

# STRONG ARM

---

A PLAY IN TWO ACTS  
Inspired by ANTON CHEKHOV's THE SEAGULL

By  
WYN MORENO

Contact:  
Wyn Moreno  
304 N Ford Ave.  
Fullerton CA 92832  
435-232-6016  
wynmoreno@gmail.com

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Andrea Decker, Marika Becz, Joseph Dunham, Mark Ramont, Svetlana Efremova-Reed, Jim Taulli, Anne James, John Gleaves, Miguel Torres, Shellie Sterling, Joshua Johnson, Kelvin Rhodes II, Tina Burkhalter, Nicholas Decker, and Kyle Cooper

STRONG ARM was produced by The Wayward Artist in Santa Ana, California, July 2019. It was directed by Mark Stevens; the set design was by Kristin Campbell; the costume design was by Rachel Lorenzetti; the lighting design was by Colby Nordberg; sound design was by Lauren Zuiderveld; the original stage manager was Sydney Fitzgerald. The cast was as follows:

Elaine Maddox.....	Marika Becz
Marshall Maddox.....	Dan Keilbach
Phil.....	Craig Tyrl
Allie.....	Autumn Paramore
Hank Felton.....	Joseph Dunham
Mara.....	Kathi Gillmore

Special thanks to John Spiak, Tracey Gayer, and Grand Central Art Center.

CAST OF CHARACTERS

MARSHALL MADDOX: All-star high school phenom baseball pitcher. Eighteen years old and in excellent physical shape.

ELAINE MADDOX: Retired hall-of-fame tennis player, mother to MARSHALL. In her forties.

HANK FELTON: Recently retired baseball player, boyfriend to ELAINE. In his forties.

ALLIE: College sophomore studying journalism, and ACT tutor to MARSHALL. Early twenties.

PHIL: Hot shot sports agent, and representative for both ELAINE and MARSHALL. Forties to sixties.

MARA: ELAINE's older sister. Practicing physician. Forties to fifties.

SETTINGS

Farnsworth High School locker room, Chicago, Illinois. Present day.  
Suburbs of Chicago, Illinois. Present day.

## NOTE FROM THE PLAYWRIGHT

"Sport is not a relationship of neutrality... From an athlete's standpoint, it is a living, loving relationship. It is a kind of love/hate relationship with challenge, struggle, sacrifice, victory, defeat, self-improvement...A relationship of passion and pain with intense highs and intense lows."

-Carolyn E. Thomas

When I first got the idea to explore the lives, relationships, and motivations of athletes, I didn't know where to start. The creative process always involves a bit of luck. Even though my favorite sport is basketball, and I follow it avidly, I kept coming across stories about baseball, about kids, about retired athletes, about drug abuse. Even more than basketball, baseball runs on hero narratives. Even though baseball is a team sport, when the pitcher throws the ball or when a player steps up to bat, that player stands alone under the pressure to be the greatest. They have to believe they already are the greatest, or they crack under the pressure.

Even though people love sports, most have never considered the effect sports have on the psyches of athletes and fans. Sports can be violent and mean spirited; they are founded on the principle that somebody has to lose. It's a harsh world in which to grow up. Studies of athletes show that athletes vacillate between being incredibly sensitive and hardened to a point of being delusional in their quest for perfection. Can you place yourself for a moment in the shoes of a young man or woman who seeks to gain everything? The prize for being the best is millions of dollars, fame, accolades, and a future empire. The ability to care for your loved ones. It all rides on your strength and ability, on pushing your body to the point of breaking. Can you feel the pressure already?

In Anton Chekhov's *The Seagull*, the Seagull is a representation of freedom and security. When the Seagull is shot and killed, the audience is presented with a terrifying reality: that there is no security. In *STRONG ARM*, the titular Strong Arm likewise dangles the promise of security and freedom in front of the characters' noses. But will it, like the Seagull, fail to deliver on that promise?

NOTE A

On Page 78: Given the limitations of doing damage to props, etc., feel free to take artistic liberties with this moment. At the world premiere at The Wayward Artist, MARSHALL pushed over the trophy case and hit the Wimbledon plate off the wall. What's important is that MARSHALL uses the bat to attack the symbols of his success, and ELAINE's as well.

NOTE B

On Page 84: Productions could use a hospital bed, hospital gurney, or anything similar, but feel free to take some artistic liberties here.

ACT 1

SCENE 1

LIGHTS UP.

Sounds of a baseball game. Organ.  
"Hey batter batter..." "What have  
you got..." etc., voices of the  
ANNOUNCERS can be heard in rapid  
banter.

ANNOUNCER 1

Welcome back to the state championship game here at  
Farnsworth High School, a young Francis Ramos up to bat. Not  
a bad hitter for young man of 17, decent batting average, and  
a little bit of an attitude I must say.

ANNOUNCER 2

Hey, this kid has so much potential, he just oozes talent,  
but I think even Ramos is not looking forward to batting  
against this young phenom, Marshall Maddox. Boy, has he been  
great today or what?

ANNOUNCER 1

Well last year Marshall threw a consistent 90 mile per hour  
fast ball, which is not easy for a high schooler.

ANNOUNCER 2

He has toughness and mental focus, and he also has a positive  
influence in his mother Elaine, who pushes him to greatness  
every day.

ANNOUNCER 1

Hey look there she is, boy is she tough.

Lights come up on ELAINE MADDOX.  
While the announcers are  
commenting, she mutters under her  
breath.

ELAINE

Come on, Marsh... What are you doing... He's a lefty, remember

what we talked about when it comes to lefties?

ANNOUNCER 2

You know, he probably has no idea how lucky he is having a mother like that! Not to mention the fact that she herself is a hall of fame tennis player. Here's the pitch..

Lights go down on ELAINE who is visibly upset. Lights shift to INT. a locker room with MARSHALL sitting alone rubbing vapo-rub etc. on his arm. ELAINE ENTERS the empty locker room.

ANNOUNCER 1

And another strike! This kid throws some major heat. I can't even believe it. Watch out world, here's someone who has options, and I guarantee he has a bright future.

ELAINE

You know how long I've been sitting out there waiting for you?

MARSHALL

Long time?

ELAINE

Yeah.

MARSHALL

I'm sorry. I got caught up with the rest of the guys. They were going to go to a party, and they wanted me to go. I told them that we had plans.

ELAINE

How'd the game feel?

MARSHALL

Good.

ELAINE

It felt good? That's all?

MARSHALL

Yeah, I mean, I pitched a no hitter..

ELAINE

I was just asking.

MARSHALL

Jonesy said that I set the record on strike-outs today. I mean it's not that big of a deal though, they say lots of pitchers my age can throw no hitters.

PHIL, MARSHALL'S agent ENTERS the locker room.

ELAINE

Go get your stuff.

MARSHALL exits.

PHIL

Wow, what a great game!

ELAINE

Please keep that to yourself, he shouldn't get too comfortable.

PHIL

Whatever you say boss. So, did you tell him?

ELAINE

Will you keep your voice down? No, I haven't told him yet. I'm waiting until he's done processing the event.

PHIL

Processing..

ELAINE

He needs to process what he did wrong today, and make improvements.

PHIL

But he won! (ELAINE shoots him a look.) Okay, I'll leave it alone. You've got to give it to him, though, he's got one hell of an arm.

ELAINE

Yes. Yes he does.

PHIL

Okay, but you have to admit...

ELAINE

If you keep stroking his ego, he'll never amount to anything. Got it? We don't want him to get-

MARSHALL ENTERS.

PHIL

Great game, kid!

MARSHALL

Thanks.

PHIL

I'm already getting prospects lined up for summer scouting. A little birdie told me there are several universities looking at you. I'm positive we can get a great school to offer a full ride, but if I'm being honest with myself, and between you and me, I don't lie to myself often, I think you might want to re-consider what we talked about before... about going pro.

MARSHALL

I don't think so.

PHIL

Come on, just think about it, will you? For me? I understand you want to do the whole college experience, believe me, I know! I loved college, but you've got the talent. You could make some serious cash. I'm talking millions.

MARSHALL

I promised Allie I'd apply.

PHIL

Who's Allie?

ELAINE

His ACT tutor.

PHIL

That's great. Between you and me, Marshall, I can't really

help you any further with this college thing. I could get in some serious shit just talking to these universities as it is. Lucky for you, I've still got a few buddies at these universities who don't mind turning the proverbial blind eye, you know what I mean? Okay Okay Okay. Well, let's put some feelers out there and see what's what, okay? (MARSHALL nods yes) Great! Well, I'll see you next week, right? (ELAINE shoots him a glare) I mean, sometime soon... in the future. I should go, right?

ELAINE

Yes you should.

PHIL

Great to see you again kid. Take care of that arm, please? (ELAINE shoots a look) Right! Later!

PHIL exits.

MARSHALL

Okay, what's going on?

ELAINE

Nothing, why would you think anything is going on?

MARSHALL

Okay, seriously?

ELAINE

What?

MARSHALL

That wasn't even smooth.

ELAINE

Okay. We're having a few people over for the weekend.

MARSHALL

Like who? (pause)

ELAINE

Mara. And a couple of other people...

MARSHALL

Who? (pause) Are you kidding me?

ELAINE

He only wants to help. And he's bringing some gear that you've been eyeing lately. He's got that Rawlings two-wheel combo pitching machine you've been asking about.

MARSHALL

He's a jerk mom, the last time he came over he threw a bunch of your stuff outside, and he kept on screaming, "I was the king of Chicago, A Number One." That's not normal.

ELAINE

He's just very passionate.

MARSHALL

He's weird.

ELAINE

Well, you don't have to talk to him about anything besides baseball, okay?

MARSHALL

I'm not talking to him at all.

ELAINE

Wow that's mature. Will you just try please? I don't ask you for much. I let you play X-box way too much, and I don't invade your privacy. Hey. I'll let you choose the meals for the week. Please Marsh? Look at me. How can you say no to this face?

MARSHALL

No, don't give me the fish face.

ELAINE

The what?

MARSHALL

The fish face. Whenever you get all emotional, or cheesy your eyes get all big, and they well up with tears... Like a fish.

ELAINE

Oh that's nice. Now I feel really pretty. Seriously though, you're going to try right?

ALLIE ENTERS in an awkward moment.

ALLIE

Hi.

ELAINE

Hi Allie, were you watching the game too?

ALLIE

Yeah, I was just coming to congratulate Marshall. But if this is a bad time, I can just...

ELAINE

No no no, I need to use the restroom anyways. I'll meet you outside, Marsh?

MARSHALL

Okay.

ELAINE exits.

ALLIE

Everything alright?

MARSHALL

Yep.

ALLIE

Hey, you looked great out there. You're really impressive.

MARSHALL

Thanks.

ALLIE

No, I mean it! I haven't seen anything like that since Chapman killed the Padres with that one o' five heat check in twenty ten.

MARSHALL

Wow, you really are a fan aren't you?

ALLIE

I told you I was. So what's wrong? You pitch the best game of your life, and it looks like somebody took a dump in your gym bag.

MARSHALL continues to pick up clothes and equipment from the game.

MARSHALL

It's nothing. My mom... She can be... Never mind. We're studying this week, right?

ALLIE

I was planning on it. Or do you want to just skip the whole thing and go into the pros?

MARSHALL

Ha ha. Very funny. Believe it or not, the more I think about college, the more I'm sure it's where I'm supposed to be.

ALLIE

Why do you say that?

MARSHALL

I don't know. It's just a gut feeling. The pros just seem like a bat shit crazy thing right now, and I can't deal with that. College I can handle.

ALLIE

No, I get it. But I mean come on, "what if" right?

MARSHALL

Oh, you don't think I know about the millions that await the great Marshall Maddox?

ALLIE

Well, you're not that great, so let's calm down on that one.

MARSHALL

Oh, no. I would be great. That's not even a question.

ALLIE

Oh yeah?

MARSHALL

Did you fall asleep, or did you happen to see the no-hitter I threw today? Maybe you've gone blind! Allie, follow my voice!

ALLIE

Oh wow. Talking trash already, huh? Okay. Tell me something:

What do you think college is going to be like?

MARSHALL

I don't know... Classes, study sessions, learn about...stuff.

ALLIE

Stuff, now that's a great major!- I had a roommate who majored in stuff...

MARSHALL

Okay, so I don't know much about the intricacies-

ALLIE

Intricacies? That's a big word. Maybe English!

MARSHALL

You're just helping my point. I need to get out there and... learn. I just want to choose something. My mom, she's so set. She has everything figured out. She talks with her friends about advertising our brand. She thinks I'm a brand. She looks at magazines in the dentist office and imagines me on the cover. Nike, Adidas, Underarmour...And sometimes, yeah, after a great pitch, I feel like Superman, but when I think it's the rest of my life...God, it's so overwhelming right now. It's so much pressure.

ALLIE

Okay buddy, cool your jets, let's just take one thing at a time, okay? Let's just get a good score on this ACT, and go from there. What do you think?

MARSHALL

Yeah. That sounds good. Same time? Tuesday? (awkward pause Allie nods) My mom is probably waiting.

ALLIE

Hey, Marshall? You don't need to be anybody, you know? I mean, it would be pretty awesome if you were a famous baseball player. Also, if you get into the pros, I'll have to be a famous sports reporter and follow you around, and I'll get to say, "Oh, yeah... I've been following him from the beginning. He's a good kid." But you don't need to be anybody. Just you.

MARSHALL

Thanks.

ALLIE

You're welcome.

MARSHALL

Let's get out of here.

ALLIE

(picking up a bat) Hey, send me one right down the middle! Right there.

MARSHALL

Yeah. Right. You'll break something.

ALLIE

Oh, so you think I'll hit it? I'm flattered.

MARSHALL

Let me reword that, I'll break something.

ALLIE

What are you? Chicken? What are they going to do? Expel you? Trust me.

MARSHALL

Okay, but underhand, right down the middle.

MARSHALL pitches. ALLIE bunts it.

ALLIE

Sometimes you have to take the easy road. So much for a no hitter. You kinda suck. Shall we?

LIGHTS OUT.

## ACT 1 SCENE 2

LIGHTS UP. ELAINE'S house. MLB retiree HANK FELTON walks through the front door. He places the key he used to get in to the house behind the archway. He puts down his bag and waltzes around the room. It is midday. The room is an homage to ESPN or Sports Illustrated. Trophies, signed billboards/posters on the wall, or newspaper articles framed might be used to decorate this home. ELAINE and MARSHALL ENTER.

ELAINE

Oh, you're here already. I thought we might beat you home.

HANK

Well, you know me. I have a thing about being the last one at a party.

ELAINE

So, you did remember to bring it?

HANK

Who you talkin' to? I only need to hear instructions once, and BAM! It's out back.

ELAINE

Uh huh. Well, give me a kiss, so I can go take these shoes off. (They embrace and HANK kisses her more passionately than ELAINE was expecting) Okay tiger easy. I'll be right back.

ELAINE catches MARSHALL trying to escape the room and pushes him towards HANK as she exits.

HANK

Mmm. That mama of yours. Been a long time Boyo. You been avoiding me or something?

MARSHALL

No, I'm just a little-

HANK

Well, bring it in here.

They meet for an awkward embrace, MARSHALL tries to break away, but HANK holds on.

Oh, this feels right. Doesn't it? Me back here. And look at you. You look like a bonafide athlete. To be honest, I didn't think you could do it, kid. I happy that I'm going to be proven wrong. Right?

MARSHALL

Yeah.

HANK

Good.

A knock at the door.

ELAINE

I've got it.

PHIL and MARA ENTER, deep in conversation.

PHIL

...No, that's not what I meant to say, you're taking that way

too personally.

ELAINE

What happened?

PHIL

I would like to preface by saying that this conversation started because I gave her a compliment.

MARA

Yes you did.

PHIL

I said that she was a very warm and pleasant physician...

MARA

Then?

PHIL

I told her merely that women doctors have a generally cold bedside manner.

MARA

To which I replied, that is the most sexist thing you've said all week.

PHIL

I'm not sexist.

MARA

Oh really? When was the last time you represented a women athlete?

PHIL

Are you kidding? What about Elaine?

MARA

What about Elaine? She's been retired for 20 years now.

ELAINE

Children, please. Why were you even talking about this?

PHIL

Well...

MARA

Go ahead, tell her.

PHIL

I asked her to give me a physical. (Elaine laughs) There's something with my breathing, it doesn't sound right. Listen.

MARA

He's fine.

PHIL

Yeah, last time I ask you for anything.

ELAINE clears her throat.

PHIL

Sorry about that Hank. Good to see you again.

HANK

Yep, it's been a while. Mara, how are you?

MARA

I'm very well Hank, thank you for asking. (Mara notices a whiskey bottle) Lainey, didn't Mom say: "Never keep your booze in plain sight?" You know who is going to be all over that?

PHIL

I assume I am once again the butt of your joke?

MARA

Only because it's such nice butt.

PHIL

Mara! What did I say about flirting!? My heart can't take it. Give me enough to drink, I may give us a try.

MARA

Please, if I'm flirting, you'll know it, my dear. (Pause) Well, this is going to be a crowd isn't it?

MARSHALL

What?

ELAINE

Oh, I think it's going to be great for Marsh, he's really

been looking forward to this.

MARSHALL

Looking forward..

PHIL

Am I going to be upstairs or in the den?

MARSHALL

Wait- what is going on?

ELAINE

-Both you and Mara are upstairs in the bedrooms across from Marshall's room.

MARA

Oh, are we going to share a bathroom, because I'm not sure that's a great idea, knowing Phil.

MARSHALL

Hello- can someone please...

PHIL

What is that supposed to mean?

HANK

Oh well I don't mind sharing a bathroom with Phil, I can swap rooms with you- if you don't mind.

PHIL

Have you seen this suit?

MARA

You are messy in the bathroom.

MARSHALL

Will somebody please..

ELAINE

-Hank, you were going to stay in my room, I mean- if you don't feel up to...

PHIL

And you leave hairs in the sink, but you don't see me complaining...

MARSHALL

Will somebody listen please!?! (the room falls silent) Mom, what's going on?

ELAINE

I told you we were having guests during your spring break to help you get ready for recruitment.

MARSHALL

No, you said Hank was coming over, you never said there would be a whole entourage! The guys wanted to go camping at Thomas Woods!

ELAINE

Marsh, this week is critical.

MARSHALL

You said this wasn't going to be stressful.

ELAINE

Just think of it like it's "Marshall Maddox Spring Break" huh? It's like an MTV special!

MARSHALL

Mom, MTV isn't a thing anymore.

ELAINE

Well, they're here for you now, so I would start getting used to it. Hank is going to workout with you every morning, to get you used to the regimen, and Mara is going to monitor your arm strength and cardio training, and Phil is going to advise you in the evenings about schools, and if you want, the league too.

MARSHALL

And did I ever have a say in this?

HANK

Come on buddy, it's gonna to be fun, I promise.

MARSHALL

I was supposed to study with Allie. The ACTs are coming up.

ELAINE

I know, which is why she's staying too!

MARSHALL

Wait, really? She's staying over?

ELAINE

Yes. I talked to her about it last week, and she agreed to help you full time, here.

MARSHALL

You got my whole calendar fixed up, huh? Were you never going to tell me about this?

ELAINE

Marshall, for god's sakes, you're being overly dramatic.

HANK

Come on, kid, it'll be fun.

MARSHALL

I heard you the first time, and easy on the kid stuff.

ELAINE

Marshall. This is happening, so you'd better get used to it.

HANK

You better be grateful for everything your mother does for you, kid. You're lucky to have her.

MARSHALL

(under his breath) Yeah, you and me both.

HANK

What was that? Care to say it to my face?

MARA

Oh for god's sakes, I need a drink.

PHIL

Right behind you.

MARSHALL

I said, you are lucky to be in this house, at all, with her.

HANK

Oh, is that right.

ELAINE

That is enough! Marshall, go check on the crockpot. Now.

MARSHALL leaves in a huff.

You are not helping.

HANK

Hey, I didn't start anything.

ELAINE

Just behave, please?

HANK

Yes ma'am.

PHIL

So Elaine, when can we sit down with Marshall and tell him the good news?

ELAINE

I'm waiting for dinner.

MARA

What's the good news?

PHIL

I got some major league scouts just waiting to see him. I just have to give the word. You have no idea, that kid is something else. All I had to do was mention his name, and they basically started drooling, I mean can you believe it?

MARA

Are you sure this isn't a Phil special?

PHIL

I'm telling you, this is too good to pass up. I know I tend to exaggerate, but I'm not blowing smoke up your ass, Elaine! I'm thinking he'll go first round. His first contract might be something like six, maybe seven mil, four years.

HANK

No way. That's a ridiculous rookie contract.

PHIL

I shit you not.

ELAINE

He's not going to take it.

MARA

Why not?

ELAINE

He wants to go to college.

HANK

Then he's an idiot.

MARA

Wow. That's a little harsh.

MARSHALL ENTERS without anyone  
noticing.

HANK

Well, he is. College? I didn't get anything out of college.  
Biggest waste of two years if you ask me.

MARA

Well, I think it's a great idea he wants to go.

HANK

Yeah, you would.

MARA

I'm not even going to bite on that one.

HANK

Oh come on, Mara, don't give up so easy. That kid needs you  
to come to his rescue! God knows he hasn't gotten far without  
these women telling him what to do, right Phil?

MARSHALL

Feel free to say something, mom.

ELAINE

(pause) He's not altogether wrong.

MARSHALL storms out of the house.

MARA

Marshall? Wait!

ELAINE

Let him go. He does that. He's got to learn to be a man some day.

PHIL

Did somebody say something about dinner, my stomach is doing the lindy hop over here.

Doorbell rings. ELAINE goes to answer the door, enter ALLIE, with a suitcase.

ELAINE

Hi Allie. Great timing, we were just about to eat.

ALLIE

I hope this is all okay. I can't really leave the house for more than a day without packing my whole world.

ELAINE

It's fine. I'm glad you found the place. Marshall is just taking a walk, he'll be right back.

ALLIE

Yeah, I thought I saw him...he was moving pretty fast.

ELAINE

I hope you don't mind the couch. I figured you would want your own bathroom.

ALLIE

That works for me. Hi, nice to meet you, I'm Allie.

PHIL

Phil. Marshall's agent.

MARA

Mara. I'm Elaine's sister.

HANK

I'm Hank.

ALLIE

Oh my god, you're Hank Felton. You played for the White Sox! I mean, you were drafted by Detroit, but most of your career you were on the White Sox! That's my favorite team!

HANK

It's always nice to meet a Sox fan. Most are Cubs fans to the death around here.

ALLIE

(She fakes spitting on the ground) We don't say the "C" word in my family.

HANK

Oh, okay!

ALLIE

This is crazy. I remember your last game, three years ago. You've aged well, if you don't mind me saying so.

HANK

Careful now.

PHIL

Elaine, I'm going to drink you out of house and home if we don't eat soon.

ELAINE

What? Oh! Right, just let me put the porch light on for Marshall for when he comes back. I'm right behind you.

They all EXIT, except for HANK and ALLIE.

ALLIE

So, tell me about retirement, is it awful?

HANK

It's not all bad.

ALLIE

You can tell me the truth, I won't tell anybody.

A moment.

HANK

It's awful.

ALLIE

I knew it. I saw Garrett Anderson three years ago, he was an outfielder for the Angels..

HANK

Yeah, I know who he is.

ALLIE

I asked him the same question. And he looked at me and I swear I thought he was going to cry. I just thought that was so intense, man. This guy was like 6'2 225, and ready to cry about a game. So, tell me the truth.

HANK

I don't really miss the planes, airports, hotels, or the drudge of the regular season. What I miss, is the playoffs. The competition of studying your enemy, and looking them in the eye on game day and saying, I'm coming for you. It's more than a game.

ALLIE

Nice.

HANK

I don't mean to be rude or anything, but why are you here, again?

ALLIE

Oh, shit. Yeah, I guess I never did say, huh? I'm Marshall's tutor for his ACT coming up.

HANK

Oh.

ALLIE

Yep, I guess Elaine wanted me to help him the whole week. It's like, high impact tutoring. Pretty wild. I mean, you guys live forever away, so that doesn't help things...

HANK

I don't live here.

ALLIE

Oh. I thought-

HANK

I mean, we are... But no. I live in North Side.

ALLIE

Ooooo nice. I'm on campus. Little Italy.

HANK

Pretty different from the city, huh?

ALLIE

Yeah, the burbs freak me out. But I mean, there's tons of space, she pays well, and Marshall is a great guy. So, no complaints here.

HANK

Well, it looks like we'll be seeing lots of each other. I'll be here the whole week too.

ALLIE

Alrighty then. Looks like a packed house. You're helping Marshall somehow?

HANK

We'll see, that kid can be an ass sometimes.

ALLIE

I'm sure you know nothing about that? I'm just busting your chops. Hey we should go help Elaine, yeah?

HANK

Yeah, that's a good idea, I'll be right there, I'll catch up with you.

ALLIE EXITS, HANK reaches for a baseball bat leaning against a wall. He picks it up, notices it shakes while being positioned in the air in front of him. He pulls out a small container of white powder, and snorts some. He waits for a beat, takes a breath, lifts the bat, and it's stiff as a rock. He takes a swing.

LIGHTS OUT

ACT 1 SCENE 3

LIGHTS UP

The Maddox home. SAME EVENING. It's late. ELAINE, HANK, PHIL, MARA, and ALLIE are all sitting around the living room furniture discussing baseball, playing backgammon and drinking.

ELAINE

The best designated hitter of all time is Big Papi, David Ortiz. He intimidates every pitcher he goes up against. It's simple, when you take away the numbers, and his are great, you're left with psychology. You just know he's going to hit.

PHIL

I respectfully disagree. If you're talking about hitting it out of the park, well, you might have a case, Laney, but in Hank's day, there was only one man who could guarantee a base, baby! Big bad Harold Baines, all day every day.

MARA

Oh please, just because you represented him for like a week, you think he's the greatest to ever live!

ALLIE

I like Edgar.

ELAINE

Edgar? Really?

ALLIE

Yeah, he wasn't flashy with all the homers, but I'm pretty sure he had more consecutive runs than all of those other guys.

ELAINE

You see, that's exactly my point. This is why Phil's argument sucks too! We're not talking about, numbers, stats, analytics, and what not... Sports are played with people. People fall short. People feel fear. Yeah, Edgar might have the most runs, but does he raise goose bumps on the back of your neck? Mara, will you get me another drink, honey? What can you do when the lights are in your eyes? That's Big Papi.

ALLIE

I want to know what Hank thinks. What do you think, big guy? Who's the best designated hitter?

HANK

Me.

MARA

Shocker.

HANK

I'll just say one thing for myself. Clements, Smoltz, Mussina, Martinez... They know me very well. That's all I'm going to say.

ALLIE

Okay! Good case! Good case!

HANK

Regardless of...

ELAINE

You were very good, I don't want to take anything away from you, Hanky Panky...

HANK

You know I hate that name.

ELAINE

But you were a little too vocal at times.

HANK

What the hell does that mean?

ELAINE

Sometimes I think you woke up the sleeping dog.

MARA

Wait, the sleeping dog, what does that-

ELAINE

-The sleeping dog is the other team just going through the motions. But when a certain hothead comes into the picture and is having a good game, he starts jawing at the opposing team. "Everybody move up! This guy can't hit! You're joking with that pitch- right?" Stuff like that.

MARA

-So in a sense, you helped the opposing team perform better?

PHIL

To be fair, the opposite reaction would sometimes happen. The other team would get intimidated, and they would fall apart in the later innings. Shit.

MARA

Ha! That's five games in a row now? Are you ready to up the stakes?

PHIL

You're lucky I'm drunk.

MARA

You've had like two drinks.

ELAINE

He's been sneaking shots when we haven't been looking.

PHIL

I did not sneak them. I was just trying to achieve the proper level of conviviality. It's not my fault the rest of you don't know how to celebrate this momentous- occasion.

MARA

-Wow, you are drunk.

HANK

The point Phil was drunkenly trying to make, was that more often than not, my antics on the baseball field were intimidating to opposing teams.

ALLIE

And what about the pressure? Did you ever feel like you were under too much pressure as the star of the franchise?

MARA

Oh please...

HANK

(Looking at MARA) Yes, but I wanted that. You're either the hero or the goat. I'd take those odds any day.

PHIL

(Sudden realization) That's fifty fifty.

ELAINE

I personally felt a lot of pressure, when I was a player, believe it or not.

ALLIE

Well, don't you think that it's a little different, playing a solo sport, when baseball is a much more team-oriented game?

MARA

Ouch.

ELAINE

Tennis is a difficult sport. You're right. You're by yourself. No teammates, no one else to blame. It's hard when you're all by yourself.

MARSHALL ENTERS with a heavy head.

MARSHALL

Hi everybody. I've done some thinking, and I wanted to apologize for my actions. I uh, really wanted to be a good sport about all of this. And, I'm glad you're all here. So, that's it. I'm ready to work... And um, thanks for helping me this week.

ELAINE

Well... Good. There's food left in the kitchen if you want to go warm it up, and bring it out here, and hang out for a minute?

MARSHALL

Yeah, that sounds good.

MARSHALL goes into the kitchen MARA gives him a long embrace.

MARA

Let's all just take it a little easy on him, alright? Alright, Hank?

HANK

Why are you looking at me?

PHIL

Let's start cleaning this up. Whoa!

MARA

You okay?

PHIL

Oh Mara, has anyone told you, you look lovely under the warm light of candles.

MARA

Oh my god.

HANK

I think it's time to go to bed, Phil.

PHIL

Nonsense. I haven't even made a complete ass of myself yet.

ELAINE

He's fine. Leave him be.

MARSHALL ENTERS again with a plate of food. He sits next to ALLIE on the table. ELAINE pours him a glass of wine.

Here you go, buddy.

MARSHALL

I'm good, mom.

ELAINE

Mama didn't raise no bitch, now come on.

MARA

Elaine, maybe we all should just...

PHIL

Ding ding ding! Oh, where's my glass? Okay. (He makes the actual noise by hitting the glass) I have an announcement to make! Marshall, I have spoken to my inside people at UCONN, UCLA, and LSU, they all want to offer you full rides. Shhh, now that's a secret.

ALLIE

Marshall, that is so great-! Congrats!

PHIL

-Hold on hold on, I'm not finished... Yes, Marshall, mozeltov... But let's talk MLB!

MARA

Phil, that is not why- we're here!

PHIL

-Hang on a second, will ya? Marshall, major league scouts are very, very interested. You are projected to go first round in the draft.

ALLIE

Jesus, first round?

PHIL

First fuckin' round! Now come on kid, what do you say? Are you ready to make those shiny dreams a reality?

MARSHALL puts down his food, and scans the room. ALLIE gives an encouraging look, HANK is pouring another drink for ELAINE and MARA stare intently.

ELAINE blurts before MARSHALL has a chance to say anything.

ELAINE

I say yes.

ALLIE

All right!

MARSHALL

I'll think about it. (HANK let's out a large laugh.) Is this a joke to you?

HANK

No, you're a joke to me, Marshall Maddox.

MARA

Hank.

HANK

You're just a kid who has everything aren't you? Who's never had to work in a day of his life, just like everyone else in this godforsaken generation. You're going to go find yourself? In college? Gonna go live in a dorm room? With a bunch of jerks who don't know their assholes from their tweed coats? You're a joke, a badly timed, indecisive, flat joke, without a punch-line.

MARSHALL throws a punch, and HANK, ready to receive, grabs his arm, and throws MARSHALL on the table. Startling everyone else. A large pill bottle falls out of HANK's pocket. ELAINE notices and grabs it before anyone else can see. PHIL, MARA, and ALLIE attempt to pull HANK off of MARSHALL.

HANK

You think you're ready for the major league?

MARSHALL

Get off me!

MARA

Hank, stop it right now! Elaine, we can't get him off.

ELAINE puts her hands on HANKS face  
gently and removes his hand.

ELAINE

That's enough.

MARSHALL gets up and grabs a bat  
from the side of the wall.

HANK

Whoa! He's got a bat everyone! Come on Marshall, It's not  
your forte. Stick to pitching.

ELAINE

Marshall, I said that's enough. (MARSHALL stops) Okay,  
everybody, it's been a long night. Let's call it.

ALL EXIT except ELAINE and HANK.

ELAINE

That was charming.

HANK

I'm sorry about all that.

ELAINE

You know, you can be very difficult sometimes. (drops the  
pill bottle on the table. There is a moment of silence.) You  
told me you stopped.

HANK

Are you serious?

ELAINE

And what the hell does that mean?

HANK

We've been through this.

ELAINE

Yes, but that does not count for this kind of stuff.

HANK

What? This?

ELAINE

You've got to meet me half way. I'm trying really hard here.

HANK

You're trying hard?

ELAINE

Yes, I think that I've been more than patient.

HANK

Oh wow.

ELAINE

Believe me. You're a handful sometimes.

HANK

Yeah, well you're no peach either.

ELAINE

Oh, don't I know it. At least I don't put you through this shit.

HANK

No, you're right.

ELAINE

Oh don't do that. I hate being the bad guy. You know I hate bossing you around. And I know you have your things that keep you sane, and fresh, as you put it, but don't you think this is getting a little out of control?

HANK

I can handle it. I can kick this whenever I want, but I feel good. I still feel like I can play when I'm on this stuff.

ELAINE

At forty-five?

HANK

Yeah. I mean it, babe. I feel strong. I feel healthy. The minute I stop feeling that way. It's gone. Trust me. Look at me. Okay?

ELAINE

Just keep it away from Marshall.

HANK

You got it.

ELAINE

Just do me that one favor?

HANK

I said you got it. Jesus, I think you're forgetting why we're all here in this shit show in the first place.

ELAINE

Hank, we've been together for a while now. I think I'm owed the courtesy of a favor every now and then.

HANK

This is not a favor. (pause) He's arrogant, completely unmotivated, and most important, he doesn't want it, babe. I hate to say it, but none of you are listening to this boy.

MARSHALL and ALLIE come into the room.

ALLIE

Hi. We're trying to build the habit of studying before bed. It helps retain information.

ELAINE

Yeah, that's a good idea. Did you get enough to eat, Marsh?

MARSHALL

Yeah, I did. Thanks, Mom.

ELAINE leaves.

HANK

Hey Marshall, I'm sorry about what happened. It was a dick move. We cool?

MARSHALL

Yeah. We're cool.

ELAINE comes back with pillow and blankets.

ELAINE

Okay, then. I'll leave you two at it. Here are some blankets and pillows. Tell Marshall if you need anything else.

ALLIE

Will do. Thank you.

HANK and ELAINE EXIT.

ALLIE

You okay?

MARSHALL

Yeah, I'm good. What's on the agenda tonight?

ALLIE

Well, you're actually doing very well with the science portion, so let's focus on math tonight, and then we'll do some English tomorrow. Deal?

MARSHALL opens his math book and takes out paper and a pencil, but quickly gets distracted by ALLIE, who is reading a book.

MARSHALL

What are you reading?

ALLIE

Are you studying?

MARSHALL

What, I can't ask a question?

ALLIE

I'm not being paid to distract you from your work. Here, I'll read it later. Okay, so functions are what?

MARSHALL

(reading from the book) A relation between a set of inputs and a set of permissible outputs with the property that each input is related to exactly one output.

ALLIE

And that means what?

MARSHALL

Ah... Well, you see... it's when inputs are--

ALLIE

What's an input?

MARSHALL

This is going to be a long week.

MARSHALL puts his head in his hands.

ALLIE

I'm reading Dostoyevsky. "The Brothers Karamazov."

MARSHALL

Is it good?

ALLIE notices a comic book on the table.

ALLIE

I mean, it's not "The Adventures of Cyclops and the Phoenix" I'm just busting your chops! Remember, that's what I do. I bust chops. It's Russian.

MARSHALL

What does that mean?

ALLIE

It's hard.

MARSHALL

What do you mean?

ALLIE

There are like a million characters that I have to write down so I don't forget them.

MARSHALL

You can't remember all the characters?

ALLIE

You try not mixing up Ivan Fyodorovich, and Pavel Fyodorovich.

MARSHALL

Are those... names?

ALLIE

See! But it's not too bad.

MARSHALL

What is it about?

ALLIE

Oh boy, what is it about? It's about family, and a love triangle, it's about hate, and- frustration...

MARSHALL

-What do you mean by that?

ALLIE

I don't know, like, everybody in the family just hates each other so much. It's about the father ruining the lives of his kids. It's about everything. It's... it's really good.

MARSHALL

I think I'll pass on that one.

ALLIE

Why?

MARSHALL

It seems ridiculous. There's too many things! A love triangle, family hatred... I mean, You should stick to one thing if you're going to write a book.

ALLIE

You doubt Dostoyevsky? You think you could do better?

MARSHALL

Maybe. I don't know, maybe I'll take a writing class, and I'll become...

ALLIE

The next Dostoyevsky?

MARSHALL

No. I'm going to be me. That's for sure.

ALLIE

You're cute. You've got heart. I've seen your heart on the field. Why are you so against baseball?

MARSHALL

What do you mean?

ALLIE

Why do you think that you have you have to do anything else besides the one thing that you're already amazing at? (realizing she struck a nerve) You don't have to answer that. I'm sorry.

MARSHALL

It's okay. I'm pretty tired. Can we pick this up tomorrow morning?

ALLIE

Yeah, it doesn't look like you're in the mood for math tonight. What are you in the mood for? (MARSHALL looks flustered) I'm just messing with you.

MARSHALL

Oh yeah. Ha. Hey, I want to give you something.

ALLIE

You want to give me something? I shudder.

MARSHALL pulls out the bat he almost hit HANK with.

MARSHALL

No, You'll like it.

ALLIE

What is that?

MARSHALL

Oh, this? This is a bat signed by Frank Thomas.

ALLIE

Oh my god! Seriously?

MARSHALL

Yeah. For reals. He saw me in a youth nationals tourny. I asked him to sign a bat, and he did.

ALLIE

I can't accept this.

MARSHALL

Please? I want you to have it.

ALLIE

Marshall, this is amazing! Thank you.

ALLIE kisses him on the cheek. He gets a little embarrassed, and turns away.

MARSHALL

Goodnight.

ALLIE

Goodnight.

MARSHALL EXITS. ALLIE starts to unpack her backpack and set up a sleeping area on the couch. She takes out her phone and starts to play music, eventually it will play Fleetwood Mac's "Dreams" She starts to read her book again. HANK ENTERS and starts to stretch for a late night run.

HANK

Sorry, don't mind me.

ALLIE

Going for a run?

HANK

It's a nice warm night, I figured why let it go to waste?

ALLIE

I didn't think baseball players ran all that much. (a moment)  
Joking.

HANK

Gotta keep my girlish figure. You want to join me?

ALLIE

No thanks.

HANK

Suit yourself. You're missing out on a truly religious experience. You know, sometimes you just have to grab life by the nuts and say: I'm in charge here. No time to say no, whatever they say, tell yourself, I am that I am. Phew... Am I talking a lot?

There is an awkward moment of silence, and ALLIE gets up and starts to move toward him.

ALLIE

What are you on?

HANK

Excuse me?

ALLIE

What are you taking?

HANK

I don't think I... (ALLIE tries to grab the inside of his sweat pants pocket.) What are you doing?

ALLIE

What's in that pocket?

HANK

What's with the interrogation?

ALLIE

My brother was on meth for 4 years, I know when someone's high. What is it? Coke?

HANK

It's only for when I run.

ALLIE

Interesting.

HANK

You ever tried it?

ALLIE  
Maybe.

HANK  
No you haven't.

ALLIE  
Well, maybe I haven't.

HANK  
Interested?

ALLIE  
I'll pass, thanks.

HANK  
Yikes! Did you hear yourself say that? You throw a lot of judgment for someone who has no idea what it feels like.

ALLIE  
I don't need to know what it feels like.

HANK  
It's not meth. Meth is for crack heads, skanks, and lowlifes. This stuff will put you into fifth gear.

ALLIE  
How long have you been taking it?

HANK  
I started the middle of my ninth year in the league.

ALLIE  
Oh my god, that is so long. Don't you worry about heart attacks, stuff like that?

HANK  
I have the heart of a lion. No, I know what will get me, I don't worry about that.

ALLIE  
Okay, wise guy, I'll bite. What's going to get you?

HANK  
Women. I'll end up chasing someone down the street and telling her that I love her, and I'll get hit by a car, or

I'll tell a woman that I would do anything for her, I'll jump in a swimming pool full of acid, just to prove to her I love her.

ALLIE

(She laughs out loud) Does that line actually work? You're ridiculous.

HANK

(Dropping the flirtation) Yeah, I might be. But at least I'm honest.

ALLIE

Are you insinuating that I'm dishonest?

HANK

Why are you here?

ALLIE

I'm helping Marshall.

HANK

Why are you really here? (pause) Oh, I see. You're a bigger fan than I thought you were.

ALLIE

Don't be stupid.

HANK

Tell me I'm wrong. (HANK whispers in her ear) I'm not stupid.

A moment of dilation.

ALLIE

Okay. You got me. I wanted to meet you. I wanted to get your opinion on a few things. I wanted to ask you about the league.

HANK

There you are. Nice to meet you, Allie.

ALLIE

I've watched you for a long time.

HANK

And what is to stop me from going upstairs and giving this

information to Elaine?

ALLIE

That's not your style. I know you, remember?

HANK

Don't flatter yourself. You may be a fan, but you don't know me.

ALLIE

I know you wont tell Elaine anything.

HANK

Why?

ALLIE

I'm a woman.

HANK

I suppose because you're a fan, I'll indulge just this once.

ALLIE

That worked!?! You're right. That is going to be your downfall some day.

HANK

You see. I never should have told you that.

ALLIE

Since we're being honest here, what's it like being famous?

HANK

I don't know if I ever felt famous.

ALLIE

I have a hard time believing that.

HANK

Oh, I have an ego. That is a different thing. Fame is worthless. Even the laziest dogs in the world can get famous. It's very different from being great.

ALLIE

I like that. Do you think some people are built for greatness?

HANK

Nobody built me. I'll tell you what makes me great. It's the inability to settle. I didn't wake up one morning and think, I'm a great baseball player. Apart from practice and training, it took me years to understand the psychology of baseball. When I first got into the league, I was young, I was twenty years old. I had no idea what life was like. And here everybody is telling me to be something more. They need you to run the team, Hank. The team needs you to make a run here, Hank. The team needs you to rally the guys, Hank. At twenty years old, you know how hard that is? Greatness isn't built. It's thrust upon you by others too weak to do it themselves. It wasn't that I needed to feel important, or loved. It was necessity. Do you want to be great?

ALLIE

Well, that depends...

HANK

I said, do you want to be great?

ALLIE

Yes.

HANK

Prove it.

HANK puts some coke on the back of his hand, and keeps watch while ALLIE snorts. She sits up straight, her body goes erect, and she looks around the room and spins in a few circles, starts to sing Fleetwood Mac's "Dreams"

ALLIE

Oh, thunder only happens when it's raining, players only love you when they're playing, say, women... They will come and they will go. When the rain washes you clean, you'll know. You'll know.

HANK turns her around and kisses her.

LIGHTS OUT

ACT 1 SCENE 4

LIGHTS UP

ALLIE runs down the stairs onto her make shift bed on the couch.  
ELAINE, PHIL, and MARA walk in from an early morning tennis match right as ALLIE is jumping onto the couch. ELAINE puts down her racquet and gives MARA a suspicious look. She calls upstairs.

ELAINE

Marshall? Are you up yet?

MARSHALL

(off stage) Be down in a minute.

MARA

Good morning, Allie. How did you sleep?

ALLIE

Mmmm, what time is it?

ELAINE

It's late. (shouting) Marshall!

ALLIE

How was tennis?

MARA

Awful, as per usual. Elaine kicks our asses every time. I just like the sweat.

PHIL

At this point we basically play as doubles against Elaine.

ELAINE

You did fine. Marshall I mean it!

MARSHALL ENTERS.

MARSHALL

I'm here! Jeez. I've been up for a while already. I've been studying!

ELAINE

Yeah, I'm sure you have.

MARSHALL

Okay. Good morning, Allie.

ALLIE

Good morning.

PHIL

Anybody want some coffee?

ALLIE

Oh, yes please. I'll come help you out.

They both EXIT into the kitchen.

MARA

So Marshall, what's on the agenda today?

MARSHALL

Well, I've got conditioning with Hank in an hour, and then lunch, and then Phil and I are going to make some Skype calls with some teams.

ELAINE

Pro teams?

MARSHALL

Yeah. Why?

ELAINE

Nothing. You're really listening to Phil?

MARSHALL

Shouldn't I?

ELAINE

No, you should. I just want to make sure you're coming to this decision on your own.

MARSHALL

Of course I am.

ELAINE

This has nothing to do with Allie?

MARSHALL

What are you talking about? No. What do you mean?

MARA

I'm going to go help with coffee, I think.

MARA EXITS into the kitchen.

ELAINE

With Allie. God Marshall, you think I was born yesterday?

MARSHALL

What?

ELAINE

Okay, play it smooth. Whatever man, you don't want to tell me, fine.

MARSHALL

You're crazy.

ELAINE

And you're naive. Just be careful, Marsh.

MARSHALL

Oh my god Mom, she's not that much older than me. You can relax.

ELAINE

By the way, that does not give you permission to do whatever you want in this house, young man.

MARSHALL

Are you serious with that young man shit?

ELAINE

Watch your mouth!

MARSHALL

I'm eighteen, I can like whoever I want.

ELAINE

Oh, you think so, huh?

MARSHALL

Yes, I do. I haven't done anything wrong.

ELAINE

Hello Marshall! I saw her coming downstairs this morning.

MARSHALL

What?

ELAINE

Yeah, I caught her! Not so smooth after all are you?

MARSHALL

You saw her coming down... What?

ELAINE

I caught you red handed, kiddo.

MARSHALL

Caught me doing what, exactly?

ELAINE

Oh, I can use my imagination. I was your age once too, you know.

MARSHALL freezes.

Allie. I caught her coming downstairs this morning, and she looked very red in the face.

HANK comes downstairs whistling Fleetwood Mac's "Dreams" He sees both of them. ELAINE and MARSHALL realize what really happened.

HANK

Good morning, my love. Hey Marshall, you ready to hit it hard today? (MARSHALL EXITS without saying a word) What's with him?

MARA, PHIL, and ALLIE ENTER.

PHIL

Morning, Hank!

HANK

Hey Phil. We got some interviews lined up today?

PHIL

You know it! I can't wait to see the look on his face when they give him an offer.

HANK

Which teams are interested?

PHIL

So far I've got six teams thinking he'll go top three in the draft.

HANK

Which ones? Maybe I can reach out to a few?

PHIL

Oh, you're going to love this, the Sox want him for sure. Not as much as Cleveland, but yeah, Chicago is in the mix.

HANK

No shit? That's great.

MARSHALL comes back downstairs.

MARSHALL

Let's go Hank.

HANK

Give me a sec. I haven't had my coffee yet.

MARSHALL

You think you're such a stud baseball player, don't you?

HANK

What?

MARSHALL

I heard you the other day, you said you could still play in the league. Is that true? You still think you could do it?

HANK

What the hell is all this?

MARSHALL

Do you?

HANK

You don't want to do this, kid.

PHIL

Hey Marshall, relax. He's not worth it. Sorry Hank.

MARSHALL

Answer my question. Do you think you still got it?

HANK

Yes. I do.

MARSHALL

I bet you couldn't hit anything I threw at you right now, and I'm not even warmed up.

ELAINE

Marshall.

MARA

Where is this coming from?

MARSHALL

What do you say, old man? You want to put it to the test? Or are you too much of a coward? Are you afraid you're actually as washed up as we all know you are? Since I'm only an eighteen year old, it should be pretty easy to hit one right? You're always saying how lazy I am. Should be easy right?

ALLIE

Hey, Marsh, let's take a walk, yeah?

MARSHALL

You keep saying that the game of baseball is mostly psychological. It's all in your head. You should be psychologically prepared to beat a teenager. Should be easy.

MARA

Marshall, you proved your point.

MARSHALL

Maybe ten years ago he could've stood a chance. You see, the only reason any of you pay him any respect is because he's a

bully. He plays these mind games and he tricks you into thinking he's great. But when he played his last season, he never took one base. (to ALLIE) Did you know that? He struck out every game. (to HANK) Isn't that right? Everyone knew you were a drug riddled, washed up, hasbeen. What do you say?

HANK

Let's go.

HANK and MARSHALL EXIT outside.

MARA

Come one, we should stop them.

PHIL

Are you kidding, I want front row seats!

PHIL and MARA EXIT

ELAINE

Allie, can I get a minute?

ALLIE

What's up?

ELAINE

Have you seen these?

ELAINE walks toward the large trophy case and references a series of trophies and awards.

ALLIE

Oh! That's your Wimbledon win, yeah?

ELAINE

Have you ever seen a match?

ALLIE

Not in person, no.

ELAINE

You like baseball, right?

ALLIE

I'm more partial to baseball, yes.

ELAINE

Why is that?

ALLIE

I think it's because my dad used to take me to White Sox games. He was my best friend.

ELAINE

That's nice. Tennis is a more personal sport. As much as Hank likes to tell stories about competition, baseball is more about the athletes being in competition with themselves. In tennis, there are opponents. Do you know how many Wimbledons I've won?

ALLIE

It was just the one, right?

ELAINE

That's right. Nine Grand Slam championships, four doubles championships, but just that one Wimbledon singles win. I fought like hell for that one. But the game I remember most vividly was this one. 1987. My first Wimbledon trip. I was so young. I was up against this bad ass bitch from Czechoslovakia. She was ugly as sin. I was quite lovely, if I do say so myself, so I was the obvious favorite among the crowd. It's bullshit, but that's how women's tennis works sometimes. But she could hit that ball, that's for sure. I remember I was down a set, and I went to shake her hand before the next round, and she didn't even extend her arm. She looked at me and said, "That smile will not save you in here. This is my house. I built this house. Build your own house, and then we can shake hands." Yeah, talk about your killer attitudes, right? So I tried to shake it off, but I kept asking myself, what did she mean, "this is my house"? This was my house! Everyone here is cheering for me. I had the most signs with "I love you, Elaine" written on them. Was she blind? Deaf? She finished me with little effort. I was in way over my head. And when it was game, set and match, I fell on that grass, and I cried like a baby. She had pulled me apart. It was her house. She was absolutely right. I had no business being there yet. The next year, I won that (indicates the Wimbledon plate). She retired that year, the Czech girl. I never got the chance to get her back. To look her in the eyes, and say, "It's my house now."

ALLIE

Are you okay, Elaine? What are you...

ELAINE gets in ALLIE's face.

ELAINE

This smile will not save you in here. This is my house. Got it?

ALLIE

Yeah.

MARSHALL screams offstage. ELAINE and ALLIE pull apart. MARSHALL is led into the house by MARA and PHIL, HANK following behind. MARSHALL is screaming in pain.

MARA

Here, get him on the couch. Let me see. Phil, call an ambulance please!

ELAINE

What the hell happened?

MARSHALL

I can't feel my arm!

MARA

There was an accident. Calm down Marshall. Just lay down.

ELAINE

What did you do?

HANK

It was an accident.

ELAINE

Yeah, I'm aware that it was a fucking accident! What happened? (MARSHALL passes out) Marshall? Marshall!?

MARA

He's in shock. He passed out from the pain.

ELAINE

What's wrong with his arm.

HANK

Calm down, please?

ELAINE

Please do not tell me to fucking calm down! Which arm is it?

PHIL

Crazy accident, could've happened to anybody!

ELAINE

Which arm is it!?

MARA

His right arm.

ELAINE

What's wrong with it?

MARA

It's broken...badly.

ELAINE grabs HANK

HANK

Whoa!

ELAINE

What happened? Talk to me!

HANK

Well he... uh... bet me he could strike me out six times in a row. I called him out. And I hit him with a line drive. Hard.

ELAINE

Mara?

MARA

We've got to get him to a hospital.

PHIL

Ambulance is coming.

HANK

Well, I guess I won the bet, huh?

MARA

What is wrong with you?

ELAINE

Get out.

HANK

Now hold on a second...

ELAINE

Get out of my house!

HANK leaves with a glance at ALLIE

ALLIE

Should I, uh...

MARA

Yeah, I think you'd better, baby girl.

ALLIE grabs her things and picks up the Frank Thomas bat, but, after glancing at MARSHALL, she decides to leave it.

PHIL

Now wait a minute here, Elaine. Before you go crucifying Hank, you should know he tried to back out of it, he realized it was stupid, and tried to walk away from it. It was Marshall who was acting crazy.

ELAINE

Thank you, Phil. Can you give me a minute with Marshall, please?

PHIL

Sure thing. Mara?

MARA

I think I should stay until the ambulance arrives.

ELAINE

Just five minutes please. It will help me calm down.

MARA

Okay Lainey, we'll be outside if you need anything.

PHIL and MARA EXIT.

ELAINE

Don't do this to me, Marshall. This will not define you. An arm can be mended. You hear me? You are too strong. You're a survivor. You're Marshall Maddox. My pride. My light. Promise me you wont give up. You'll come back from this. Don't worry baby, I wont let you make any more stupid decisions. We'll do this together.

Sirens in the background, and the windows light up with red and blue lights.

LIGHTS OUT.

END OF ACT 1

## ACT 2

## SCENE 1

LIGHTS UP.

THREE DAYS LATER. MARA and PHIL are sitting playing backgammon. PHIL is silently winning, trying not to upset anything.

PHIL

You missed that.

MARA

What did I miss?

PHIL

That right there. That move. You would've beat me.

MARA

I'm sorry, I guess I'm not really in the mood for games right now.

PHIL

Okay.

MARA

Should I go up and help?

PHIL

Leave it alone.

MARA

Yeah, you're probably right.

Awkward moment.

PHIL

What are we doing here?

MARA

We are being nice, and helping out when we can (PHIL checks his watch.) If you check that watch one more time, I swear to god.

PHIL

I happen to have other clients, who need my assistance, I'll have you know.

MARA

Are any of them your best friends? That's what I thought.

ELAINE ENTERS.

PHIL

How's he doing?

ELAINE

He's good. He's feeling a lot less pain, he can move most of his fingers now. So that is great. He's getting more of an appetite. So... what else? The doctor says he will be ready for strength conditioning in two weeks. If you're still willing to...

MARA

Of course.

ELAINE

How you doing, Phil?

PHIL

Oh me? I'm good. (pause) Hey, you know plenty of uh... schools are still interested. I've heard... Yeah, they'll just put him on their injury roster, and put him in when he's ready.

ELAINE

Yeah, that sounds great.

PHIL

So... I wouldn't worry about that.

ELAINE

And what about...

PHIL'S phone starts to ring.

PHIL

I'm sorry, guys, I really have to take this. (into his phone) Hello? Yes. Calm down, I'm sure you're not being traded. I'll bet my left...Tesla, come on now, you're over reacting.

PHIL EXITS.

MARA

Have you talked to Hank at all?

ELAINE

Yeah, he's supposed to come over tonight and talk. I don't know.

MARA

Well, you know how I feel about the whole thing.

ELAINE

You made that perfectly clear.

MARA

And that's all I'll say about that.

ELAINE

Oh god, just go ahead and say it.

MARA

About Hank? I thought I just-

ELAINE

No. It's something else. With you there's always something else. (pause) Go ahead.

MARA

Okay. This is nothing personal. But I just think that Marshall is going through a lot right now. I'm sure he's feeling like he got hit by a garbage truck, and the last thing he needs are people pulling him in all different directions. I think the best thing to do is to give him some space. No more baseball.

ELAINE

No more baseball? Really? That's your advice? Baseball is his life.

MARA

Have you ever really talked to him about baseball?- I don't know...

MARSHALL ENTERS with a cast and a sling around his arm.

He listens to the conversation.  
They do not see him.

ELAINE

-Have I talked to him about baseball!? We don't talk about anything else! You know what, you don't know anything about Marshall, alright? You come over every now and then, and you pretend that everything is all "Leave it to Beaver" with the thoughtful Aunt routine, but you're just like everybody else. You never got it. Sports. It's a way of life. The minute you let your foot off the gas, there it goes. Bye bye!

MARA

There is a life outside of sports, you know. You might not see it, or, hell, you might not believe it, but I'm very happy with my life. You had your tennis career, and that was everything to you, I get that, but try to have some perspective. Marshall has different interests. He's more like me. What does he like? Comic books, right? Maybe he could be an artist! Or a writer! (ELAINE scoffs) If he wants to go to college and explore other options, I'm happy for him. And I'm sorry if that kind of positivity isn't what you think- Marshall needs.

ELAINE

-You think that's positivity? Telling Marshall it's okay to fail?

MARA

I didn't realize my life was such- a failure...

ELAINE

Mara, if you're going to make this about yourself, why don't you just leave?

MARA pauses in shock, then heads  
for the door.

MARA

I love that boy too, you know. You just take care of him please?

MARA sees MARSHALL and gives him a  
guilty look as she EXITS. ELAINE  
sees MARSHALL.

ELAINE

Hi. Are you hungry?

MARSHALL

No. I just heard you and Mara talking.

ELAINE

Yeah. I'm sorry about that. I'm just tired, that's all.

MARSHALL

It's okay, Mom. Hey, could you rub my shoulder? The doctor said it would help blood flow.

ELAINE

Of course. Just sit down here. You look like a baby bird.

MARSHALL

What do you mean?

ELAINE

Like your little wing was clipped. (Pause) Oh honey, why did you do this?

MARSHALL

What?

ELAINE

Why did you challenge him like that? You knew better than that. Don't do it again?

MARSHALL

I won't, Mom. I'll be smarter next time.

ELAINE

Because there may not be a next time. Right?

MARSHALL

That feels nice. (Another moment) Do you remember your hall of fame thingy? The induction? I remember. It's the first thing I can remember. I saw you in your grey lace dress. I remember it had these tiny tassels on the back. You gave me a kiss, and went up to give your speech. I don't remember what you said, but I remember how animated you were, jumping up and down, and then you cried and kept pointing at me. You just kept pointing.

ELAINE

Don't move your arm so much. I remember.

MARSHALL

Is that on tape somewhere? I'd like to see it. (a moment)  
Mom?

ELAINE

Huh? Yeah, there probably is... somewhere.

MARSHALL

I wanted to be just like you. I love you, Mom. Do you remember, after Dad... and it was just you and me? I feel like that right now. Can't we have that again? I don't have much time left, before I leave for college. Why can't it be just us?

ELAINE

Because you're leaving. I can't be alone all the time, hon.

MARSHALL

Then why does it have to be him?

ELAINE

Oh Marshall, please don't do this right now.

MARSHALL

I'm just asking a question.

ELAINE

You never got the chance to get to know him.

MARSHALL

I did! I tried, Mom.

ELAINE

Maybe you thought you did...

MARSHALL

And here you are telling me to be more of an adult, but I didn't see him backing down. Shouldn't he have been the adult in that situation?

ELAINE

I asked him to leave. What more do you want from me?

MARSHALL

I want you to never see him again!

ELAINE

I'm the parent here! You don't get to tell me what to do. Mother, Son, remember?

MARSHALL

See, he's making us fight right now! His bullshit--

ELAINE

Language.

MARSHALL

And poison is tearing us apart.

ELAINE

You just love making me miserable, don't you, Marsh?

MARSHALL

I have no respect for him at all. You want me to get to know him? I don't want to get to know him! Plus, he just completely sucks as a baseball player.

ELAINE

Don't be jealous. It's weak.

MARSHALL

I've got more talent in my pinky finger than he ever had.

ELAINE

Then why don't you want to play baseball?

MARSHALL

I never said that.

ELAINE

Go to college? Don't go to college? You're so soft.

MARSHALL

Oh, here we go.

ELAINE

Your perfect game for instance--

MARSHALL

I knew you felt that- way.

ELAINE

-You thought it was such a big deal, but I saw the truth! You gave up- in the ninth, Marshall.

MARSHALL

-Why can't you just be honest with me if that's the way you felt?

ELAINE

-You're as soft as charmin, and you will be nothing unless you toughen up...

MARSHALL

I wish you were more like Mara! She at least to me! (ELAINE freezes) (Long pause) I'm sorry. I didn't mean it. It just came out. I was so angry.

ELAINE

It was said. (A distinct knock at the door.) Go on up to your room. We'll talk later.

MARSHALL

Mom...

ELAINE

Just go. (Another knock)

MARSHALL EXITS. ELAINE goes to answer the door. HANK lets himself in.

HANK

Hey you.

ELAINE

Hey. How are things?

HANK

Good. How's his, uh... arm?

ELAINE

Better.

HANK

Good. I'm so bad at this stuff, you know?

ELAINE

I know. Me too. You look tired.

HANK

Huh?

ELAINE

I didn't mean anything by that. I just...

HANK

I know. Hey, I found something the other day. It's an old picture of us. Do you remember that?

ELAINE

Of course I do. Two year anniversary. Well, "anniversary." The Navy Pier. It's been a while since we've been there.

HANK

I loved that dress. God, you were sexy.

ELAINE

Hey, I still am, buster!

HANK

Very true.

ELAINE

You weren't so bad yourself.

HANK

And didn't I know it, look at that face.

ELAINE

That's your picture face. It's like this. (She imitates)

HANK

It was windy that day.

ELAINE

Yeah, sure.

An awkward moment.

HANK

Do you remember what I said to you?

ELAINE

You said that I made you feel stronger. When you played. What's wrong?

HANK

I meant that. You still make me stronger. I wouldn't have the courage to come here without it.

ELAINE

What are you saying?

HANK

Come on? What are we doing here? You've gotta see it. Be strong with me now.

ELAINE

Is she waiting outside, or what? She is!?

HANK

She wanted to see Marshall, but I convinced her to stay. It's just us.

ELAINE

She's just a kid.

HANK

I know I must seem like a creep, but I promise you it's more than that.

ELAINE

Did I not give you more?

HANK

You gave me everything.

ELAINE

No. No, I'm not going to let you leave. I'm sorry.

HANK

She makes me feel alive. Do you remember what that was like? To be a hero to somebody? When I retired baseball, a part of me died. I never got to mourn that part of my life. I need to let this go. I can't go on living like I can still play

baseball. I need to let it die, but I need time. I'm not giving up on us, but this is what I need right now. Marshall taught me that. I shouldn't have been able to hit that ball. He pitched it so fast. I think I may have closed my eyes. (laughs) Pure instinct. Have I ever told you about my first game? (ELAINE allows him to continue) When I came on to the field for the first time my rookie season, I was terrified. I was shaking so hard, you could see the bat swaying in the breeze. First three pitches, struck out. So, next inning, I'm up again. "Strike three." At this point, I'm looking at the other guys, and they're all saying, "you'll get the next one rookie", stuff like that, you know? Now, you know I'm not a praying man, but I had to send up something to the big guy. So, I whispered to myself in the dugout, "Please God, let me hit that ball." Next inning comes around, I'm up again. I choke up real tight on that bitch, and the pitcher takes one look at me, and sees it. I am going to hit this ball. He throws the worst slider of his life, and I get right under that thing. BAM! Homerun. I've never felt that way about a hit since. Until now. I'm not done with this thing. I know I can't play any more, but I need to mourn. Allie is helping with that.

ELAINE

So, what you're saying is you need a little fan to boost your ego before you let it die? One last hit?

HANK

Come on. Maybe this is just what I need right now.

ELAINE

What you need is me.

HANK

I had you! You've always been everything that I have ever needed. Please? Let me go?

ELAINE

No! I wont. I don't give in. I don't give up. You know this! We've been through too much for you to do this right now. No. You're mine. I was there for you every step of your retirement. So, now I'm not what you need? Convenient. These are mine. Your eyes, are mine. These strong arms, they're mine. You're hands, they belong on this face. I will not let you go. I will chase you down, and I will make you love me again. You know I will. I am capable of that. I can make

compromises. But I have my limits.

HANK

You'll be the death of me. You know that right?

ELAINE

You won't leave me.

HANK

Whatever you say.

ELAINE

You do what you need to do. And when you're finished, you come back to me.

HANK

I don't know if I...

ELAINE intensely strokes his face,  
and kisses him for a long time

ELAINE

Come back to me.

HANK

Okay.

ELAINE fixes his clothes, pulls his hair back grabs his face and gives him a gentle slap in the face. Then ELAINE sits on the couch ignoring him, as if he were no longer there. HANK stays for a moment, and then heads toward the door.

LIGHTS OUT

## ACT 2 SCENE 2

LIGHTS UP

A MONTH LATER MARSHALL is sitting at a table, his math book open. He's reading a copy of *The Brothers Karamazov*. ELAINE comes out of the kitchen with a plate full of raw meat.

ELAINE

Marshall, can you please clean this up? People will be here soon.

MARSHALL

Yeah, in a sec.

ELAINE

Barbeque happens in twenty minutes!

MARSHALL

I know. Just one sec, please?

ELAINE

What are you reading?

MARSHALL

Dostoyevsky.

ELAINE

Who? (Takes a look) Really? Okay. The Brothers Karam...

MARSHALL

Karamazov.

ELAINE

Mmm! Is it good?

MARSHALL

Uh... Yep. It's good.

ELAINE

Are you reading it for school?

MARSHALL

Yep.

ELAINE

Shouldn't you be working on math?

MARSHALL

I'm taking a break.

ELAINE

And reading Russian literature?

MARSHALL

My arm hurts. It's my right one. Remember?

MARSHALL pantomimes writing with a pencil.

ELAINE

Right. How are your classes? Better? Marshall...

MARSHALL

I'm working on it, okay?

ELAINE

Marsh, you can't shut me out like this, buddy.

MARSHALL

I'm not shutting you out, God! I'm just... doing some things.

ELAINE

We need to get you to that 3.0 kiddo...

MARSHALL

I know.

ELAINE

Or else Phil can't do much...

MARSHALL

I know.

ELAINE

I just want to see a little fight in you, Marsh!

MARSHALL

I know! You have no idea what I'm going through right now.

ELAINE

I mean I think I have a little idea of what you're going through.

MARSHALL

No you don't.

ELAINE

Marshall, I played too, remember? I've had injuries.

MARSHALL

Not like this.

ELAINE

Well, something like that...

ELAINE starts to play with  
MARSHALL's hair.

MARSHALL

Mom. Mom, please, just--

ELAINE

What? You afraid of your mom finding some fleas?

MARSHALL

Stop. Stop! Stop feeling sorry for me! Stop trying to make it better! Just stop. I know I gotta get my grades up, I know I gotta be better, I know I gotta heal faster, I know these things, but right now I just want to read this fucking book! (Pause. ELAINE nods and starts to leave) Did you know this is the only book I've ever tried to read? It's hard okay? Eighteen years old, and this is the only one. How stupid is that? Pathetic, right? Comic books. I read comic books. Super heroes. I picked one up the other day, and I started reading it. It made me feel sick to my stomach, so I thought I would try reading a different one. Spider-man. Same thing happened. It happened over and over and over... Until I figured it out. I'm not super.

ELAINE

What?

MARSHALL

I'm not super. I thought I was... I really did. There's nothing I couldn't do. What happens if it breaks again?

ELAINE

Marshall...

MARSHALL

What happens if I can't throw? What happens if I can't... I've got nothing else. I can't do anything else. I don't know how to do anything else. You know what super is? If I wanted to strike somebody out, I would do it. If I wanted someone to hit a foul ball over and over again just to make them frustrated, I would do it. And now I'm nothing. (ELAINE tries to interject) Don't! Don't give me any of this, "you're great at lots of things, Marshall" bullshit! You know it's not true. You walked in here just now, thinking, "what the hell is he doing reading that book"? Don't do it. We're past that. You know I've got nothing else. Isn't that right?

Doorbell rings.

ELAINE

That's enough of this feeling sorry for yourself crap. People are here. Go on. Go get ready. (MARSHALL starts to leave) You know, being super is about rising above your weaknesses.

MARSHALL EXITS.

ELAINE answers the door. PHIL and MARA come inside, arguing again.

MARA

That's not what you said!

PHIL

That is what I said if you were listening...

ELAINE

Why are you two always fighting?

MARA

Don't look at me, I'm completely reasonable...

PHIL

My ass! Do you want to know what it is this time? Here.

PHIL kisses ELAINE on the cheek and hands her a plate of jello.

ELAINE

I don't know, do I?

PHIL

She said, "I really love how you don't care how you come across." Can you believe that?

MARA

That's a compliment!

PHIL

Are you crazy...? Okay. How do I come across, then?

MARA

Well, you do come across as overbearing sometimes.

ELAINE

Also, you bring jello..

PHIL

Oh nice. This is why I come to these things.. (His phone rings) To get picked on by my friends. (He answers) This is Phil. No, for the last time, do not tell the general manager you're leaving! For god's... I will sort this out..

PHIL gestures hanging himself. The others laugh. PHIL EXITS

MARA

Where's Marshall?

ELAINE

Upstairs. What is that?

MARA

It's a black forest chocolate torte... I have no idea what it tastes like, but it took a long time to make, so eat it.

ELAINE

I'm going to put it right here.

MARA

Hey, you okay?

ELAINE

Yes.

MARA

You look like you've been crying.

ELAINE

Nope. I feel great. Really. I am.

MARA

Okay. You know, I'm just so proud of you for finally getting rid of you know who. He's just so toxic...

ELAINE

Mmhmm.

MARA

The storm cloud can finally lift from over this house, right?

ELAINE

Right.

MARA

Oh, which reminds me. You really should start getting back out there. I don't want to be pushy, but I have a few people who might be interested in you...

ELAINE

Yeah... Mara.

MARA

He's coming today, isn't he? (A very distinctive knock is heard) Oh, Jesus Christ...

ELAINE

Mara?

MARA EXITS to follow PHIL. ELAINE answers the door. HANK is waiting to enter. He kisses her on the cheek.

HANK

I'm here.

ELAINE

And?

HANK

I'm here. Okay? (She embraces him) I didn't know what to bring. You know I can't cook...

ELAINE

It's fine. I have to go check on the food. Yeah, take a load off. I've missed you. Marshall! We're almost ready to eat! Hurry up, bud!

ELAINE and HANK EXIT. MARSHALL comes running downstairs. There is a soft knock. MARSHALL slowly answers it to find ALLIE standing there. He lets her in.

ALLIE

Hi.

MARSHALL

Hey. What are you...

ALLIE

How are you?

MARSHALL

I'm fine. I tried calling you, but I kept getting...

ALLIE

I know. That's my fault. I should've... uh. How's your arm?

MARSHALL

It's still there. Somewhere.

They share an uncomfortable laugh.

ALLIE

How's rehab?

MARSHALL

It's fine, now that I'm going to be a vet.

ALLIE

A what?

MARSHALL

No, I'm going to study to be a veterinarian.

ALLIE

Like with animals?

MARSHALL

I've always loved animals, so yeah. Why not?

ALLIE laughs.

ALLIE

I'm sorry, I didn't mean to laugh.

MARSHALL

No, I get it. You think I'm too dumb?

ALLIE

No! That's not what I... Come on. Why aren't you doing baseball?

MARSHALL

Because baseball sucks! I hate baseball! I mean, I love it, but it's brought me nothing but trouble.

ALLIE

I don't get you. The man who has everything, and wants none of it. What I wouldn't give to be Marshall Maddox.

MARSHALL

"The mystery of human existence lies not in just staying alive, but in finding something to live for."

ALLIE

Is that the Brothers Karamozov?

MARSHALL

I've been reading it. I think I know who I want to be. I think I know who I want to share it with.

ALLIE

Marshall...

MARSHALL

This is hard for me.

ALLIE

I know, so before you say anything else...

MARSHALL

No, I think I need to just say something first, okay?

ALLIE

Okay, maybe we should...

MARSHALL

I love you.

ALLIE

Oh my god.

MARSHALL

I know, there's lots that I do that I gotta work on, but I really do. I love you. (A pause) What's that in your hand?

ALLIE

Oh, uh...

MARSHALL

Is it for me?

ALLIE

No, it's uh, for Hank.

MARSHALL

Okay.

ALLIE

I know this is totally messed up, but could you give it to him? I don't think I can see your mom again...

ALLIE hands MARSHALL a paper bag.

MARSHALL

What is this?

ALLIE

Nothing.

MARSHALL

It's just a paper bag?

ALLIE

Okay, don't freak out...

MARSHALL grabs the bag and opens it. He pulls out a large bottle of pills.

MARSHALL

Zolpidem? What the hell is this?

ALLIE

They're Hank's. He has trouble sleeping... They help him with that. I just didn't want them in my house any more.

MARSHALL

Does he get high with this too? Jesus, what isn't that guy on!?

ALLIE

Hey, not so loud...

MARSHALL

Do you get high with him? (ALLIE shrugs) Wow. Okay.

ALLIE

Oh, come on! Like you're perfect?

MARSHALL

Are you serious with this? Do you love him?

ALLIE

What are you, five?

MARSHALL

The guy is a loser! Why are you doing this?

ALLIE

It's complicated.

MARSHALL

Try me.

ALLIE

I got an ESPN internship yesterday.

MARSHALL

Okay. Congratulations I guess.

ALLIE

I'm not an idiot, Marshall. I know it probably goes against what you believe me to be... I'm sorry. I'm sorry I can't love you. I'm not what you need, Marshall. Maybe if you were that guy. (She points to a trophy.) But you're not that guy. It's not fair to you. It was never fair to you. But this is who I am. I'm going to be in professional sports. I have to. And this thing, whatever it is you're going through. I can't let it get in my way. You know? I'm sorry. God, I am so sorry!

MARSHALL

So that's it?

ALLIE

It's me. It's still me. I'm hoping we can be friends.

MARSHALL

Friends. Sure. (MARSHALL looks at the Frank Thomas bat) You forgot the bat I gave you, by the way.

ALLIE

I didn't forget it.

ALLIE touches MARSHALL's arm and EXITS. MARSHALL opens the small paper bag and takes out the bottle. He takes one pill, he takes another, and then swallows the whole bottle. MARSHALL takes the bat with his left hand, and breaks his trophy case. ELAINE, HANK, PHIL, and MARA ENTER, and see the mess that has been made. (SEE NOTE A).

ELAINE

Marshall? What happened?

MARSHALL

Nothing. I'll clean it up.

ELAINE

(picking up the Wimbledon plate) What did you do!?

PHIL

Maybe it was an accident?

MARSHALL

It wasn't an accident. I did it on purpose.

MARA

Marshall, what's wrong? Why would you...

HANK

Leave him alone, Mara. Let him blow off some steam.

MARA

Unlike you, Hank, I don't think breaking things and acting out are appropriate ways of "blowing off steam."

HANK

No, he should probably repress everything down like you do, until he shoots up a school or something.

MARSHALL

Hey! Leave her alone, you son of a bitch.

HANK

Hey, kid, I don't know if you got the memo, but I'm currently on your side.

MARSHALL

I said, leave her alone!

MARSHALL pushes HANK with his one hand.

HANK

You better back up, son. I'll break that other arm, I swear to god...

ELAINE

Enough! Why are you such a child!? One setback, and you throw it all away! You don't think I was disappointed when I had to

give up my career? I was in my prime! I was invincible! When I found out I was pregnant, did I complain, Mara? Did I break everything important to me? How much money did I walk away from, Phil? (MARA and PHIL are silent) I had a duty to perform, and I chose you! Over tennis! Over being super! I chose you. I gave up everything. And this is what you do.

MARA

Elaine, come on, you don't mean that.

ELAINE

I do. I'm not sorry I said it either.

MARSHALL EXITS upstairs.

HANK

Hey Phil, give me a hand with this, will ya?

PHIL

Sure.

HANK and PHIL start to clean up the trophy case.

MARA

Come here. Sit down. Breath. Wow, your face is really hot. I'm going to get some ice.

ELAINE

No. Just stay here for a moment?

MARA

Hey, it's okay.

ELAINE

Why did I say that?

MARA

I don't know. You've been...

ELAINE

You're right, I didn't mean that.

MARA

It's okay.

ELAINE

We didn't have me, when I was his age. I wish Mom cared as much as I did. She never pushed me. It was Daddy who was... Marshall doesn't understand how lucky he is.

MARA

I know.

ELAINE

You think I should go up and talk to him?

MARA

I'd give him a minute.

PHIL

Hey, I'm going to go check on the food. I smell burning.

PHIL EXITS.

MARA

I'm going to get that ice. Hank?

MARA EXITS. HANK starts to exit,  
but ELAINE's line stops him.

ELAINE

He'll get over it. Remember what we said, it'll build him up. It will.

HANK

I don't know babe, maybe we should give it a rest?

ELAINE

What?

HANK

Marshall, and baseball. Maybe we should give it a rest, huh?

ELAINE

Just like that? The kid throws a tantrum and you want to throw in the towel? Yeah, well... I guess that's it. When times get tough, that's what we do.

HANK

It's more than that. He's your son, but he's got to choose. You can't do it for him any more.

ELAINE

You're right. He is my son. And no son of mine will give up.  
I won't let him.

MARA ENTERS with ice and places it  
on the back of ELAINE's neck. HANK  
continues to pick up the mess  
MARSHALL left.

MARA

There you go.

ELAINE

Can you go check on Marshall?

MARA

Sure.

MARA EXITS upstairs, and ELAINE  
walks over to the trophy case,  
picks up her Wimbledon win and  
gently sets it on the couch like a  
newborn infant. HANK silently  
watches.

ELAINE

These are more than just trophies. This is more than just a  
big fucking plate. It's my legacy. It's our legacy.

MARA screams out for ELAINE. She  
runs downstairs.

MARA

Hank, call 911! Marshall is unconscious! I think he may have  
taken something! Hurry!

MARA and ELAINE EXIT back upstairs.

HANK pulls out his phone.

HANK

Hello! 1648 Colver Avenue. There is a young man here who may  
have taken some...

He finds the brown paper bag on the floor, and empties it, discovering the empty pill bottle.

He's unconscious... uh...

ELAINE

(Offstage) My baby!

HANK

Please hurry. (Hangs up) Shit. Shit!

HANK collapses on the couch with the paper bag in his hand. He clenches it until it crumbles. Head in his hands.

LIGHT OUT

## ACT 2 SCENE 3

LIGHTS UP.

A WEEK LATER A gurney or hospital bed has been brought into the front room of the Maddox home (SEE NOTE B). MARSHALL is lying on the bed attached to various machines. Ventilator and ECG sounds can be heard. MARA and ELAINE are both helping with pillows.

MARA

Alright. This is much better than upstairs, I think. There's so much more light in here than in his room. I think two pillows are fine. We don't want to put too much strain on his neck. He needs to breath easy. Okay.. The nurse should be here around two, but I don't mind sticking around until then. Would you like that?

ELAINE

Yes.

MARA

He looks good.

ELAINE

Yes.

MARA

I'm not just saying that. He looks like he's getting some color back.

ELAINE

I know.

MARA

How's this? Do you like him facing this way? Or, should we give him a little more of a view?

ELAINE

I think he's fine there.

MARA

So, how's Hank?

ELAINE

I don't know, Mara.

MARA

I thought I saw his car driving down Deerfield on my way up.

ELAINE

He was picking up some things. He and Phil are pretty much scared shitless of this whole situation.

MARA

Well, it is tough, you know.

ELAINE

Oh, I know.

MARA

Don't be too hard on Phil, he's just coming to terms with..

ELAINE

Losing a star client. His golden goose. No, I get it.

MARA

He cares.. He's just not that great with emotional stuff, you know that.

ELAINE

Well, who knows right? Maybe he completely dodged a bullet with this one, you know, maybe Marshall would have been a total bust?

MARA

That's enough. That's ugly.

ELAINE

Yeah, you're right.

MARA

Elaine, he can still have a good life, you know. He may be able to walk someday!

ELAINE

Walk?

MARA

Yeah, wouldn't that be amazing?

ELAINE

Amazing? You think that Marshall walking would be amazing? It would amaze, you? It would fill you with awe to see Marshall Maddox walk?

MARA

Well considering the circumstances, yeah it would.

ELAINE

Okay. Thank you.

MARA

Oh no, you're not going to take this out on me. I'm sorry, Elaine. I am sorry! You don't think this is killing me too!? Get over yourself. Daddy would never have let you...

ELAINE

Stop right there! Enough. You didn't know him like I did.

MARA

I know I didn't. But he had limits.

ELAINE

There are no limits to this.

MARA

That boy is as close to a child as I will ever have. You never thought for one second how this effects me.

ELAINE

He's not your son. I know he feels like that sometimes, but he's not. He's mine, and it's my job.

MARA

You're right.

ELAINE

Do you remember when we used to go to his little league games?

MARA

Yeah.

ELAINE

He was so good! Even back then. You remember how crazy I was back then? The epitome of the baseball mom. When he got into high school, we would fight after every game, and during, what am I saying? God, we would fight. He would come out of the game telling me, "shut up!" And I would say, "you just need to calm down." You know? And it was stressful. He could tune everyone else out, but not me. I could literally feel him as he's on the mound, but then I have to shut my mouth, because then he'd say, "you're freaking me out, mom!" I would be so nervous watching him play, and he could feel how nervous I was, and that made him nervous. Nobody else could make him feel like that, Mara. Only me. I'm the person in his head. When he decides to throw a curve ball, that's my voice he hears, pushing him, warning him. I could feel every single pitch, every single move, every insecurity, every fault. And then he'd win, and he would look at me. And you want to do nothing more than to be supportive. But sometimes that's not good enough.

MARA

I know.

ELAINE

Of course he's your son! I didn't mean that. What I meant was, he's not yours in here (points to her heart).

MARA

I know.

ELAINE

It was just us. It was us! It was us. And all I wanted was for him to succeed. It was never enough. Not for him. Not for me.

MARA

You were devoted to him. No one could say you weren't. You were devoted to him. You never missed a game. (A long pause) Elaine, we need to talk about this paperwork. It needs to be filled out today. You take your time, but just so you know. It needs to get done.

ELAINE

What is it?

MARA

The DNR paperwork.

ELAINE

DNR?

MARA

"Do not resuscitate."

ELAINE

Oh.

MARA

It's just in cases like this... It's hospital policy, if you're going to keep him here... Well it's up to you now. (Another pause) I'm going to go check on the tea, I'll be right back.

MARA EXITS and ELAINE walks around the living room. ELAINE picks up the bat, and angles herself directly across from MARSHALL. She chokes up on the bat, and playfully swings.

ELAINE

I just wanted to see what it was like. Standing across the mound against you. You would've been great. I don't know what to do. I'm sorry I never asked, "what do you want to do, baby?" So, now I'm asking..

ELAINE lays next to MARSHALL on the bed, reaches her arm over him still clutching the bat and she tightens her grip.

LIGHTS OUT.

END OF PLAY

