

# GROWING FLOWERS ON THE MOON

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A full-length play

By Bob Bowersox

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Registered WGA/E

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**NOTES ON SPECIAL TEXT MARKINGS:**

A SLASH ( / ) means the character with the next line of dialogue should begin their speech at the point of the slash

A DASH ( -- ) means that the character with the next line of dialogue should cut off the current speaker sharply by beginning their next line

AN ELLIPSE ( ... ) means a slight pause, or in the case of a phone call, listening

A WORD OR WORDS IN ITALICS (*like this* ) means that word or words should be given a slight emphasis

A WORD OR WORDS IN ALL CAPS means that word or words are given a STRONG emphasis.

TWO CHARACTERS ON THE SAME LINE means they both speak their line simultaneously

## CHARACTERS

HELEN MACMILLAN...70's and still with it; wealthy; has lived alone in Cargill House since her 20's

FLORA ANTHONY.....70's; African-American; has been Helen's maid and companion since Helen first came to Cargill House; originally the maid to the Cargill family

DARIUS ARTHUR/DAVID CARGILL.....mid-20's; African-American

DOCTOR SYLVIA REYNOLDS.....40's; a psychiatrist

DETECTIVE JIM OGDEN....30's-40's; from the Newton Police Department

## PLACE:

Cargill House, an estate in the wealthy Newton section of Boston

## TIME:

February 8, 2018. It is evening, say around seven o'clock.

“Love looks not with the eyes, but with the mind,  
And therefore is winged Cupid painted blind...”

-- *William Shakespeare*

The set is an opulent living room, part of a large estate in the wealthy Newton section of Boston. It is a space that looks like the clock stopped half a century ago -- a dated decor of plush furniture, artifacts, books, and small statuary.

Center on the Upstage wall are two wide windows, almost floor to ceiling, with heavy, velvet drapes hung over them and slightly open. On either side of the windows, covering the rest of the upstage wall, are floor-to-ceiling bookshelves, packed with all manner and sizes of books, with framed photos and small items interspersed throughout.

Set into a nook on the Upstage Left wall is a large desk, with lamp, desk accoutrement, some books, and a polished mahogany box about the size of a small cigar box. Downstage of that is a long sideboard, with framed photos, small statuary and a large bowl, maybe some flowers in a vase, and a landline phone. Downstage Left is an arched doorway leading into a dining room.

On the Upstage Right wall is a door that leads to a hallway and the entry foyer of the house. Downstage of that is a large fireplace with a mantel, on which are a number of framed photos. A large landscape of a fox hunt is hung above the mantel.

Center Stage is a large, plush sofa/couch with a coffee table in front of it. Stage Left of the sofa is an armchair, with a floor lamp and small table nearby. Stage Left and slightly downstage of the sofa is another chair of that type. A large, plush rug sits under most of the centerstage area.

LIGHTS UP.

Evening. An opulent, estate house living room. A low fire in the fireplace. It's spitting rain outside.

HELEN MACMILLAN sits in her armchair, reading to the light of the floor lamp. She has a shawl around her shoulders.

A burst of lightning flashes through the partially-drawn drapes on the upstage windows. Helen drops the book to her lap, looks over at the windows. She shivers, draws the shawl closer around her.

A beat later, her maid, FLORA ANTHONY, enters through the dining room archway, carrying a silver tray with a china teacup, matching teapot, and a small plate of cookies.

FLORA

Nasty night blowing out there, Miss Helen. Thought you might like some Mister Earl Grey to warm the blood a bit.

Helen sets her book down on the coffee table as Flora sets the tray in front of her.

HELEN

You read my mind, Flora. As you always have. You'll join me?

FLORA

Maybe one of these shortbreads. You know tea keeps me up.

HELEN

Always has, hasn't it?

FLORA

It has, indeed. Strong stuff, that Mister Earl.

Flora has moved to the windows, looks through the slightly-open drapes.

FLORA

Nasty, nasty, nasty. Wouldn't want to be out there tonight.

HELEN

I was expected at the Foundation board meeting this evening.

FLORA

Oh, no, Ma'am. Night like this. Catch your death.

HELEN

It wasn't that so much. Just didn't feel right. Not tonight.

FLORA

No, Ma'am.

HELEN

I'm sure somebody will say something, though.

FLORA

They should say 'Thank you', you don't mind my opinion. You send them enough money, Miss Helen. They can do without you this one time.

(shivers, pulls the drapes)

Whew! Chilly in here. You want me to poke up that fire?

HELEN

I'm alright for now. The tea will warm me up. Come sit.

FLORA

Yes, Ma'am.

(moves to the couch)

Let me get that for you.

Flora pours the tea, hands the cup to Helen.

HELEN

Thank you, Flora. You sure you won't have some?



FLORA

This will be fine.

Flora takes a cookie, sits back and takes a small bite. After a beat....

FLORA  
(carefully)

What you reading there?

Flora sits up to reach for the book but Helen quickly moves it to the side table near the lamp.

HELEN

Nothing special.

FLORA

Uh-huh. Nothing special...

HELEN

No. Just passing the time on an...unfriendly...night. You know...

After a beat...

FLORA

I know I know that book, Miss Helen. Seen that cover many times.

HELEN

Have you?

FLORA

Yes, Ma'am. Book of poetry, right?

HELEN

It is, yes.

FLORA

Let's see...you reading ... I'm gonna say... that Keats fella.

HELEN

Shelley this time, actually.

FLORA

Uh-huh. Knew it was one of 'em.

(beat, then quietly)

I know what day it is, too.

HELEN

Do you.

FLORA

Mm-hmm. Eighth day of February.

They look at one another a beat.

FLORA

You read that book every year this day.

HELEN

Every year.

FLORA

Yes, Ma'am. No other day. Just this one. Every year.

HELEN

And every year, you bring me Earl Grey.

FLORA

Yes, Ma'am, I do.

HELEN

And every year, on this day, we have this conversation.

FLORA

We do. Sad to say.

Flora takes another bite of cookie.

HELEN

Yes. It is.

Helen rises, teacup in hand, takes the book and moves to the bookshelves USL.

She places the book in an empty slot among others, then moves to the desk. She sets her teacup down, and picks up a small mahogany box resting on it. She holds the box up, opens the lid slowly. She looks inside.

A sadness crosses her face. She lets the box drop slowly in front of her, looks to the ceiling. She brushes a tear from an eye with a hand. She looks back into the box.

HELEN

Fifty years today.

FLORA

Yes, Ma'am.

HELEN

Still feels like yesterday to me.

FLORA

Does to me, too, Miss Helen, truth be told.

Helen gently closes the lid on the box and sets it back in its place on the desk, picks up her teacup and sips it.

HELEN

I realized today that I've only counted those years by these days, Flora. Fifty of them. Fifty February eights. That's all. There's nothing between them that I can touch in my memory.

FLORA

No, Ma'am.

HELEN

They alone stand out. Just fifty days. In this house. Fifty very long days.

FLORA

Maybe you ought'n to dwell on it. Let it go this one time.

HELEN

Oh...You know I won't do that.

FLORA

S'pose I do.

HELEN

It's all I have anymore, it seems.

FLORA

Mm-hmm.

HELEN

(looks to Flora)

I do worry about you though. You've passed all those days with me. A lot to ask.

FLORA

Don't you worry none about that. I've not been one much for the world either.

HELEN

I know it's been lonely for you too.

FLORA

I have my Bible and my garden and my kitchen. That's all I've needed. You been good to me.

HELEN

Well, I'm grateful you've been here all these years.

FLORA

Yes, Ma'am. Hope to always be, God willin'.

(reaches for the teapot)

Let me warm that cup up for--

A doorbell rings somewhere in the house.

HELEN

Now who would that be this time of night?

FLORA

Who's fool enough to be out *in* a night like this is what you should be askin'.  
(as she rises)

I'll see to it.

HELEN

Thank you, Flora.

Flora exits through the USSR door, closing it behind her.

Helen looks to the mahogany box again, then sets her teacup on the desk, crosses to the fireplace mantel.

She reaches up and takes down a large, framed picture of a young man in uniform, standing in front of what looks like a limousine or touring car. He's smiling. Helen considers the photo several beats.

HELEN

(softly)

Fifty years, my love.

The door opens, Flora enters.

FLORA

There's a young man at the door, Miss Helen. Young black man. Asked if he could come in.

HELEN

This time of night? Were you expecting anyone?

FLORA

No, Ma'am. There's nobody I'd have over without speaking with you first, you know that.

(beat)

Certainly not a man, and certainly not tonight...

HELEN

No. Of course not. You know him?

FLORA

No, Ma'am, don't think so. But he knew me. Called me by my name. Said it was good to see me again. I thought maybe he from my church, but he said no, that he'd been away.

HELEN

Did he say what he wants?

FLORA

Just that he wants to speak with you. Called you by your first name, too. A little familiar, you ask me, / but--

HELEN

Indeed.

FLORA

He said it was important.

HELEN

What can be so important that he come out on a night like this?

FLORA

Don't know, Miss Helen.

Helen sets the photo back on the mantel...

HELEN

Not very proper.

FLORA

No, Ma'am. What do I tell him?

HELEN

(after a beat of consideration)

Tell him this is not the time, Flora. And quite inappropriate.

FLORA

Yes, Ma'am.

Flora turns to go.

HELEN

And...

Flora stops as Helen crosses to the desk. She opens a drawer, rummages a moment, then withdraws a business card and takes it to Flora.

HELEN

Give him this. This is my attorney, Peter Gordon. Tell the young man to contact him in the morning and explain what he requires. If Peter decides it's something he thinks I need to address, he'll contact me.

FLORA

Yes, Ma'am.

Flora exits, closing the door. Helen moves to the desk.

HELEN

(to herself)

No decorum in the young these days....

Helen picks up her teacup and sips.

A moment later, muffled conversation can be heard from the entry foyer. It draws Helen's attention. It grows louder. A male voice demanding or pleading..

Concern crosses Helen's face, she sets the teacup down. The exchange seems to be growing more heated.

FLORA (O.S.)

(muffled, distant)

I told you, leave, now!

(beat, then...)

Sir! Where are you going?! Mister! Come back here!

Helen sets the teacup down, moves quickly to the sideboard, She opens a drawer, withdraws something, pulls her shawl over it.

FLORA (O.S.)  
(closer now)

Mister! You can't go in there!

The door to the room bursts open and a  
YOUNG BLACK MAN rushes in. He will in a  
moment be identified as DARIUS ARTHUR.

He's in a tweed suit and tie. He looks a little  
disheveled -- damp from the rain -- a mix of  
determination and desperation on his face. Flora  
tries to hold him back.

FLORA  
You can't be in here, Mister! You got to get out! Miss Helen...!

Darius stops dead when his eyes find Helen. Is  
it seeing her, or the fact that she is now holding  
a pistol at arm's length, aimed directly at him?

HELEN  
I know how to use this.

Darius's hands immediately go up. He takes a  
step back.

DARIUS  
I believe you. But please...don't shoot!

FLORA  
(pointing at the door)  
You need to leave, boy! Now!

DARIUS  
(to Flora)  
I'm not here to hurt anybody. Honestly. I just want to talk to her...  
(to Helen)  
...to you. It's important.

HELEN  
Important enough to get yourself killed, young man?



A beat. Darius slowly drops his hands.

DARIUS

Yes. It is.

HELEN

Well, you may get your wish.

(to Flora)

Flora, call the police.

Flora moves for the phone on the sideboard.

DARIUS

No, please. Don't do that. Not until you hear what I have to say.

HELEN

There is nothing I want to hear from a man who impertinently barges into my home this time of night without proper introduction or protocols.

(to Flora)

Do as I ask.

Flora slides the phone to her, picks up the receiver and dials.

DARIUS

Wait! Please!

FLORA

(into phone)

Yes, Newton police?

DARIUS

You don't want to do that!

FLORA

Yes. This is Flora Anthony, at Cargill House, on Lake Avenue...yes...

HELEN

And why don't I?

FLORA

I'm calling for Miss Helen MacMillan...

DARIUS

I may be a stranger to you and I know you wouldn't want to hear from a stranger, but, I think, most certainly, you'd want to hear from...David.

FLORA

Yes, MacMillan...

HELEN

David? David who?

DARIUS

(quietly)

David.

Flora and Helen exchange a glance, as Helen's pistol arm begins to sag.

HELEN

Dav...David? Not...*my*...David...

Helen's eyes slowly shift to the picture of the young man in uniform on the mantel.

Darius takes a step toward her.

DARIUS

Yes. *That* David, Helen.

At the sound of her name, the pistol comes back up, as does Helen's anger.

HELEN

Who the hell *are* you?!? What are you doing here?!

DARIUS

That's what I want to talk with you about. If you'll just give me ten minutes of your time.

HELEN

I will not--

DARIUS

Please. Five minutes, then. Just five minutes. That's all I ask.

Flora has momentarily forgotten the call, then  
jumps back to it...

FLORA

Yes. Yes. MacMillan, on Lake Avenue, yes. We have a--

HELEN

Hang up, Flora.

FLORA

(surprised)

Hang up? Miss Helen...

HELEN

Please, Flora. Do as I ask.

FLORA

(into phone)

I'm sorry. I'll call you back.

Flora hangs up the phone.

FLORA

I hope you know what you're doing.

HELEN

They'll be here in five minutes if she calls back, young man. I will give you that much time to say whatever piece you think you must.

FLORA

No, Miss Helen. Let me call back and then--

HELEN

We'll give him his say, Flora.

FLORA

This wrong, Miss Helen. This *way* wrong.

HELEN

Maybe. We'll see.

Helen indicates the chair near the fireplace.  
Darius moves to it, sits. Helen moves to her  
chair, sits. She keeps the pistol aimed at him.

HELEN

You have your five minutes. And not a minute more.

A long uncomfortable silence. Then...

DARIUS

I'm really not sure where to begin, to tell you the truth. It's a little confusing for me. As it is for you...I'm sure...

As he speaks, Darius is looking around the  
room, at the doors, the windows, the desk...like  
he's sizing up the place...

DARIUS

...And I apologize for not letting you know I was coming in late, but...I just made the train and I didn't have time to find a phone before boarding--

HELEN

You're tap-dancing. Get to it. What are you doing here?

Darius stares at her for several beats, then  
straightens himself, adjusts his jacket.

DARIUS

I know it's been awhile, and I apologize for that...I've been away, and I wasn't sure about...well, some things...but...that doesn't matter now. I'm here, and--

HELEN

Who *are* you, sir?

DARIUS  
(surprised she doesn't know)

Helen. My love. It's me. David.

A long, heavy silence. Helen slowly rises.

HELEN  
You bastard. You will *not* say his name again! How dare you come into my house...on THIS DAY...and say that to me. How DARE you!

Darius opens his arms, sits forward as if to rise.

DARIUS  
Helen, please...!

Helen raises the pistol, arm outstretched. It really looks like she intends to shoot him dead.

HELEN  
Don't you move!

FLORA  
I'm calling the police back, Miss Helen. This man crazy. If you not scared, I sure am...

DARIUS  
I know how this must look. I should have called before now, let you know I was coming. I know that. But if we could all just calm down a moment and...and...and talk. 'No one wins when passion and disquiet overwhelm patience and repose.'

HELEN  
(a beat, stunned)  
What did you just say?

DARIUS  
What? Say what?

HELEN  
That last...about....What you just said, about passion and disquiet...it--

DARIUS  
Overwhelms patience and repose. Yes.

HELEN

My David used to...he used to...

DARIUS

I said it a lot, yes. I know. It's one of my favorite quotes. I wrote it to you in a card once when we had a small spat--

HELEN

Stop! Please stop!

She lets the pistol sag to her side.

HELEN

Who are you? What is...this?

Helen seems suddenly unsteady. She can't take her eyes off Darius.

Darius cautiously moves to the couch near Helen and slowly sits. He reaches out toward her -- toward the gun...

Flora immediately swats his hand away.

FLORA

Oh, no. No, sir, mister.

Flora takes the gun from Helen, aims it at Darius.

FLORA

Don't you move.

(to Helen)

I'm gonna call the police.

HELEN

No. Wait a moment...

FLORA

Miss, Helen, this man out of his mind. We need to call them back. Now.

HELEN

Please, Flora. Just give me...

(to Darius)

Please. Who are you?

Darius is quiet a moment, then...

DARIUS

(quietly)

I've told you.

HELEN

What you've told me is preposterous. And outrageous. You cannot be--

FLORA

ID. Show me some ID. Prove what you sayin'.

DARIUS

I...I don't have--

FLORA

Show us something or I call.

DARIUS

I just have...

Darius reaches into his jacket pocket, withdraws a plastic card the size of a credit card. He offers it to her.

DARIUS

This is all I have...

Flora takes the card, looks at it.

FLORA

This a ... drug prescription card. For somethin' called Hal...doll...

DARIUS

Yes--

FLORA

For you.

DARIUS

No, it's not.../ me...

FLORA

Got your picture on it.

(hands card to Helen)

Says your name is Darius Arthur. That ring a bell?

No response. Flora turns the card in Helen's hand to read it again.

FLORA

Has an address ... a pharmacy in a place called La Place, Louisiana..

DARIUS

I don't know what that is. I've never been to Louisiana. You have / to--

HELEN

(holding up card)

Then what is this?

DARIUS

I honestly don't know. It was in my pocket, that's all--

HELEN

(reading the card)

Darius Arthur, sir. It says Darius Arthur.

(turns the card to him)

And this is you, sir. Would you like a mirror?

DARIUS

I know, I know, but believe me. What I've told you is true. My name is...David Cargill.

Helen rises, moves away.

HELEN

(angrily)

I told you not to say his name!



DARIUS

Yes, I know, / but--

FLORA

You have anything else? Driver's license? A Costco card? Anything?

DARIUS

No. Just that.

(digs in his pocket, withdraws some bills)

And a little money. The cab over here took most of--

HELEN

This is ludicrous. You can't just come here and claim--

DARIUS

Where else would I go. This is my home.

HELEN

Oh, for the love of--

DARIUS

Everything I feel, think, see...every thought I have...everything I'm as sure of as I am that I'm alive and breathing and sitting in front of you here, tells me I am David Cargill. You have to believe me.

Helen tosses the drug ID card on the coffee table.

HELEN

THIS is you, sir.

DARIUS

No--!

HELEN

David Cargill was killed in 1968 in some godforsaken place called Hue, in that senseless Vietnam War, fifty years ago. Fifty years ago *today*, in fact. He was twenty-five years old. Which means, if you were he, you'd be my age. You are not seventy-five years old, young man.

FLORA

Not to mention, you the wrong color.

DARIUS

I know it sounds insane, and I don't blame you for being incredulous. I don't understand it myself. But hear me out. I have not always felt comfortable...I don't know how else to say it...there are times where I've felt that I've been *in* places, but not *of* them. Does that make any sense? And when I'd look at myself in the mirror, or at my hands, the fact that my skin was black confounded me...it didn't seem real...it didn't seem right...

FLORA

We all feel that way, Mr. Arthur, sad to say. Those of us like us, anyway. You're no different than me.

DARIUS

I can't explain it. I mean, how would *you* explain the memories I have...

(to Helen)

...of you...

(to Flora)

...of you, Flora? Memories of conversations, moments in my life--

FLORA

We all have things floating in our minds that have no business being there, Mr. Arthur. I used to play like I wasn't me when I was little. Close my eyes, imagine myself all done up in a pretty pink dress, ridin' in a big car, goin' to a party, ridin' a pony. Doesn't mean I was gonna wake up the next day and be Princess Diana. It doesn't work that way, son. It just means I was a poor black girl wishing things were different.

DARIUS

I know. I know it sounds crazy. But...why would I know this house, for instance? That this room connects to a dining room that has a mahogany dining table and high-back Queen Anne chairs, and sideboards filled with antique blue and white china? And beyond that, a kitchen with a big island over which hang a dozen copper pots with bottoms blackened by years of use? And upstairs, six bedrooms, all with ten-foot-high ceilings, and high casement windows with heavy velvet drapes, and four-poster beds--

Helen raises her hands, turns away...it's too much.

HELEN

Stop!

(turns back to him)

Young man, what you are saying is impossible. You might as well be telling me you can grow flowers on the moon.

DARIUS

I know. I know it seems that way, but maybe I can....Wait! I can give you some proof!

Darius moves quickly to the desk and points to the mahogany box sitting on it.

DARIUS

There. In this box. There's a dried pink rose, with a white ribbon around it. And tied into the ribbon are two gold wedding rings...*our* wedding rings...the ones we never got to use. We put them there the day I left for Vietnam.

HELEN

Oh, my God...!

DARIUS

How would I know that if I wasn't David Cargill?

Helen looks to Flora, then back to Darius.

HELEN

Oh, my God...

FLORA

Don't believe him, Miss Helen. There's all kinds of ways he can know that. He could have come in here some day we were out...

(she moves for the phone on the sideboard)

I'm calling the police, get this man out of this house --

Darius makes a sharp move toward Flora.

DARIUS

Please! Don't call them!

Flora raises the pistol and points it at Darius. She's going to shoot.

But Helen steps into the space between them.

HELEN

NO! Don't!

She takes Flora's arm, tries to lower the pistol.  
Her eyes turn to Darius...

FLORA

Miss Helen...Don't be listenin' to this man! Call the police before he--

Darius steps toward them.

DARIUS

Helen, please--

FLORA

(raising pistol again)

No, Miss Helen! We don't know this man! This is not right, and you know it!

Helen's eyes are still on Darius, like if she looks away, he'll disappear, like she's questioning her own eyesight. She pushes Flora's arm down again.

HELEN

Please, Flora. Please. Give us a minute. I think I should talk to Mr. Arthur. In private.

FLORA

No! I will not leave you here with him for a second!

HELEN

Please, Flora. Do as I ask. It will be all right.

(turns to Darius)

It *will* be all right, won't it?

DARIUS

I'm not here to harm anyone.

HELEN  
(to Flora)

Okay? See? It's okay.

Flora looks from Helen to Darius and back. She steps toward the door to the foyer, then turns and offers the gun to Helen.

FLORA  
You shoot him if he moves.

HELEN  
I don't want that.

FLORA  
Miss Helen...

HELEN  
Check that the front door is locked, and that there's no one else out there. That's something that needs to be done.

(looks at Darius)  
We're just going to talk a moment.

FLORA  
I'll be right outside this door. You holler if--

HELEN  
(guiding her out the door)  
I will.

Flora exits.

Helen turns to Darius. They stare at one another a long beat. Finally...

HELEN  
I haven't made a mistake, have I?

DARIUS  
I told you. I'm not here to hurt anyone.

HELEN

Then what is it you really want, young man? We don't have money here. Some jewelry upstairs, but not much...

DARIUS

My God. Haven't I made myself clear? I'm not here to rob you. I've just come home--

HELEN

This is NOT your home! You are NOT David Cargill!

(she calms herself a moment)

You're confused, I can see that. Perhaps something happened to you -- in that Louisiana place, maybe...a bump on the head, or--

DARIUS

I was right about the box, wasn't I?

HELEN

You could have broken in here, like Flora said. Come in while we were out.

DARIUS

I could have, yes, --

HELEN

That box has been there for years. A dozen people could have known about it, Mr. Arthur.

DARIUS

Call me David, will you, please?

HELEN

I will not. That would be ludicrous. There is no way you are....David.

Darius moves to the desk, picks up the box.

HELEN

Don't touch that, please.

But Darius opens the box, and takes out the dried pink rose with the white ribbon and the rings.

DARIUS

How would I know about this if I wasn't--

HELEN

Leave that alone!

Helen crosses to him quickly, tries to take the rose from Darius's hand, but he grabs her hands in his, holds them tight.

DARIUS

(his voice almost desperate)

You MUST believe me, Helen!

Helen's eyes snap to his, as something passes between them in the touch of their hands...an electricity...something.

Helen emits a small, short scream. She appears near fainting, and her body begins to go limp. The rose drops to the floor.

Darius pulls her to him, supports her, keeps her from falling.

DARIUS

Darling! Are you all right?

He is guiding her to the nearby couch when the door opens and Flora rushes in, pistol at the ready.

FLORA

Let her go!

Darius lowers Helen to the couch, then quickly backs away, his hands open, up, and out.

DARIUS

I was helping her! She was falling!

FLORA

Get away from her!

DARIUS

Yes! Okay! Just--

Flora moves cautiously to the couch, keeping the gun and an eye on Darius.

FLORA

You all right, Miss Helen?

Helen is a little dazed, her eyes still on Darius.

HELEN

Yes, I'm--

FLORA  
(to Darius)

What did you do to her?

DARIUS

Nothing. We were talking and she became lightheaded. I thought she was going to fall...

FLORA

Miss Helen...?

HELEN  
(composing herself)

I'm all right. It was nothing. Stop all this fuss...

(noticing the gun)

And put that damn thing away!

FLORA  
(a little shocked)

Miss Helen, I don't think--

HELEN  
(rising)

I said it was nothing, and I meant it. Now, please, get that thing out of here.



FLORA

I don't think that's a good idea, Miss Helen--

HELEN

Please, Flora. Put it in the kitchen or the pantry or something. Just get it out of here.

Flora looks at Helen, then at Darius.

HELEN

It's fine.

(to Darius)

There's no need for it, is there?

DARIUS

No.

HELEN

(to Flora)

Go on, dear.

Flora moves slowly to the archway. She's not at all convinced this is a good idea. She exits.

DARIUS

Thank you.

HELEN

I didn't do it for you.

DARIUS

All the same. I don't like guns...for obvious reasons. I'm not here to harm you...either of you. You have my word.

HELEN

It's that word of yours that's in question, I'm afraid.

Helen moves to the rose on the floor, picks it up. She crosses to the desk, picks up the box and places the rose back inside. She looks at it a moment, then closes the lid and places it back on the desk. She turns to Darius.

HELEN

I need a drink. Politesse dictates I offer you one as well.

DARIUS

No, thank you. I don't drink.

(as Helen moves to the bar cart)

I never did, if you'll recall.

Helen pauses, but doesn't look back, then picks up a decanter and pours.

HELEN

He never liked the taste of alcohol. Said it tasted like how...

DARIUS

...ether smelled.

HELEN

...ether smelled.

This stops Helen. She stares at Darius a long beat. Then she moves to the edge of the couch.

HELEN

How am I supposed to take this, Mr. Arthur?

DARIUS

I ask again...please call me David.

HELEN

Absolutely not.

DARIUS

It's my name.

HELEN

No, it most certainly is not.

This frustrates Darius. He leans on the back of Helen's chair.

DARIUS

How do I convince you? This is as surreal to me as it must be to you.

HELEN

Surreal doesn't begin to define it, Mr. Arthur. I'm just trying to decide whether this is a nightmare I'm going to wake up from at some point.

She sits on the couch, picks up the prescription card.

HELEN

This card. It implies you're from Louisiana.

DARIUS

Whoever Darius Arthur is...was...maybe. But that's not--

HELEN

Then *you* are from Louisiana. It's your picture on this card, sir.

DARIUS

All right. I can't argue that, but...I don't remember...that...

(rubs his eyes)

I'm very tired. I haven't slept...

(indicates her chair)

May I?

Helen nods. As he sits...

HELEN

How did you get here? To Boston? To my house?

DARIUS

I came on the train, like I said...as I always did when I'm away on business. I got on in Washington, D.C....

HELEN

How did you get *there*? To Washington?

DARIUS

Does it matter? I was away...business, I guess. I simply wanted to get home, to you. When I got to South Station, I took a taxi, as I always have. I realized I didn't have my key, so I rang the bell.

HELEN

You have a key to my house?

DARIUS

Why wouldn't I? It's my family home.

HELEN

It's *not* your home, Mr. Arthur--

DARIUS

Please don't call me that--

HELEN

--It never has been. And I will call you that because...because it's impossible for me to call you...the other. You are not...

She is unable to say the name. Instead, she sets her drink down, rises, and moves to the mantel and takes down the picture of the young man in uniform.

HELEN

*This was David Cargill, fifty years ago.*

Helen hands Darius the photograph. He stares at it a moment. His brow furrows, as if he's confused about what he's looking at. Then...

DARIUS

Yes, but...

HELEN

(kindly, gently)

Mr. Arthur...you are not the man in this picture. It's impossible.

DARIUS

Then why do I remember everything from my life?

HELEN

You remember what? How can you remember what you never lived?

Darius jumps up, crosses to the US windows that look out over the front of the house. He pulls one of the drapes back, looks out into the night.

DARIUS

It was right there. In the drive, right there. My father's old limousine, remember? Gerald drove me...

(looks at Helen)

How is Gerald, by the way?

HELEN

(quietly)

Gerald died twenty-two years ago. David would never have known...

DARIUS

I'm sorry to hear that.

HELEN

Nor would you, Mr. Arthur.

Darius sighs, then looks out at the night again.

DARIUS

I remember this. That evening. It was...

(he speaks as if reciting a poem)

...just at dusk, the sky dark as French burgundy above, the reddish glow of the sunset on the horizon, like a slash of incandescent lipstick across the upper lip of the earth...you stood in this very window, looking out at me in the drive, by the car, my leather satchel -- my *father's* leather satchel -- at my feet. You wore a yellow dress, with a high, white collar. You were holding a cat...

HELEN

(breathless)

How do you know...?

DARIUS

That was the last beauty I saw...that sky...

(turns to her)

...and you...before the hell of...

(closes the drape, turns to her)

Remember?

(smiles)

You wanted a big wedding...the church, the flowers, a dozen bridesmaids, a white silk and crinoline gown covered in pearls. You and Flora were--

HELEN

(disconcerted now)

Stop this! How do you--?

DARIUS

You wouldn't kiss me goodbye that day. You said you were afraid it would be a last kiss...that if you saved it, I would have to return safely to collect it. I promised I would...

Helen turns from him, one hand moving to her heart, the other to her mouth.

HELEN

Oh, my God...

DARIUS

I guess it's taken me fifty years to fulfill that promise.

A long beat. Helen has not moved, her hands trembling, a mix of fear and despair on her face.

Darius approaches her, placing his hands gently on her shoulders.

DARIUS

Darling, I--

Helen spins from him, crosses from him.

HELEN

NO! This cannot be happening! You are *not* David Cargill! I don't know how you know these things...these *private* things, but you are *not...him!*

Darius approaches her again, still holding the picture.

DARIUS

I don't know how, Helen. I don't know what. But somehow, in some way, I *am* him, and I *am* here, and I want--

HELEN

Why are you doing this?!?

Flora has appeared at the archway. She can see that Helen is distressed.

FLORA

Miss Helen, are you all right? Is he--?

HELEN

(to Flora)

No. No, it's all right. This is all just...a bit unsettling, that's all.

FLORA

Well, maybe it's time to call the police, have them come out. Let them check this man out.

DARIUS

That's unnecessary. I'm not here to--

FLORA

It's unnecessary that you came here, young man. There was no need to come out on a night like this, disturbing Miss MacMillan. Disturbing *me*.

Helen lets a small laugh, despite the pregnancy of the situation.

HELEN

That was probably your biggest mistake, Mr. Arthur. Not even *I* am allowed to disturb Miss Flora.

DARIUS

Be that as it may, I had to come tonight.

HELEN

And why is that?

A long beat, then...

DARIUS

Because if what you are saying is true, it is the anniversary of my death...

(he turns)

God! That sounds insane.

(moves to the mantel)

How can I have died in 1968 and be standing here now?

FLORA

(sternly)

Because you are not Mr. Cargill, plain and simple. You can't be. That's not how God designed things. When you go sit at His right hand, you do not get to come back. You wouldn't want to. So, you are *not* him, and what you doing is a sin against my God, and an affront to Miss MacMillan here. So don't be lookin' for sympathy where none is deserved.

Darius smiles.

DARIUS

You have always trusted in that God of yours, haven't you, Flora?

HELEN

Only thing in this world that she *does* trust in, from what I can tell.

FLORA

Amen.

DARIUS

(setting picture back on mantel)

I think I knew that the day I hired you--

FLORA

*You* didn't hire me--

DARIUS

You applied for the position, but insisted that I come to you at your daddy's church...First Bible Baptist in Maynard, not six miles from here.

FLORA

(to Helen)

How does he know--?



DARIUS

Your daddy -- Tamarius Anthony, wasn't it? He was a good man, a godly man, Flora. I admired him, though I thought it a little extreme that he wouldn't let you work for me until I declared before the altar of his church that I accepted Jesus Christ as my savior and swore to live by the Ten Commandments. He made me buy you a new Bible, too, remember? You still have it?

FLORA

(he's unsettled her)

How do you know that, boy? That was fifty years ago. My daddy's been gone longer'n you been alive. How do you know *any* of that?!

DARIUS

I was there, Flora. I--

FLORA

You were *not* there! You were *not*!

(turns to Helen)

Enough of this, Miss Helen! You need to throw this man out of this house. You need to throw him out now. Or better yet, let me get the police and have *them* take him out. He is up to no good here.

Helen moves to Flora, trying to calm her.

HELEN

We need to stay calm, Flora. Whatever he wants, he will not get. The police are close by, if we need them.

FLORA

Not close enough...

HELEN

(looks at Darius)

He appears to be as confused as we are. Now, God works in mysterious ways -- you've said that to me many times. Maybe God has sent this young man here for a reason.

FLORA

The Bible also tells us to 'be sober and be vigilant, for the Devil walks about.'

HELEN

I doubt he's the Devil, Flora.

(to Darius)

Are you the Devil, sir?

DARIUS

(smiles)

No. Most certainly not.

HELEN

Perhaps we can use some tea, yes? I would like some.

FLORA

I will not serve this man, Miss Helen! I will not! It is time for him to leave!

HELEN

We cannot let fear overtake our sense of propriety, Flora. A guest in our house--

DARIUS

--will always find family at his side.

Helen and Flora look up at Darius...it's a quote they remember....

Flora breaks from Helen, beelines through the archway as...

FLORA

I cannot stay here with this man. I can't. I'm callin' the police, Miss Helen, and I'm going to get that pistol, no matter what you say.

And she's gone.

HELEN

Flora! Please...!

She moves to the archway.

HELEN

Can I leave you here a moment without worry? I need to...  
(indicates Flora)

DARIUS

Yes, of course.

And Helen exits through the archway.

Darius watches her go, then after a moment, turns and leans against the mantel, looking up at the picture of David Cargill.

He rubs his eyes, hangs his head, as if very, very tired. He then shakes his head, turns it as if looking away from something.

DARIUS

(whispered, to himself)

No...

He shakes his head again, and crosses to the desk. He opens the drawers, looking through each one, a furtive glance toward the archway now and again. He does the same at the sideboard.

He stops, takes a deep breath, hangs his head.

He then moves slowly to the bookshelves, peruses the books a few moments, then selects one, pulls it from the shelf. He opens it just as...

Helen enters, carrying a small tray, on which are two china cups, a small teapot, and a plate of small cookies.

She sets the tray on the coffee table, sits in her chair,

HELEN

I hope Earl Grey is all right.

DARIUS

Yes. It's always been our favorite.

Helen looks up at this, then...

HELEN

And I found some scones. A little dry, but they'll have to do.

Darius comes to the couch, carrying the book.  
He sits.

DARIUS

How is Flora, She all right?

HELEN

She's upset. You make her...anxious.

DARIUS

But not you...not anymore, it seems. Why is that?

Helen considers him, then pours the tea. She hands a cup to Darius. He sets the book down, takes it. She takes her cup, sips it.

HELEN

I don't know why, but you no longer frighten me. Not like Flora. This doesn't mean you haven't upset me, however. These are old wounds you've opened, young man. Painful, dark memories. What I don't understand is why you would do this. What purpose can it possibly serve?

DARIUS

I never meant...I would never hurt you, Helen.

HELEN

(reacting to the familiarity)

Please. Don't call me--

DARIUS

Would it be better if I called you Kitten, then?

Helen's teacup rattles, then slowly drops to her lap, her face a sudden wash of emotion.

HELEN

How...? That's not possible...

Darius sets his teacup down. His voice is calm, gentle.

DARIUS

That first time I met you. An afternoon party at your father's place out on the cape. It was July fourth, nineteen sixty-six.

Helen is transfixed.

DARIUS

I was the guest of a guest...I forget who. I'd even thought about not going, but then I figured, why not? It was a nice day to leave the city. Much cooler out there. Your father was very gracious to a young stranger. I wandered the grounds for a while before coming around to the terrace on the back of the house. I stood there looking at the water, then noticed something across the lawn toward the trees...a flash of blonde hair above a bright blue dress, sitting in the grass in front of a large gazebo. I wandered over, stood near you. You were playing with a pair of bright orange, bobtail kittens. You were unruffled by the presence of a stranger, much like your father. You immediately patted the ground, and when I sat, you handed me one of the kittens. You said, "Treat her right and..."

HELEN

"She'll love you forever."

DARIUS

Yes.

(beat)

And you have been my Kitten ever since.

A long beat of silence passes between them, their eyes locked. Helen slowly sets her teacup on the coffee table, clasps her hand in her lap.

HELEN

How do you know these things, Mr. Arthur? It's not possible that you would know any of them.

DARIUS

Because I am not Mr. Arthur, my love. You know who I am. You feel it, I know you do. That is why you are no longer frightened of me.

Helen rises and moves away.

HELEN

What I feel is the world turning upside down. My God, do you know what you're saying? How is something like this even possible? I've never seen you before. You come here unannounced and unexpected, claiming to be the most important person in my life...a man who has been dead for fifty years. Yet the only identification you have has another man's name and picture on it. You are stretching the limits of not only believability here, but possibility. Are you implying a possession of some sort? A reincarnation? What?

DARIUS

Is that what this is? Maybe. Why not? All I know is what I know, what I feel, what I've told you. And I haven't been wrong, have I? About us meeting, about my leaving, about Flora, our wedding plans...

(points to the desk)

...the rose and rings.

(picks up book from the coffee table)

And this. Remember this? Romantic poets. I read Keats and Shelley to you...sitting on a blanket right out there...

(points to an unseen area on the property)

...by the pond, your head on my lap, smoking cigarettes and feeling wicked and sexy for doing so. How would I know all this if I wasn't David Cargill?

HELEN

It can't be...!

DARIUS

However I am here, darling, I am here. What more can I do?

Helen shakes her head, wrings her hands. If we could be in her head, we'd know how much she wants to believe, but the absurdity, the impossibility, of it holds her back.

Darius sets the book back on the coffee table, rises and walks to the desk, picks up the mahogany box, carries it back to stand before her.

He opens the lid. He takes out the rose with the ribbon and rings, holds it up between them.

DARIUS

Ask me why I gave you this.

Helen doesn't speak...just shakes her head.

DARIUS

Ask me what I said to you when I did.

HELEN

You said...

But she stops...it's too painful.

DARIUS

I said, "These rings circle my heart, my love, and will keep me safe, as long as you keep them near. I will be back for them...and for you."

(holds the rose out to her)

And now I have kept that promise, my love. I am here.

Helen looks up into his eyes...

HELEN

(very quietly)

How...How do you...?

DARIUS

In your presence, my dearest Helen, I *am* David Cargill.

The dam bursts in Helen. She falls weeping into Darius, her arms wrapped tightly around him. They stand locked like this for several beats, both weeping now, holding so tightly to one another it could be hard to breathe.

Darius leads Helen to the couch. They sit.

DARIUS

Are you all right?

HELEN

I don't know. This is all so...

(she looks up at him)

I can't tell you how many nights I cried to the heavens...cursed whatever God maybe up there for taking...you...for tearing my life apart in such an ugly way. I cursed myself for letting you go that day. I should have done something to keep you there. I couldn't get the image out of my mind of you lying in the mud somewhere, your life leaking from you, and I wondered endlessly if you thought of me in your last moments. It was torture. Fifty years of longing so deep and overwhelming, I no longer felt a part of this world. I didn't want to *be* a part of a world that could take you away...leave me alone...

She shivers, wraps her arms around herself.

DARIUS

You're shaking. Are you cold?

She nods.

Darius removes his jacket, drapes it around her shoulders. He puts his arm around her, holds her to himself.

DARIUS

That better?

HELEN

It's...yes....

(rests her head on his shoulder)

Yes, yes, yes.

(beat, she closes her eyes)

It feels...like the years...are gone. Like a lifetime of wishing has magically removed them. I'm afraid to breathe, I'm afraid to open my eyes and wake up and...

(opens her eyes, looks up at him)

I want to believe this is happening, but how can it be? How are you here?

Darius considers a moment, then...

DARIUS

You asked if reincarnation may be a part of this. I told you I don't know much about that kind of thing, but...when I was over there, I used to walk a lot. There were places I could go that were safe.



I came across a monastery -- Tibetan monks -- and I spent many an afternoon there. This was toward the end for me...the fighting was becoming more intense, more vicious. It was harder every day to get up from a sleepless night, to open my eyes. But it was calming there, within the cool walls, away from the carnage, a world apart from the horror. One of the monks I met -- his name was Tenzin -- he was older, had been there all his life. We talked of many things -- life, religion, man's purpose on this earth...death. He mentioned reincarnation to me once. What I remember...he said that certain things -- devastating traumas, resentments...

(he looks at her)

...great loves -- can pass from life to life if they needed to be resolved in some way.

Maybe...I don't know...but maybe...

(he touches her cheek)

Does it really matter now?

HELEN

No. No, it doesn't.

They look at one another a long, pregnant beat, which is suddenly cut by the ring of a doorbell, and the knock of a door knocker somewhere in the house.

Helen and Darius hold their gaze a moment, until a second ring and knock.

As they release their embrace, Flora emerges through the dining room archway.

FLORA

This better not be another--

She stops in her tracks as she sees Helen and Darius on the couch.

FLORA

No, Miss Helen. No.

Helen sits forward, straightens herself. Another knock at the door.

HELEN

It's all right, Flora. Did you call the police?

FLORA

No, Ma'am. But I sure want to.

HELEN

(to Darius)

Is whoever that is connected to you?

DARIUS

No. I told you...I came alone.

FLORA

What are you doing, Miss Helen? How can you--

HELEN

(to Flora)

Get that, will you please, Flora?

Flora looks at Helen and Darius on the couch,  
doesn't move.

HELEN

Please?

Flora shakes her head and moves to the foyer  
door and exits.

HELEN

I'm a little worried about who else might be coming through that door...

They look at one another, and then laugh a short  
laugh.

Darius rises.

DARIUS

This might be a good time for me to use the restroom, if I may...let you attend to...

(indicates the foyer)

...whatever that is.

Helen rises, removes Darius's coat from her shoulders, hands it to him. He drapes it on the couch. She indicates the archway.

HELEN

It's through the dining room, before you get to the kitchen.

DARIUS

(smiling)

I know.

Darius exits through the archway. Helen watches him go, then looks to the ceiling.

A beat later, Flora returns, escorting two people: one is a stocky DETECTIVE JIM OGDEN in a suit and tie. The other is DOCTOR SYLVIA REYNOLDS, dressed professionally in a jacket and matching skirt, a ruffled blouse buttoned to her throat. Reynolds carries a leather portfolio.

FLORA

Miss MacMillan, this is Detective Ogden, from the Newton police department.

OGDEN

Miss MacMillan.

HELEN

Good evening, Detective.

FLORA

And this is Miss--

The Woman offers her hand to Helen.

REYNOLDS

Doctor. Doctor Sylvia Reynolds.

Helen shakes her hand, uncertainly on her face.

FLORA

I told them you were otherwise engaged...

(an eyeball to Helen)

...but this one...

(indicates Ogden)

...insisted.

OGDEN

I'm terribly sorry to be bothering you this late at night, Miss MacMillan. You know I wouldn't if we didn't think it prudent not to wait until tomorrow, under the circumstances.

HELEN

And what circumstances would those be?

Reynolds indicates the couch and chair area.

REYNOLDS

May we?

Helen glances at the dining room archway where Darius had disappeared moments before, then gestures toward the couch area.

Reynolds, Ogden, and Helen all cross there. As they do so...

HELEN

I don't want to be rude, but Flora was correct. I am engaged in something. Will this take long?

OGDEN

I'll get right to the point, then, Miss MacMillan. Has anyone you don't know come to your home in the last few days?

Helen and Flora glance at one another. Ogden and Reynolds catch it.

OGDEN

Someone has, then?

REYNOLDS

It would have been a young African-American man--

HELEN

What does this pertain to, Detective? Is it something pressing?

OGDEN

(glances at Reynolds)

We believe it is, yes. Earlier this evening, Doctor Reynolds appeared at the Newton station, asking for help in finding you.

HELEN

Me?

OGDEN

Well, your address, yes. She indicated that one of her patients -- a...

(he looks at a notepad)

...Darius Arthur, African-American male, age 24 -- has been missing from the institution where she works.

Reynolds hands Helen a business card.

REYNOLDS

I'm the Chief of Psychiatry at River Place Behavioral Hospital in La Place, Louisiana. Mr. Arthur has been under my care for several years now.

HELEN

(another glance at Flora)

He's a *patient* of yours?

REYNOLDS

Yes. Since he was fourteen years old. Ten years. Almost eleven now, actually.

FLORA

This hospital...it's for crazy people?!

REYNOLDS

We don't refer to our patients that way. They each have different mental issues we address with various protocols. It *is* inpatient, mostly involuntary.

FLORA

Oh, Lord...

HELEN

(ignoring Flora's histrionics)

May I ask what this Mr. Arthur is being treated for?

REYNOLDS

I'm afraid I'm not at liberty to discuss a patient's personal information, Miss MacMillan, but--

HELEN

You've come here this late at night, as Detective Odgen has indicated, because you didn't feel it -- "prudent" is the way I believe he put it -- to wait until tomorrow. This sounds serious, and perhaps time-sensitive, and as such, I think a little candor is in order.

Reynolds considers a moment, then...

REYNOLDS

All right. Mr. Arthur suffers from a condition we call Dissociative Identity Disorder...a pretty severe case, in fact, brought on by prolonged violent physical and psychological trauma at the hands of his father.

Flora crosses her arms, looks to Helen.

FLORA

Mm-hmmm.

REYNOLDS

Darius and his mother were regularly beaten, often viciously, and ultimately, his mother was beaten to death, unfortunately right in front of the boy. His father was arrested and incarcerated. Darius was taken in by an aunt, but his condition worsened over the course of a year, and he was ultimately sent to us, where his specific disorder was diagnosed.

HELEN

What is this...Disorder you mentioned?

REYNOLDS

Dissociative Identity Disorder. It's complicated, but it involves the patient being so traumatized by their own life that they simply can't *be* themselves anymore.

They take on another identity, another personality altogether. In Mr. Arthur's case, it was particularly traumatizing and his dissociation quite severe.

Helen slowly sits on the couch, her demeanor suddenly changed.

HELEN

Why would this man come here?

Reynolds opens her portfolio and withdraws a small book -- maybe seven inches high, three inches wide -- obviously old and weather-beaten, wrapped in a small, thin, leather strap. She hands it to Helen.

REYNOLDS

Does this book look familiar to you, Miss MacMillan?

Helen looks at the book, but doesn't open it.

HELEN

I don't think so. What is it?

REYNOLDS

Look at the inside cover, if you would.

Helen unwraps the strap and opens the book. She looks at what is written on the inside cover. A gasp of a breath escapes her.

Flora notices her sudden shock.

FLORA

What is it?

Flora gently takes the book from Helen's hands, reads...

FLORA

"David Cargill, Newton, Mass."

(looks at Helen)

Oh, my sweet Jesus.

OGDEN

That's this address, is it not?

HELEN

(quietly, almost whispered)

Yes. It is.

OGDEN

Is that Mr. Cargill's handwriting?

HELEN

It was, yes.

REYNOLDS

Do you recognize any of the entries? Are they something Mr. Cargill may have written?

Flora tries to hand the book back to Helen, but she won't take it. Flora then opens the book, thumbs through a few pages, then reads...

FLORA

"No one wins when passion and disquiet overwhelm patience and repose."

HELEN

Oh, my God...

Flora thumbs another couple of pages, reads again.

FLORA

"I stood by the car in my uniform, Gerald ready to drive me to the station. It was just at dusk, the sky dark as French burgundy above, the reddish glow of the sunset on the horizon, like a slash of incandescent lipstick across the upper lip of the earth. That was the last beauty I saw...the sky and Helen."

Flora looks up at Helen.

FLORA

Kind of sounds like Mister David...



HELEN

No, no, no...

OGDEN

Miss MacMillan...?

HELEN

(ignoring him, to Reynolds)

Where did you get that? What is it?

Reynolds takes the book from Flora.

REYNOLDS

It was found among the possessions of Darius Arthur in his room at the hospital after he went missing. It appears to be a diary. The dates run from April, 1967 until February, 1968. The last entry is February 7 that year.

Helen's hand goes to her mouth, her eyes close.

HELEN

This can't be happening...

REYNOLDS

You are mentioned a great deal, Miss MacMillan.

(to Flora)

As are you, Miss Anthony. Detailed descriptions of this house and grounds, anecdotal recountings of incidents and occurrences, conversations.

Reynolds sees Helen's distress, sits next to her.

REYNOLDS

Are you all right, Miss MacMillan? Should we--?

HELEN

No. I mean, yes, I'm...fine. Please...continue.

REYNOLDS

Throughout my work with Mister Arthur, he always had this book with him, rarely let it out of his hands. He explained it was his, and that it was very important to him. We didn't challenge him on it -- patients often have talismen of some sort that anchor them in some way.

It's more useful in their treatment to allow such things than to remove them for any reason. After he disappeared, I found it under his mattress. Why he left it, we don't know, but it seems he left with only a suit of clothes his aunt gave him.

FLORA

How would he have gotten it...that book? Mr. David was dead long before this Darius was born. How would it get in his hands all the way down in Louisiana?

OGDEN

We wondered the same thing. A quick search of the name and location in the book brought us to your Mister Cargill. We also found his military death certificate and other records of his service. One of those records had a list of the men in his unit. On that list was the name of Mister Arthur's grandfather.

REYNOLDS

It's highly probable they knew one another. May have gotten quite close, as men at war often do. Mr. Cargill was killed over there, wasn't he?

HELEN

Yes. Yes, he was.

OGDEN

Not a big stretch to assume the grandfather brought the book back with him, maybe intending to get back to the family. Never did, obviously. The young kid probably found it, latched onto it, read it.

REYNOLDS

And the life described in the diary was the escape he needed. Mr. Arthur's condition grew more acute over time, despite my best efforts to bring him back to reality. There were several episodes of his claiming to be a David Cargill. I'd probably seen it in the book, but...I just missed it.

HELEN

He just *thinks* he's David?

REYNOLDS

No. He believes it. Completely. To him, he *is* David Cargill. This is not unusual in severe cases like his...the patient's life is just too terrible for them to acknowledge, so they adopt another persona, as I said. I was unaware of the import of the name until I found it after he left, and made the connection.

OGDEN

We believe he may be coming here, claiming to *be* Mr. Cargill.

DARIUS (O.S.)

I am David Cargill. Is there something I can do for you?

Unseen, Darius has appeared just inside the archway to the dining room. All eyes turn to him.

Helen rises from the couch. Reynolds stands next to her.

Ogden looks to Reynolds. She nods.

Darius takes a step inside the room, looks hard at Reynolds -- recognition? -- then shakes it off and moves to Helen, puts his arm around her waist.

DARIUS

Sorry, darling. I hope I'm not interrupting.

Helen is paralyzed...not so much out of fear, but out of conflict...her desires and her sense of reality cannot resolve...

DARIUS

Is there a problem?

REYNOLDS

(smiling and calmly)

Hello, Darius. I've been worried about you.

DARIUS

(frowning)

I'm sorry.

(extends his hand)

My name is David. Have we met?

Reynolds doesn't take his hand. She just smiles and continues calmly....

REYNOLDS

It's Doctor Reynolds, Darius. You remember. From River Place.

DARIUS

No, I don't think--

REYNOLDS

I have something for you. You forgot it when you left.

She holds out the diary to Darius.

Darius immediately grabs the book, almost like a child would grab a toy from another child. He tucks it into his chest, as though protecting it, and steps away from Helen, but it's more to put space between himself and Reynolds.

Darius turns his back on the others, his face displaying a mix of confusion and fear, his voice taking on an overtone of desperation.

DARIUS

Where did you get this?

Ogden steps toward Darius.

OGDEN

Are you saying the book is yours, sir?

DARIUS

(blurts out)

Yes!

(then a quick...)

I mean, it's...

Darius looks to Helen, then Flora, then to Ogden and Reynolds.

Reynolds sees something in Darius that she doesn't like...she realizes he's in trouble.

REYNOLDS

It's all right, Darius. No one's going to --

DARIUS

NO! Don't call me that! I am David Cargill!

(turns to Helen)

Please, Helen! Tell them who I am!

(to Flora)

Flora! You've known me all my life! Tell them!

FLORA

I don't know you at all, Mister!

Ogden moves to Darius, reaches for one of his arms.

OGDEN

Perhaps we should discuss this calmly somewhere more appropriate, Mr. Arthur.

REYNOLDS

(to Ogden)

Detective, that's not--!

Too late. Darius slaps Ogden's hand away, moves further from him. It's getting out of hand quickly.

HELEN

(to Ogden)

Please! Let him be! Don't hurt him!

FLORA

(moves to Helen, holds her)

No, Miss Helen! Let them take him!

REYNOLDS

(to Darius)

It's alright, Darius! No one's going to hurt you!

DARIUS

I am NOT Darius Arthur! I am David Cargill! Get out! Get out of my house!

REYNOLDS

Darius, please! It's Sylvia Reynolds! You know me! We're just here to help you!

By this time, Ogden has reached Darius. He grabs him, twisting an arm behind his back, pushing him across the back of the couch, pulling out cuffs to shackle him.

Helen breaks from Flora's grasp, runs to Darius, throws herself across him and swats at Ogden.

HELEN

Leave him alone! He is who he says he is! He is David Cargill! He's my fiance!

This stops everything. A heavy silence, a pregnant beat....

Reynolds moves quietly to Ogden, backs him away from Darius and Helen.

REYNOLDS

(quietly)

Detective. Please. This is not helping. The harder you push, the worse it will get. Please...give them space.

Ogden backs off, his hands displayed in front of him.

Helen embraces Darius, helps him stand upright.

HELEN

(to Darius)

It's alright, David. They're leaving now. They're leaving.

She gives Reynolds and Ogden a look, then turns to Flora.

HELEN

Please, Flora, show them out.

FLORA

Oh, Miss Helen, I don't think that's a good idea. Let's let them--

HELEN

Flora! Show them out!

FLORA

Yes, Ma'am.

Flora gestures to Ogden and Reynolds, indicates the door.

FLORA

Maybe you better.

Reynolds nods, goes to the coffee table, picks up her portfolio. Ogden replaces his cuffs on his belt.

OGDEN

This is not a good idea, Miss MacMillan.

REYNOLDS

(quietly, to Ogden)

I think we need to give them some space. I think there's more going on here than we're fully aware of.

OGDEN

What do you mean?

REYNOLDS

(nodding toward a preoccupied Helen)

There may be more than one issue here.

OGDEN

How so?

REYNOLDS

Let's discuss it outside.

Ogden obliges, but as he's walking toward the door where Flora waits...

OGDEN

We'll be right outside, Miss MacMillan. We're not going anywhere. When Mr. Arthur is calmer, we'll be back, and--

Flora taps his arm.

FLORA

Please, Detective. I'll be out in a minute.

Ogden and Reynolds exit. Flora steps to Helen and Darius.

FLORA

I'm going to talk with them, if that's all right with you, Miss MacMillan...

(looks to Darius)

...Mister....

(a look between her and Helen)

...Cargill.

DARIUS

Yes, Flora. That's fine. We'll be here.

FLORA

(to Helen)

Do you need anything before I go?

HELEN

We're fine for now. Thank you, Flora.

Flora moves to the door. As she opens it, she looks back to Helen and Darius, who are now sitting together on the couch. She shakes her head, and exits.

Helen links her arm through Darius's. He still holds the diary tightly. A long beat as they sit together.



She looks around the room, then to Darius.

HELEN

I kept everything the same. Did you notice?

DARIUS

Yes. It even smells the same.

HELEN

Flora was always teasing me that the house and I were starting to creak the same way...but I didn't want to change anything in case...you...came home.

(she laughs)

She said that someday, someone would come in and find her and I sitting in these chairs, covered in dust.

(off his smile)

I'm glad you got back before that happened.

Darius considers her, then...

DARIUS

Then...you...believe I'm...?

HELEN

I'll tell you what I believe. Fifty years ago, this night, my life ended. The moment David Cargill's did. The world disappeared. Time stopped. The man I loved, whose every heart beat and every breath may as well have been my own, was gone. I considered ending my own life, in the hopes that I might find myself with him...somewhere. To be honest with you, that thought has found its way into my mind almost every day since...

Darius turns to her, takes her hands.

DARIUS

No, my love, no. If my being here has put that thought in your mind again...

HELEN

It hasn't. And it won't. Because what you have given me is a gift beyond any I could have hoped for. What I've wished for, for fifty years. Tonight...you have brought me back...my David.

He begins to respond, but she touches a finger to his lips.

HELEN

I don't care how. I don't care why. I don't care what. None of that matters.

She nods her head toward the door where Ogden and Reynolds had just exited.

HELEN

And whatever they say, whatever they do...it doesn't matter to us, right here, right now. It simply does not matter. Because right now, here with you, my heart beats again, my dearest. You being here has breathed life into me again. My David -- for however long it may be -- has returned to me.

Helen reaches up, pulls his head down to hers, kisses his cheek with feeling for a long beat.

As she pulls back, his eyes are on hers.

DARIUS

They will take me away.

HELEN

(touching his cheek gently)

Yes. They will. But that doesn't concern us right now. Right now, we have something else we must do.

DARIUS

What, my love?

Helen holds up her hand to silence him, then rises and crosses to the desk. She picks up the mahogany box and returns to the couch and sits.

She carefully opens the box, and lifts the rose and rings from it. She sets the rose on her lap, and gently unties the ribbon, removing the two rings.

She slides the smaller ring onto her left ring finger, then holds the larger ring in one hand, and with the other, she takes Darius's left hand and slides the ring onto his ring finger. She then takes both his hands.

HELEN

I've been waiting for a long time to say these words.

(takes his hands, looks into his eyes)

"With these rings, I thee wed...for better, for worse...for richer, for poorer...in sickness and in health...our hearts and lives melded...

Darius recognizes what she is saying..

DARIUS

...through this life and beyond...for time shall have no meaning...on this, our love's bond."

HELEN

...through this life and beyond...for time shall have no meaning...on this, our love's bond."

Helen and Darius smile at one another, then slowly come together in a tender kiss, then an embrace for a long moment.

Helen then turns and reaches to the coffee table. She picks up the book of Romantic poets that has lain where Darius set it earlier. She hands it to him.

HELEN

Read to me, my darling. Like you used to by the pond.

Darius smiles, takes the book, opens it.

DARIUS

What shall I read?

HELEN

Some Shelley, I think. Find us something that speaks of the timeless nature of love.

And Helen nestles her head onto Darius's shoulder.

He pages through the book.

DARIUS

Here's a good one.

He kisses the top of her head, then begins to read. The lights begin a slow fade as he reads through the following:

DARIUS

*See the mountains kiss high heaven  
And the waves clasp one another;  
No sister-flower will be forgiven  
If it disdained its brother;  
And the sunlight clasps the earth  
And the moonbeams kiss the sea;  
What is all this sweet work worth  
If thou kiss not me?*

FULL FADE TO  
BLACK

THE END