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Periscopes: A Play Exploring Neurodiversity and Family

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Periscopes
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By: Noa Dahan

Cast of Characters:

MYRA- Age 41, female.

EMMA- Age 36, female.

MOLLY- Age 12, female.

Setting:

Present day suburbia.

Scene 1

(At rise: MYRA and MOLLY sit on the floor, at the living room coffee table. MOLLY rests her chin on her pencil.)

MYRA

Finish number three.

MOLLY

What do you think I'm doing?

MYRA

You've been staring at it for five minutes. Do you need help?

MOLLY

Stop! I don't need help.

MYRA

Okay, calm down.

MOLLY

I'm calm! Just let me do my homework, God.

(MOLLY sees a fly on the wall. She follows it with her eyes. The pencil drops out of her hand, and she doesn't notice.)

MYRA

Molly, it just needs to be done.

MOLLY

I am!

(MOLLY grabs her pencil and lowers her face to about a centimeter from the paper.)

MYRA

Why does homework always have to be such a production?

MOLLY

Can't you just let me do anything?

MYRA

When I let you do stuff, you don't do it. So what choice do I have?

MOLLY

Anything but what you're doing right now!

(They stare each other down. MOLLY slams her pencil on the table, and storms off, exiting. We hear a door slam.)

MYRA

(Yelling after her.)

This just means you'll have to finish after dinner!

(MYRA moves to the adjacent kitchen and starts dinner. EMMA enters through the door in the living room. SHE drops her backpack and coat on the ground before coming to the kitchen.

EMMA kisses MYRA on the cheek, and MYRA turns so they quickly kiss on the lips).

MYRA

Remember to hang that please.

(EMMA stands at attention with an exaggerated salute.)

EMMA

Sir yes sir. Initiating protocol for Operation No Tripping Hazards in the Middle of the Goddamn Living Room.

(MYRA gives EMMA's hair a quick tug as she walks back to the living room. EMMA hangs her bag and coat on a hook by the door.)

MYRA

(Calling to the next room.)

Molly got a missing assignment slip today.

EMMA

Again?

MYRA

Yes. And, I told her last time I wouldn't sign anymore so she better stop bringing them home.

EMMA

Wasn't that yesterday?

(MYRA rolls her eyes and nods at EMMA.)

MYRA

So you're going to need to deal with this one.

EMMA

Ugh.

MYRA

I'm leaving it at your spot. Act surprised and enraged.

(bellowing)

Molly, dinner!

(MOLLY drags her feet into the kitchen. She passes Emma moodily and drops into her seat at the table.)

EMMA

(sarcastically)

Hi, Mom

MOLLY

(rolling her eyes)

Hi, Mom.

(EMMA helps MYRA serve dinner, then they carry their plates to their seats. EMMA picks up a pink slip left at her spot.)

EMMA

What's this?

(Beat.)

MYRA

Molly, do you have anything to say?

MOLLY

(deadpan)

It's a missing assignment slip.

EMMA

What for?

MOLLY

The science homework.

EMMA

Why didn't you do the science homework?

MOLLY

I thought I did.

EMMA

It doesn't really matter what you thought.

MOLLY

I couldn't find it, okay. Can you please just sign it?

EMMA

Well, where was it?

MOLLY

If I knew, we wouldn't be talking about it.

EMMA

You didn't have your homework yesterday either.

Molly

Why are you on about this?

(MOLLY's eyes narrow suspiciously at MYRA.)

Did Imma tell you to lecture me?

EMMA

Molly, if I sign this, I need you to start doing better.

MOLLY

(aggressive)

Okay.

EMMA

Okay?

MOLLY

I said, okay.

(EMMA signs the slip. MOLLY takes it, scarfs down her dinner, and jumps up from her chair. She is still chewing as she power walks toward her bedroom.)

MYRA

Aren't you forgetting something?

(MOLLY freezes, shoulders clenched. She gulps down the last bite.)

MOLLY

May I please be excused?

MYRA

You don't want to stay and tell us about your day?

(A beat. Except for her clenching fists, Molly is perfectly still, trying to turn invisible.)

Okay, you're excused.

(MOLLY sprints all the way off stage.)

MYRA

(whisper yelling)

I said to be enraged!

(EMMA gives MYRA a shove.)

EMMA

(whisper yelling back)

Next time you need an actor, hire one.

MYRA

Seriously. You don't think this is an issue?

EMMA

I never did my homework either.

MYRA

Didn't you pay for that?

EMMA

Seems like you think I did.

MYRA

You told me you were lucky to get into college. I don't want her to kill her options before eighteen.

EMMA

What did MIT get you anyway?

MYRA

A masters degree?

EMMA

I'm not belittling your accomplishments. I just think we prove that sometimes the brainiac doesn't want the perfect academic life they thought they did at eighteen. And sometimes the fuck up figures it out.

MYRA

But at least when I wanted to be an engineer, the option was open to me! The option is still open to me. We tell Molly she can be anything, but we're hypocrites if she walks out of this house and into a dead end.

EMMA

Academics aren't the only ticket out.

MYRA

Fine, but what is her's? She's so... antisocial.

EMMA

Can't she just be a pre-teen right now?

MYRA

A teenager's only job is school.

(EMMA picks up some plates and takes them to the sink. A long beat passes.)

MYRA

How was work?

EMMA

Ugh, fucking Ross and his deadlines.

MYRA

This is the hotel lobby design? I thought you had a long time for that.

EMMA

I did, but it took me forever to find, you know, the capital R *Right* thing. I want to make a lobby that says 'this is home... but the home you'll have when you've got more money than you know what to do with'. All the rugs were rubbing me the wrong way. Then Ross calls while I'm at the store. He's all 'where are you? We have a client meeting in half an hour.' Not happy to hear I was staring at the same three rugs all morning. I picked the right thing in the end. I'll show you.

(EMMA shuffles toward the living room.)

MYRA

You brought the rug home?

EMMA

I stole the swatch.

MYRA

You stole it...

(EMMA digs through her work bag.)

EMMA

(calling to the kitchen)

I needed to show you. It's no big deal.

(EMMA returns with a carpet swatch and rubs it on MYRA's face.)

MYRA

Eww you don't know who touched that.

EMMA

Embrace the softness.

(EMMA keeps trying to rub MYRA with the carpet swatch as MYRA bats her away.)

MYRA

You are such a child!

(MYRA manages to grab the swatch. She throws it across the room. EMMA tries to run and grab it, but MYRA stops her with a hug around the waist. They're laughing.)

Scene 2

(MOLLY paces the living room. Her breathing is fast and uneven. She tugs at the neck of her sweater with escalating vigor, trying to catch her breath.

SHE tries to pull the sweater over her head, and she makes noises of frustration as she gets lost in the sleeves. She throws it to the floor as it finally comes off. She stands in a sports bra, breathing hard, eyes wet.)

We hear a key in the front door.)

MYRA

(voice from offstage)

Honey? Sorry I wasn't home when you got off the bus. This area just might be too Jewish. They were out of round challah, and I had to wait for a new batch to come out.

(MYRA enters. MOLLY is frozen.)

MYRA

At least it'll be fresh.

(Beat.)

What happened to your shirt?

(MOLLY startles and her cheeks go red. She fumbles back into her sweater.)

Molly?

MOLLY

Nothing happened... I was just- hot.

(MOLLY flutters her eyelids.)

MOLLY

You got groceries? Let's put away groceries.

(MYRA puts a loving hand on her shoulder, stopping MOLLY as she walks toward the kitchen.)

MYRA

Hey. Tell me whats up.

MOLLY

You always want me to help. This is me helping.

(MOLLY walks into the kitchen, wiping tears and snot on her sleeves. MYRA pulls groceries out of bags. MOLLY seizes them off the counter, putting them away with almost cartoonish carelessness.)

MYRA

Apples go in the fridge.

MOLLY

What?

(MOLLY notices the apples beside the cereal.)

Oh.

(SHE shoves the apples haphazardly in the fridge. MYRA catches MOLLY by the shoulders when she walks back to retrieve more groceries.)

MYRA

Molly.

(MOLLY raises her eyebrows to perform a teenage 'what?!' head shake.)

Tell me what's going on.

(MOLLY dips under MYRA's arm and grabs a styrofoam carton of eggs.

MYRA takes the box of eggs gently from MOLLY's grasp. MOLLY tries to snatch them back, and one side of the box opens, eggs tumbling out and smashing on the floor between them.

A beat. They stare at the mess in disbelief.)

MOLLY

I'll get the mop!

MYRA

No, Molly. Come back in here!

MOLLY

It was an accident!

MYRA

Tell me what's wrong.

MOLLY

Nothing!

MYRA

Tell me what's going on, or there will be consequences.

MOLLY

Consequences for what? I didn't *do* anything.

MYRA

Well, I don't know what else I'm supposed to do, Molly, because all I'm asking for is two goddamn words about why you're chucking my tomatoes into the fridge and you apparently can't even give me that.

(EMMA enters through the front door in the living room. She drops her bag and coat on the floor.)

MOLLY

(Yelling.)

Can't you just let me slam doors and leave me alone like every other parent!

(EMMA tentatively walks toward the kitchen. She peaks in. MOLLY sees her, MYRA doesn't.)

MOLLY immediately runs to EMMA and hugs her.)

MOLLY

Can we go to the park?

EMMA

Um-

MYRA

The park? What are you talking about? Molly, go to your room.

MOLLY

I. Didn't. Do. Anything!

MYRA

Just let me talk to Mom. Please.

MOLLY

Sure. I'll just be waiting upstairs while you talk about me behind my back.

(EMMA and MYRA stand, stunned, as MOLLY stalks off stage. MOLLY reenters, now in her room, which we could not see before (or we could see it, but nobody was in there). We are simultaneously watching MOLLY in her room and her parents in the kitchen. One wall of MOLLY's room is painted with chalkboard paint.)

EMMA

What-

MOLLY

(voice overlapping with MYRA's)

Its fine. Its fine. Its fine. Its fine. Its fine. Its fine!

MYRA

(voice overlapping with MOLLY's)

I have no idea. I come home and she's standing in the middle of the living room sobbing, no shirt-

(EMMA raises an eyebrow.)

Yeah. I don't effing know. Why can't she just tell us what's wrong?

(MOLLY draws furiously on her chalkboard.)

EMMA

Being a middle schooler is inherently embarrassing. They don't always want to share with their mothers.

MYRA

That would be fine if it didn't affect me, but I'm constantly fielding breakdowns. Not even breakdowns; they're really tantrums! She's too old for this stuff. It's not normal.

(The phone rings. MYRA goes to pick it up, but EMMA grabs the phone before she has the chance.)

EMMA

Hello? Oh, hi Carol.

MOLLY

(voice overlapping EMMA's)

It's just school. Just school. You do this every day.

EMMA

What? No, I don't know anything about this.

MOLLY

No! It's never fine. You can never be sure what they'll do to you, Molly.

EMMA

Well, how come Mrs. Greenblat was in her locker?

MOLLY

Don't think. Don't think. It'll end. It all ends.

EMMA

Oh. Okay.

MOLLY

Just keep your head down Molly... But what are they going to say to- shhh. Shh. Molly. It's okay. Stop. Stop!

(Molly's side of the stage goes dark. EMMA hangs up.)

It was the vice principal's office. Apparently they found about 50 stolen library books in Molly's locker.

MYRA

Stolen?

EMMA

They were never checked out.

MYRA

She hates reading.

(EMMA shrugs.)

Ughhh, alright. Let's go ask.

Scene 3

(MOLLY sits on her bedroom floor, still drawing on her chalkboard. She continues talking to herself, but now she is muttering. We can't make out what she says.)

There is a knock on the door. MOLLY whips around as MYRA tentatively pushes her bedroom door open.)

MOLLY

There's no point knocking if you don't wait for me to say come in.

MYRA

Can we come in?

MOLLY

Yeah, I guess. Since you already have.

(MYRA enters and sits on MOLLY's bed. EMMA assesses the chalkboard.)

EMMA

You building a mansion?

MOLLY

Something like that.

(Emma raises her eyebrows.)

EMMA

Hmm?

MOLLY

It's my house for when I die. I'll never have to leave or see anybody because I'll have everything I need right there.

(EMMA picks up a piece of chalk and draws an awkward addition to the house.)

MOLLY

Mom!

(EMMA writes 'Best Parents Ever Room' in the middle of the square.)

EMMA

We'll need a place to stay when we visit every weekend.

(MOLLY rolls her eyes, but smiles weakly.)

MYRA

Come sit. We need to talk.

MOLLY

Oh god. What's wrong?

(Beat.)

Just tell me!

MYRA

The vice principal called.

MOLLY

What? Why?

MYRA

Mrs. Greenblat found 50 stolen library books in your locker-

MOLLY

(cutting her off)

She went in my locker?

MYRA

Apparently it wasn't closed all the way. When she tried to slam it shut, it sprang open, and an avalanche of books fell on her head.

(MOLLY purses her lips. She doesn't say anything.)

MYRA

Well? Why were there 50 stolen books in your locker?

MOLLY

I don't know.

MYRA

You don't know.

(MOLLY shrugs.)

MYRA

Okay.

(Beat.)

You don't seem surprised they were there. If you're this cagey with the principal tomorrow, she's going to punish you like you intentionally stole fifty books.

MOLLY

I didn't! Please just believe me.

MYRA

I heard about this three minutes ago. I don't believe anything, but I can only help you if you tell me the real story.

(MOLLY curls up in a ball, poised on the balls of her feet and head tucked.)

EMMA

Molly, this isn't helping anything.

MOLLY

(voice muffled)

You're all just out to get me.

MYRA

What?

MOLLY

I didn't say anything.

MYRA

God Molly! We are being really damn sensitive to you right now when the evidence says you did something bad. This is not age appropriate.

(MOLLY stands and slowly backs up.)

MOLLY

Don't swear at me. I can't think when you're mad.

MYRA

I wouldn't be mad if you would just say something!

MOLLY

Stop yelling!

MYRA

I did not yell.

MOLLY

Well it feels like you're yelling!

MYRA

I am not in control of your feelings.

(Molly bangs into the wall and breaks down into all-out sobs.)

MYRA scoops MOLLY into a tight hug. She lets MOLLY cry.)

MYRA

You can tell me. I know it's scary, but luckily you're very brave.

(MOLLY stays in MYRA's arms. Her crying gradually becomes less violent.)

MOLLY

It was Colin Ryder or Cassidy Dunlap.

(MYRA beckons her back onto the bed. MOLLY rests her head on Emma's shoulder.)

MYRA

Why do you think that?

(MOLLY freezes. EMMA strokes her hair.)

Trust us.

MOLLY

They just weren't being nice, okay.

MYRA

I need you to tell me what happened.

(Beat. MOLLY takes a breath.)

MOLLY

Colin put me in charge of the poster for that stupid group scientific method project. Everyone else in the class was done. I was going really slow and careful so my handwriting would look better because Mrs. Greenblat always makes me redo my tests neater. But I had to rush at the end, and it got messy, and I couldn't finish. The whole group lost points. The rubric said it was 'illegible and incomplete'.

MYRA

Do you know the grade yet?

MOLLY

B.

MYRA

That's not bad at all.

MOLLY

I know. It was good. But Colin told everyone it was my fault. He only put me in charge of the poster because I'm too dumb to do anything else.

MYRA

That's not true-

MOLLY

(cutting MYRA off)

Colin said that! I'm not just making it up.

(A beat.)

MYRA

I'm sorry he said that. I know words can hurt, but-

MOLLY

I wasn't done. We had silent reading time later. We have to read a book on the list for our level. It's the rules. I was reading Magic Treehouse. When we were cleaning up, Cassidy and her friends start talking really loud about how they hadn't read Magic Treehouse since fourth grade and how I must be so stupid.

MYRA

Cassidy Dunlap is... Evie Dunlap's daughter?

MOLLY

Probably. I think her mom is on PTA too. When I opened my locker later, a bunch of picture books for kindergarteners fell out on top of me. I don't know who put them there, but I could guess. I'm not as stupid as they think I am.

(MOLLY is shaking)

I'm standing in the middle of all these books for babies that are obviously not mine, but Mrs. Greenblat thought they were. She comes by, and is like 'Molly. I told you on Friday to clean that locker during lunch'. But I did do it on Friday! Everyone made fun of me all day. They were talking to me like a baby and sucking their thumbs and then trying to wipe the spit on me.

(MOLLY gets up and picks the paint off her dresser. The dresser has clearly received this treatment before.)

MYRA

Molly, you're ruining-

(EMMA gestures for her to stop, and MYRA cuts off mid-sentence.)

MYRA

We'll talk to the school. This is ridiculous. They couldn't do a minute of slutheing on their own before they just...

MOLLY

No! No, don't talk to the school. I don't want that. They weren't wrong. I did mess up the project. I have the lowest reading level in the grade. I know I don't have friends. I don't understand why I am just worse than everyone.

MYRA

You think that because you only see what other people let you see. Everyone has a hard time.

MOLLY

No, I know I'm worse because they all *seem* good at everything, but I can't even pretend. I lie all the time. Like... we get prizes whenever we go up a reading level. I have to lie when people ask me what prizes I've gotten because I've only earned one all year. But they still know. Even a million lies wouldn't be enough to hide how... how...

EMMA

Inadequate.

MOLLY

How inadequate I am.

(EMMA takes MOLLY's hands and looks into her tearful eyes.)

EMMA

You're enough for me, Molly.

MOLLY

If they knew everything... I can't imagine what they'd do to me.

MYRA

Hey. We love you. There is nothing wrong with you. You are safe.

(The stage goes dark, then a light goes up on Molly on her own.)

MOLLY touches her skin, pinches herself.)

MOLLY

You're still here. Still here. It's okay. Stop. It's okay. We love you. There is nothing wrong with you. You are safe.

Scene 4

(MOLLY's room, but the furniture has been shifted to make space for big pieces of roll paper spread across the floor. EMMA sits on the floor in front of MOLLY's chalkboard, drawing on the paper. Molly stands over her, surveying the work.)

MOLLY

Okay. You see where you drew the catapult?

EMMA

Yep.

(MOLLY points to her very rough drawing of a tricked out mansion on her chalkboard.)

MOLLY

I'll need a periscope on the top of the house so I can see where to shoot the cannonballs.

EMMA

Ah, yep. I see.

(EMMA starts drawing and MOLLY walks around the room, surveying the sketches.)

EMMA

Molly?

MOLLY

Yeah?

EMMA

You said this is your house... for when you die?

MOLLY

Yes.

EMMA

Why will you need cannons and a lookout?

MOLLY

So people don't bother me.

EMMA

You're just going to cannonball everyone off your property?

(MOLLY checks on EMMA's progress.)

MOLLY

That's the plan. No, I think the periscope needs to be longer.

(MOLLY gets down on the floor next to EMMA and draws a line on the paper.)

Like this tall.

EMMA

You know, they might just want to be your friends. Maybe they baked a welcome pie.

MOLLY

Seems unlikely.

EMMA

It's more likely that they're military enemies?

MOLLY

If they see all the big weapons they probably won't bother coming anyway.

EMMA

So we're going for a scary aesthetic over actual deadliness?

MOLLY

Both. Oh, I finished my prototype of the catapult.

(MOLLY jumps up, grabbing a little popsicle stick and rubber band catapult and a stress ball off her dresser. EMMA stops drawing to watch the launch. MOLLY catapults the ball into the wall.)

EMMA

Impressive.

MOLLY

Now imagine it really big. Big enough to launch a two ton boulder to kill anyone that tries to come near me.

(A beat.)

EMMA

Have you ever thought about getting more involved at school?

MOLLY

What? No.

EMMA

You're here all the time. It must get boring. You should join a club or something. Make some friends.

MOLLY

I don't need friends.

EMMA

It would be good for you to hang out with kids your own age.

MOLLY

Thanks.

EMMA

What?

MOLLY

I know you wish I was a normal kid. You wish I was on the cheerleading team or played the oboe or whatever. But this is what you got. If you want a better kid, then have another.

EMMA

Not everything is a personal shot at you. I just want you to be happier.

MOLLY

I've gone to school with the same hundred kids for six years. If anyone wanted to be friends, we would be.

EMMA

You're too young to be this cynical. Pick a club this weekend.

MOLLY

Mom-

EMMA

(cutting her off)

Nope. You don't just get to be alone in your room.

Scene 5

(EMMA and MYRA are in a forest clearing. Foliage hangs low over their heads and we hear birds twittering in the trees. Dandelions grow from the dirt. EMMA sits on a fallen tree trunk. MYRA is uncharacteristically calm.)

EMMA

Myra. I really should get to work.

MYRA

You told them you might be gone till twelve.

EMMA

Yes, but-

MYRA

Then what's the rush?

(A beat.)

I love the moving air out here. It helps my thoughts circulate.

(MYRA picks a particularly big dandelion and presents it to EMMA. EMMA smiles.)

MYRA

What?

EMMA

You know.

MYRA

They say it's only a weed if you call it one.

(EMMA puts it in her hair.)

EMMA

Myra. I know you brought me here for a reason.

MYRA

I want to talk to you about Molly.

EMMA

I thought this morning went pretty well. The school seemed receptive.

MYRA

We pushed the issue. They had to be receptive.

EMMA

The club this afternoon will be good for her. She can bitch all she wants about it, but people will have a harder time bullying her if she's in a group.

MYRA

But it's not just the bullying. She's being bullied *and* she can't make friends *and* she can't handle her school work. Then think about the breakdown she had last night! I mean, that was not a proportional response. And she was so determined to hide what happened, she almost just let herself be falsely incriminated. When it's this many things- I don't know. It makes me think something bigger is happening beneath the surface. And we just can't see it.

EMMA

I think we should pay closer attention. Insert ourselves more.

MYRA

That's not exactly what I mean... I already sit with her through every homework assignment. I'm there when she gets off the bus and I see her off in the morning. I would love to spend downtime with her, but her favorite sport is kicking me out of her room. I don't know what more I can do. I don't know how much more I have in me.

(Beat.)

MYRA

I think we need a third party to help us with this.

EMMA

Not the therapy thing again.

MYRA

I am not just sweeping this stuff under the rug.

EMMA

Last time they wanted to get her *tested*.

MYRA

Because it will tell them how to help her.

EMMA

Some doctor is supposed to know how to raise our child based on her ability to- what- stack blocks?

(EMMA swings around a tree trunk by her arm. She grabs a low hanging branch with two hands and hangs suspended for a moment, then kicks her feet to swing back and forth.)

MYRA

Really?

EMMA

I'm listening.

MYRA

At least a doctor can get some sort of information about her. I feel like I exist in a completely different world than Molly does, and there is no window to see into her's.

EMMA

We've had this conversation and I really don't want to have it again.

MYRA

What is so wrong with getting help for her?

(EMMA gets her feet onto the tree branch and pulls herself up to sit on it. MYRA suppresses her frustration.)

EMMA

Just because you don't get her does not mean she is wrong. You just want to medicine our daughter different because, what? It'll be easier for you?

MYRA

All I want at this point is to know if she has something diagnosable so I can stop groping in the dark trying to figure out how to parent her.

EMMA

I'll try to spend more time with her, but I am not taking our daughter to a damn shrink.

(EMMA climbs higher into the tree. MYRA just stands frozen for a beat.)

MYRA

(yelling up the tree)

I'll be in the car!

(EMMA watches MYRA walk away.)

Scene 6

(EMMA and MOLLY jump on the living room couch in their pajamas. There are pillows on the living room floor.)

MOLLY

It was so cool. We're building a boat.

EMMA

Like a toy boat?

MOLLY

No! An actual big boat. This teacher who does outdoor survivor man stuff is helping us build a canoe. And then, at the end of the year we are going to try it out in the pool at the high school!

EMMA

That's-

(EMMA cuts off mid-sentence when MOLLY suddenly stops jumping.)

What-

MOLLY

(cutting her off)

Ahhhh! It's a shipwreck!

(MOLLY starts jumping on the couch again, then falling down and thrashing. EMMA follows her lead.)

EMMA

The water is getting in!

MOLLY

What will we do?

EMMA

Jump onto the lifeboats!

(EMMA points to the pillows that are on the floor).

MOLLY

They're too far. We won't make it.

EMMA

You can do it. We'll jump together. Ready? One, two, three!

(MOLLY and EMMA jump from the couch onto the pillows on the floor.)

MOLLY

We made it.

EMMA

I told you.

MOLLY

Oh no! There's a cat in the water.

EMMA

We can save it!

(EMMA and MOLLY lay on their stomachs and pretend to swim toward an imaginary cat.)

MOLLY

I got her!

(The two scramble back onto the pillows. EMMA pretends to stroke MOLLY's imaginary cat. They breathe hard, tired from the adventure.)

MOLLY

Also... there was this girl Jackie, at the woodshop club. She is *so cool*.

EMMA

Why is she so cool?

MOLLY

Apparently she gave the principal a ten minute speech explaining why it's unfair that our district doesn't have woodshop class. The compromise was a "wood club". The school wouldn't call it woodshop because that implies tool use, which is pretty dumb because we do use tools- its awesome.

EMMA

Jackie sounds like a go-getter.

MOLLY

Yeah, but she's also super nice.

EMMA

See, I told you-

MOLLY

(covering her ears)

No, no, no! Don't ruin this with 'I told you so'.

EMMA

You're right.

(A lingering beat goes by.)

MOLLY

I am really happy I went though.

(MOLLY smiles to herself sheepishly. EMMA attempts to suppress her pride.)

Scene 7

(MOLLY, MYRA, and EMMA stand shoulder to shoulder in synagogue. They hold high holiday prayer books (Machzorim). The synagogue is decorated with white flowers for Yom Kippur service.)

The Ashamnu is being recited. All three have their right fist on their chests, and they tap their hearts with each line. MOLLY and MYRA say the hebrew together, but MOLLY is mostly guessing at the sounds based on what MYRA says and struggles to read many of the English words. EMMA joins for each English line, but doesn't say the hebrew at all. Each line should read quite quickly, as the congregants have done this prayer about a million times today.)

TOGETHER

Ah-vee-noo אָה־וֵעֵ־נֹוּ

We have sinned deliberately;

אָה־שָׁה־נֹוּ *pah-shah-noo*

We have been negligent in our performance of the commandments;

אָה־רָה־נֹוּ *tzah-rahr-noo*

We have caused our friends grief;

(EMMA's phone dings. It is quick, but it's loud. MYRA shoots her daggers. EMMA tries to check the phone underneath her prayer book.)

MYRA

(whispering through gritted teeth.)

Go outside!

(EMMA leaves the sanctuary and enters the lobby, making a greater scene by attempting to slip out unnoticed. She makes a phone call.)

קְשִׁינָה וְנִשְׁתָּקֵף *kee-shee-noo oh-rehff*

We have been stiff-necked, refusing to admit that our suffering is caused by our own sins.

וְנִשְׁתָּקֵף *rah-shah-noo*

We have used physical violence.

וְנִשְׁתָּקֵף *shee-chaht-noo*

We have committed sins which are the result of moral corruption;

וְנִשְׁתָּקֵף *tee-ahv-noo*

(MYRA cranes her neck to see the door to the sanctuary.)

We have committed sins which the Torah refers to as abominations;

וְנִשְׁתָּקֵף *tah-ee-noo*

We have gone astray;

וְנִשְׁתָּקֵף *teeht-ah-noo*

We have led others astray.

MYRA

(whispering to MOLLY)

I'm supposed to go up and read now.

(MYRA walks up to the bimah and opens her book on a podium.)

We're going back to page 276 to read the haftorah we did earlier in English.

(MYRA begins reading from her Machzor. MOLLY and EMMA's dialogue should happen simultaneously with MYRA's continuous reading.)

MYRA

And the word of the Lord came to Jonah son of Amittait, saying: Arise, go to Nineveh, the great city, and proclaim against it, for their evil has come before me.

(EMMA hangs up her phone and reenters the sanctuary.)

EMMA

(Whispering to MOLLY.)

I have to go into work.

MYRA

And Jonah rose to flee to Tarnish from before the Lord, and he went down to Joppa, found a ship going to Tarnish, paid its hire, and went down into it to come with them to Tarnish from before the lord.

MOLLY

But it's Yom Kippur.

MYRA

Now the lord cast a mighty wind into the sea, and there was a mighty tempest on the sea, and the ship threatened to be broken up.

EMMA

I know. Ross called. I've got to go. Let Imma know please.

(EMMA grabs her coat and keys off the ground in front of her.)

MOLLY

(whisper shouting)

Mom!

(MOLLY follows EMMA out to the lobby. MYRA keeps reading.)

MOLLY

It's Yom Kippur. You have to stay.

EMMA

It'll be okay.

MYRA

And the sailors were frightened, and each one cried out to his god, and they cast the cargo that was in the ship-

(MYRA cuts off suddenly. She speaks the next line to an unseen congregant.)

Rob- you're reading the next section. Can you just- thanks.

MOLLY

No! What if you aren't sealed for a new year? You have to do a good job on Yom Kippur.

(MYRA scrambles off of the bimah and out into the lobby.)

MYRA

What's going on?

MOLLY

Don't let her leave!

MYRA

You're going?

EMMA

I have to be at this meeting.

MYRA

You didn't tell Ross it's a holiday?

EMMA

I really thought I did. I guess I forgot, but I could have sworn-

MOLLY

Imma, please make her stay. It's the most important day.

MYRA

It's important because we set it aside to admit our mistakes.
But we can do that any day.

MOLLY

What about being sealed for a good year in the book of life?
What about getting a clean slate once you apologize?

MYRA

I have never presented that as anything but a story.

MOLLY

You said there's a lot to learn from stories.

MYRA

The lesson of that story is not that God has a big book where he marks down who repented well and who should be punished. You seem so upset, Molly. How about we drop Mom at work and go home to rest.

(The light closes in around MOLLY alone).

MOLLY

You knew the book wasn't real! I wish it was. Well, what do you do now? I don't know. There's no way to make it better. Do you just go home? Well what's next? Nothing's next! I'm just bad. I'm just this way forever. I'm sorry!

(The stage begins to fade into darkness.)

I'm sorry, I'm sorry, I'm sorry.

Scene 8

(EMMA and MOLLY are bringing their designs to life via jumbo cardboard blocks and an assortment of broken down boxes. EMMA's completed blueprint is hung on MOLLY'S bedroom wall.

EMMA is hot glueing blocks together while MOLLY is trying to cut a small rectangle out of a longer cardboard rectangular prism with an exacto knife. Her hand is shaking and eyes are narrowed in focus. She makes a significant mistake in her cutting. The box is ruined)

MOLLY

Are you serious! Ugh! I don't want to do this anymore.

EMMA

I'm not good at that small, crafty kind of stuff either.

MOLLY

Isn't that your job?

EMMA

The great part of my job is I hire people to make the details all pretty and perfect for me.

(EMMA yells toward MOLLY's open bedroom door.)

EMMA

Myra!

MYRA

(yelling from offstage)

What!

EMMA

Come up here a sec!

(EMMA rummages through the pile of cardboard and picks up a rectangular prism similar to the original. She uses a ruler and sharpie to trace the same dimensions for the rectangular cutout that MOLLY was trying to cut on the first box.)

EMMA

Imma is really good at that. Magic hands.

(MYRA enters.)

MYRA

Wow. Progress... Molly, make sure you don't trip at night on your way to the bathroom.

MOLLY

Imma.

(MYRA raises her hands in mock surrender.)

MYRA

Why am I here?

EMMA

We need nimble fingers.

(MOLLY presents a fresh cardboard rectangular prism and an exacto knife.)

MYRA

You were letting her use that?

EMMA

She uses a power saw at school.

MOLLY

Well how else are we supposed to build a canoe?

EMMA

I was watching.

(MYRA shakes her head, clearing it like an etch-a-sketch)

MYRA

You're right. I trust you.

(MOLLY shows MYRA the lines on the fresh box.)

MOLLY

Just cut on those lines.

(MYRA smoothly cuts out the rectangle.)

MYRA

That good?

MOLLY

Perfect!

(Beat.)

MYRA

Can I help?

(MOLLY nods enthusiastically and passes her a second glue gun.)

EMMA

So Molly. We need a boat update.

MOLLY

We started putting pieces we cut together today, and it actually is starting to look like a boat. Jackie helps me because I'm not good at making everything all straight. But she still says I'm helpful.

MYRA

That's so good.

MOLLY

I guess.

EMMA

What are you guessing about? You've been unbelievably excited.

MOLLY

Yeah.

(MOLLY fidgets for a beat.)

Those kids... that did the thing to my locker or whatever. They're been making fun of Jackie for the boat club. I just feel bad because they only started bothering her when they saw us eating lunch together. It's not fair that she makes me happy, and I just make her get bullied.

EMMA

You did not make anyone bully anyone.

MOLLY

I know.

EMMA

Please don't make this out to be your fault. Jackie is lucky to have you for a friend.

MOLLY

If you say so.

EMMA

Molly I have wanted this so much for you, and I am not going to allow you to convince yourself that this is bad somehow.

MOLLY

I'm not, I just...

MYRA

You are a great kid, Molly.

MOLLY

Okay! Can you please just chill? I went to your stupid doctor this week. Isn't that enough?

EMMA

What doctor?

(A beat passes. MOLLY turns red.)

MOLLY

I'm sorry. I forgot I wasn't supposed to say.

(The end of MOLLY's sentence trails off, and then there is silence. The painful kind.)

EMMA

I cannot believe you.

MYRA

Molly. Can you go please?

MOLLY

This is my room.

MYRA

Right.

(MYRA walks to the doorway, where she stops and looks back at EMMA. EMMA is still sitting on the floor.)

MYRA

Emma. Please.

(EMMA takes her time getting up before she follows MYRA into the living room.)

MYRA

Emma?

(EMMA balls herself up in the very furthest corner of the couch. She doesn't answer.)

MYRA

She needed help, Emma. I was going to tell you today.

EMMA

We said we weren't getting her tested!

MYRA

No, you said that you'd 'handle it'. But you didn't, so-

EMMA

(cutting her off)

Were you not just in that room? She has her first friend since, I don't know, pre-K because she joined a club on *my* suggestion.

MYRA

That doesn't fix the schoolwork, the emotional dysfunction

EMMA

(cutting her off again)

You're using shrink words now?

MYRA

No... dysfunction isn't a word set aside for psychiatrists.

EMMA

Please don't use your intelligence like a weapon.

MYRA

I'm not. You know what the word dysfuncti-

EMMA

(cutting her off)

How do you think so little of me that you don't bother to tell me what you are doing medically to our child?

MYRA

You brushed me off. You told me that you'd do something, but you never did. You flipped your shit two years ago when the shrink got Molly tested, and then when I tried to talk to you last week you wouldn't even-

EMMA

(cutting her off)

I was late to work!

MYRA

I didn't see another choice.

EMMA

There are infinite possible worlds with infinite possible choices. In this one you chose to sneak around behind my back.

(Beat.)

MYRA

You don't understand.

EMMA

Don't. I have a different opinion than you, but that does not mean it's invalid. I will not let you do that to me. This is your Ivy League elitism, and-

MYRA

(cutting her off)

MIT isn't Ivy League.

EMMA

Really? Right now?

(Beat.)

MYRA

I'm not great at saying thank you. She got off the activity bus smiling on Friday. Thank you Emma. The club was a really good idea.

EMMA

But?

MYRA

But what about when she's an adult and you can't make her join school groups? What does she have for the long haul?

EMMA

Can't you just accept her as is? God, it's just never enough for you, never.

(EMMA stalks to the door.)

I need air.

MYRA

Emma... We just had Yom Kippur. It was rocky, but its still a fresh start. Let's not leave things this way.

(EMMA is paused at the front door.)

EMMA

I feel like you put a pitchfork through the back of my head while I was sleeping.

MYRA

I'm sorry. I didn't understand how you would feel about this personally. I figured once it was over, you'd be relieved someone had done it. I'm sorry.

(EMMA shrugs.)

MYRA

How can I fix it?

EMMA

You can't.

MYRA

How do I make it better?

(A beat.)

Do we not get the results?

EMMA

I'm scared, Myra. Does she have something? Is something wrong with her? How did she get it? Are they going to tell us she's stupid or has a personality disorder or-I didn't wonder before. But, if there's a computer out there crunching statistics, I guess I frickin' want to know.

(They stare at each other.)

We should get the results. Since we can't undo it, that's the way forward.

MYRA

Emma I-

EMMA

I don't forgive you yet.

Scene 9

(MOLLY does homework at the kitchen table. MYRA sits with her. The table has become a work area. There is a big cup of writing utensils and a white board with markers. All of MOLLY's folders are labeled and neatly laid out. Her school planner is open. A large sand timer sits on the table, and the sand is flowing.)

MOLLY

I need a snack.

(MOLLY gets up.)

MYRA

You can have one when the sand runs out.

MOLLY

But I'm hungry.

MYRA

There can't be more than a few minutes left.

MOLLY

We agreed that I can have one snack before dinner! What happened to "agreements that work for all of us"? Isn't that what the doctor said?

MYRA

We also agreed that while the sand is running, its work time.

MOLLY

Great, well, I guess it's my fault for not including a starvation clause.

(Beat.)

Where's mom?

MYRA

I don't know.

(MYRA checks her watch.)

MOLLY

I thought she was coming home early.

MYRA

Yeah, I did too. Look Molly. In the couple minutes it would take you to fight me for an apple, you could just have the work done.

(MOLLY dramatically drops into her seat and gets back to work. Both legs bounce wickedly fast.

The sand runs out.)

MOLLY

Break time!

(MOLLY jumps up, snatches a snack from the pantry, and scampers off, exiting.)

MYRA

(Calling after MOLLY.)

Ten minutes!

Scene 10

(EMMA works in her office. She sits at a desk, drawing on a big piece of paper. It is dark except for the warm lighting of her desk lamp. There is a knock on the door. MYRA enters before EMMA can respond.)

EMMA

Hm? Oh. What are you doing here?

MYRA

You haven't been getting my calls?

EMMA

You called?

(EMMA picks up her phone.)

Shit. It died.

MYRA

You were supposed to be home at four. Surely you noticed that it's fully dark outside.

EMMA

Fuck. I'm sorry, I was just so in the zone.

MYRA

It's ten P.M. Somehow I doubt 'the zone' is that immersive.

EMMA

Myra. I'm sorry.

(Beat.)

I don't know what you're looking for me to say.

MYRA

I thought you meant it when you said you would help.

EMMA

It's just hard for me.

MYRA

There wasn't even a client holding you here. All you had to do was come home.

EMMA

I got side tracked.

(MYRA throws her hands into the air.)

MYRA

Use a clock.

EMMA

I am not a child.

MYRA

I had to march down to your workplace to collect you, so it sure feels like it.

(A beat. EMMA rifles through a stack of papers on her desk and pulls out a pamphlet. She opens it and starts reading.)

EMMA

1. Often fails to give close attention to details or makes careless mistakes in-

MYRA

What are you doing?

EMMA

2. Often has trouble holding attention on tasks.

3. Often does not follow through on instructions and fails to finish schoolwork, chores, or duties in the-

MYRA

(cutting her off)

Okay! Believe me, I spend all my time on neurodiversity mommy blogs. I know the ADHD symptoms.

EMMA

But these are me! We both know I gave it to her. So why is it that Molly deserves help, but I just need to do better?

MYRA

We don't *know* that you gave it to her.

(EMMA indicates the pamphlet.)

EMMA

This is a report card of what I did to her.

(She is quiet for a moment.)

I wanted to be a biological Mom so badly. I dreamed about holding my baby. She'd blink her soft eyelids open, and it would be my grandmother's eyes looking back at me.

(A beat.)

It hurts to look at her sometimes. Tuesday morning Ross chewed me out because I lost a client's only copy of their paint samples. That afternoon Molly came home with *another* missing assignment slip.

(EMMA reads from the pamphlet again.)

"Often loses things necessary for tasks and activities". I didn't know that was in my DNA. Nobody told me inadequacy is a disease I could give her.

MYRA

Stop. That's my wife and daughter you're talking about.

(EMMA smiles weakly.)

MYRA

I don't blame you. I don't blame Molly. There's no one to fucking blame. God, I miss my twenties. It was so simple. My whole life, my only goal was to science circles around men. Badass STEM bitch lady. Then I got there and... meh. All the jobs kind of sucked and the egos were just annoying, so I scrapped the first twenty nine years of my life and asked what's next. I can't do that now. I love Molly so fucking much, but I don't like being a mother. I thought we'd have the perfect setup. You'd earn the money. I'd take care of the kids, have plenty of spare time to write my poems. I thought by now I'd have a poetry book and Molly would be middle school valedictorian like I was, and everything would be perfect. Turns out parenting is just yelling, wiping tears, and making everyone resent me for being the bad cop. I have no idea how I'm supposed to control an autonomous being, but apparently that's my job now. And I can never quit.

(EMMA squeezes her lips together.)

EMMA

A happy little home full of perfect people is kind of a joke to me. I was Molly. I was difficult and impossible and ruined everything for the whole family. I don't have anything to offer in this situation.

MYRA

I'm not asking you to swoop in and save the day. I just need someone on my side when she starts sobbing about the homework so I don't feel like Satan for forcing her to push through. I think you're better than you give yourself credit for, and even if you aren't, I need you.

EMMA

Alright. The therapist said sand timers for Molly. I'm an adult, so I can probably upgrade right? Hey Siri, set an alarm for 4 pm Monday through Friday.

(Siri lets EMMA know the alarm is set. EMMA shoves her things into her work bag and gets her coat. She flips off the lamp on her desk, and the room is dark.)

Scene 11

(EMMA and MYRA sit at the kitchen table, which is strewn with a number of cardstock circles and strips. EMMA cuts out a final strip. MOLLY stands in front of the whiteboard (now a kitchen staple) and sticks four strips onto a cardstock circle taped to the board.)

EMMA

Alright, so what are you making there?

(MOLLY scrunches her eyes.)

MYRA

Hey, it's okay. No penalty for trying.

MOLLY

Diploid..

EMMA

Diploid what?

MOLLY

A diploid cell.

MYRA

Right. So it has two sets of the genetic material.

MOLLY

I know!

MYRA

I know you know. I was just remembering.

EMMA

All right. So what do you want to do first? Mitosis or... the other one.

MYRA

Meiosis.

EMMA

Right.

MOLLY

Mitosis. It has less steps.

EMMA

I like how you think.

MYRA

Good memory.

MOLLY

I can remember some stuff. I'm not stupid.

MYRA

I know. Okay, you have your diploid cell. What's next?

MOLLY

The stuff inside replicates.

(MOLLY grabs four more strips off the kitchen table and puts them in the circle beside the others.)

MYRA

Yeah, but is that what it looks like when they replicate?.

(MOLLY stares at it for a long time. MYRA opens her mouth to speak, but EMMA puts a hand on her shoulder.)

EMMA

(whispering)

She has it.

(The silence is long. MOLLY tentatively reaches out her hand and moves the strips so that they make four X-s.)

EMMA

Perfect. They make little crosses.

(MYRA elbows EMMA hard in the side, and EMMA smiles, raising her eyebrows back at MYRA.)

EMMA

Alright, what happens now?

(MOLLY is silent for a long pause.)

MOLLY

I don't... I'm not sure.

EMMA

Do you know what you're stuck on?

MOLLY

Well... they either make four cells... or two cells. But I don't know which.

EMMA

We had a trick for that. Do you remember?

(A beat.)

What are we doing mitosis or... the other one.

MYRA

Meiosis.

EMMA

That.

MOLLY

Mitosis.

EMMA

And how are those words different?

MOLLY

That's what I don't know!

EMMA

Hey, hey. I just didn't ask the question clearly. How are those words spelled differently?

(MOLLY thinks for a pause.)

MOLLY

Mitosis has a T in it.

EMMA

Mitosis has a T in it. And what else has a T in it?

(MOLLY scrunches her eyebrows.)

EMMA

Two or four?

(MOLLY's smiles.)

MOLLY

Oh. That thing.

(MOLLY grabs two more circles off the table. She sticks them beneath the cell she's made. She takes apart the crosses and moves the 'genetic material' to place four single strands in each of the two cells.)

MYRA

High five, kid.

(MOLLY high fives MYRA and then EMMA.)

EMMA

Alright, enough of this. Time for ice cream.

(MYRA pulls a gallon of ice cream from the fridge and EMMA collects bowls and spoons. MOLLY plops down at the table.)

MOLLY

Imma.

MYRA

Hm?

MOLLY

Why don't I take medicine?

MYRA

Are you sick?

MOLLY

No. When I go to the special testing room during lunch, the nurse comes in and gives medicine to some of the other kids finishing their tests. I asked this boy Bobby about it. He has ADHD too. He said the medicine helps him focus and do things

right the first time. His doctor said it's like glasses for ADHD.

MYRA

Some kids take medicine for ADHD, but you don't have to.

MOLLY

Maybe it would make me better.

MYRA

Well aren't these things we're doing helpful? Using the strategies and learning different ways.

MOLLY

I don't know.

EMMA

Are you saying you want medication?

MOLLY

If there's a magic pill to make me normal, I want it.

(EMMA loses interest in her ice cream.)

MYRA

Your brain works differently, but you're not broken.

MOLLY

Yes I am Imma!

MYRA

It really breaks my heart that you believe that.

MOLLY

Breaks your heart? I think that's the best news ever. A bad.. cake, a bad cake isn't broken. It's just disgusting because there's too many eggs and not enough sugar and nothing can be done about it. That's just how the cake is, bad. But you can fix something that's broken. When you fix a broken T.V., nobody has

to know there used to be a problem. The pill could fix me. It would be like I was normal the whole time.

MYRA

You want to boil your brain in chemicals and turn into someone else?

EMMA

(quietly)

That's not what she said.

MYRA

You think she should be medicated?

EMMA

Dr. Benson did say it was an option.

MYRA

Aren't you the one who didn't want this?

EMMA

Look at how the other stuff has worked out. We aren't doing this to her anymore. She's coming to us and asking for help.

MOLLY

Bobby said it made everything easier. Like he could just do the things adults told him to do. People stopped getting mad at him all the time.

EMMA

Let's talk to Dr. Benson about it at your next appointment.

(Beat.)

EMMA

(to MYRA)

Okay?

(MYRA touches EMMA's hand across the table.)

MYRA

Okay. I trust you on this.

Scene 12

(MOLLY storms in and slams the front door, dropping her backpack on the floor. MYRA picks it up after her and hangs it on a hook.)

MYRA

Molly, the school called. I know what happened. I'm sorry.

MOLLY

I'm fucking trying! I'm trying harder than ever. Can it ever just be fucking enough?

(MYRA flinches at the language.)

MYRA

I know. I told them you'd been improving so much because of the club. They said its policy, and they can't make an exception. Nobody can participate in an after school activity while they're failing a class.

MOLLY

God I hate math! The numbers just don't stay in my head and then Ms. Keller tells me to be neater so I don't lose track, but I don't have enough time to finish the tests as it is!

MYRA

Can I help? Maybe I can get it if you show me.

MOLLY

Jackie said that she'd tutor me.

MYRA

Oh. Well that's great.

MOLLY

Yeah. I told her why I couldn't come anymore, and she offered to take the activity bus to our house after wood club.

MYRA

I'm so glad you've made a friend Molly. I was worried you'd lose her if you couldn't participate anymore.

MOLLY

Ok, Mom don't be weird. Especially when she comes over here. Just be cool.

MYRA

No worries, I'm already the coolest.

(MYRA pulls an orange pill bottle out of the cabinet.)

MYRA

Don't forget your afternoon dose. Especially if you're going to be studying.

(MOLLY pours herself orange juice and takes the pill, moving her whole head to gulp it down. MYRA starts to make dinner.)

MOLLY takes her math book out of her backpack and lays it open on the table. She writes $1377/27$ at the top of the board in a brightly colored dry erase marker. She talks to herself as she works, at first mumbling, but gradually increasing in volume.)

MOLLY

Start from the beginning. Don't get ahead. Is 27 smaller than 1? No. 13? No. How should I know how many go 27's go into 137!

(MOLLY takes a deep, purposeful breath.)

Its okay Molly. You have the time you need. Go down the list. MOLLY writes 27X2 on the board, and solves that multiplication problem. She'll need to work up to 5, and she stacks each problem beneath the last as neatly as she can.

MYRA

You doing okay?

(MOLLY nearly jumps out of her skin, suddenly remembering she is not the only one in the room.)

MOLLY

I'm still sad.

MYRA

No. You sound a little... frantic

MOLLY

I'm just focusing out loud.

(The doorbell rings. MOLLY's marker falls from her hand.)

MOLLY

Jackie!

(MOLLY takes off for the front door, then stops half way to look back at MYRA.)

Imma, I'm serious. Don't embarrass me.

(MOLLY runs the rest of the way to the door before MYRA can respond. As MOLLY pulls open the door, the lights fade out.)

Scene 13

(We can just make out MYRA feeling her way down a dark hallway. She opens the door to MOLLY's bedroom, and she squints as the light burns her eyes. MOLLY sits in her now completed cardboard house, and we just see the top of her head through a window. The house is elaborate and strange, equipt with battle devices but also decorated with a cardboard piece mosaic. MYRA stops in the doorway for a moment, grinning.)

MYRA

It's the middle of the night. Why are you awake?

(MOLLY startles at the sound of MYRA's voice. She uses the periscope to see MYRA's face.)

MOLLY

You have pillow creases. The test is tomorrow. I couldn't sleep.

MYRA

You'll do better with rest.

(MOLLY ducks out the front door of her house/castle, holding a rainbow of flair pens, a notebook, and a textbook.)

MOLLY

Maybe, but if I'm awake I might as well study.

(MYRA sits down on MOLLY's bed.)

MYRA

Is the Adderall still keeping you up?

MOLLY

No, I told you that stopped being a problem weeks ago. I sort of sleep better than ever now.

EMMA

Better?

MOLLY

Yeah. I finish the things I'm supposed to, so the thought of tomorrow doesn't keep me up as much.

MYRA

I'm glad the medicine has been helping you, Molly.

MOLLY

I know you didn't want me to take it.

MYRA

I think this was a time you knew better than I did.

MOLLY

Everyone always knows better than me.

MYRA

No. I just love you so much. I didn't want to put something in you to make you change. You're so wonderful the way you are.

(Beat.)

MYRA

I haven't been in there since you attached the periscope.

MOLLY

Try it.

(The two duck into the giant structure. MYRA tries out the periscope.)

MYRA

Very cool. I feel like we could have just given you a pair of binoculars though.

MOLLY

No because binoculars help you see stuff far away, but you still can't have anything blocking the line of sight. With a periscope you can see over everything. If your view is blocked by water or trees or anything really, a periscope is the only thing to help you see.

MYRA

I guess I just hadn't thought about it much.

(A beat passes. The two just sit inside of the castle, and we can see them through the open door.)

MOLLY

Do you think I'll pass tomorrow?

MYRA

Are you kidding? You've been studying like there's a gun pointed at you. You're going to wipe the floor with those numbers.

(MOLLY smiles.)

MYRA

Alright, I really think you have to at least try to sleep for a little.

(MOLLY crawls out of the house and gets in bed. MYRA follows her.)

MOLLY

Can you do the thing?

MYRA

Who do you think I am? Of course I'm going to do the thing.

(MYRA grabs the end of the comforter and waves it up and down so that it billows like

a parachute over MOLLY. MOLLY laughs. MYRA smooths the blanket back down.)

EMMA

Goodnight.

(MYRA kisses Molly on the head.)

MOLLY

Love you, Imma.

MYRA

Love you too.

Scene 14

(MYRA works on dinner in the kitchen. EMMA enters, dropping her stuff on the ground. EMMA starts to walk away, then freezes in front of a homemade poster that says 'HOOK!!!'. EMMA backtracks, and puts her stuff on the hook.)

MYRA

I've trained you well.

EMMA

I'm a grown woman. Figured I should stop leaving my shit all over the floor.

(EMMA walks into the kitchen. A table cloth covers the kitchen table, a candle in the middle. Two places are set, each with a glass of wine. There are no school supplies in sight.)

What's this for?

MYRA

Molly called. She got a B+ on the math test. That puts her at a C, so she's at her club. She'll be there late because apparently they're revealing their boat in the high school pool next week.

EMMA

Thank god. I think one more night of studying might have broken her brain.

MYRA

And, since we have an evening all alone here...

EMMA

Oh.

(EMMA puts her hands on MYRA's waist.)

But it'll be so boring. What ever will we do with the hours and hours...

MYRA

I'm starting with wine.

(MYRA grabs the open bottle next to her and drinks from it directly. EMMA laughs, smacking MYRA playfully.)

EMMA

Classless.

(EMMA takes the bottle and drinks from it herself. A kitchen timer goes off.)

MYRA

Dinner's ready! Go sit before it's cold and gross.

(EMMA sits down, and MYRA spoons a serving onto each of their plates. They start eating.)

EMMA

(mouth full)

So goob.

MYRA

I liked it before I saw it partially digested.

(Beat.)

EMMA

This is such a good day.

MYRA

Because of this?

EMMA

Yeah. And, remember the guy I did the hotel lobby for?

MYRA

The capital R *Right* rug?

EMMA

Yes. Well, I guess I picked a good rug because he loved the design. He's hiring me again to do the penthouse rich-people-suite.

MYRA

That's amazing!

EMMA

Yeah. You know, Ross hates my flakiness, but he can't deny I make his clients very happy.

MYRA

You make everyone happy. It's almost frustrating.

(EMMA smiles weakly.)

EMMA

I'm glad you still think of me that way.

MYRA

You make every moment fun. It's just, when life isn't joyful, fun-- tastes sickly sweet. It leaves a bad taste because sweetness isn't right when the whole world is made of flaming hot dog shit.

EMMA

You fought so hard to make our lives sweet again. I appreciate you.

(MYRA gets up to give EMMA a kiss on the head.)

Scene 15

(MYRA and EMMA stand at a punch table. EMMA has spilled a little punch on her shirt, and (MYRA wipes it aggressively with a damp napkin. The table is set up near a high school lap pool, an artisan wooden canoe floating on the surface.

MOLLY trips and falls onto the side of the stage opposite her parents at the punch table. She looks back and is stunned for a moment.)

MOLLY

(Calling behind her)

Hey! You're going to keep walking? I know you can hear me, asshole. Fine, I really don't care how you treat me at this point.

(MOLLY's volume increases as the recipient walks away, ignoring her.)

I'm effing used to it. But this is Jackie's day and if you do anything to her...

(MOLLY's is yelling at this point.)

You don't even want to know how I'll get you back!

(MOLLY dusts herself off and struts over to her parents.)

EMMA

You good?

MOLLY

What? Yeah. Why?

MYRA

You're all red and bouncy. If you've been jumping off the school roof... actually I do not need to know if you have been.

MOLLY

It was fucking Collin Ryder. He tripped me. I

EMMA

What a dick.

MYRA

Emma! He's twelve.

EMMA

You disagree?

MYRA

Well, no. I agree.

MOLLY

I just accept it at this point, but if he gives Jackie shit on her day, I will kill him.

MYRA

You don't have to just accept this sort of thing. You should tell someone that works at school.

MOLLY

No. I just want today to be fun.

(A beat passes.)

MOLLY

Have you been in the boat yet?

(EMMA smirks.)

EMMA

Imma's scared.

MOLLY

This pool is 6 feet deep and you've been able to swim since you were four.

MYRA

I know it's logically fine, but I guess I just don't like, um, new vehicles.

(MOLLY rolls her eyes and grabs each of her mothers' hands. She pulls them to the pull deck.)

(MOLLY climbs into the boat and then helps each of her moms enter in turn. The boat wobbles as they climb in. MOLLY untethers the boat from the pool deck and hands MYRA an oar, taking the other for herself.)

MYRA

Ah! Don't make me row.

EMMA

Oh, shut up.

(MYRA and MOLLY row the boat in circles and weaving patterns around the pool. MYRA gains confidence as she rows.)

MYRA

Hey Molly.

MOLLY

Hm?

MYRA

Lean back a second.

(MOLLY leans back, and MYRA whispers in her ear. MOLLY freezes for a beat, then whips around to look at MYRA).

MOLLY

Are you serious?

MYRA

Yeah. Yeah lets do it.

MOLLY

Oh my god! Okay... to the right on three. Ready?

MYRA

One.

MOLLY

Two.

MYRA

Three!

(MOLLY and MYRA abruptly shift to the right and lean. The boat capsizes. The three are dunked into the water and then come up shrieking.)

EMMA

What!

(MYRA and MOLLY are cracking up. The three swim to the flipped canoe and hold onto the side.)

EMMA

(to MOLLY)

How long were you planning this?

MOLLY

Not my idea!

(EMMA looks to MYRA.)

MYRA

I guess I was just feeling inspired.

(EMMA laughs and kisses MYRA, a difficult act as the pair try to keep themselves above water.)

MOLLY

This is just the best moment ever.

(The three laugh, trying to right the boat and dunking underwater in their struggle. As the lights go dark, their laughter lingers.

End of play.)