.)*

CASSIE. Thanks again for coming down here.

DANIEL. Of course.

THE GREAT PLAN OF HAPPINESS

CASSIE. I wish I got to see you more. I wish I got to see all of our family more.

DANIEL. You are living your life, Darling. And you are doing a great job. *(A beat.)* How are *you* doing? With this week and...everything?

CASSIE. I'm doing fine. Mostly I just miss him.

DANIEL. Of course. I miss him too, Sweetie.

CASSIE. Yeah. I know, you knew him longer than any of us.

DANIEL. Yes, but losing a father is just different than losing a brother. They are both painful, certainly.

CASSIE. *(After considering a moment.)* You know, to be honest I...I don't really know if I'm doing well or not since I don't know how I am supposed to be feeling. I'm here. And that helps. A lot. Being with Mom and McKayee helps a lot. And you. And Heber. *(She considers whether to share this before she speaks.)* I hear his voice.

DANIEL. His voice? Heber's voice?

CASSIE. No, sorry. I hear my dad's voice. When I read and write. In my head. My head reads and writes in my dad's voice.

DANIEL. Yeah? All the time?

CASSIE. Yeah. I mean, just when I read or write. It's been that way since he died. He read my master's thesis as I wrote it. It sounded so much better in my head in his voice than when I read it out loud in my own voice. Sometimes it's frustrating and hard to hear. But, I mean, I get to think on my own at least.

DANIEL. Hm, is this a good thing?

CASSIE. No... I don't know. Maybe. I'm not sure why it's happening.

DANIEL. I'm not sure why either. Your dad would know why. He was a successful psychologist...or psychiatrist... I always forget which one.

CASSIE. Psychologist. And, yes. He was. He probably would know. *(Jokingly.)* Maybe I'll ask him.

DANIEL. Let me know what he says.

CASSIE. Will do.

DANIEL. You know, let me know if you need anything. Just, in life.

CASSIE. Thanks. I will. You too.

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DANIEL. I will. (*A beat.*) You can let me leave your sister a tip. No arguing with that. (*Daniel takes out his wallet, pulls out cash, and leaves a tip on the table.*)

CASSIE. Well, let me do something!

DANIEL. You can make sure I get to see you again the next time you come.

CASSIE. Hm, okay. These just keep getting harder as we go...

DANIEL. And you can walk an old man out to his car. (*Cassie stares at him disapprovingly. Daniel begins to stand up to leave slowly and feigning pain.*)

DANIEL. I'm serious. I'm still having trouble moving from how full my stomach is with meat and pineapple. (*Cassie stands up to leave too. They talk as they exit.*)

CASSIE. Well, then that makes two of us, so I don't know how much help I'll be.

DANIEL. (*Teasing her.*) You can help me with my book club meeting I'm planning. It's a gay men's theatre-themed book club and we only read scripts by Oscar Wilde and Tennessee Williams while we listen to the music of Cole Porter.

CASSIE. Ha! Well, I may know more about that than what Relief Society moms want to read. (*They exit.*)

SCENE 4

A classroom in the ward building the following morning. The LDS Hymn "Hold to The Rod" plays. Lyrics are audible — "Hold to the Rod, the Iron Rod. 'Tis Strong, and bright, and true. The Iron Rod is the word of God; 'Twill safely guide us through." A visual diagram of the LDS concept of the Plan of Salvation is drawn on a whiteboard at the front of the room, including the labels — "Premortal Life, Earth Life, Spirit World, Celestial Kingdom, Terrestrial Kingdom, and Telestial Kingdom." A table in front of the whiteboard holds Anna's books as well as a picture on an easel of Jesus Christ. As the lights rise, McKayee is standing near the table, concluding the prayer which begins the class. Cassie, Haylee, Heber,

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Brandilynn, Marilee are seated in chairs as class members. They have their Gospel Doctrine books as well as Book of Mormons and scriptures on their laps or nearby. Anna, as the class teacher, is seated in a seat in front of the class. Their heads are bowed, and their arms are folded in prayer.

MCKAYEE. ...We pray these things in the name of Jesus Christ. Amen.

ALL. Amen. *(The class members raise their heads. McKayee takes a seat with the class and ANNA takes her place standing behind the table and in front of the chalkboard to begin the class.)*

ANNA. Thank you so much for being here on this beautiful, and hot, Sabbath day. *(The class members politely chuckle.)*

ANNA. Do we have any visitors in class we need to welcome today? *(The class hesitates for a moment.)*

MARILEE. I have three visitors today. All my children are here. Heber and Brandilynn are visiting from Orem for the farewell. And Cassie is here from Chicago.

ANNA. Yes, welcome to all of the Warren Family. It's so good to have you all here with us today.

CASSIE. We grew up here, but thanks.

HEBER. Very glad to be back in the home ward.

ANNA. I bet. Okay. Well, today we are learning from Chapter 30 entitled "The Great Plan of Happiness" in the Book of Mormon Gospel Doctrine Manual. This is such a wonderful lesson and message — I had such a spiritual week as I studied, pondered, and prayed about his topic. Whether you had the opportunity to pre-read and prepare or not, please take out your manual and turn to Lesson 30 which begins on page 133 as well as your Book of Mormon and turn to Alma Chapter 40. *(The class members open their books and the correct pages. Anna finds the correct pages in hers as well and prepares to teach.)*

CASSIE. *(Leaning to Haylee in a whisper.)* Full disclosure, I did not read this, nor did I bring my manual.

HAYLEE. *(Whispering back.)* That's okay. I didn't either.

CASSIE. *(Teasing her.)* Yeah, but I am a visitor. You are just an unprepared sinner who is going to... *(Mouthing the word.)* hell.

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HAYLEE. *(Joking back.)* Um, look at the board. *(Also mouthing the word.)* Hell isn't part of the Plan of Salvation, Cassie.

CASSIE. Then you're a sinner going to the Telestial Kingdom.

HAYLEE. Touché. *(Anna finishes prepping. She begins the lesson and references the diagram on the chalkboard and the picture of Jesus as she speaks.)*

ANNA. Thank you everyone. Now, I have a diagram drawn on the board, which you can see in your manual as well if you have one. What is this a diagram of? *(The class does not answer.)*

ANNA. Don't all answer at once. *(The class chuckles half-heartedly. Marilee raises her hand to respond.)*

ANNA. Yes. Sister Warren.

MARILEE. It's The Plan of Salvation.

ANNA. Yes. Thank you. It's The Plan of Salvation. Or The Great Plan of Happiness, as the lesson title refers to it. Who has seen this diagram, or one like it before? *(All of the class members raise their hands.)*

ANNA. Sure. You have probably all seen this diagram or something like it before. Probably many times before. If you are members of The Church this is probably very familiar to you. You've been taught it many times. You may even wonder, "Why are we learning about this in Gospel Doctrine? Shouldn't this be a Gospel Essentials lesson?" So, why are we learning about the plan of Salvation if we all know what it is? Is anyone willing to read the quote from Neil A. Maxwell on page 133 in the manual? Beginning with "The Lord has described..." *(After a moment of hesitation from the class, Heber raises his hand to volunteer.)*

ANNA. Thank you, Brother Warren.

HEBER. No problem. *(Reading from the manual.)* "The Lord has described his plan of redemption as the Plan of Happiness.

Con conversationally, we reference this great design almost too casually at times; we even sketch its rude outlines on the chalkboards and paper as if it were the floor plan for an addition to one's house. However, when we truly take time to ponder the Plan, it is breathtaking and empowering."

ANNA. Thank you. *(Pause.)* What a powerful thought and statement. The Plan of Happiness, God's plan for us, is so simple. So simple we can sketch it on a board in a minute or so. We can basically describe it in a

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breath or two. Yet, it's so amazing, so incredible, so wonderful. How often do we, or do I, do *you*, take it for granted because of its simplicity and its familiarity? When was the last time you did what Elder Maxwell suggests and took the time to ponder the Plan of Salvation? (*A silent pause.*) You don't have to answer that. It's rhetorical. (*The class again chuckles politely.*)

ANNA. I did have the opportunity to review, consider, and ponder upon The Great Plan of Happiness this week as I read the chapter and prepared for this lesson and, perhaps like many of you, it was something I haven't done in a while. And I want to bear you my testimony on what a powerful experience it was. It was, like Elder Maxwell said it would be, extremely breathtaking and empowering. And I'll share the thoughts and insights I had as we read and learn today. In this lesson we get to study and consider the words of Alma to his son, Corianton, teaching him about The Plan of Salvation — God's plan for us. Before we delve into the scriptures, was anybody else able to think or read ahead for the lesson. Any thoughts you had on pondering The Plan of Salvation? (*Brandilynn raises her hand. Anna calls on her.*)

ANNA. Yes.

BRANDILYNN. I was thinking about this a few days ago when I was in The Temple. In the past Heber and I have tried to get the Temple once a month. Which, it turns out, is difficult with a new baby and a four-year-old. And before last week we hadn't been since before our Traedun was born. But thanks to a wonderful Grandma (*Looking toward Marilee.*) living so close to a Temple, we got to go last week. Anyway, we were in a session and I, even in just those few short months, realized that I had forgotten the peace I feel when I'm in The Temple — when I take time to sit and be quiet to think about what we are doing in this life, why we are here, where we came from, and where we are going. And it was so...so comforting and calming. Having a baby and a preschooler is hard and overwhelming and chaotic and messy. Life is hard and overwhelming and chaotic and messy. But when we take time out to think about the big picture, and go to The Temple if we can, it's all so much more doable. More bearable. We remember that God wants us to be happy. Not overwhelmed, not depressed, not angry. He wants us to be happy, and that

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is why we are here. Sometimes it's hard to remember that in the thick of life.

ANNA. Thank you. Yes. Exactly. Anyone else? *(Heber raises his hand.)*

HEBER. Well, I'm glad Brandilynn got that out of our Temple session. Because I fell asleep. *(The class laughs.)*

HEBER. I often think about this in a different light. Yes, God's plan for us is simple. However, The World will often take it and make it too simple, if you know what I mean. God has given us commandments that we need to follow, covenants we need to make and keep, to be able to return to live with Him. And there are people in The World who want to think, and would like us to think, that it's so easy to return to live with God that we don't *really* need to do those things, keep those commandments and covenants, and we can still have the same happiness.

ANNA. Yes. It's simple, but not necessarily easy. Not just anyone can reach the Celestial Kingdom *(She points to the Celestial Kingdom on the chalkboard.)* without work. We need to work. We need to keep God's commandments. Absolutely. *(McKayee raises her hand to speak.)*

MCKAYEE. I think The World, sometimes, would like us to forget this. There are people, like Heber said, who would like to make it so easy that anyone can do it. I, for one, think it's scary what happened in our country just last month. The Proclamation to the Family is very clear that marriage is between one man and one woman. And we just had five people decide for our country that marriage can be between any two adults. Which is not God's plan. It's not The Plan of Happiness. And it's not going to be, no matter how The World changes its view of marriage. Marriage will always be between a man and a woman in God's Plan.

ANNA. Yes. Absolutely. *(Cassie speaks up without raising her hand.)*

CASSIE. I'm not disagreeing, of course. Though I think we need to also remember that agency is part of God's Plan of Happiness as well. A very important part. That Satan was the one who suggested we shouldn't be free to make our own choices. And we find that happiness, that peace, through making our own choices, and even from making mistakes and learning from them. I also think that, and I have found in my life, that God knows each of us individually and he made each one of us unique. What works for one person to bring them happiness may not work or be the same for

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another person. That is why we have personal prayer and personal revelation.

ANNA. Yes. I agree. I do think we need to be careful though because it is true that there are things that are a part of God's plan and things that are not. We do have to do, or not do, certain things to enter into the Celestial kingdom. And those things are not suggestions. There are some commandments and covenants that are black and white. And either you do them or you don't. Either you drink alcohol, or you don't. You drink coffee, or you don't. Either you get sealed in The Temple, or you don't. And we can run into trouble when we start to blur those lines and think about certain things as "gray."

CASSIE. I just...I think where the issue...well, for me the issue in our judgments as humans as to how other people live and fulfill God's plan for them. And I'm as guilty as anyone, of course. I've learned, particularly in my time living in an environment where a lot of people aren't Mormon and don't have the same upbringing that I do, that I don't get to decide what makes other people happy or whether other people are living the way God wants them to or not. That's between them and God. It's funny because when I first got to Chicago, I was kind of overwhelmed because many of the people I encountered lived in ways and did things that were against my standards and values I had been taught. And I thought, "Wow, these people must be really unhappy because they drink, or smoke, or (*Gesturing toward McKayee.*) are in a homosexual relationship." But then, eventually, as I spent more time with them I discovered that they aren't unhappy people. They are wonderful, happy people that have taught me a lot in life, actually, about how to be more joyful. And I don't have to do the things they do to be happy, of course, but I don't feel like we should immediately judge them and say that they will never be able to fulfill God's plan for them because their life is different than mine.

HEBER. Of course we don't want to judge people, and it's okay to be friends with people who aren't LDS and have different standards. But we need to make sure we are living *in* The World but not *of* The World. We have to remember that we have the full truth and knowledge of the Gospel and the Plan of Salvation while the rest of The World does not. So, we are held to a higher standard. And we need to remember that temporary

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enjoyment in this mortal life is different from eternal happiness and salvation. The Plan of Salvation is about eternal salvation too, not just pleasure in this lifetime.

MCKAYEE. I also think it's important to realize and be aware that The World is slowly lowering its standards as to what it considers "moral," and God is not. He is the same yesterday, today and forever. His standards for us haven't changed. So, when The World decides "It's a woman's right to be able to be in control of her own body and show it off how she chooses," God still has His standards of modesty as designated by temple garments, and they haven't changed. And when The World says, "Anyone can be married as long as they are in love," The Proclamation to the Family, which is also scripture from God, hasn't changed.

ANNA. Yes, God's standards are still the same for us. This is a really great discussion. Really great. And it leads directly into the teachings of Alma. So, if everyone would open their scriptures to Alma Chapter Forty and find verses one through twenty-three. *(Cassie raises her hand.)*

ANNA. Yes, Cassie.

CASSIE. While people are finding that, I just...I have a question. We have been referring to "The World" a lot. And, I feel like... I just wonder, who is "The World?" What is that? What does it mean? And maybe because I work with words and literary concepts, but I feel like we use an abstract, undefined concept to generalize and lump together a whole group of people who aren't members of The Church. And I think we need to be careful of that. When we talk about "The World" are we really talking about media? Are we talking about pop culture or social media campaigns? Do we really mean specific lobbying groups? It's definitely a difficult question, but I think it's an important one to ask, especially for people like me who don't live in Utah surrounded by other Mormons. I navigate and interact with crowds that I think a lot of people in this room would consider "The World." But when you get out there you realize that those people in "The World" are your colleagues, neighbors, friends. Then it does start to become "gray," and it starts to become important to define who we are talking about when we are saying that these people are out to get us or working against God's will. Does that make sense?

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ANNA. Yes. That does make sense. And it's an interesting and important point. I experienced this on my mission. I met so many wonderful people who didn't know about this amazing Great Plan of Happiness that God has for them. It goes back to what Brother Warren said — that it is absolutely okay to be friends and interact every day with non-members. There are such wonderful people in The World, and we can learn a lot from them. And living *in* the World but not *of* the World gives us such great opportunities for missionary experiences and ways to build the kingdom. We can set an example for the people around us of what being a Church member is and what it can look like to have the fullness of the Gospel in our lives. *(Marilee raises her hand.)*

MARILEE. I love the "I am a Mormon" commercials. There are such unique members of our Church living the gospel standards while they live their lives in The World. It's such a good missionary tool.

CASSIE. Yes. But again, and I think my point is it's important for us when we talk about this to actually define *what* and, or *who* it is we are referring to when we talk about The World...

HEBER. *(Acting the role of a student.)* Well, Professor. That is a very good question. *(Cassie rolls her eyes, and the rest of the class chuckles lowly.)*

HEBER. I do think you are on the right track when you mention media, and popular culture. But it is more than that. As McKayee mentioned, our government, The Supreme Court, just ruled that gay marriage is legal in all 50 states. What are they going to be able to decide next? Will they force us to marry gay people in our Temples? They want it to be illegal to say it's against your religion and you don't want to bake a cake for a gay wedding. And there are states where kids are forced in schools to learn about families with two daddies or two mommies. It's a combination of a lot of forces all around us.

MCKAYEE. I have non-Mormon friends too, Cassie. We absolutely want to befriend them and understand their point of view, but we do have to be careful. We have to stay strong in The Church and The Gospel so we can be examples to them, like Anna said.

CASSIE. Yeah. Okay. I know. I get that. I do...

ANNA. Does that make sense, Sister Warren?

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CASSIE. Yeah, I wasn't confused about it...I just wanted to make the point that...

ANNA. *(Cutting her off to guide the conversation back to the lesson.)* I really do think reading Alma's words will help us clarify and learn from this great discussion. Going straight to the scriptures with our questions is always the best option. God always has the best and clearest answers for us.

CASSIE. Sure.

ANNA. So, if I have a volunteer to read Alma Chapter 40 starting at verse one. And we can each read a verse as we snake around the room as we read through...let's see, since we are running short on time now...let's just go through to verse twelve. Will anyone begin for us? *(After a moment of no volunteers, Haylee raises her hand.)*

ANNA. Thank you, Sister Simons. *(Haylee begins to read Alma Chapter 40. The class members all follow along in their scriptures. Cassie is unsatisfied but silent. She looks around the room at the others reading.)*

HAYLEE. Now, my Son, here is somewhat more I would say unto thee; for I perceive that thy mind is worried... *(Haylee continues reading sotto voce. Cassie stands up from her seat and leaves the room, taking her bag with her. She crosses to the other side of the stage. Once she is out of the room she stands and stares, looking around, not sure of where to go.*

Marilee notices she has left and follows her out of the room. While some others have notices Cassie has left, the reading continues. When Haylee is done with the verse, the next person reads sotto voce, etc.)

MARILEE. Cassie, Honey, is everything okay? *(Cassie turns to her mother, takes a breath, and slowly responds.)*

CASSIE. Yeah, yeah, I'm fine. I just need to go to the bathroom and catch some air. I'll be back in, in just a second.

MARILEE. Okay Sweetie. *(Marilee returns to the classroom and takes her seat as they continue to read. Cassie sits outside the classroom. She takes out her notepad and a pen to write. She sits for a while without writing anything. She finally has a thought. She searches through her bag and finds "Go Set a Watchman." She opens the book and scans the pages, looking for a particular passage. When she finds what she is looking for, she stops and reads silently.)*

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DARRIN. (V.O.) “Why doesn’t their flesh creep? How can they devoutly believe everything they hear in church, then say the things they do and listen to the things they hear without throwing up? I thought I was a Christian, but I’m not. I’m something else, but I don’t know what. Everything I have ever taken for right or wrong these people have taught me — these same, these very people. So, it’s me, it’s not them. Something has happened to me.” *(When she has completed reading, she sits silently and contemplates. After a moment she puts the book back into her bag. Stands and looks around, not sure where to go. She sits again, with no particular plan of action.)*

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