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SF PERUSALS

Crawl, Fade to White

by Sheila Callaghan

A Samuel French Acting Edition



SAMUEL FRENCH
FOUNDED 1830

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PRODUCTION HISTORY

Commissioned by South Coast Repertory Theatre in Costa Mesa, California.

Developed at the Playwright's Center in Minneapolis, Minnesota.

Performed by Theatre of NOTE, Los Angeles, California 2005.

A revised version of ***CRAWL, FADE TO WHITE*** was workshopped at Fordham, Winter 2008.

CHARACTERS

LOUISE / YOUNG LOUISE – Female, 38…
FRAN / VOICE – Female, 45-55
DAN – Male, 45-55
APRIL – Female, early twenties
NOLAN – Male, early twenties
NIKO – Male, 28-32

AUTHOR'S NOTE

A stroke (/) marks the point of interruption in overlapping dialogue. When the stroke is not immediately followed by text, the next line should occur on the last syllable of the word before the slash – not an overlap but a concise interruption.

SPECIAL THANKS

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*(***FRAN** *and* **DAN** *in their living room. They are dressed very stodgily, in drab clothing from the late 60's.* **DAN** *is folding little autumn-colored pieces of paper.* **FRAN** *is cutting leaves from them. Their actions perfectly mirror one another; fold-snip, fold-cut. Something taut and fat and terrifically unsaid hangs between them. Piles of colored paper leaves lie at their feet in orange, yellow, red.)*

(They sit there for a bit. Finally.)

(The doorbell rings. **FRAN** *and* **DAN** *ignore it, or do not hear it.)*

(After a long while, it rings again. **FRAN** *and* **DAN** *glance at each other, bewildered and timorous.)*

*(***FRAN** *stands and hundreds of tiny color scraps fall from her lap at her feet. She opens the front door. It is* **LOUISE**. *She is made-up and well-coifed. She smiles graciously.)*

(Beside her is a large cardboard box.)

LOUISE. Hello.

FRAN. Hello.

LOUISE. I hope it isn't too late to call…

FRAN. Not at all.

*(***FRAN** *opens the door wider and gestures for* **LOUISE** *to enter.* **LOUISE** *drags the cardboard box in after her carefully.* **FRAN** *resumes her cutting nervously.* **LOUISE** *sits down.* **DAN** *has stopped folding and is staring at* **LOUISE**.*)*

LOUISE. I live next door.

(No reaction from either **FRAN** *or* **DAN**.*)*

I've been there twenty years. You can see my house through that window.

*(***FRAN** *and* **DAN** *look through the window. They see* **LOUISE***'s house.)*

FRAN & DAN. Ahh.

LOUISE. Strange we've never met.

FRAN. Oh. We don't generally um.

DAN. Fran isn't good with the outside.

FRAN. No.

LOUISE. Well.

(long uncomfortable beat)

You look awfully busy.

FRAN. We're having a sale. A Fall Clearance Sale. We're selling some things. Dan wanted to

DAN. *We* wanted to

FRAN. We. Sell things. Old things we kept. Dan said it was time.

DAN. It's a Fall Clearance Sale.

LOUISE. I see.

(long uncomfortable beat)

FRAN. The trees lost their leaves too early this year.

DAN. The heat.

FRAN. Fall fell before our sale.

(long uncomfortable beat)

So we're making our own leaves. And we bought stickers for the prices. And we advertised. We've never done that before, have we?

DAN. No, Fran.

FRAN. Dan put up signs.

*(***LOUISE** *slowly pulls out a sign that reads FALL CLEARANCE SALE, followed by an address and a date.)*

*(***FRAN** *is slightly frightened.)*

FRAN. She has our sign, Dan…

LOUISE. It's why I'm here.

FRAN. The sale doesn't start until eight A.M. tomorrow. Didn't you write the time, Dan?

DAN. I did.

LOUISE. Have you another pair of scissors?

(a beat)

FRAN. Have we, Dan?

DAN. Scissors? Another pair? No. No, we only have one pair. One pair of scissors.

FRAN. One pair of scissors. Only one.

LOUISE. May I use those?

*(***FRAN** *looks at her scissors. She looks at* **DAN**. *She looks at* **LOUISE**. *She looks at the scissors. She hands* **LOUISE** *the scissors, very carefully, handle first.)*

*(***LOUISE** *approaches* **DAN**. *She places her fingers on the paper he is folding and removes it from his hands. He lets her, stunned and vaguely aroused.* **LOUISE** *returns to her seat and begins cutting the folded paper.* **DAN** *and* **FRAN** *look at each other, nervous.)*

(Finally, **LOUISE** *opens the paper she has been cutting. It is an open, square box. She holds it up to* **FRAN***'s head.)*

LOUISE. This is how I'm used to seeing you. Your face in a frame. Peering out.

FRAN. Oh.

LOUISE. I have something you admire. Don't I.

(tiny beat)

FRAN. *(frightened)* Ha! The weather!

LOUISE. I find myself in need of money rather quickly/

FRAN. So unpredictable!

LOUISE. If she feels the way I believe she does about this particular item

FRAN. Ninety degrees in October!

LOUISE. Then I've come to the right place.

FRAN. And it's going to rain tomorrow! Upwards, they say! We heard on the radio, D-dan?

*(***DAN** *regards* **LOUISE** *suspiciously. Longish beat.)*

DAN. What do you want?

*(***LOUISE** *gestures to the cardboard box.)*

LOUISE. I've attached a price. Please ONLY sell to someone who recognizes the value. I'll come by tomorrow evening to collect my cash. You may retain fifteen percent for yourselves. Does that sound equitable?

FRAN. *(excited)* Equitable…yes, yes….

DAN. *("wait a minute")* Fran.

FRAN. But she said/

DAN. *(to* **LOUISE***)* Why us?

*(***LOUISE** *smiles.)*

LOUISE. We're neighbors. I wouldn't trust it with any other seller.

DAN. Or maybe no one else would buy it from you…

(A beat. **LOUISE** *continues to smile. She hands the scissors back to* **FRAN***.)*

(She then frames **DAN***'s face with the paper, as she did with* **FRAN***.)*

LOUISE. My goodness. This looks awfully familiar too.

(A beat. **DAN** *sweats.)*

DAN. *(quietly)* You don't have curtains.

LOUISE. *(quietly)* I don't.

(Beat. She hands **DAN** *the paper frame.)*

LOUISE. Thank you. Now if you don't mind…

(She gestures for them to turn their backs.)

FRAN & DAN. Of course.

*(***FRAN** *and* **DAN** *turn their backs, close their eyes, put their fingers in their ears, and begin to mutter "la-la-la-la-la.")*

*(***LOUISE** *kneels by the box. She strokes it lovingly.)*

(Then, **LOUISE** *is done with the box. She stands. She touches* **DAN** *and* **FRAN** *to cease their muttering.)*

LOUISE. *(cont.)* I will see you tomorrow evening. My name is Louise.

FRAN. Fran.

DAN. Dan.

LOUISE. Lovely to meet you finally.

*(***LOUISE** *exits.)*

*(***DAN** *and* **FRAN** *glance at each other.)*

*(***FRAN** *rushes to the box and cuts into it frantically, and peers inside.)*

FRAN. Oh.

DAN. What?

FRAN. Nothing.

*(***LOUISE** *appears in an unknown space. She is holding open a daily planner and talking on the phone.)*

LOUISE. Of course. Darling, I had to check in, it's been ages since I've seen you…

Yes, I did get your message, and I do appreciate you calling to cancel.

Well I'm so glad you're feeling better. Why don't we reschedule now, while I have you….

(A beat. She listens. Then closes her daily planner.)

I see. I'm sorry to hear that.

Don't be silly darling. I never take these things personally. And I do have other clients.

All right. Well I'm running late, so….

(She hangs up the phone solemnly.)

(She slips her planner and her phone into her briefcase.)

(All disappear.)

Two

*(***LOUISE***'s house. Dark as the inside of a stomach.)*

(Heavy heavy breathing. We can see nothing. We can only hear voices.)

NOLAN. Holy mother/

APRIL. Shhhhh….

NOLAN. Fuck me I need to/ sit…

APRIL. SHHHHHHHHH!!

NOLAN. She's not even here.

APRIL. She moved some things…

NOLAN. Where's the couch

APRIL. To your left…

NOLAN. There's nothing here

APRIL. LEFT.

NOLAN. THERE'S NOTHING / HERE

APRIL. Wait a second –

(flashlight)

The rug…the table…. Oh no

NOLAN. Lightswitch.

(Lights on. **APRIL** *and* **NOLAN** *are dressed head to toe in black. Both squint.)*

(The room is completely bare.)

*(***APRIL** *runs out of the room.)*

(Moments pass.)

(She runs back in.)

APRIL. *(cont.)* It's gone.

NOLAN. You're joking.

*(***APRIL** *runs out of the room again.)*

(Moments pass.)

(She runs back in. She is clutching a large photograph.)

APRIL. It's gone. Everything is gone.

NOLAN. Okay, let's stop, let's think.

APRIL begins to hyperventilate.

APRIL. *(between gasps)* She
She
She

NOLAN. *(overlapping* **APRIL***)*
Ape. Screw it, okay?
We don't need it. WE
DON'T NEED IT –

APRIL. *(between gasps)*
Gone
Gone
Gone
Gone

APRIL. How
Can
You
Say
That

NOLAN. Because it's true. We'll find something else to sell.
We have scads of options. Scads.
What's that?

APRIL. *(between gasps)* What?

NOLAN. In your hand.

*(***APRIL** *realizes she is holding something.)*

APRIL. Oh.
I didn't
I just grabbed

NOLAN. Who is it?

APRIL. My f-f-f-f-father

(She hands him the portrait and begins to calm down.)

(It is of a young man dressed in a white uniform, standing next to a white van and smiling.)

(The picture is fading softly to white.)

NOLAN. "Harmony Animal Shelter."

*(***APRIL** *grabs the photo back and scrutinizes it.)*

APRIL. That's the van. That's the van. And the u-uniform.

NOLAN. You have a father?

APRIL. He.

Um.

Died in a helicopter crash over Bolivia.

Got eaten by lions in Kenya.

Was gouged by a bull in Barcelona.

Got hit by a train in Louisiana.

NOLAN. Freak.

APRIL. Choked on a chip in England.

NOLAN. Freak.

APRIL. Fell off the Great Wall of China.

NOLAN. Freak.

APRIL. Drowned in a puddle in Paris.

NOLAN. Freak.

APRIL. Grew wings and a beak.

Wings and a beak.

NOLAN. Wings and a freak.

APRIL. Um wings and a beak, yeah, flew away, that's all I know. She doesn't um.

*(***NOLAN** *tickles her. She screams and snorts. Then he grabs her and holds her. She struggles to free herself.)*

NOLAN. We're going now. Okay?

APRIL. I'm not leaving without it.

NOLAN. Yes you are.

APRIL. I'm not.

NOLAN. I'll yank you out by the butt hair.

APRIL. Gross!

NOLAN. I'll leave you here.

(a beat)

APRIL. *(quietly)* No.

NOLAN. Gimmie.

(He holds his hand out for the picture. **APRIL** *doesn't move.)*

(The front door knob rattles.)

*(***APRIL** *jumps.)*

*(***LOUISE** *enters.)*

(Everyone freezes.)

*(***LOUISE** *is shocked speechless.)*

LOUISE. Hello.

APRIL. Hello.

LOUISE. Hello.

NOLAN. Hello.

(A beat. **NOLAN** *extends his hand.)*

I'm Nolan. April's boyfriend.

LOUISE. Oh. A pleasure.

*(***LOUISE** *extends her hand to* **NOLAN** *glamorously. They shake.)*

NOLAN. Sorry we're sweaty. We ran all he way here.

LOUISE. From school?

NOLAN. Sixty miles.

LOUISE. That must have been a poignant outing.

NOLAN. It was.

LOUISE. Would either of you like some tea?

APRIL. No/

NOLAN. Tea would be lovely.

*(***LOUISE** *exits into the kitchen.)*

NOLAN. *(whispering)* Ask her where it is. Ask her where it is. Ask her where it is.

*(***LOUISE** *returns with a mug. She sees the photo hanging and reacts almost imperceptibly, but then ignores it.)*

LOUISE. I'm afraid I have no fresh leaves. Nor do I have a pot to heat up water. I hope an old tea bag in cold water will be agreeable to you….

NOLAN. Quite.

*(***LOUISE** *hands* **NOLAN** *his mug.)*

LOUISE. It's a special tea from the Fujian Province. Made from tender white buds covered in silver-white hairs.

(He takes it and lifts the tea bag from the mug. He gnaws on it.)

(Awkward silence. It lasts a bit.)

So what brings you both here?

NOLAN. Not much, not much, we were just, it's funny actually. April said she hadn't seen you in like, what, four years? And I was like, that's outrageous. That is OUTRAGE-OUS. So I was like, totally spur of the moment, let's visit. Let's just end the madness. We're humans, right? And it's so GREAT to finally meet you. Face to the name and so forth.

LOUISE. And you have headsocks and burglar outfits.

NOLAN. Headsocks for the cold, black for the fashion.

LOUISE. Isn't it the middle of the semester? What about classes? April?

APRIL. Um. No classes, I. Ate the school. Got a bum score on a p-chem exam so like I rented um a little propeller plane and dropped five tons of of of magic shell then I grabbed a serving spoon from the cafeteria and m-m-mounged. I'm failing out of school.

(a beat)

I'm failing out of school. They brought around a minesweeper to explode all the bad students and I made the loudest bang.

LOUISE. They would have contacted me.

APRIL. No no they wouldn't, they only do that in grammar school. I'm like done, it's. Um.

*(***LOUISE** *turns to* **NOLAN**.*)*

LOUISE. Nolan, is this true?

NOLAN. Hardly. Your daughter here is blowing everyone away. Professors gape at her like, like they're watching the cosmos disrobe. STUNNINGLY brilliant. A little socially inept, which I find rather tantalizing to

be honest. And her hygiene isn't stellar. And she hates dresses. All things that make her the unique and precious individual that she is. Show her, April.

APRIL. What?

NOLAN. Show her what a unique and precious individual you are.

APRIL. I don't

Um.

Um.

The, the.

NOLAN. What you are studying, for example.

APRIL. The energy and frequency of particles and waves. Of light.

(A beat. **NOLAN** *gestures for her to go on.)*

You um, can never know the exact location and exact velocity of a particle of light because light particles obey the uncertainty principle, and and if you know the velocity of a light particle very accurately your knowledge of its location will suffer, and vice versa, which is why you um you NEVER say the particle is in a certain location with a certain velocity, but rather the particle's most PROBABLE location is here and its most PROBABLE velocity is this, which um goes to prove that when you look beneath the surface of nature to see why things behave as they do, you find only unknowable's. Which.

(a beat)

NOLAN. You SEE???

LOUISE. I certainly don't need you to tell me how extraordinary she is.

(beat)

Will you be staying the night? April's childhood bed is still here. I'll go make it up for you…I assume you'll be sharing, whether or not I approve…

NOLAN. Well that's awfully forward-thinking of you Louise, can I call you that?

LOUISE. Do I have a choice?

NOLAN. We all have choices. Could I ask you something else Louise?

LOUISE. Certainly.

NOLAN. April was wondering /

LOUISE. Can she not speak for herself?

NOLAN. Um, yes. April?

(They both look at **APRIL** *expectantly. A beat.)*

APRIL. *(quietly)* W-w-where , where….um

LOUISE. I was forced to sell a few things.

APRIL. Even –

LOUISE. That too. Your scholarship is taxed. Your dorm is private. The dinette set did not go for as much as I would have liked. And business is at an all-time low. So.

(a beat)

I've given it to our neighbors next door to sell at their Fall Clearance Sale. I tried selling it elsewhere but. Well.

(a beat)

I do wish there had been another way.

(a beat)

Would you prefer the sheets with the walruses having tea or the re-enactment of the burning of Joan of Arc?

*(***APRIL** *gathers her things to leave.)*

LOUISE. Where are you going?

APRIL. The neighbors.

*(***APRIL** *puts her coat and hat on, and gestures for* **NOLAN** *to do the same.)*

LOUISE. *(cont.)* It's only five A.M….

APRIL. So?

LOUISE. They aren't starting their Fall Clearance Sale until eight…

APRIL. We'll wait.

LOUISE. On their lawn?

*(***APRIL** *exits.)*

*(***NOLAN** *shrugs and exits.)*

*(***LOUISE** *is alone. She notices the photo* **APRIL** *has left behind. She hangs it on the way.)*

Three

(Early morning, sun just coming out. **NOLAN** *and* **APRIL** *are sweating beneath the four trees.* **APRIL** *is quiet and shakingly furious.)*

*(***APRIL** *again is biting her nails or picking at something on her face or doing something manic and annoying quickly and nervously.)*

NOLAN. Christ it's muggy. The air is like, festering.

APRIL. We're in the heart of the swamp.

NOLAN. Can't believe you grew up here.

APRIL. I didn't. Years of sending me away. Fucking private boarding schools since fucking KINDERGARTEN. Oh god the money, and now I'm like, GUILTY, is that even FAIR, I mean did I ASK to be sent away, NO, and I'm all, ffftttttt, and oh god she didn't even CALL ME about the, the, she just, and she KNEW, she KNEW I would freak, you saw her face she was all "that too." And you know what I'm G-G-G-G-GLAD I left school because you know why, FUCK YOU Louise, that's why. "That too" I mean JE-SUS.

NOLAN. And so young.

APRIL. She was sixteen when she had me. Her family was like WAY rich like I mean stupid wealthy like um, she went to a Swiss finishing school, OH did you know it's like a serious fucking crime to eat bread with soup at a dinner party? You make crumbs, it's. Um disrespectful to other guests, um. Oh also, and like sixty-five to seventy centimeters of space should separate each g-g-guest at a, fruit must always be peeled and eaten with a knife and fork, napkins um…

(small beat)

The second we get it, and I mean THE VERY NANOSECOND we lay our hands on it, I want out. Off the grid. The telescope, the boat, the hurling light. All of it. Like, like we always, um.

NOLAN. I don't want to be here any more than you do.

(a longish beat)

So what's her business?

APRIL. Her.

NOLAN. She said business is at an all-time low…

APRIL. Consulting.

NOLAN. What does she consult?

(a beat)

Ape.

APRIL. What. I don't know. What time is it. The neighbors make me nervous –

NOLAN. APRIL.

(beat)

APRIL. She's a b-beauty consultant.

(beat)

APRIL. Don't be quiet. I don't like it when / you're

NOLAN. *(irritated)* You drag me here. We haven't slept. We haven't eaten. We smell like camp. We're waiting for a yard-fucking-sale.

APRIL. I'm / sorry

NOLAN. I don't like feeling out of / control.

APRIL. I'm sorry.

NOLAN. And I don't like it when you keep things from me.

APRIL. What things? I'm not. I'm not. I swear Nolan.

*(***NOLAN** *drinks, irritated.)*

(a long beat)

Some things. Don't. Have words.

NOLAN. Just tell me *one* thing. One thing that has words.

(a beat as she thinks)

APRIL. Um my f-father…

Okay she met him over the corpse of a dead dog. Their fingers touched through the bloody matted hair on the dog's back. The heat rose from the dog's body and

was absorbed into their hands. Harsh divinities leaked from their eyes and splattered onto the asphalt where the dog lay. The dog grew cold beneath their agency. Two small white suns rose within their bodies. Stomach to throat. Stomach to throat.

(a beat)

She tells it better. I'm not good at her stories.

NOLAN. A dead dog.

*(***APRIL** *nods.)*

I don't know anything about you.

(a beat)

APRIL. *(quietly)* You kn-know everything about me.

*(***APRIL** *places her hand over* **NOLAN***'s. He does not move. It begins to rain around them in slow motion. Upwards. They note it. It is strange.)*

NOLAN. *(genuine)* Superb.

Four

*(***YOUNG LOUISE** *is curled up in a ball in the corner of a small, dark closet. She is fifteen. She wears a crappy, torn, second-hand dress, and looks like she hasn't bathed in two weeks. She is sleeping.)*

(Inside the closet are a make-shift milk-crate desk, a sleeping bag, some hanging clothes, several empty cans of Biggie Mart root beer, and much dirty laundry. It is clear that the closet has been used recently as a bedroom and an office.)

(A young man enters, holding a parlor lamp tightly in his arms. It is the man from the picture on **LOUISE***'s wall.)*

(The lamp is an antique oil-burning parlor lamp from the early 1900's, highly ornate and highly valuable.)

(The man carefully places the lamp on the floor. **LOUISE** *wakes up with a start.)*

(They stare at each other quietly for several moments.)

NIKO. You haven't left the closet. Have you.

*(***YOUNG LOUISE** *shakes her head no.)*

Where you been shittin'?

(She points to a corner.)

Eleven days.

YOUNG LOUISE. Yes.

(a long beat)

It's so quiet…are they all dead?

NIKO. Most of 'em.

Didn't occur to you to feed 'em, I s'pose.

YOUNG LOUISE. I was going to. But then when you didn't come home I thought you wanted them to die. And then I thought you were dead. So then *I* wanted them to die.

NIKO. Well. Got your wish.

(a beat)

YOUNG LOUISE. Where have you been sleeping?

NIKO. Back of the van. Somewhere off the highway.

(A beat. **YOUNG LOUISE** *touches the lamp.)*

YOUNG LOUISE. Thought I'd never see it again.

NIKO. Took it to the same pawn shop four different times. Second time he doubled his offer. Third time he tripled it. Last time he wept like a baby.
But I couldn't do it. Kept picturing you sittin' here wonderin' how I could take it from you. Made my blood freeze in my veins.

(a beat)

NIKO. So. That's that. Fella down the way wants to take this shack off my hands. Told him okay. Gonna stay in my van. Gotta pack some stuff.

*(***YOUNG LOUISE** *remains silent.* **NIKO** *grabs a plastic bag and begins shoving his remaining clothes into it.)*

YOUNG LOUISE. Don't leave.

NIKO. I'm. You know. I'm not a pair of shoes with invisible heels. Or a fancy dress with little mirrors sewn into it. Or a metal thingy with diamonds. Or a silk nothin'. All that stuff you talk about. I'm none of it, Louise.
And I'm also not the man to keep you from it.

*(***YOUNG LOUISE** *retrieves a lipstick and a mirror from her purse. She smooths her hair and begins applying make-up.)*

*(***NIKO** *watches her silently a moment.)*

You know you don't need that crap. You're beautiful without it.

*(***NIKO** *exits.)*

*(***YOUNG LOUISE** *continues to apply her lipstick, calmly, over and over and over. Her hand is shaking.)*

Five

*(***DAN** *is sitting on a lawn chair under a tarp outside the house. It rains in slow motion around him, upwards.)*

(The words "FALL CLEARANCE SALE" are spelled out with paper leaves, the very leaves **FRAN** *and* **DAN** *have been cutting all month. Paper leaves decorate the scene in garish abundance.)*

(Around **DAN** *are piles of baby items, in mountains of blue and pink and white: baby clothing, baby toys, stuffed animals, mobiles, strollers, cribs, rolled wallpaper with rainbows and clouds. A child's tape deck plays a child's tape of sugary nursery-rhyme songs. Everything with price tags.)*

*(***FRAN** *appears from inside the house, looking morose.)*

DAN. Come on, Fran…

FRAN. No.

DAN. There's nothing to be scared of…Have a look at the rain. It's very unusual. Why don't you bring the thing out and set up a chair.

FRAN. I don't see the point.

DAN. You won't come out? Just for a few minutes? Today of all days?

What if someone comes by? You won't want to miss that…

FRAN. No one will come. It's too far from town. The weather is strange. The smell keeps everyone away.

DAN. What would it take to get you out here, Fran?

FRAN. *(darkly)* Something real special.

*(***FRAN** *says nothing.)*

*(***DAN** *peers into the distance.)*

DAN. Well I'll be damned.

*(***FRAN** *looks.)*

FRAN. It's her…She's coming HERE. She's coming HERE, Dan! Oh my gosh I'm not decent…

*(***FRAN** *disappears into the house.)*

*(***NOLAN** *and* **APRIL** *appear, damp and covered in mud.)*

APRIL. We um heard you were having um. A f-f-fa-fa-fa –

(She's stuck.)

NOLAN. – all Clearance Sale.

DAN. Everything Must Go.

*(***FRAN** *emerges, beaming. She wears colorful party clothes and lipstick. She carries a cut lemon and a glass. She is giddy.)*

*(***DAN** *is delighted.)*

FRAN. Hello! Well what a delightful surprise! Would either of you like some lemonade? Fresh squeezed?

*(***FRAN** *squeezes a bit of lemon into a glass and hands them both to* **NOLAN**.*)*

DAN. Isn't she a pip?!

NOLAN. Baby stuff. Where's the baby?

DAN. We don't have one.

FRAN. We did. Have a baby. Two.

DAN. Ah yes.

NOLAN. I don't see it, Ape.

FRAN. Two babies. A little girl. A little boy. Right Dan?

DAN. Carol and Farrell. They were twins.

APRIL. Um, my mother / g-g-gave

FRAN. They weren't twins, Dan. We told people they were. Because they were both so tiny. Right Dan?

DAN. So tiny, yes

NOLAN. Maybe it's inside

FRAN. You could fit them both in the palm of your hand. And they looked alike. Both with blue eyes that turned green in the summer. Both with straight blond hair that turned curly in the winter.

APRIL. My mother g-gave you something. To sell.

FRAN. We saved all their things. Just in case. In case they came back.

APRIL. She m-made a / mistake

FRAN. But now we are selling everything. Because they aren't. Coming back.

NOLAN. How do you know?

DAN. We got a note. "Dear Parents. We aren't coming back. Sell our stuff."

FRAN. More lemonade?

NOLAN. Where's the lamp?

FRAN. Oh. Yes. Sold.

NOLAN. It's six twenty five. Your Fall Clearance Sale doesn't start until eight AM.

DAN. Town folk. They came early.

APRIL. What? What?

FRAN. We were setting up. They said "how much for that?" And we said…we said/

DAN. We said nothing. It had a price tag. They gave us money. Then they left.

*(***APRIL** *begins to hyperventilate.)*

APRIL. What? What? What?

NOLAN. April…breathe…

FRAN. What's going on

NOLAN. She's having a reaction

*(***APRIL** *starts to eat the leaves from the "FALL CLEARANCE SALE" sign.)*

FRAN. Oh dear…we've been cutting for months…make her stop Dan….

*(***APRIL** *doesn't stop eating and gasping.)*

DAN. Young lady…stop it, now…

*(***APRIL** *does not stop.)*

FRAN. *(to* **NOLAN***)* What do we do?

NOLAN. Probably want to let her go until she's full.

FRAN. Not the orange ones, dear…

*(***APRIL** *drops to her knees and begins clawing and shredding the other leaves.)*

DAN. Spank her, Fran.

NOLAN. You can't spank her

DAN. When children misbehave you spank

NOLAN. She's not your child

FRAN. You have to OWN the child you want to spank, Dan.

DAN. Oh.

NOLAN. APRIL, these perfectly good people worked very hard on their leaf motif, now STOP it

*(***APRIL** *finally stops, looking wild and panicked.)*

FRAN. I think she's worked hard enough for it….
Come, darling…If anyone needs me I'll be inside tending to our daughter.

DAN. Our –

FRAN. Guest. What did I say?

DAN. Nevermind.

(A giddy **FRAN** *takes* **APRIL** *into the house.* **DAN** *and* **NOLAN** *look at each other as though someone just shoved wet gummy bears down their underpants.)*

NOLAN. Maybe I should / go inside

DAN. *(firmly)* No.

(a beat)

Just. Wait.

(They wait.)

Six

*(***FRAN** *and* **DAN***'s living room)*

(The parlor lamp from the earlier **NIKO/YOUNG LOUISE** *scene is perched regally atop a table, glowing for the first time.)*

*(***APRIL** *is curled up around the lamp.* **FRAN** *is hopping about giddily.)*

FRAN. Can I get you anything? A glass of milk? A candy bar? We don't have guests very often…Will you be staying long? You are more than welcome. You know I remember you as a little girl. Those brief periods, when you'd come home from wherever it was she sent you. You'd sneak into her bedroom and stare into that glass for hours. I thought you were retarded! But I loved you anyway…Though I could not for the life of me imagine what you were looking at…

APRIL. Look…see?

*(***FRAN** *squints at the glass.)*

FRAN. Um…well, it's very…

APRIL. A thumbprint. A MAN'S thumbprint. Been there since I could focus my eyes, you know like I'd sit there comparing every line to my own like places we matched and places we didn't and. I used to get headaches a lot, and and then I like stared THROUGH the thumbprint at the light inside until everything would go fuzzy and then the pattern would form a shape and the shape was a man, like um a whole man made of light pressing his hands against the inside of the glass, um. And each time she sent me away I'd dream of him inside it kissing her in his white uniform, and like um, I dreamed of of of her name caught in his throat. As though she were lost.

FRAN. *(genuine, brimming)* Aren't you JUST a darling. I'll go grab us some snacks.

*(***FRAN** *runs off.)*

*(***APRIL** *glances up. Something outside catches her eye.)*

(It's **LOUISE***'s house.)*

*(***APRIL** *stares out the window. We can see* **LOUISE** *in her bedroom adjusting her make-up and getting dressed to go out.)*

*(***APRIL** *continues to stare.)*

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