

# **THE SOLDIER'S DAUGHTER**

*By  
Ryan Sprague*

## THE SOLDIER'S DAUGHTER

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THE SOLDIER'S DAUGHTER

*For Emerson Hart*

THE SOLDIER'S DAUGHTER

CAST: 2M, 3F

CARLY            17, small and vulnerable, but with a rough exterior.

JASPER           26, tall and lanky. Insecure and unambitious, but with a good heart.

SEAN             27, clean cut and muscular. Brash, cocky, and perfect for the Army.

MARY ANN       Mid 50s, the mother of Carly and Sean. Anxious, and controlling.

ALLISON         24, bubbly and naïve, but very compassionate.

TIME: Fall of 2007

PLACE: Syracuse, NY

\* A slash (/) in the text represents an overlapping of the following line.

## THE SOLDIER'S DAUGHTER

*The Soldier's Daughter* was originally developed with The Nu·ance Theater in New York City. It received a workshop production which was directed by Michael Blatt, featuring the following cast:

Carly..... Ali Wetzel  
Jasper..... John Schanck  
Sean..... Robert Schilling  
Allison..... Shelby Rebecca Wong  
Mrs. Turner.... Judith Feingold

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*The Soldier's Daughter* received its second workshop production with Voyage Theater Company in New York City. It was directed by Nicholas Westemeyer and featured the following cast:

Carly..... Shelby Rebecca Wong  
Jasper..... Andrew Sanford  
Sean..... Alessio Araujo  
Allison..... Ella Kaille  
Mrs. Turner... Mary Round

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## SCENE 1

*Living room of a sparse apartment. Sorry excuse for a couch and some beat up chairs. A coffee table. The only real decent thing in the room is a record player resting on top of two milk crates carelessly secured by electrical tape. CARLY, 17, sits on the couch, wearing a coat and hat. A messenger bag of hers lay on the ground. After a moment, the front door is unlocked and opened. JASPER, 26, enters, holding a large paper bag.*

**JASPER.** Comfortable?

**CARLY.** Sure.

**JASPER.** You still have your coat on.

**CARLY.** Guess I'm a little cold.

**JASPER.** Heats busted.

**CARLY.** Noticed.

**JASPER.** I like your hair. What I can see of it.

**CARLY.** Yeah?

**JASPER.** The color. It's really... sort of like... I don't know. Just like it, I guess.

**CARLY.** Thanks. *(Takes her hat off. Jasper takes a six pack of raspberry whatever out of the paper bag.)*

**JASPER.** Raspberry, right?

**CARLY.** Sure.

**JASPER.** I mean, you asked for raspberry. Is that really what you wanted or...?

**CARLY.** Raspberry's fine.

**JASPER.** Just making sure. Whatever makes you feel...

**CARLY.** Comfortable?

**JASPER.** Comfortable. Exactly.

**CARLY.** Did you get anything?

**JASPER.** I'm fine. I have my own... uh... do you smoke?

**CARLY.** Yeah. Sure. *(Jasper retrieves a bowl and a dime bag of weed from nearby. He starts packing it.)* Oh. You meant... right.

**JASPER.** Is it okay or...?

**CARLY.** Totally. Yeah. Do your thing. *(Jasper packs it with precision. Carly sips her drink. They sit in silence as Jasper lights up.)* Party was

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kinda lame.

**JASPER.** Yeah. Hal made me come. Said it would be good for me. You?

**CARLY.** Hal's sister.

**JASPER.** Parties really aren't... I'm not in to the whole...social thing?

**CARLY.** Me either. (*Clearly, they aren't.*) Ever left Syracuse?

**JASPER.** Once.

**CARLY.** Once?

**JASPER.** I like it here. It's...

**CARLY.** Boring?

**JASPER.** Comfortable.

**CARLY.** Comfortable is boring.

**JASPER.** Guess I'm boring then. At least it's something?

**CARLY.** I guess.

**JASPER.** Have *you* ever left Syracuse?

**CARLY.** Bounced around when I was really young. Settled here after my dad's second tour in the Gulf. Syracuse has always been my real home.

(*Beat.*) Where'd you go?

**JASPER.** Huh?

**CARLY.** When you *once* left. Where'd you go?

**JASPER.** Oh. Oswego.

**CARLY.** (*Laughs.*) That's like forty minutes away.

**JASPER.** It's not Syracuse, though.

**CARLY.** Okay. What made you make the *long* trek?

**JASPER.** A band I liked was playing there.

**CARLY.** What band?

**JASPER.** You wouldn't know em.

**CARLY.** Try me.

**JASPER.** Cerebral Ballzy.

**CARLY.** That's... quite a name.

**JASPER.** Told ya you wouldn't...

**CARLY.** "Insufficient Fare" was a pretty good single. I don't know much else, though.

**JASPER.** (*Impressed.*) You like punk music?

**CARLY.** I appreciate it. The older stuff, mostly. Cramps...  
Buzzcocks...Slits.

**JASPER.** Wow. That's... I dunno... just didn't expect that.

**CARLY.** Why? Cuz I'm too young? (*This gives Jasper pause.*)

**JASPER.** About that... how old are you?

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**CARLY.** Why?

**JASPER.** Just curious.

**CARLY.** Got my license not too long ago.

**JASPER.** To drive?

**CARLY.** No. To fly. What do you think?

**JASPER.** That's ridiculous. That would make you like, sixteen.

**CARLY.** Couldn't buy my own alcohol. That should tell you something.

**JASPER.** All that tells me is that you're not twenty one.

**CARLY.** What do you plan on doing with me?

**JASPER.** I... that's not... can you just tell me?

**CARLY.** (*Beat.*) I'm not sixteen. Settle down.

**JASPER.** Okay. I just didn't...

**CARLY.** I'm seventeen.

**JASPER.** Seventeen?

**CARLY.** Yeah.

**JASPER.** Shit.

**CARLY.** What?

**JASPER.** I knew you were younger... I just... wait, your brother doesn't know you're here, does he?

**CARLY.** I decided to come over before you even knew Sean was my brother. "Ignorance is bliss" is in full effect, here.

**JASPER.** I guess we're not really doing anything... wrong.

**CARLY.** Not yet.

**JASPER.** You're joking, right? (*No answer from Carly.*) You're not joking. Okay, so this can't happen.

**CARLY.** What can't happen?

**JASPER.** This... us... whatever it is you think we were gonna...

**CARLY.** Gonna what?

**JASPER.** It just... you don't think there's something wrong or... weird about this?

**CARLY.** I guess I just don't care if something's wrong with it. (*Jasper isn't sure where to take things. He does the only thing he knows can calm the debate in his head. He lights up the bowl again and takes a hit. He offers it to Carly. She accepts. She starts coughing.*) It's really clean.

**JASPER.** Get it from this botanist guy. Owns a floral shop off South Ave.

**CARLY.** Usually I'd say to never bring your work home with you, but in this case...

**JASPER.** I say that too! (*Beat.*) I don't say that. I've never said that. I don't

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work so... am I still talking? (*Carly laughs. She inches closer to Jasper.*)

**CARLY.** So... Jasper. That's... a name.

**JASPER.** Yeah. It was gonna be Rufus. Still not sure if I came out on top or not.

**CARLY.** I like Jasper. It's... *you.* (*Jasper smiles at her, almost in a daze. Maybe it's the weed. But maybe not. Either way, he breaks from it and distances himself.*)

**CARLY.** What?

**JASPER.** Sorry, I just... you really shouldn't be here. Right? This is like... Yeah I don't... no you shouldn't. Should you?

**CARLY.** Stop.

**JASPER.** I just think... I don't know what to think...

**CARLY.** Jasper... stop.

**JASPER.** I... I just get... lonely.

**CARLY.** We all get lonely.

**JASPER.** Yeah but I get really lonely. I don't sleep. Barely eat. (*Beat.*) I just want someone to talk to.

**CARLY.** That's what we're doing. We're talking. This is talking. So just...talk.

**JASPER.** (*Few beats.*) What do you... do?

**CARLY.** What do I *do*?

**JASPER.** Yeah. Besides sitting alone at parties.

**CARLY.** I like to draw.

**JASPER.** Draw. Yeah... yeah. Okay. So drawing. You draw. You're a... drawer.

**CARLY.** Yeah.

**JASPER.** What do you draw?

**CARLY.** Portraits mostly.

**JASPER.** That's cool. I got one of those caricatures done once at the State Fair. It looked nothing like me, but the guy put me in a Superman costume so that was kinda cool. Big S. (*Beat.*) Tights. (*Beat.*) Cape. (*Beat.*) You want to leave, don't you?

**CARLY.** (*Laughs.*) No! Just... are you always this... awkward?

**JASPER.** I don't know.

**CARLY.** Just... don't worry about it, okay?

**JASPER.** Okay. (*He points to something hanging on the wall.*) That's mine.

**CARLY.** It is yours. That's why it's on your wall.

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**JASPER.** No, I mean I drew it.

**CARLY.** Oh. Oh, it's... what is it, exactly?

**JASPER.** I call it, "Bird Meets Chair." It's a bird. On a chair. That's why I... I took an art class first semester before I dropped out. This was my uh... swan song I guess you could say...

**CARLY.** And you hung it on your wall... that's... great.

**JASPER.** Not big on decorations, so I thought what the hell? Wall could use something.

**CARLY.** Art is *not* decorations. You should hang it because you're proud of it. It's an... expression.

**JASPER.** Okay. (*Beat.*) What do you think?

**CARLY.** It's... well it's...

**JASPER.** You hate it.

**CARLY.** It's so... simple.

**JASPER.** Simple. Right. Like a kindergartener did it. Got it. Maybe I should take it down.

**CARLY.** No no no. You put a lot into this! I can tell.

**JASPER.** Really?

**CARLY.** You struggled to even get the right shapes. Shows in the eraser marks you have right here. (*She examines "Bird Meets Chair" closer. Jasper follows behind her, paying close attention.*) And then there's the cross-hatch technique...

**JASPER.** Yeah. The cross hairs. (*He pantomimes it, almost like he's wielding a sword.*)

**CARLY.** Cross-hatch. You were really focusing on the preciseness of the chair. And this smudging down here... a shadow I'm guessing?

**JASPER.** Think so. Could have just been my hand rubbing the paper.

**CARLY.** I mean it's at the right angle if this is where your light source is coming from.

**JASPER.** Right. Right. (*Carly looks at it for a moment. JASPER is looking at her. She catches him.*)

**CARLY.** We should listen to some music. (*Jasper moves to the record player.*)

**JASPER.** Name a band. *Not* Cerebral Ballzy.

**CARLY.** Is this a test?

**JASPER.** You judged my masterpiece. I'm judging your music.

**CARLY.** (*Thinks.*) Falling Up Stairs?

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**JASPER.** Shut the fuck up!

**CARLY.** Okay?

**JASPER.** You know Falling Up Stairs!?

**CARLY.** *You* know Falling Up Stairs?

**JASPER.** Of course I do! I was in the same Cub Scout troupe as Darryn!

**CARLY.** The bassist?

**JASPER.** Wow. You really do know them. Nobody knows the names of bassists...

**CARLY.** Well, I do. Got "Shift in the Weather"? (*JASPER goes to a milk crate and starts shuffling through his records.*)

**JASPER.** I have every album.

**CARLY.** Sure about that? They had an EP in '06 that very few people know about.

**JASPER.** "The Forgotten Ghost"! Few B sides and a different drummer on every track.

**CARLY.** You have it?

**JASPER.** See for yourself.

**CARLY.** I'm impressed.

**JASPER.** Me too. (*He stares at her for a moment as she continues skimming the albums. She notices.*)

**CARLY.** What?

**JASPER.** Nothing. (*Beat.*) FUCKING STAIRS! (*Carly jumps, and then let's out a laugh. Jasper puts the album on as it starts playing. He plops down on the couch, singing along to the music. After a moment, Carly sits next to him. He lights up again, taking a huge hit. He passes it to Carly. She smokes, handing it back. They stare off.*)

**CARLY.** I work at the museum downtown. You should stop by sometime.

**JASPER.** We have a museum?

**CARLY.** (*Laughs.*) Yes. Everson. It's sorta near the Landmark Theatre.

**JASPER.** There's a theatre?

**CARLY.** Do you ever leave your apartment?

**JASPER.** Not really. (*Beat.*) So you go to school and work at the museum? That's a lot for someone your... yeah.

**CARLY.** Taking a year off from school. Not really my thing.

**JASPER.** Me either. Your mom's cool with you taking a year off?

**CARLY.** My father was killed in the line of duty. So yeah... she pretty much has to be cool with it.

**JASPER.** (*Beat.*) Right. Look, when I heard about your Dad, I...

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**CARLY.** Jasper...

**JASPER.** Yeah?

**CARLY.** Let's play a game.

**JASPER.** I don't think I have anything. Might have a deck of cards somewhere.

**CARLY.** No... not like that. *(She takes the bowl from him and takes hit, getting close to him and slowly blowing the smoke into his face.)* Let's pretend your name is Rufus. *(Puts the bowl down and grabs Jasper's hand. She slowly moves in and kisses him. He hesitates at first, but eventually gives in. She stops.)* And just for tonight... let's pretend I'm your age. *(She then stands and faces him, finally taking off her coat. She wears a black tank top.)* Can you do that, Jasper?

**JASPER.** Who's Jasper? *(CARLY moves toward him. Falling Up Stairs vibrates with heavy percussion from the record player as lights fade.)*

### SCENE 2

*The following day. Carly sits on the couch, scribbling casually in her sketch-pad. She wears one of Jasper's band t-shirts. After a moment, Jasper enters, still half asleep and in zombie-mode. He notices her as she continues sketching throughout the following. A to-go coffee rests on the coffee table. Carly hands it to Jasper.*

**JASPER.** Thank you.

**CARLY.** Wasn't sure how you took it, so...

**JASPER.** Don't care. *(Beat.)* How long have you...?

**CARLY.** A while.

**JASPER.** I must have really hit the bed hard.

**CARLY.** You looked so peaceful with your face pressed up against the wall. Drool dripping down your chin. I didn't want to disturb that.

**JASPER.** I'm sorry.

**CARLY.** Everyone drools.

**JASPER.** I mean for... you know. I just... haven't really slept that well in a while and... it's like I couldn't hear anything? My mind was just... it was... well, like you said... peaceful.

**CARLY.** Good.

**JASPER.** Are you mad?

**CARLY.** Why would I be mad?

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**JASPER.** That I uh... fell asleep before...

**CARLY.** It's fine. *(She examines her sketch for a moment, sighs, rips it out of the sketch-pad and gives it to Jasper. He wipes his eyes and glares at the sketch. As his eyes begin to focus, he is completely in shock.)*

**JASPER.** Holy shit.

**CARLY.** No one ever really gets to see what they look like when they sleep. And this was pre-drool. You're welcome.

**JASPER.** This is...

**CARLY.** It's just a sketch.

**JASPER.** I don't know what to.. at least let me make you breakfast.

**CARLY.** It's almost six. *(JASPER looks confused.)* 6pm, Jasper. It's almost 6pm.

**JASPER.** Are you serious?

**CARLY.** Kind of dark for morning, isn't it?

**JASPER.** Why didn't you wake me up?

**CARLY.** You clearly needed it.

**JASPER.** Thanks for sticking around. You didn't have to.

**CARLY.** I don't work today. Plus I kinda like being... *away* from it all. *(Jasper nods, sitting next to Carly, still attempting to wake up. Carly continues to sketch.)*

**JASPER.** I seriously have not slept that hard in... ever. Don't think I even had any dreams. Which is weird cuz when I *do* sleep, I always have the same one. All my teeth fall out. You ever have that one? *(Carly shakes her head, continuing to sketch.)* What do you dream about?

**CARLY.** I don't.

**JASPER.** Really?

**CARLY.** Nope. Never.

**JASPER.** That's kind of depressing.

**CARLY.** I don't mind. Keeps the nightmares away.

**JASPER.** What about the good dreams?

**CARLY.** What's the use of dreaming if it's not real?

**JASPER.** What's the use of art if you can't dream it? *(Carly actually looks intrigued at his response. He responds with a 'mind blown' sorta thing. She laughs.)*

**CARLY.** I sometimes go down to the creek on the edge of Onondaga Park to sketch. Sometimes I just listen to the water, and there's been a few times I drifted off to sleep and had these, like... daydreams.

**JASPER.** What were they about?

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**CARLY.** Sunflowers. (*Beat.*) There was this long stretch of them that led to the creek. And my mom would dress me in this bright sundress, and my Dad would take me and Sean to the park. I'd always pick one flower and bring it home. My mom would cut the stem and put the sunflower in my hair. (*A smile.*) Guess that's what I... dream about.

**JASPER.** Sunflowers. You daydream about sunflowers. That's... it's great. (*Carly's phone vibrates and breaks the moment.*)

**CARLY.** I should go. Sean's been calling me non-stop.

**JASPER.** Wait. Did you...? Does he know you're here? What did you tell him?

**CARLY.** That I was at your apartment and that you got me drunk and took advantage of me. (*Jasper is frozen.*) I never talk to him. You can unclench your balls now. (*Her phone vibrates again.*) Ugh, seriously, Sean?

**JASPER.** Maybe you should answer it.

**CARLY.** He's freaking out about the memorial. (*Jasper looks confused.*) For my dad? Some friend you are.

**JASPER.** Haven't talked to Sean since I... it's really been a year?

**CARLY.** Next Saturday.

**JASPER.** How's your mom doing with it?

**CARLY.** All she does is bake brownies. And then eat them All the time. Every day.

**JASPER.** She's keeping busy. That's gotta be good, right?

**CARLY.** She's getting fat.

**JASPER.** Ouch! (*Beat.*) Hey... I'm uh... I'm sorry.

**CARLY.** For what?

**JASPER.** Your Dad.

**CARLY.** Did you kill him?

**JASPER.** What?

**CARLY.** My dad. Were you the one that killed him?

**JASPER.** Uh... no?

**CARLY.** Then you really don't have to be sorry.

**JASPER.** Okay. I just... thought that would be the right thing to uh...

**CARLY.** I'm messing with you.

**JASPER.** Too early for that... ya know... 6pm and all? (*Carly smiles. Jasper sips his coffee.*) My uh... my mom died when I was younger. She was really sick. My dad bailed on her some time before. Had to live with my aunt for a while. So I uh... I know what it's like to lose a parent.

**CARLY.** Thanks.

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**JASPER.** So if you ever want to talk about it...

**CARLY.** Jasper...

**JASPER.** I just...

**CARLY.** Thank you.

**JASPER.** So your mom's baking brownies. What about Sean? How's he doing?

**CARLY.** We don't talk much. Let alone see one another.

**JASPER.** Well when you do see him, give him my best?

**CARLY.** Do it yourself.

**JASPER.** What?

**CARLY.** Come to the memorial.

**JASPER.** Oh. No, I couldn't.

**CARLY.** Why not?

**JASPER.** I mean, it's your family and friends. I wouldn't want to intrude.

**CARLY.** Family and friends my ass. Half the town will be there. News stations and the papers. They eat this patriotism shit up. Come on. You can be my date.

**JASPER.** Yeah, that would go over great.

**CARLY.** I'm kidding! Tell you what... there's this, like, rehearsal dinner thing tomorrow. Guess they want us to sorta run through everything before the memorial next week. It'll just be a handful of people. Stop by.

**JASPER.** I'm a little anti-social, if you haven't noticed.

**CARLY.** Seem to be doing okay with me.

**JASPER.** You're different. Don't know why.

**CARLY.** Well when you figure it out, let me know. *(She puts on her coat and hat and grabs her messenger bag, heading for the door.)*

**JASPER.** What time is the...?

**CARLY.** Dinner's at seven. It's at the Valley Legion off the Turnpike.

**JASPER.** Oh yeah, they used to do pancake breakfasts and fish fries there.

**CARLY.** Still do. We have a caterer, though. Thank God. *(Beat.)* Come.

**JASPER.** I'll uh... I'll try to stop by. Depends on my schedule.

**CARLY.** *(Laughs.)* Cute.

**JASPER.** No. *Awkward.* Remember?

**CARLY.** Right. *(She hesitates for a moment and then kisses him. It's a long kiss. She's the one to break it off.)* Thanks for the t-shirt. *(She exits. Jasper watches her leave. He goes to the sketch, staring at it. After a moment, he sits on the couch and lights up the bowl. He notices that Carly left her tank top. He holds it, a smile unlike any he's had in a very long*

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time.)

### SCENE 3

*The following afternoon. Outside the banquet hall. SEAN, 27, has a few index cards in hand. He recites a speech.*

**SEAN.** Our dead brothers still live for us, and bid us think of life, not death. Of life to which in their... (*Loses his place.*) in their youth, they lent the passion and joy of the Spring. (*Unbeknownst to Sean, Jasper enters. He listens.*) As I listen, the great chorus of life and joy begins again, and amid the awful orchestra of seen and unseen powers and destinies of good and evil, our trumpets sound once more a note of daring, hope, and will." (*Tries to make the last sentence more dramatic.*) Of daring. Hope. And will. (*Offstage, the sound of Sean's mother, MARY ANN, can be heard.*)

**MARY ANN.** (*Offstage.*) Sean, I need you in here!

**SEAN.** Hold on! (*Reads from index cards again.*) Our dead brothers still live for us...

**MARY ANN.** (*Offstage.*) Sean!

**SEAN.** Hold on! (*Beat.*) And bid us think of life, not death. Of life to which...

**MARY ANN.** (*Offstage.*) NOW, Sean!

**SEAN.** OF LIFE TO WHICH IN THEIR YOUTH, THEY LENT THE FUCKING PASSION AND JOY OF THE GOD DAMN SPRING! God dammit! (*Lights a cigarette. He paces back and forth, continuing to read from the cards. Jasper hesitates, and begins to leave, but not before Sean notices him.*)

**SEAN.** Jasper?

**JASPER.** Hey.

**SEAN.** The fuck are you doing here?

**JASPER.** Memorial.

**SEAN.** It's not 'til next week.

**JASPER.** Oh. Right, yeah I... I meant the uh... must've looked at the calendar wrong. (*Sean punches Jasper in the arm.*) Um, Ow?

**SEAN.** It's good to see you, ya piece of shit! (*Bear hugs him.*)

**JASPER.** You too.

**SEAN.** Been working out?

**JASPER.** Not really.

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**SEAN.** I was kidding. Scrawny as ever. *I've* clearly been working out. Check it. (*Flexes for Jasper. Notices his beard.*) What's with the whole Grizzly Adams thing?

**JASPER.** Eh, just giving it a test spin. Two year test spin.

**SEAN.** Ya look like a bum.

**JASPER.** Thanks.

**SEAN.** Of course you'd screw up the dates. Always showing up to the wrong classes. Screw up the date for the funeral, too, asshole?

**JASPER.** I wasn't sure if I... it had been a while since we uh... (*Sean punches him in the arm again.*)

**SEAN.** I'm just messing with ya, Jasp. Hey, you still doing that whole Top Cook thing or whatever?

**JASPER.** Not so much.

**SEAN.** Dropping out of school didn't exactly jump start the dream?

**JASPER.** (*Beat.*) Look, I know I sorta just... disappeared. And that was shitty, so...

**SEAN.** Hey, not my problem, Quitters are quitters. Thought I'd at least hear from ya after you left, though. Not a peep.

**JASPER.** You're right. I shoulda... there was just... you're right.

**SEAN.** Where you living now?

**JASPER.** Got an apartment off Valley Drive. Near the duck pond.

**SEAN.** Damn. Even I wouldn't walk through there at night.

**JASPER.** It's not that bad.

**SEAN.** Whatever you say. At least one of us is getting outta this shit hole, right?

**JASPER.** What do you mean?

**SEAN.** I'm shipping out. (*Beat.*) You knew I signed up, right?

**JASPER.** Your sister failed to mention that. Wow.

**SEAN.** Sometimes ya just... did you say my sister?

**JASPER.** Huh?

**SEAN.** You said my sister. She never came up to campus. How do you know Carly?

**JASPER.** (*Beat.*) Oh. I uh... I met her at a party.

**SEAN.** A party?

**JASPER.** Yeah.

**SEAN.** The hell kind of party were you at with teenagers?

**JASPER.** Younger sister of a friend... Hal. You remember Hal from freshman year?

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**SEAN.** Halitosis!? I couldn't not be in the same room with that guy without wanting to puke when he opened his mouth. Hey, you remember that one time I put skittles in the shower head and he came out looking like a rainbow?

**JASPER.** Yeah... and he reported *me* to the R.A for it.

**SEAN.** Stuttering little weasel. "W-W-What the hell?! W-W-Who did this!?" (*Sighs.*) Memories.

**JASPER.** It amazes me you had any friends in college.

**SEAN.** I had your scrawny ass.

**JASPER.** The only reason I hung out with you was because your mom would bring those brownies up every time she visited. We were friends via baked goods.

**SEAN.** Those fucking brownies... hey, come inside and have a beer.

**JASPER.** I shouldn't.

**SEAN.** Come on. Mom hasn't seen you since ya dropped out. Plus I need a break from this goddamn speech.

**MARY ANN.** (*Offstage.*) Sean... I'm not going to ask again!

**SEAN.** ALRIGHT! (*Lights up another cigarette.*) She is so on edge. All the time. I'll tell ya, it sucks being the only man of the house. I don't know how she's gonna survive without me here.

**JASPER.** You miss him?

**SEAN.** Of course I do. Miss him like hell. (*Beat.*) We don't all have deadbeat dads, Jasp. No offence. Hey... I ever run into that prick, I'm punching him right in the mouth. No warning. No words. Just BAM! (*Shadow punches Jasper in the face. Jasper flinches.*) Hey, you ever think of joining up? Might be just what you need. Some... stability.

**JASPER.** (*Laughs.*) No.

**SEAN.** Oh, I'm sorry. Didn't mean to offend the fucking peace brigade.

**JASPER.** Just not my thing. That's all.

**SEAN.** It's not a *thing*, Jasp. It's an honor. (*Yelling inside.*) Hey mom! Guess who's here!

**MARY ANN.** (*Offstage.*) It better be your sister!

**SEAN.** Not even close!

**JASPER.** I can go. You guys probably have a lot to...

**SEAN.** It's just a rehearsal dinner. Plus, I gotta practice this speech on someone other than my mom. She gets all worked up and starts crying and shit.

**JASPER.** Okay. (*Beat.*) It'll be good ta see her again.

## THE SOLDIER'S DAUGHTER

**SEAN.** That a boy! (*Starts to drag Jasper inside.*) Hey, wait til you see his waitress in there. Perky tits. Tight little ass. And she's wearing one of those white button-downs with a black bra.

**JASPER.** And?

**SEAN.** Shoes? What do you want from me?

**JASPER.** No, I mean why are you telling me this?

**SEAN.** I'm trying to help you out here. MOM! SET AN EXTRA CHAIR AT OUR TABLE! (*Mary Ann, 50s, appears.*)

**MARY ANN.** Sean, what are you yelling...? Jasper!?

**JASPER.** Hi, Mrs. Turner.

**MARY ANN.** (*To Sean.*) What's he doing here? (*To Jasper.*) Sorry honey, that was rude. I didn't mean it that way. It's a... surprise. Pleasant surprise. (*Beat.*) Yaaaay.

**SEAN.** He screwed up the days.

**MARY ANN.** Oh, that's... I'm sorry if you heard my yelling in there, by the way. Just been a little on edge the past week or so.

**SEAN.** Yeah. A *little*.

**MARY ANN.** Who would have thought a memorial would be tougher than the funeral?

**JASPER.** I'm sure you've got everything under control.

**MARY ANN.** I always do. But having my irresponsible daughter making herself even more scarce than usual, it makes things a little... (*To Sean.*) Did you call her?

**SEAN.** Yeah. Like ten times. (*Mary Ann looks like she may lose it, but catches herself.*)

**MARY ANN.** (*To Jasper.*) You're more than welcome to eat with us tonight. All I ask is that you grab the brownies from the van. Sean, help him bring in the rest of the desserts. (*Beat. Mary Ann catches a scent in the air.*) Were you smoking?

**SEAN.** Nope.

**MARY ANN.** Your father never smoked a cigarette in his life. And I don't care if all your boot camp friends do it, he would be telling you the exact same thing if he... (*Sighs.*) It's great seeing you again, Jasper. I always hoped you two would re-connect. I just wish it were under different circumstances.

**JASPER.** I'll uh, I'll get the brownies. (*Carly enters, messenger bag with her, out of breath.*)

**MARY ANN.** (*To Sean.*) Help him. And then I need you to...

## THE SOLDIER'S DAUGHTER

**SEAN.** Well, look who decided to show.

**MARY ANN.** Where have you been? I told you I needed those collages three hours ago. Did you get them?

**CARLY.** Shit.

**MARY ANN.** Of course you would do this today. I just... I'm calling Brenda. Maybe she'll drop them off if she has time, because apparently you're too busy.

**CARLY.** The memorial isn't til next week. Calm down.

**MARY ANN.** Don't tell me to... *(To Sean.)* You deal with this. *(Mary Ann heads back inside. The three stand in silence.)*

**CARLY.** *(To Jasper.)* Hey.

**JASPER.** *(To Carly.)* Hey.

**SEAN.** *(Audible shiver.)* Weird. *(Starts pulling Jasper inside.)* Come on, Jasp. You gotta see this waitress.

**JASPER.** What about the brownies?

**SEAN.** Fuck the brownies! White shirt. Black bra. Let's go! *(He continues dragging Jasper inside. He shoots a quick glance at Carly and shrugs. Carly stands alone for moment. She's clearly happy that Jasper showed up.)*

### SCENE 4

*Later that night. Darkness. The sound of a door flinging open. A light is flicked on to reveal Jasper's apartment again. Sean and Jasper enter. Sean is pretty drunk and Jasper is a little buzzed.*

**SEAN.** I gave you more than enough time with her and you blew it.

**JASPER.** I'm not good at talking to girls.

**SEAN.** What are you, twelve? Grow some balls, man. *(Yelling outside.)*

**DON'T FORGET TO... HEY! THE LIGHTS! THEY DON'T GO OFF AUTOMATICALLY!**

**JASPER.** Sean, can you/ just-

**SEAN.** DID YOU LOCK THE DOORS? I DON'T TRUST THIS NEIGHBORHOOD!

**JASPER.** Hey just... you know... people/ can hear you.

**SEAN.** Jesus, Jasp. It smells like a Phish concert in here.

**JASPER.** I wasn't really expecting company so...

**SEAN.** It's like, seeping from the walls, bro. *(Sighs.)* We'll make due. You

## THE SOLDIER'S DAUGHTER

got beer?

**JASPER.** Yeah.

**SEAN.** All that matters. (*ALLISON, 24, the waitress from the rehearsal dinner, enters. She runs to Sean and leaps in to his arms. He spanks her and throws her on the couch as they begin to wrestle. Carly, sober, enters. She and Jasper stare at the display before them, disgusted, yet somewhat intrigued.*)

**ALLISON.** Cut it out! You want everyone to see my panties?

**SEAN.** What panties?

**ALLISON.** Pervert! (*They continue wrestling.*)

**CARLY.** Words can't express how much I want to gouge my eyes out right now.

**JASPER.** Agreed. (*Beat.*) Hey... thanks for driving.

**CARLY.** Yeah, well mom and big brother sort of ruined any chance of me getting drunk so...

**JASPER.** I know, but you didn't have to drive us all the way here and... you didn't have to come. That's all I'm saying.

**CARLY.** I wanted to come.

**JASPER.** (*Smiles.*) Cool. (*They share a moment. It's soon broken by Sean and Allison's continued horseplay.*)

**JASPER.** Thirsty?

**CARLY.** Still got the raspberry stuff?

**JASPER.** Shhh.

**CARLY.** What? (*Jasper gestures towards Sean.*) He's not listening. Trust me. (*To Sean and Allison.*) Hey. Hey. HEY! (*Nothing.*)

**JASPER.** That's amazing.

**CARLY.** (*Kicks Sean.*) I'm having a drink. Deal with it. (*She goes to the kitchen.*)

**JASPER.** I'll show you where the... (*To Sean.*) Do you guys want anything or...? Okay. (*Sean and Allison are pretty much just making out at this point. Jasper goes to the kitchen. As soon as he enters, Carly kisses him. He pushes her off.*)

**CARLY.** What?

**JASPER.** It's just... he's in the other room. I don't want...

**CARLY.** Want to what? Kiss me?

**JASPER.** No... just not with him... not with them... it's just weird.

**CARLY.** Have some balls.

**JASPER.** You sound just like Sean.

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**CARLY.** Excuse me? I sound nothing like Sean. Let's make that clear.  
**SEAN.** The hell's going on in there?!

**JASPER.** Nothing.  
**SEAN.** Jasper, I don't trust you around children!  
**CARLY.** I'm fine, Sean.  
**SEAN.** Come back in here. *(Beat.)* NOW! *(Carly storms back in to the living room.)*  
**CARLY.** Happy?  
**SEAN.** Very. *(Staring ever not-so-subtly at Allison's breasts.)*  
**CARLY.** Jesus... could you two just... not do that? *(After a moment, Sean lifts Allison off his lap.)*  
**SEAN.** *(Mockingly.)* Happy? *(Jasper enters, handing Sean and Allison a beer. They all sit, not sure how to continue. They drink their drinks respectively, Carly sipping her raspberry whatever.)*  
**ALLISON.** Your father was very handsome. *(Carly lets out a sarcastic laugh.)* All the other waitresses agreed. We saw the pictures of him that your mother brought? The ones with him in his uniform?  
**CARLY.** Are those... *questions?*  
**SEAN.** Carly...  
**ALLISON.** Anyways... I thought he was very handsome.  
**SEAN.** Thanks.  
**CARLY.** Well, you got the next best thing sitting right next to ya. So there's that.  
**ALLISON.** You do look like him.  
**SEAN.** I get that a lot.  
**ALLISON.** And you're going in to the Army just like him?  
**SEAN.** I am.  
**ALLISON.** That's just so... there's something about soldiers. I don't know what it is.  
**CARLY.** Well you be sure to let us know when you figure that out, okay?  
**ALLISON.** Oh. Okay.  
**SEAN.** Carly... stop.  
**JASPER.** So... where they shipping ya first, Sean?  
**SEAN.** New Mexico. Then the Middle East somewhere. Desert to fucking desert.  
**ALLISON.** Sounds so scary. Just the words... *Middle East.*  
**CARLY.** We thought you meant New Mexico.  
**ALLISON.** What? No. I was just...

## THE SOLDIER'S DAUGHTER

**CARLY.** Don't hurt yourself.

**SEAN.** (*Slams his beer down.*) Stop! (*Jasper finds his bowl.*)

**JASPER.** Anyone wanna smoke?

**SEAN.** Can't.

**CARLY.** I do.

**SEAN.** Uh no. You're not smoking. And Jasp, I can't have that shit showing up in my drug tests. Could ya ditch the bud for one night, ya fucking stoner?

**CARLY.** It's his apartment. And if I want to smoke, I'm gonna smoke.

**SEAN.** What did I just say? You're not smoking. You're lucky I'm even letting you drink that raspberry shit.

**CARLY.** I'm lucky? So you choose now to become a big brother figure? That's funny...

**ALLISON.** So, what exactly is your, like, job in the Army gonna be?

**SEAN.** Infantry.

**JASPER.** Woah. That's like, front lines, right?

**SEAN.** Damn straight it is.

**CARLY.** More like a moving target.

**SEAN.** (*Barely brushes this one off.*) Anyways, been training in Georgia for the past six months. I'm ready.

**JASPER.** Wow. Just seems so... to the point, I guess.

**SEAN.** Do what ya gotta do. This ain't no cooking class. This is war.

**ALLISON.** Aren't you scared? I would be scared.

**SEAN.** We all got our reasons. My dad didn't die so that this war could just go on and on/ and on-

**CARLY.** What war? I thought we already won. Isn't that what that big 'ol banner on the aircraft carrier told us, like, four years ago?

**SEAN.** It's not that easy, Carly. These things take time.

**CARLY.** Time. Right. Big five year plan thing going, huh? So we should be wiping our hands clean around, what? 2012?

**SEAN.** My little sister, everyone. Trying to act like she knows what the hell she's talking about. Adorable.

**CARLY.** Go kill those big bad terrorists, Sean. Find those WMDs. Bestow peace upon the world.

**SEAN.** The fuck's your problem? Seriously...

**CARLY.** Jasper...

**JASPER.** Yeah?

**CARLY.** You agree with me, don't you?

## THE SOLDIER'S DAUGHTER

**JASPER.** Uh... I'm not exactly/ sure-

**CARLY.** Sure you are. Bringing about peace with war. The hypocrisy of it all. You said it yourself, remember? At the party. When we were... talking.

**JASPER.** Did I... ? There were so many people there... and I was talking to a lot of... uh... different people... *(To Sean and Allison.)* I was drunk. Kind of like right now. Maybe we should call it a night / and...

**SEAN.** It's not always about peace, Carly. Sometimes people have to be taught a lesson. That they can't just walk all over ya and get away with it.

**CARLY.** So it's revenge. Someone does something wrong, and they get punished for it. Right? *(Sean stares at her. She stares back.)* Right? *(Carly takes the bowl from Jasper, lights it, and takes a huge hit. She hands it back to Jasper. Sean tries to remain calm.)*

**ALLISON.** I think soldiers are brave. Noble. *(Carly laughs at her again.)* I wish you wouldn't laugh at me.

**CARLY.** Kind of hard not to. *(Jasper springs to his feet and goes immediately to the record player.)*

**JASPER.** Who wants some music?

**ALLISON.** I do.

**JASPER.** *(To Allison.)* What do you like?

**ALLISON.** I'm really into hip hop and modern country right now.

**JASPER.** I don't really have... I think I've got some Johnny Cash...

**ALLISON.** Oh. Is he a rapper?

**CARLY.** Oh. My. God.

**JASPER.** How about Falling Up Stairs?

**SEAN.** Oh hell no! I had to suffer through that band all of freshman year.

**CARLY.** They're actually a really good band.

**SEAN.** They're actually fucking horrible.

**CARLY.** Oh yeah, 'cuz modern country is a respectable genre.

**ALLISON.** Sorry it's not Fall Out Boy.

**CARLY.** What's that supposed to mean?

**ALLISON.** I mean shouldn't you be in your bedroom calling boys or curating your MySpace?

**CARLY.** Wow... so the waitress has some claws...

**ALLISON.** I don't appreciate the way you're treating me... you're honestly acting like...

**CARLY.** Like what? Show us your other settings...

**ALLISON.** *(Springs to her feet.)* You're acting like a little bitch!

**CARLY.** *(Springs to her feet.)* There it is!

## THE SOLDIER'S DAUGHTER

**SEAN.** (*Gets between Allison and Carly.*) Let's just... my sister is just trying to act cool and is failing miserably...

**ALLISON.** Yeah, well I don't appreciate some little kid treating me like this because she thinks I'm an idiot.

**CARLY.** Oh I know you're an idiot. Why else would you be here with *him*?

**SEAN.** Wow... okay. Well she's definitely right. You are being a major fucking bitch.

**JASPER.** Sean, chill out. Seriously.

**SEAN.** *Seriously* Jasper? You *seriously* want me to chill out?

**JASPER.** Everyone needs to just... you know?

**SEAN.** I came here to have a good time and catch up with you/ and she-

**CARLY.** You barely even noticed/ he was here!

**SEAN.** Don't interrupt me.

**CARLY.** Don't tell me what do.

**SEAN.** You know... I knew this was a bad idea. But fuck... okay. Let's do this.

**CARLY.** Do what?

**SEAN.** You haven't done one goddam thing to help with this memorial. You realize that, don't you?

**CARLY.** What the hell does that have to do with anything?

**SEAN.** Mom and I put the whole thing together.

**CARLY.** Why are you bringing this up now?

**SEAN.** And you act like it's just another day.

**CARLY.** It *is* just another day.

**SEAN.** How can you/ say that?

**JASPER.** Sean...

**SEAN.** How can you stand there and say that/ about him?

**CARLY.** It's much easier than you think. (*Sean slowly starts walking towards her. Jasper interjects.*)

**JASPER.** Yeah, I think maybe we should call a cab or...

**SEAN.** I'm not gonna let her stand there and say that about him. After all he's/ done...

**CARLY.** All he's done? What did he do? Huh? Tell me what he did.

**SEAN.** He saved all those people. How can you just...?

**CARLY.** That's not what I'm talking about.

**ALLISON.** What's happening?

**SEAN.** We're not doing this now. Not now.

## THE SOLDIER'S DAUGHTER

**CARLY.** Of course we're not. *You* brought him up. This whole memorial bullshit/ so don't/ go...

**SEAN.** Bullshit? *(Sean's fists are clenched as he begins a tight pacing.)*  
You're gonna stand there and say that it's bullshit?

**CARLY.** Yeah. I am.

**JASPER.** Carly / stop.

**CARLY.** It / is, Sean...

**SEAN.** Shut up.

**CARLY.** It's all / complete...

**JASPER.** Stop...

**SEAN.** Carly, shut / up!

**CARLY.** BULLSHIT!

**SEAN.** SHUT THE FUCK UP! *(He lunges towards Carly. Jasper starts to push him back, but Sean takes a swing and hits him square in the nose, sending him to the ground.)*

**ALLISON.** Oh my God!

**JASPER.** Ow. *(Rolls on the ground like a turtle on its shell.)*

**CARLY.** You asshole!

**SEAN.** Fuck. You okay, Jasp? Shit. *(To Carly.)* See what you made me do? *(To Jasper.)* Get up, Jasp. I didn't hit you that hard. *(Allison dials her phone, gathers her things, and heads for the door.)*

**ALLISON.** Yeah, I need a cab.

**SEAN.** What are you doing?

**ALLISON.** Jasper, what's your address?

**JASPER.** *(Through blood and possibly a broken nose.)* 105 Merritt Drive.

**SEAN.** Wait a second!

**ALLISON.** 105 Merritt Drive. Thanks.

**SEAN.** Where are you going?

**ALLISON.** Home.

**SEAN.** Why?

**ALLISON.** Are you serious?

**SEAN.** We were just messing around.

**ALLISON.** You broke his nose!

**SEAN.** It's not... Jasp, put some ice on it.

**ALLISON.** Thanks for the beer, Jasper.

**JASPER.** No problem.

**SEAN.** *(Goes to Allison.)* Don't be so dramatic. I'll drive you home.

**ALLISON.** You're drunk.

THE SOLDIER'S DAUGHTER

**SEAN.** *(To Carly.)* Bring her home.

**ALLISON.** Uh/ no...?

**CARLY.** Yeah... that's not happening.

**SEAN.** God dammit! *(Beat.)* Fuck it, I'm driving. Jasp, you really want us to go?

**JASPER.** Yeah... I think that might be for the best...

**SEAN.** Yeah. Sure. Let's let the man recoup, huh? *(Sean begins to usher Allison out and gestures to Carly.)* Let's go.

**CARLY.** I'm staying.

**SEAN.** The fuck?

**JASPER.** No. Carly, you should...

**CARLY.** I'm staying here.

**SEAN.** Like hell you are.

**CARLY.** He's hurt.

**JASPER.** I'm okay. It's all good. I'll just... ow...

**CARLY.** You could have a minor concussion. Someone needs to stay with you.

**SEAN.** For the last time, I didn't hit him that hard. Jasp, smoke your shit and shake it off.

**CARLY.** Just bring her home and I'll take her cab.

**SEAN.** He's *my* friend.

**CARLY.** You have a really interesting way of showing that.

**SEAN.** This is fucking weird.

**CARLY.** Very.

**SEAN.** *(Beat. To Allison)* Let's go.

**ALLISON.** You're buying me Arby's on the way home.

**SEAN.** Fine. *(Allison exits. To Carly.)* This isn't over. *(He exits. A moment between Carly and Jasper.)*

**CARLY.** You're bleeding.

**JASPER.** Yeah, I noticed.

**CARLY.** Do you have paper towels or...?

**JASPER.** All out.

**CARLY.** Toilet paper?

**JASPER.** I meant to grab some today...

**CARLY.** Okay... well let's not add blood to the lovely array of stains on your rug. *(She searches the area endlessly for something to stop the bleeding. She finds her black tank-top neatly folded next to the record player and moves to Jasper.)*

## THE SOLDIER'S DAUGHTER

**JASPER.** Don't..

**CARLY.** It's fine. I've had it forever. (*She gently places the tank-top under his nose. He winces in pain.*) It's gonna bruise like hell. Just being honest.

**JASPER.** Great.

**CARLY.** Hold it there. (*She goes to the kitchen and raids the freezer.*)

**JASPER.** I don't have ice if that's what you're looking for.

**CARLY.** Of course you don't.

**JASPER.** Might be some frozen beans stuffed in the back somewhere.

**CARLY.** Got em. I think. (*She brings the mashed up bag in to the living room and places it on top of his nose. They sit in silence.*)

**JASPER.** So... Allison is nice. (*Carly shoots him a look. They both start laughing.*) Ow ow ow! (*Again, they sit in silence.*) That was uh... a lot.

**CARLY.** He's such a prick. I can't wait for this stupid memorial to be over, for him to ship off, and hopefully I never have to see him again.

**JASPER.** Damn.

**CARLY.** What?

**JASPER.** I just... with what happened with your Dad and everything... I think he's just...

**CARLY.** Oh so now you're taking his side? He punched you in the fucking face.

**JASPER.** I know... I just... you saying you didn't care about the memorial. I think that really hurt him.

**CARLY.** Hurt him? (*Laughs.*) Yeah. Sean... the victim. And for your information, it's not that I don't care. Okay? I just think it's stupid. He's gone. Why keep stretching out the grief?

**JASPER.** I mean, it's only been a year. Don't you think that maybe your dad deserves a little-

**CARLY.** A little what? He did his job and he died in the process. That's the risk they sign up for. He'd be the first to tell you that. Trust me.

**JASPER.** Just seems a little harsh. That's all.

**CARLY.** Yeah, well compassion isn't really my thing so... (*Takes the frozen beans off his nose.*) I think it's done bleeding.

**JASPER.** I just... maybe there's something you're not telling me.

**CARLY.** What do you mean?

**JASPER.** I don't know. About your dad?

**CARLY.** (*Beat.*) Yeah, maybe. (*The horn of the bad honks outside.*) Cab's here. Keep the beans on it. (*Carly heads for the door.*)

**JASPER.** Carly... what happened?

THE SOLDIER'S DAUGHTER

**CARLY.** Don't go to sleep any time soon.

**JASPER.** Just tell me/ what-

**CARLY.** And don't/ smoke.

**JASPER.** You can tell me. What happened?

**CARLY.** HE DIED! Okay? *(Beat.)* That's what happened. And it was the best goddam thing that could have... shit. *(Car horn honks again. Carly flings the door open.)* HOLD ON! *(She stands in the doorway. Jasper moves to her and tries to console her. She hits him away.)* Don't touch me! I don't... just don't. *(Jasper stands, watching her. She is frozen.)*

**JASPER.** Stay.

**CARLY.** What?

**JASPER.** We don't have to talk. We don't have to do anything. We can just sit here.

**CARLY.** He's probably going to wait up until I'm home.

**JASPER.** I don't care. Let him wait.

**CARLY.** He's gonna assume the worst. You know that.

**JASPER.** Carly, I don't care. Stay. Please. *(After a moment, Carly slowly makes her way back in the room. She sits on the floor and takes the sketch-pad from her bag. She starts to sketch. Something. Anything. Jasper watches her for a moment. He waves the cab away and shuts the door. He slowly makes his way to the couch and sits, not quite sure what to do. He wants to say something to her, but chooses not to. He lets her draw. The only sound is Carly's pencil furiously scribbling across the paper as Jasper watches on. Lights fade.)*

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