

HEAVENLY SUNLIGHT

By
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HEAVENLY SUNLIGHT

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HEAVENLY SUNLIGHT

For my sister, Glenna, who is the adult in the family.

HEAVENLY SUNLIGHT

Cast of Characters

LILY THORNE: In her 60s. An attractive black woman.
Somewhat nervous, has a giving nature.

BENJAMIN THORNE: In his 60s. A slender black man; quiet,
broody.

CALVIN THORNE: 35. A boyishly handsome black man.
Volatile. Lily & Benjamin's son.

JEAN THORNE: 29. An attractive black woman with close-
cropped hair; cynical; Lily & Benjamin's
daughter.

MIRIAM THOMAS: In her late 60s. A stylish black woman.
"Bourgie"; Benjamin's sister.

ABE THOMAS: 70. A stylish black man; conservative.
Miriam's husband.

Harris Thomas: In his early 20s. A smallish, muscular black
man; sweet-natured and on the spectrum.
Miriam & Abe's son.

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ACT ONE
SCENE 1

1984. Winter. A suburban home in Haines, Illinois. Afternoon to evening. Lighting should indicate the gradation from day to night as Act One progresses. Light up on a dining room area. LILY enters from the hallway with a large watering can. She moves to a lush cluster of plants downstage of the dining room. Watering them, she speaks to the plants.

LILY. And how are you all today? Hm? Sweet things? Sweet things need to grow. Mmm. Thought you'd die of thirst, didn't you? Oh I think you know better than that. All that work I put into you? Oh no, honey. *(Waters plants.)* I'm late getting started. Had to ready myself. No rest for the weary. Oh yes that feels good, doesn't it? Yeeess. I can hear you drinking. Sound hungry. Yes, I think hungry and thirsty. Drink, honey. Drink it in. All over and through you...Mm-hm. You don't need much, do you? Nooo, not too much. *(Looking straight ahead, as if through a window.)* Nobody's moving. Inside. Each house. The Edmonds, the Millers, the Browns. Staring and waiting. Like me. For what? Company? Family? Thank God the sun's out. Least it's bright. Snow looks beautiful. Clean. Til the slush, anyway. Til it's ruined. Ohhh Jesus Christ, what is it? Help me to hold out. Oh, God! *(She throws the watering can at the plants. BENJAMIN hurriedly enters from the hallway. He stops near the dining room table and looks warily at her.)*

BEN. What happened?

LILY. I...dropped the can.

BEN. Didn't you call?

LILY. Why would I call you? To help me water the plants?

BEN. Didn't you yell? Why were you yelling?

LILY. Oh, Benjamin, I didn't call you, I...I called out to God, I stubbed my toe. That's all. I was clumsy. That's all. *(Picking up the watering can.)*

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You're not going to wear those dirty clothes, are you? You look like Farmer John. (*Light up on kitchen area as they enter it.*)

BEN. They'll be too hungry to notice. Don't worry about it.

LILY. Miriam and Abe? They notice everything. Especially your sister. Are you hungry? Don't touch anything wrapped up, now. Get a breakfast bar. It's light.

BEN. Yuck. (*He roots through refrigerator.*)

LILY. Let that hold you till they all arrive.

BEN. All arrive? I can't wait that long. Where's the ham?

LILY. Not the ham, Benjamin. That's for tonight. You know once you start eating you can't stop. Just get away from the food. Try to hold out till they come.

BEN. I want to eat.

LILY. Well, fix yourself a bologna sandwich. I've got enough to worry about without you adding to it. (*Before he can move, she starts preparing the sandwich.*)

BEN. Why are you worrying?

LILY. Because I'm better at it. Change your clothes while I'm doing this.

BEN. I do my share of worrying. I get my share. I worry about you. I... So what's worrying you?

LILY. Now? Now I have to make a sandwich for my husband because he is hungry and his hunger must be attended to. No matter what tables are upturned in the process.

BEN. You don't have to do anything.

LILY. Oh? Since when?

BEN. You're not making it right. You still don't know what I like on a bologna sandwich.

LILY. I know you better than you know yourself. (*Phone rings in dining room.*)

BEN. You know everything.

LILY. (*Going to answer phone.*) I don't know everything, I just know you. (*Answering phone.*) Hello?... No, we're still waiting for him. Who... Oh, well, yes, call back tonight if you think... or I could have him call you. Who... Oh... yes, call back tonight if you... Goodbye. (*Hangs up; returns to kitchen.*) What are you doing?

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BEN. Making myself a proper sandwich. So who was it?

LILY. A friend of Cal's.

BEN. New York?

LILY. He'll call back.

BEN. Oh. *(Pause.)* Why did you yell?

LILY. I'm not yelling.

BEN. I mean before.

LILY. I stubbed my toe.

BEN. And that's what's worrying you? A stubbed toe?

LILY. Some of us respond to pain more vocally than others. No, that is not what's worrying me.

BEN. *(Sitting at table.)* Why do you want to be so difficult? *(Displaying his work.)* Now *that's* how you make a sandwich.

LILY. I don't want to get into an argument now. They'll be here soon.

BEN. *(Eating.)* What makes you think there'll be an argument? Something's obviously bothering you. I am your husband. We are married.

LILY. I know that, Benjamin.

BEN. How can I help if you keep everything a secret?

LILY. It was easier before. At least then all you concentrated on was making enough money. You could retreat with a pat on the back.

Legitimate.

BEN. Pat on the back? Legitimate? What was illegitimate about my working hard?

LILY. Legitimately *away* so that the children were *my* problem. I suppose you thought situations could be handled more easily by *one* person. That was your reasoning, I suppose. Was that how you thought it out?

BEN. The children. You mean Cal. *(Pause.)* Is it money?

LILY. I knew you'd say that and I could have meant Jean.

BEN. Well? Am I right?

LILY. Why is that always the first thing out of your mouth? Money.

BEN. Am I wrong?

LILY. Money is not the be all and end all.

BEN. What's the problem?

LILY. It's difficult for someone who is creative.

BEN. Cal.

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LILY. Living in a dog-eat-dog city like New York. And if you're sensitive and trusting like Cal, it's easy to be taken advantage of.

BEN. What happened?

LILY. I tried to prepare him. Maybe *late*, but...It should have started sooner. When he was still at home. When he was little. I would have made you pay more attention to him. Little boys look up to their fathers. Learn from them.

BEN. You don't think Cal looks up to me?

LILY. Oh yes, yes, you know he does. He loves you very much. You know that. I'm talking about guidance, being around, involving yourself, doing your part.

BEN. You don't think I've done my part?

LILY. Yes, yes, in a *duty* sense. In a, I don't know, *expected* sense.

BEN. I've done what's expected?

LILY. Yes.

BEN. So what's wrong with that?

LILY. Not from *inside* enough.

BEN. You mean I'm not emotional like you.

LILY. We're not talking about me; we're trying to find *you*.

BEN. I'm not lost! You don't think I've done my part? You don't think I've provided for us?

LILY. Of *course* you've provided for us, Benjamin, I've got eyes!

BEN. Yes?

LILY. Yes.

BEN. I've done that but you want me to *feel*. You want me to *feel* the doing, right? Listen, I made the most of my college time and got my degree and joined the Air Force. Engineering, mechanics, the works. Guess what? The hard part was leaving the Force and being a colored civilian. You think maybe I was in a state of numbness going back and forth from Cincinnati to Haines, Haines to Cincinnati? Maybe I had to be, bounced around like a damn yo-yo.

LILY. Let's not argue about it anymore. I don't want to argue.

BEN. Putting up with Jack-crackers. Trying to find a place where I could do what I was taught to do without ...

LILY. I know.

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BEN. You talk about patting me on the back? Crackers patted me on the head for luck and loosened my leash *just* a bit each year. Can't get no feeling outta *that*, right? (*Lily starts to wash dishes, deliberately making noise.*) Where did you think I wanted to be? Away? Papa. Your Papa. Your Papa and fishing. What was I supposed to do?

LILY. You did fine.

BEN. It's like he forgot what the world was. A white man could go fishing with his boy. A black man was lucky to get fish for supper. He knew that. He lived that. But your Papa wanted Cal to learn fishing. Didn't matter whether Cal was too young to hold the fishing rod. Didn't matter whether I was a father who only visited on weekends. That's okay as long as his boy learned *fishing*. Where did you think I wanted to be? I wanted to go fishing, too! With Cal. From our own house in our own pond!

LILY. Yes, Lord.

BEN. Nothing wrong with trying to make the right moves so we could all live like decent people.

LILY. No one's saying you weren't a good provider, Benjamin!

BEN. I've been a damn *great* provider! None of you has ever wanted for anything, have you?

LILY. No one is questioning your ambition or your diligence. You are a wonderful generous man and we are grateful to you. (*Pause.*)

BEN. What happened? Is Cal in trouble? Who was that on the phone?

LILY. Yes.

BEN. Yes?

LILY. You know how desperately he's trying to get his talent to the right people.

BEN. Oh for crying out loud. He needs money! The boy needs money! Didn't we just give him close to five hundred dollars? Wasn't that for his talent? What was it for?

LILY. He's trying so hard. He's got to make these contacts –

BEN. Are you telling me he's got to have money every time he gets somebody's *name*?

LILY. It's hard. The world is hard. Finish eating your food and change your clothes.

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BEN. How much?

LILY. He's so talented and it's so difficult for a person like Cal starting out in show business.

BEN. He's been "starting out" for ten years, Lily!

LILY. We're his family and he's got to know that he can depend on us.

BEN. I've been writing him off as a dependent since he was born! He *knows* he can depend on us!

LILY. It's not just the money, Benjamin. He's got to know that we believe in him, that we have confidence in him.

BEN. I have confidence in him. I have always had confidence in him. He is my talented, sensitive son. How – much – does – he – *want*?

(Pause.)

LILY. Five thousand dollars.

BEN. WHAT?! NO! NO! *(Storming out; Lily runs after him.)* This is too much! NO!

LILY. It's only money and he's our only son! He must know we won't abandon him!

BEN. How can you say that? How can he *make* you say that?

LILY. He's not *making* me say anything!

BEN. Who does he call whenever he needs something? Not me!

LILY. He calls *us*!

BEN. No! He calls *you*! He knows who to get to!

LILY. He knows who'll be there for him!

BEN. He knows who to *use*!

LILY. He does not use me. He loves me. And he knows who loves him.

BEN. He knows who to get to. *(He exits up the hallway. Lily returns to the kitchen; sits; stares. Light fades out.)*

SCENE 2

The den. Later. The stage is black. We hear the voices of Lily and CAL.

LILY. Oh I missed you so much! Come to me, baby.

CAL. *(Overlapping.)* Mama, stop, c'mon! God ...

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LILY. Are you tired? You want to eat? Benjamin, Cal's here! (*Light up on Lily and Cal in the den. Cal is engulfed in Lily's embraces and fawning.*)

LILY. Oh, Mama has missed you sooo much oh he's so sweet and I know that airplane food wasn't any good so I'll fix you a snack before Miriam and Abe get here. Did you eat on the 'plane?

CAL. The Thomases are here?

LILY. It'll only be a few hours. We'll just act nice and maybe they won't be so bad. You're not eating right, Cal. You're too thin, honey.

CAL. I eat.

LILY. But not the right things and not three meals a day. Your clothes are hanging off you like you're anorexic and that little clothes washer you have in that tiny apartment doesn't clean. I'll bet all your clothes are one shade off from the original color.

CAL. Is Harris coming with them?

LILY. Yes, poor thing.

CAL. I really didn't expect a *crowd*, Mama. And please help us, not Miriam, Abe and Harris.

LILY. Well now you know I couldn't tell them not to come.

CAL. I know, I know.

LILY. Anyway they're coming to see Benjamin and me, not you. You don't have to see much of them at all if you don't want to. We'll be playing Scrabble most of the time. Benjamin! Cal's here!

CAL. When's Jean coming?

LILY. That girl. You know she's cut off all her hair, don't you?

CAL. What?

LILY. You heard me. All that beautiful long hair is gone. I just don't understand how a woman, especially a young woman, could cut off the main thing that makes her.

CAL. She never liked long hair, Mama.

LILY. But her face is too round for short hair, you know that. Remember Annabelle Brody? Lived on Elm Street?

CAL. No.

LILY. Oh you do, too! Annabelle Brody? She graduated with you?

CAL. Mama, that was high school.

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LILY. How can you forget people so quickly? You make it seem like it was a million years ago.

CAL. High school was forgettable.

LILY. Well, I remember *all* my high school friends and that *was* a million years ago.

CAL. I hated everybody in high school.

LILY. Oh no, not everybody and you could have had fun if you let yourself.

CAL. Mama...

LILY. Anyway – Benjamin! – Where is he? Anyway, Annabelle Brody cut off all her beautiful hair and now she looks like a walking Halloween pumpkin. Hair makes you, honey... Turn around.

CAL. Oh Mama...

LILY. Turn around, Cal. I want to see the back of that head. (*Examining his head.*) I hope you keep your hair this way all the time and not just when you come *here*. For *my* sake. I know you. Benjamin!

CAL. He's not coming in.

LILY. Maybe he left without telling me. Maybe he had to pick something up.

CAL. His car's still in the garage.

LILY. Why didn't you let him pick you up at the airport? You shouldn't have to spend money on a cab.

CAL. I'd rather ride in my own silence.

LILY. Now what does that mean?

CAL. Did you tell him about the money?

LILY. I tried to.

CAL. Did he let you get as far as my name?

LILY. This is not a little bit of money you're talking about and I don't blame your father for getting upset. Do you really need that much?

CAL. Do you want me to keep playing Black Jack and the Beanstalk till I'm forty?

LILY. That's not going to happen. Not with your talent.

CAL. In New York, talent goes as far as your money lasts. You've got to make an impression. Wearing my underwear in front of a herd of screaming brats does not make an impression.

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LILY. You have a God-given talent and no amount of money or the lack of it is going to take it away from you. (*The stage goes black except for spots on Lily, Cal and JEAN. Jean is in a Limbo State unseen and unheard by Lily or Cal.*)

JEAN. “Don’t hide your light under a bushel.”

LILY. Don’t hide your light under a bushel, Cal. You just keep trying and have faith and you’ll get your break.

JEAN. “It’s harder if you’re black if you’re black it’s harder.”

LILY. You have to remember that even though it’s different nowadays, more opportunities and of course our people have always been big in show business, it’s still harder for a black to get ahead. That’s a fact of life.

JEAN. “You just keep trying.”

LILY. You just keep trying and have faith in the Lord.

JEAN. “Keep the faith, baby.”

LILY. Do you pray, Cal? I know you don’t go to church but I hope you still pray. Don’t give up your faith, honey. You listen to your mama. (*Light out on Lily. Spots remain on Jean and Cal, who are in a Limbo State.*)

CAL. So Barbie goes into the kitchen.

JEAN. Wearing a crispy pink apron over her really adult jumpsuit.

CAL. And she picks up the tray of little coffee cups and saucers and brings it into the living room.

JEAN. Holding the tray precariously with her stiff mannequin arms, careful not to spill anything on the cute little dollhouse floor.

CAL. And she sets the tray down carefully –

JEAN. So as not to spill anything –

CAL. On the cute little dollhouse coffee table –

JEAN. When she hears a knock at the door.

CAL. She bounces to the door letting her hair bounce likewise behind her.

JEAN. Her hair –

CAL. Preternaturally blond and set –

JEAN. Is styled in the latest *haute couture*.

CAL. Can be lengthened or shortened at will. Just pull.

JEAN. She opens the door and who is standing there but –

CAL. Midge.

JEAN. Midge.

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CAL. Barbie's best friend.

JEAN. In the whole wide world.

CAL. No competition for Babs, that one.

JEAN. None at all.

CAL. Hi.

JEAN. Hi.

CAL. Come in, Midge.

JEAN. Okay, Barbie. Where's Ken?

CAL. He's at work. Let's have coffee.

JEAN. Okay.

CAL. They sit down in the cute little dollhouse chairs and bend their really realistic little rubber doll's knees.

JEAN. Barbie, that's my apron.

CAL. I've got a roast in the oven.

JEAN. It goes with my sundress.

CAL. Barbie straightens her really realistic little rubber doll's knees and bounces into the kitchen.

JEAN. Midge follows similarly, knocking over the coffee tray with her Little Mary Sunshine sundress...Take it off.

CAL. No.

JEAN. It's my apron.

CAL. It's my house.

JEAN. It was my house yesterday.

CAL. Get out.

JEAN. No!

CAL. It's my house and I say get out.

JEAN. It's my apron 'cause it goes with my sundress.

CAL. I wore that sundress yesterday so get out of my house.

JEAN. Well I've got naturally curly red hair.

CAL. I've got *Ken*.

JEAN. Slap!

CAL. Midge knocks Barbie into the cute little dollhouse wall, scattering the kitchen sink and stove. Pow!

JEAN. Barbie knocks Midge into the cute little kitchen table, scattering the washing machine and kitchen counter.

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CAL. Crash!

JEAN. Boom!

CAL. Clatter!

BOTH. The dollhouse is in a shambles!

JEAN. The furniture and knickknacks are lying inside and outside of the cute little dollhouse like the aftermath of a small Blitzkrieg.

CAL. Barbie and Midge lie spent on the cute little dollhouse kitchen and living room floors.

BOTH. Respectively.

JEAN. Their knees look double-jointed now and their preternatural hair is disheveled. *(Meanly.)* Barbie's has been unceremoniously yanked its full length. The apron is somewhere on the cute little dollhouse roof. *(Normal light up. They are back in "real time.")*

CAL. Miriam and Abe are coming with Harris.

JEAN. Oh God.

CAL. "Don't use the Lord's name in vain."

JEAN. I got an abortion.

CAL. Oh God. I need a drink.

JEAN. Happy birthday, Cal.

SCENE 3

The kitchen. Later. Ben has changed his clothes and is rooting in the refrigerator. Lily is making a sandwich at the counter.

LILY. Jean! *(Pause.)* Jean! Come here, honey! Mama wants to see you! *(To Ben.)* Are you still hungry? I'm fixing Cal a turkey sandwich. Your baloney sandwich is in there. I saved it. Jean! *(To Ben.)* You're going to ruin your dinner when Miriam and Abe get here wait and see...Jean!

JEAN. *(Offstage, irritably.)* What?

LILY. Oh now that's no way to answer your mother. I haven't seen you for a long time. *(To Ben.)* It's in there. With your name on it. *(Seeing he can't find it, she finds it for him.)* Move. *(Jean enters. Lily to Ben.)* Here it is. Right under your nose.

BEN. *(To Jean.)* Your mother's hiding things again.

HEAVENLY SUNLIGHT

LILY. Now Jean, you know how your father is when he wants something he shouldn't have. He becomes "picky blind": only sees what he wants to see.

BEN. Sounds like the best kind of blind to me.

LILY. (*Setting table.*) Cal! Come on and eat, hon! (*To Jean.*) Aren't you hungry?

JEAN. No.

LILY. You're skinny as a rail and your hair's too short for your face. Cal's going to eat something...Cal!

JEAN. (*To Ben.*) Has Mr. Pordy turned water into gold yet? He's going to be a very rich black man with that invention. (*Cal enters.*)

BEN. Not for another two years, according to him. He's got the mechanics figured out but he needs equipment, experts in the field, money.

LILY. Oscar Pordy. Oscar Pordy's got plenty sense and I know he won't let government take anything away from him, not as long as he's been working on that thing. That's what happens, you know: the government takes over if your big ideas change how we live. I'm surprised you're still in business with him. (*To Cal.*) Sit down and eat, hon. Oh and somebody called you from New York. He didn't leave his name.

BEN. (*To Lily.*) You're surprised we're still partners?

LILY. Jean, I don't want you to feel left out either so come on and have something. (*To Ben.*) Aside from the fact that you're the only black firm in Haines and Oscar Pordy antagonizes the white people that want to hire you, aside from that, how can he put all his time in some, some new-fangled car engine and still be worth anything to you and Ashford? I'm surprised he hasn't left the firm by now. It should say "Thorne & Ashford" not "Pordy, Ashford & Thorne."

BEN. You can work and dream at the same time, Lily. Pordy has never shorthanded us because of what he's dreaming. Ashford doesn't complain, I don't complain. I say more power to you, Pordy.

LILY. Well, you're smart, too, Benjamin, just as smart as he is.

BEN. As far as losing us jobs, Pordy's got a lot of pride, that's all. He doesn't want us getting handouts. We don't need'em.

HEAVENLY SUNLIGHT

LILY. I just meant that Oscar Pordy has been working on that invention, wonderful as it is, smart as he is, for at least ten years now and I would think that that kind of dedication to something which may *never* happen might put a strain on his *real* work with you and Ashford. But if you say it doesn't, it doesn't, and I wish Oscar Pordy luck.

BEN. He's smart. You don't turn away from that.

LILY. (*Placating.*) That's right.

BEN. You shouldn't be surprised we'd stick by him.

LILY. I'm not surprised.

BEN. Thick as paste bread.

LILY. Yes, well there are other people who need your support, too.

JEAN. Thanks, Mama.

LILY. Jean?

BEN. Jean?

JEAN. Just kidding. Ha ha.

CAL. Mustn't kid. People're starving in Africa.

LILY. (*To Jean.*) I don't want you to feel left out. Don't you want a little snack? Everybody's eating but you.

JEAN. Let's not upset the status quo, Mama. I'm fine, really.

BEN. Well, uh, uh, Cal, your uh, mother tells me you need a, a little money?

CAL. It's sort of an investment. *Will* be an investment. (*Simultaneous freeze and light change. The following encounter should be played in "happy sit-com" style.*)

BEN. What kind of investment, son?

CAL. Well, Dad, the kind that would make you proud, proud, proud.

JEAN. Tell us about it, Cal!

LILY. Oh yes, tell us!

CAL. With the help of Daddykins over there, I am going to present myself in a cabaret act that will set New York Big Apple City on its ear! I am going to have great back-up singers, I am going to have a great band, I am going to sing and read poetry and I am going to be everything to everybody! I will get Broadway offers and movie offers and I will be a regular on all the talk shows in town!

LILY and JEAN. Yaaay!

HEAVENLY SUNLIGHT

CAL. So whaddaya say, Dad, whaddaya say?

BEN. You've got it, son! (*Holding up a huge check.*) Here's a blank check! Happy birthday! (*They freeze. Previous lighting resumes. Scene returns to normal.*) Well, uh, uh, Cal, your uh, mother tells me you need a, a little money?

CAL. It's sort of an investment. Will be an investment.

BEN. What kind of investment?

CAL. Toward my career. It's the only way to be heard. Hiring musicians, singers –

BEN. Wait a minute wait a minute. What are you talking about? Hiring who?

LILY. He can't do it all by himself, Benjamin.

BEN. What exactly are you investing in?

CAL. An act.

LILY. Isn't that a wonderful idea?

JEAN. (*Sadly.*) Oh Mama, please.

BEN. What is this act going to accomplish, exactly?

LILY. How can you ask a question like that? He's taking an initiative. Isn't that what you want?

BEN. Seems to me *I'm* taking the initiative.

CAL. And that means?

BEN. It means I want to know what I'm investing five thousand dollars in, *exactly.*

JEAN. Jesus Christ!

CAL. (*To Jean.*) Now you come to life? And don't pretend you didn't know, Benedict.

JEAN. I didn't know!

BEN. Seems you told everybody but the one who counts.

CAL. (*To Lily.*) Satisfied? (*To Ben.*) Do you have any idea... We're not talking about some stupid church recital where you invite your friends and neighbors and have a nice reception in the church rec! I'm not singing for the Lord anymore!

LILY. Cal.

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CAL. Cal nothing! I'm sick of begging! *(To Ben.)* How come I always have to prove prove prove everything to you? How come you let Oscar Pordy dream but won't let me? Why can't you willingly help me –

BEN. *(Interrupting.)* Give you the shirt off my back?

CAL. Forget it, forget it. If it was for Aunt Miriam or even Harris, you'd be scatching'em out a check right now.

LILY. Benjamin...

BEN. Benjamin what? I'm not a beggar either!

CAL. Forget it, Mama. I don't want his money.

LILY. It's not just the money or his career.

BEN. What is it, then? A success story? An accounting? A justification? What?

LILY. We owe a happy life to our children.

JEAN. You know what I think? I think I have a roast in the oven and an apron on the roof.

LILY. Oh, shut up, Jean! You make a joke out of everything!

BEN. It's too much money.

CAL. Skip it.

JEAN. *(To Lily.)* No more baby.

LILY. *(Confused.)* Jean? *(As dialogue continues, light slowly fades to black and a scratchy recording of the hymn "Heavenly Sunlight" plays, sung by a boy soprano.)*

BEN. *(To Cal.)* You're getting too old.

CAL. Forget it. You've made your point.

LILY. *(To Jean.)* What's wrong, honey?

JEAN. Nothing, Mama. *(Recording continues to play as the stage goes black.)*

VOICE OF BEN. I remember a blue suit.

SCENE 4

The stage remains black. "Heavenly Sunlight" continues to play. Area light reveals Lily and Ben. Lily is wrapping a birthday present.

HEAVENLY SUNLIGHT

LILY. Listen to that angel. I'm so glad this record of Cal still plays, scratches and all.

BEN. I remember a blue suit and a silver bowtie.

LILY. Is that what you wore? I don't remember that. *(Light up on dining room area; late afternoon. There are many festively wrapped presents in the room.)*

BEN. No, no. I mean Cal. And I remember that great arc of pews from the choir to the congregation. Aisles and communion paths. And there was Cal in the middle of it all. Singing.

LILY. Mae Ellen played for him. He said I made too many mistakes. *(She turns off the recording.)*

BEN. He looked so tiny. 'Specially from the balcony.

LILY. Benjamin Thorne, I looked all over the church for you and that's where you were?

BEN. One little dot amongst all those running pews.

LILY. Don't forget to sign his card.

BEN. His voice was so clear and sure. A little kid like that.

LILY. He got his voice from Papa.

BEN. Oh, that's right. Papa used to sing a little.

LILY. Sing a little? Benjamin, I declare.

BEN. I'm teasin' you. 'Course I know he could sing. Lead tenor with the Four Crooners, right?

LILY. The Hamilton Four. You still teasing me?

BEN. Played the "Chitlin' Circuit."

LILY. That's right. My papa ... Nothing's working for Cal. I don't know how to help him anymore.

BEN. There was a promise of something in his voice.

LILY. Nothing's promised. When he was born I prayed and asked the Lord to take hold of his life. Not my will but God's be done. I gave him back to the Lord at birth.

BEN. Don't we have some say in it?

LILY. What do we know? All we can do is guess. *(Doorbell rings.)* Oh they're here!

BEN. I thought we had instincts to fall back on. Didn't the Lord give us those, too?

HEAVENLY SUNLIGHT

LILY. Sign your card and put this with the others and hurry up and answer the door.

BEN. Hey! Where are you going?

LILY. My hair, my hair! (*Doorbell rings.*) Hurry up and answer the door, Benjamin! (*To the door.*) Coming! (*She exits. Ben signs the card and puts the present with the others. Doorbell rings again. Light up on kitchen area as Ben goes to open the door. MIRIAM enters.*)

MIRIAM. Lord, Benji, what took you so long? (*They embrace.*) Where's Lily? I thought I heard her voice. (*ABE enters.*)

ABE. How ya doin', old man?

BEN. You look in good health, "gramps."

MIRIAM. You don't look so good, though. Where are Jean and Cal? Where's Lily? Are we going to wear our coats all day? Oh never mind. I'll just drop mine on the floor.

ABE. Oh, go ahead, woman. You know Lily keeps a clean floor.

MIRIAM. Now you know I'm not about to drop several thousand dollars worth of mink on a kitchen floor, clean or not. (*To Ben.*) You better hang this up somewhere, Brother. (*Lily enters.*)

LILY. Miriam! Abe!

MIRIAM.

ABE.

There you are!

Hey, babe.

LILY. Benjamin, they must be burning up in those coats. Why don't you hang them up?

BEN. (*Taking coats, joking.*) You and Miriam look so nice and happy, I don't have the heart to take'em offa ya. But if Lily thinks otherwise...

MIRIAM. Brat.

ABE. Be careful of the fabric, old man. Camels don't grow on trees, ya know. (*Ben exits with coats.*)

LILY. Where's my nephew?

MIRIAM. Why he's- Harris? Abe, I thought Harris came in with you. Harris!

ABE. (*Going to door.*) Harris? Son? People are waiting here!

MIRIAM. I declare.

ABE. You have to keep your eye on him every minute.

HEAVENLY SUNLIGHT

MIRIAM. Harris! What could he be doing out there in the cold? I'm sorry, Lillian. (*HARRIS enters. He is not a child. He is a smallish 22-year-old man holding a large brightly wrapped package in one hand and a lump of melting snow in the other.*)

LILY. Well there he is! My goodness. Oooh let me hug him! Come here, baby. (*She embraces him awkwardly.*)

MIRIAM. Harris! What in God's name are you bringing into this house? What is that?

HARRIS. (*Offering the lump.*) Happy birthday, Aunt Lily.

ABE. Here, give that to me. (*He takes the lump of snow from Harris and puts it into the sink.*)

MIRIAM. And it's not Lily's birthday, it's Cal's. You know that.

HARRIS. I know.

MIRIAM. And be careful! Oh Lily, the water's dripped all over your clean floor. I am so sorry.

LILY. Really, it's nothing. It's just water. (*She goes to get a mop.*)

MIRIAM. Don't you move! Harris made the mess and Harris will clean it up, won't you, Harris? (*Ben returns.*)

HARRIS. It's Cousin Cal's birthday and Cousin Cal is Aunt Lily's son.

BEN. How ya doin', youngster? Put'er there, pal.

HARRIS. (*Shaking Ben's hand.*) Hi, Uncle Benny. Happy birthday.

MIRIAM. Here are paper towels. (*To Ben.*) Benji, don't slip in that puddle. (*To Harris.*) And stop saying happy birthday to everybody!

LILY. (*With fake smile.*) Harris brought in some snow, Benjamin.

HARRIS. (*Cleaning up water while balancing the present.*) From outside.

ABE. Never mind, son.

HARRIS. For Cousin Cal.

ABE. Give me the present. You can't wipe up the water and hold the present at the same time. And give Uncle Benny your coat.

LILY. Here, I'll put it in the other room. What a beautiful package. You didn't have to get Cal anything. (*She takes the coat and present to the dining room.*)

MIRIAM. Where is the birthday boy?

BEN. That's enough, Harris, I can finish. (*He does so.*)

HARRIS. It was for Cousin Cal.

HEAVENLY SUNLIGHT

ABE. You shouldn't help him.

MIRIAM. He doesn't need it.

HARRIS. A little snowman. For Cousin Cal. *(Lily returns.)*

LILY. Can I get you something to drink?

ABE. Now you know the answer to that. Don't worry, I'll fix it. *(Going to bar in dining room.)* Miriam?

MIRIAM. Bloody Mary.

LILY. Harris, what about you, sweetie?

MIRIAM. Ginger ale.

LILY. Ben?

BEN. Ginger ale.

MIRIAM. Lord, Benji, you teetotalers. For once will you two have a drink with us?

LILY. Well...

BEN. We don't like the stuff.

MIRIAM. Why do you have a bar, then?

BEN. For you drinkers.

MIRIAM. "You drinkers." Why don't you let Lily speak for herself? I believe she was about to say "yes," weren't you, honey? *(Abe returns, drinks in hand.)*

BEN. I'm not stopping her. *(To Lily.)* Go ahead, have something.

LILY. *(Defiantly.)* I might.

MIRIAM. *(Sipping her drink.)* I do believe this is perfect.

ABE. Look who made it.

LILY. What should I have, Abe, if I were to have something?

MIRIAM. Give her a screwdriver.

LILY. I've heard of that.

ABE. May I? *(Takes juice out of refrigerator and goes to bar in dining room.)*

MIRIAM. Come on, Ben, join the party.

BEN. I've joined. Let's drop it.

MIRIAM. *(To Lily.)* Mmm, something smells good. Do you want me to help you with the food?

LILY. No no, honey, it's all warming in the stove. *(Handing Ben a glass.)* Here's your ginger ale. Let's go inside, everyone. *(Light up on den area as*

HEAVENLY SUNLIGHT

Lily and Miriam pass Abe in the dining room. Ben, unhappy, remains in the kitchen with Harris.)

ABE. *(Handing Lily a drink.)* Sip, kid.

LILY. *(Sips.)* Oo! It's strong.

MIRIAM. That's how we like 'em in Virginia, honey. *(They enter the den.)*

LILY. Now sit down, you two, and catch me up on everything and everyone. *(Light out on den. Focus back to kitchen.)*

HARRIS. Where's Cousin Cal?

BEN. In his room.

HARRIS. Where's Cousin Jean?

BEN. In her room.

HARRIS. It's Cousin Cal's birthday and Cousin Cal is your son. That's why I said happy birthday.

BEN. Com'on, youngster. Bring your drink and let's "join the party."

HARRIS. Okay. Happy birthday. *(They leave kitchen as light fades to black.)*

SCENE 5

Early evening. The Stage is black with pools of light on Cal and Jean. They are in a Limbo State as before.

CAL. Little Cal has constructed a skyscraper with his Kenner Girder and Panel Building Set.

JEAN. Landscaped with miniature shrubs and trees.

CAL. Dotted with miniature cars.

JEAN. A Rolls, a station wagon, a sports car. Red, red, red.

CAL. Placed on a light green wooden platform that came with the Kenner Girder and Panel Building Set.

JEAN. Red plastic girders and beams and cute little pre-fab windows and door panels that looked like facades from a movie set.

CAL. And annoying little pre-fab blue floors and roofs that puckled from constant use or just plain lousy design.

JEAN. All of which sat on a counter in the basement.

HEAVENLY SUNLIGHT

CAL. Covered with a Formica surface.

JEAN. By our daddy.

CAL. For the kids. Little Cal.

JEAN. And Little Jean.

CAL. And the Little Toys.

JEAN. Omigod, yes.

CAL. Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs – I knew all the songs by heart.

JEAN. Cinderella and Prince Charming – Me, too.

CAL. Peter Pan and Tinker Bell.

JEAN. The winch.

CAL. We went with Mama to Rike's Department Store.

JEAN. And we saw them all piled in colorful bins next to the board games and the bubble gum.

CAL. It was a free-for-all.

JEAN. These three-dimensional white cartoonists' Disney-conceived miniature concoctions.

CAL. Some were hand-painted. They were the best.

JEAN. Some were just green or tan plastic.

CAL. They looked just like they did in the movies or in the comic strips. And three-dimensional!

JEAN. But they could be scratched with your fingernails if you weren't careful.

CAL. Or leave teeth marks if you were especially nervous about something.

JEAN. Or if you just wanted to bite one of those bloated fingers or bulbous feet or fat noses.

CAL. Some of 'em resembled war casualties after a while. Or chew-toys.

JEAN. A footless dwarf here.

CAL. A fingerless mouse there.

JEAN. A noseless, tailless dog-thing under your pillow. Did we know or care that little black kids in the 50s saw nothing or anything that looked remotely like themselves in Rike's Department Store?

CAL. Here we go.

HEAVENLY SUNLIGHT

JEAN. That little *colored* kids in 1950s Haines or anywhere else rarely saw an image of themselves on TV outside of “Amos ‘n’ Andy” or “Beulah?”

CAL. Whoa, comrade. “Beulah?” You left out the entire Civil Rights Movement and everything after it, like *The Cosby Show* this year. Have you seen it? It’s brilliant. We’s human now, gal! So let’s bring the “Way Back Machine” back to ’84, okay? Back to the ranks of the unwashed.

JEAN. Well, let’s not go that far, *comrade*. Don’t put me in your ranks. I’m very clean.

CAL. Not in the eyes of God.

JEAN. Who’s *God*? And ... *whose* God?

CAL. Mama’s God. That’s the one who’s gonna get *you*.

JEAN. What about Daddy’s God?

CAL. Our father who art invisible?

JEAN. Yeah. That’s the one who’s gonna get *you*.

CAL. In theory... Miriam voted for Reagan. Yet again.

JEAN. So did Abe. Black Republicans give me the heebie-jeebies.

CAL. Well, two peas.

JEAN. One pod.

CAL. Poor Walter.

JEAN. Poor Geraldine. (*They close their eyes.*)

CAL. But we had *these*. The Little Toys.

JEAN. Yes. We had *these*. Back in the day. (*They open their eyes. She speaks in a mock dialect.*) Cal, you got a secret t’ tell yo lil’ sista chile?

CAL. (*Ignoring her.*) Mama threw ‘em away or gave ‘em away to Goodwill. After we left home. Along with all our Disney recordings and movie souvenirs.

JEAN. Lawsy, Ah do b’lieve he got a biggun..

CAL. They’re collector’s items now, you bitch.

JEAN. Cal got a secret an’ he don’ know how t’ spring it, do he?

CAL. Like brotha, like sista, Missy Slip ‘n’ Slide.

JEAN. (*Dropping dialect.*) Well, not *really* like sister, Miss Puss ‘n’ Boots. You’re gay, Cal, and you know I don’t care, right?

CAL. I know ... That’s my apron, take it off.

JEAN. (*Sniffs.*) I smell a roast in the oven and a lie behind that smile.

HEAVENLY SUNLIGHT

CAL. I've got Ken.

JEAN. Yeah, you can have Ken. Let's go, Brother, once more unto the breach. (*Light up on den area where Cal and Jean join the others. Everyone has a drink in their hands except Ben and Harris.*)

LILY. I swear, Miriam, I am just amazed at the size of that present. Look at it, Cal. Good Lord, I hope you didn't spend a lot of money on it.

CAL. Bite your tongue.

MIRIAM. Hell, honey, I would love to take credit for it but it's not just from Abe and me. And Harris. It's from the cousins in Denver. *They* decided.

JEAN. Denver?

MIRIAM. Why, yes.

ABE. Cliff and Angie.

MIRIAM. And Broderick and Lafonia.

CAL. (*To Jean, making fun.*) And Paisley and Pammy. You remember.

JEAN. (*Playing along.*) Oh yeah.

HARRIS. And Fat Butt.

CAL and JEAN. Fat Butt?

MIRIAM. Harris.

ABE. Son, what did we tell you about Fat - about Eugene?

HARRIS. He has a gland problem.

ABE. That's right. Nobody's perfect, are they?

HARRIS. He *likes* it.

MIRIAM. That's enough, Harris. As I was saying, the cousins in Denver decided it was Cal's turn to get the Santa treatment this year. It's a little early for Christmas, I know, but that's our family. What can I say?

BEN and MIRIAM. Thick as paste bread.

CAL. Lawsy.

LILY. So generous. And Harris. He's so big. He looks like a weightlifter. Mister Universe.

MIRIAM. Yes. Well.

ABE. They let him at school. He exercises a lot. At home, too, when he comes home. When they *let* him come home. It keeps him occupied.

MIRIAM. Calvin? Are you on your feet?

LILY. Well of *course* he's on his feet. He's doing fine. Working hard.

HEAVENLY SUNLIGHT

ABE. Debts all paid, boy? (*Awkward pause.*)

MIRIAM. Oh, honestly! We're all family here.

LILY. My Jean will be graduating from Simmons next year.

MIRIAM. Wonderful!

ABE. (*To Jean.*) That's a women's college, I hear. Accounting, right, girl? You're taking accounting in school?

JEAN. Actually -

ABE. I was telling Ben I have a notary public contact you might want to use. Y'know, if you play your cards right, branch out, keep your eyes open, you'll be set. That's how we did it, right, Ben?

BEN. Yep, that's how we did it. Oh, man, starting out was something, wasn't it? Miles to work, miles to home. I think Lily and me had the longest long-distance marriage in history.

LILY. We were still living with my Mama and Papa in Kentucky then.

MIRIAM. That's right, you told me about that. Honestly, Lillian, I don't know how you did it.

LILY. Ben would drive in from Tennessee on the weekends. How I wished for those weekends to hurry up and get there!

JEAN. Lovebirds? Really, Mama?

LILY. Yes, Jean, really. We were so happy then, even with the difficulties, and, well, I guess one of those weekends paid off, didn't it, 'cause Cal was conceived, even though Benjamin missed the birth.

MIRIAM. (*Laughing.*) Were you too late, Benji? Did you miss it?

BEN. (*Stung.*) But I got there, didn't I? I made it, didn't I?

LILY. Yes, you were at the hospital. (*Miriam heads to the bar.*)

BEN. (*Getting angrier.*) So, so then I, I got the job at -

ABE. Miriam? Another scotch? Sorry, old man.

BEN. - at Ryan Air Force Base here in Haines and I bought this house. With a pond in the back! And it didn't matter what color I was at the Base. I served my country, didn't I?

CAL. Good ol' Big Brother. I'll drink to that. (*He does.*)

HARRIS. Uncle Benny worked for his big brother?

ABE. That took about seven or eight years to get to the Base, didn't it, Ben? Took me just five years from the Chevrolet place to my trucking

HEAVENLY SUNLIGHT

business (*To Lily.*) and that was a heartless trek, pretty miss, a heartless trek.

MIRIAM. (*Returning with drinks.*) Let's give the heartless treks a rest now. Scotch, your majesty?

ABE. And I started out in Californy. Dealt with some of the biggest white fools God ever made. Called me Abe Lincoln after a while when I kept screaming 'bout how they better be remembering my fist is as equal as they are. I think I actually beat my way from greasin' cars to selling 'em. Californy to Roanoke. (*Takes a drink.*)

JEAN. (*Overly cheerful.*) I switched degrees, y'all! Yessiree, I decided on behavioral psychology instead. Just dropped that business school crap and went straight for the head. How 'bout a refill, Cal?

CAL. Yowsa.

JEAN. Mama?

LILY. (*Giving Jean a slow burn.*) There's a good living in psychology, Jean says. Very smart, figuring out people's minds for them. (*Jean takes Cal's glass and heads to the bar.*)

MIRIAM. How old is Jean now?

BEN. Uh, twenty...six, twenty-seven?

MIRIAM. Benji! You're terrible! Don't you know how old your own daughter is?

HARRIS. Do they come home very often, Uncle Benny?

MIRIAM. How old is Cal, then, you forgetful thing? He's got to be up in his thirties.

LILY. He's in his early thirties.

MIRIAM. What do you mean "his early thirties"? How old is he?

LILY. Oh, Miriam, he'd rather be vague about his age.

MIRIAM. Vague?

ABE. Why would a man want to hide his age? I always thought you *gals* went that route. Up, down and around that route.

BEN. (*To Harris, changing the subject.*) How's the job treating you, man? Seems all that lifting really built you up. (*Jean returns with drinks.*)

ABE. He doesn't work there anymore. He had a...there was a...

MIRIAM. We didn't like the boys he worked with. Bad influences. You know.

HEAVENLY SUNLIGHT

HARRIS. I was fired.

LILY. Fired!

ABE. You were not fired! There was a misunderstanding, Ben. Like Miriam said, these bad influences.

BEN. What happened?

MIRIAM. Nothing *happened!* You know how naïve he is. They took advantage of him. Thank God we got him out of there in time.

LILY. Who took advantage of him?

ABE. Some punks. They were users. You know.

CAL. Drugs?

HARRIS. Selby and Watts.

MIRIAM. He just happened to be there.

CAL. (*Looking at Jean.*) Lawsy, Lawsy.

ABE. He doesn't work at the school, so it was out of Doctor Forscher's hands.

MIRIAM. Fortunately, the doctor understood the situation and took care of it.

HARRIS. They caught us.

MIRIAM. Be quiet Harris! (*To the others.*) See what I mean?

CAL. What kind of drugs? Coke?

JEAN. Pills?

MIRIAM. What difference does it make? Coke? Since when did Coca-Cola become a drug, Calvin?

CAL. Oh. He was smoking pot.

MIRIAM. *He* was not smoking anything! Those boys were!

HARRIS. We were smoking and we got caught.

MIRIAM. BE QUIET!!

BEN.

LILY.

HARRIS.

Hey, hey...

Miriam...

I'm sorry...

MIRIAM (*Overlapping.*) Taking drugs may be acceptable behavior in New York, Calvin. And Jean, I suppose they have it in Boston, too, but –

JEAN. (*Simultaneously with Cal.*) You're right, Aunt Miriam.

CAL. (*Simultaneously with Jean.*) It's everywhere.

MIRIAM. It's all over now. Everything's been taken care of and Harris has a new job, thank you very much. (*Pause.*)

HEAVENLY SUNLIGHT

ABE. (*Like a predator stalking its prey.*) How old are you, Cal?

CAL. Pardon?

ABE. How *old* are you?

CAL. Well I don't play with *dolls* anymore if that's what you mean. Ha ha.

ABE. How old are you? Your mother said you were - (*To Miriam.*) How did she put it?

MIRIAM. Vague.

ABE. Yes, vague. Vague about it. I don't understand why. How old are you?

JEAN. Cal doesn't want it out. Top secret.

ABE. But vanity is a woman's domain.

CAL. We all have egos.

ABE. But a *real* man doesn't care who knows how old he is. If you've lived your life like you're supposed to, the older you are, the prouder you should be. I'm seventy and don't care who knows it.

CAL. Well, Lawsy mercy. You don't look a day over Hard Knocks. How old are *you*, Aunt Miriam?

LILY. Oh Cal! You're so bad. Isn't he bad, Jean? Oh Lord, I want to get *off* this subject of age before one of you asks how old *I* am and I don't even tell Benjamin that, do I, Benjamin? This is Leap Year, woman's choice, and I choose to change the subject.

BEN. Uh, Harris, the Reds still your favorite team, youngster?

MIRIAM. (*To Ben, closing in.*) How old is your son?

HARRIS. (*To Ben.*) I like the Yankees.

ABE. If a man is rooted in the important things of his life, he doesn't waste time worrying in a mirror.

CAL. What are the important things of life, Uncle Abe?

LILY. Oh it doesn't matter. Let's not argue. It's your birthday. (*To Ben.*) What were you asking Harris? (*To Abe.*) Would you get me another one of these orange juice drinks?

HARRIS. (*To Lily.*) Baseball.

ABE. Things like home and family. Honest work. The Church.

CAL. Maybe I like the idea of agelessness. Maybe retaining a few anonymous years can give you a few extra chances.

HEAVENLY SUNLIGHT

BEN. All the extra years in the world can't help you if you don't know what you want.

CAL. I know what I want.

HARRIS. Can I visit Cousin Cal in New York?

LILY. Am I going to get another one of these jackhammers or what?

BEN. You don't drink, Lily.

JEAN. Here, Mama, I'll get you another one. Anybody else?

CAL. Fill'er up.

HARRIS. Can I have one?

MIRIAM. He'll have ginger ale. *(Pause.)* When do you think you'll be making it in show business, Calvin?

JEAN. *(Imitating Lily.)* It's so hard. *(Exits with glasses.)*

LILY. It *is* hard, Miriam, because you need contacts and connections and you go to these auditions and you do real well and they act like they like you and it turns out you're too tall or too short or too thin or too fat or you don't have enough experience or you don't have one of those union cards. What do they call them, Cal? Ecstasy cards?

CAL. Equity cards.

LILY. That's right. Or they think you have too much hair which of course you can cut or you have too little hair which you can buy a wig for or you're Mexican or Chinese or some other group they didn't plan on.

MIRIAM. But Abe's young nephew Anthony is in a music group and they got a record contract right away. Didn't they, Abe?

ABE. He travels all over the country and makes quite a bit of money, too. He owns a condo now.

MIRIAM. Oh and what about Alisha Troy? She's only nineteen and models for...I declare, Lily, I'm almost as bad as you with names. What's that man called? Calvin! He has Calvin's first name.

CAL. Calvin Klein?

MIRIAM. She models for Calvin Klein and she didn't have contacts either. She was stopped on the street! Can you imagine that?

LILY. Well, that's different.

MIRIAM. It's still show business, Lillian.

ABE. *(To Cal.)* You have two expensive degrees. You can teach.

HEAVENLY SUNLIGHT

CAL. What, grading papers and following some stupid curriculum? No thank you. (*Jean returns with drinks.*)

ABE. How can something so hard earned, so hard gotten, this sacrifice your parents have made, how can you, their product, be so useless? Nobody sent your father and me through school, all expenses paid.

CAL. Well, you weren't that bright –

LILY. Calvin!

ABE. That's alright, Lily, let him speak his mind.

CAL. - and my father, who *was* that bright, got a scholarship to Tuskegee University. Besides, degrees don't mean a helluva lot in children's theater. Nobody cares whether the cast of Black Jack in the Beanstalk has diplomas. That's what *I* do, by the way, folks. I do children's theater. I've been doing children's theater for five years.

ABE. You perform for *children*?

LILY. He does other things, too.

CAL. Yes, Mama. Showcases for no pay and waiting tables.

HARRIS. Can I visit Cousin Cal in New York?

MIRIAM. You must be at least thirty-eight by now. Most young men your age have settled into their lives.

CAL. I don't know how old I am. I don't punch a Time Clock.

HARRIS. Can I, Uncle Benny?

ABE. You *should* be punching a time clock, and you have a woman's sensibility.

CAL. And you have none.

HARRIS. Can I?

MIRIAM. (*To Harris.*) Will you be *quiet*!

BEN. Cal is thirty-five today and Jean is twenty-nine.

JEAN. Ah, yes. Still in my formative years.

CAL. That's *my* business, Daddy! You have no right!

ABE. A thirty-five-year-old man still begging money from his “daddy”?

CAL. What did you say?

LILY. Well, honey, Miriam and Abe are family, too.

CAL. You told *them*?

ABE. Five thousand dollars. That's a lot of money for those of us who work for a living.

HEAVENLY SUNLIGHT

CAL. Shut up!

LILY. I want this to stop right now! *(Cal starts to leave.)* Baby! Where are you going?

CAL. Baby's going to finish getting *drunk!*

LILY. NO!! *(No one moves.)* Now you listen to me, every last one of you. This is Cal's birthday and I won't have it ruined. Before we sit down and say grace and have dinner, I want you two to shake hands like civilized men and I don't want to hear another raised voice in my house.

BEN. I told the truth.

LILY. Abe? Miriam?**MIRIAM.** Miriam? What did *I* do?

ABE. *(Smugly.)* Alright. I have no problem with that. *(Smirking, he holds out his hand.)* Cal? *(Cal walks up to him and stops. They stare each other down before they solemnly shake hands. Everyone except Lily silently moves to the dining room table and takes his/her seat. Light fades.)*

END OF ACT ONE

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