

TO-MORROW & TO-MORROW & TO-MORROW
A Play in One Act

Noelia Mann

CHARACTERS

Clementine (Merciful) George (Medea came from Colchis, present day Georgia)
Jax (god has been gracious)
Isa (strong)
Ravid(wanderer)
Seina (innocent)
Benoni (son of my sorrow)
Chorus Girl 1/ Doctor 1
Chorus Girl 2/ Doctor 2
Iris (messenger)
Verra (Verrat- to betray/truth)
Doctor 3
Narrator

SETTING

An urban city in northern New Jersey. Most of the action is limited to the third floor of a tall, somewhat shabby apartment building in an average part of the city. All of the characters' apartments are located along this hall. The action that takes place outside of the building is uncharacteristically devoid of passersby.

The play is set in the present, sometime in late August/early September when the air is still hot and heavy with humidity- the stagnancy of the gray air mirrors the stagnation of the characters at this point in their lives.

SCENE ONE

LIGHTS UP

The ceiling fan turns slowly round and round, pushing the hot, stagnant air to and fro between the french windows and the thrice locked door. CLEMENTINE closes her eyes, dizzily shutting out the image and struggles to take a gasp, having the terribly uncomfortable impression that she is breathing in someone else's air and that most of its oxygen content has been sucked out by the previous user. She moves her head slightly towards the window and feels the back of her neck stick to the sweaty leather cushions of the couch. A fly buzzes lazily by. She sighs in misery. Outside on the street below, a car door slams. A baby wails in the apartment next door and some voice calls incomprehensibly, the exact words lost somewhere in the dredge of the thick, late August air.

Footsteps on the stair.

CLEMENTINE tenses ever so slightly, the pressure visible only in the crinkling of the dark skin around her eyes as she clenches them tighter shut, and the raising of her freckled shoulders, freckles barely noticeable on the dark olive canvas.

The locks click back.

NARRATOR

Click.
Click.
Click.

JAX

I'm back.

CLEMENTINE

(Her eyes are still shut)
You're late.

JAX

Jesus, Clementine. I'm putting food on the table, right?

CLEMENTINE

Yea, you're putting food on the table.
(Silence)

JAX

Where's Ben?

CLEMENTINE

He's at Isa's. I had errands to run this afternoon.

JAX

I thought the reason you were home was to be with him! And you can't even take him to run errands with you?

CLEMENTINE

(Finally opening her eyes, yet still staring straight up at the revolving fan)
So you stay home with him and I'll work.

JAX

Ha yea, you'll work. Whattya gonna do Clementine? Gonna sell your paintings, huh?
(The edges of his mouth curls slightly up, a grimace of mockery that seeks to hurt her, and enjoys it)

CLEMENTINE

Anything.
(She speaks these words directly at him. Ever the image of self-control, only the flash of fire that rises in her eyes betrays her anger)

JAX

Right.
(He draws out the "i" sarcastically, turning from her with a smirk to make his way over to the fridge and pull out a beer, the first of what promises, as usual, to

be many. The cap flips off with a quiet “pop” and JAX throws his head back to take a long swig. He smacks his lips with satisfaction and wipes his mouth, missing a dribble of alcohol that crawls sluggishly down his chin. CLEMENTINE stares, her nostrils flaring slightly with disgust)

CLEMENTINE

What, don't think I can?

JAX

(Turning towards her, a maliciously spiteful smile disfiguring his face, he begins...)

When was the last time you sold one?

CLEMENTINE

(Choosing to ignore his malice)

Benoni is getting old enough now that he can stay at home alone after school. I don't need to be here with him anymore. I was thinking maybe now that the new school year has started I could-

JAX

Clementine! How're you gonna get a job?! You don't have a college degree! Barely a GED. Who do you think is gonna hire you?

CLEMENTINE

(Softly)

You underestimate me.

JAX

Oh God, not with that again. I'm just being realistic. Ben could probably use you at home another year anyway and things may be tight, but I don't think any of us are ready for you to be working full time. Remember what it was like at the restaurant, huh? We barely saw each other.

(As he speaks, he moves towards her, bending down slightly to look into her eyes, half patronizingly, half genuinely. She refuses to make eye contact with him, refuses to recognize his authority)

JAX (CON'T)

Fine! Go, get a job, what do I care!

(He throws up his hands in resignation and moves over the fridge for another beer)

CLEMENTINE

Jax, I feel like a caged animal here! When you got your promotion and we could get by with just you at work I still wanted to be working. But it was so important to you and your mother that I was home with the baby, and I wanted to be a good mother. So I stopped. But he's almost eight for Christ sake. Can't you just put aside your breadwinner

bullshit for one minute?! I know you think you know what's best for our family, for our son, but look around you! You and your mother come from some archaic age where it's not okay for a woman to have her own career, her own passions, her own life.

JAX

O Jesus, Clementine, leave my mother out of this. You have to get over your little vendetta against her. You're a grown woman. It's beginning to sound ridiculous.

CLEMENTINE

Vendetta against her!! Jax, have you seriously forgotten how she treated me? Made me feel like a prostitute for being pregnant and not married. Spoke to me like I was trash.

(His eyebrows raise as she speaks)

CLEMENTINE (CON'T)

What, you didn't think I noticed?

(Her voice cracks slightly with incredulity)

CLEMENTINE (CON'T)

Didn't notice the looks, the lowered voice as she told all her little neighborhood friends about my dubious past, my questionable lineage, my promiscuity. Tried to convince you I was a bad influence, trouble, a marr on your good name and image. Never considered for a minute everything I'd given up to be with you, everything I'd-

JAX

Clem, don't start with that again. Don't try and guilt trip me. It's not my fault your family didn't like me, anymore than it is my fault that you think my mother wasn't perfectly polite to you absolutely all the time. You didn't have to leave-

(A deep wine tone appears in CLEMENTINE's face as the blood rushes to her head, casting a grotesque shadow across her attractive features. Yet, her voice lowers down to a deep, quiet rumble, full of sincerity and passion)

CLEMENTINE (CON'T)

Didn't have to leave? Jax-

(The sound momentarily sticks in her throat. She continues with even more calm than before)

It was for you. It has always been just to be with you. And I would do it again and again and again. I couldn't even imagine an alternative.

(She turns away in silence)

(A shadow of remorse flashes across his face. Something else, too. Maybe guilt? It is gone too soon to define)

NARRATOR

(In quick succession)

TICKTICKTICK.

TICKTICKTICK.

CLEMENTINE

God, I hate your ring tone.

(JAX ignores her and pulls the small black device from his pocket)

CLEMENTINE

Who is it?

JAX

My mother.

CLEMENTINE smirks.

CLEMENTINE

Shouldn't you pick it up?

(JAX is silent. The ringing stops)

CLEMENTINE (CON'T)

I don't think I've ever seen you not pick up you mother's calls.

JAX

The timing just felt too ironic.

(They fall back into silence. Moments pass. JAX drains the bottle, placing it beside him on the island and looks longingly at the fridge. CLEMENTINE takes up her silent vigil of the ceiling fan once again. The clock above the door ticks away)

JAX

(Mumbling)

Shit.

CLEMENTINE

What?

JAX

Left something at the office.

CLEMENTINE

So get it in the morning.

JAX

It's Saturday.

CLEMENTINE

(Not really thinking...)

It's Friday. Oh, tomorrow-

JAX

I'll be back in... a couple hours.

CLEMENTINE

A couple hours!

JAX

It's seven o'clock on a Friday night. The whole goddamn world is trying to get into the city.

CLEMENTINE

Can't it wait?

JAX

No.

(He is out the door before she can protest further. CLEMENTINE sinks back onto the couch. Minutes passed. The clock strikes 7:30. DING. She rolls over and stares at its white face. Faceless. Sighing, she stands in one fluid movement, grabbing the key from the island, her hand hesitating over the empty beer bottles that stand like sentinels along its perimeter. Suddenly, she raises her hand as if to knock them down. She thinks better of it and walks to the door, flicking the lights on her way out without turning. She locks the door behind her. Footsteps sound on the stairs and as she turns, the crown of a blonde head appears, ascending. A face joins the head, and soon a body)

CLEMENTINE

Hello!

VERRA

Hi.

(The blonde head mumbles, face to the carpet. She looks up nervously for a moment, fumbling with her keys as CLEMENTINE passes)

CLEMENTINE

Mmm. Your perfume. My mother used to wear that. I love that smell.

(VERRA grunts something inaudible in response, smiles vaguely and slinks into her apartment, closing the door quickly behind her with a tiny. CLICK. CLEMENTINE stands alone in the hallway staring at the door. She shrugs her shoulders and moves several doors down, rapping twice before quickly entering)

SCENE TWO

(No time has passed)

(CLEMENTINE enters the apartment, closing the door behind her. The kitchen is neat, far more so than her own. The newspapers are stacked neatly under the phone and a radio faintly reports the traffic on the GWB from behind the chrome toaster. The fluorescent lights over the cutting board crackle vaguely. CLEMENTINE crosses and flicks them off. Leaving the lights on when no one is in the room makes her anxious)

CLEMENTINE

Isa? Helloooo? Where are you guys?

ISA

(From another room...)

Hey Clem, is that you? I'm coming.

(Almost immediately, a door to the left opens and a tall woman bustles into the room. She is curvaceous and dark complexioned with wild hair that flies about her face, giving her the constant appearance of motion. She is handsome rather than beautiful and her features are far from dainty, though one can hardly help but notice her in a room nonetheless)

CLEMENTINE

Hey. Where's the kiddo?

ISA

(She shrugs apologetically)

He's finishing Indiana Jones. I didn't think you'd mind.

CLEMENTINE

I don't mind. So how ya been? I really appreciate you staying with him for a couple hours, by the way.

ISA

Oh it's no trouble. Did you guys have fun?

(She winks)

CLEMENTINE

He was late.

(CLEMENTINE stares at a speck on the floor intently, as if to set it ablaze with her eyes)

ISA

Late? What does late mean?

CLEMENTINE

He came home at quarter of. Left again at 7:00.

ISA

What?! I thought he was supposed to be home at 5:00 today.

CLEMENTINE

Yea, so did I.

(She laughs good-naturedly)

So I guess I kept you here with the little guy under false pretenses.

ISA

No, we had a great time together. He's a piece of work!

*(CLEMENTINE'S tinkling laugh echoes in the sparsely furnished room.
'Tastefully minimalistic,' ISA always said)*

CLEMENTINE

I'm glad.

ISA

Ooo, you will never believe what happened today!

CLEMENTINE

Mm?

ISA

I swear, Clem, you will never believe this girl. God! She's the most selfish bitch... you know those people who you absolutely always have to pick up the pieces whenever they screw up? But it's fine because everybody expected you to be there-

CLEMENTINE

(CLEMENTINE smiles with recognition)

Seina? What did she do now?

ISA

Wait til I tell you.

(Pauses dramatically)

She wants to come and stay with me. Like to live. Here. Can you freaking believe it?

CLEMENTINE

I don't understand. You two have never gotten along. Why doesn't she write to your mom? Or just move back in with your dad? They were always close, right?

ISA

(This has really hit a nerve)

Oh, yea, they've always been close (*resentful*). Except my sister's uh...little habit...probably wouldn't go over too well in the psycho's house. And poor dad can barely take care of himself. I mean, he just finished bailing her out. Not to mention everything he poured into the auditions and the traveling and the classes for her. Of course she quit the studio, like everything else she's ever done, but not before dad could pay for the semester. Non-refundable, stupid brat.

CLEMENTINE

This is probably going to sound tactless, but didn't your father get part of the estate, you know, when they separated? I mean growing up your family always seemed pretty okay on that end.

ISA

Uh Uh (*shaking her head*) Mom kept everything. Said he wasn't "fit." Said he's exploited Sei, said he'd practically sacrificed her to salvage some part of his crushed dreams or something crazy like that.

CLEMENTINE

How could she justify that? I thought your father had been in business?

ISA

God, no! Not initially. My father always wanted to be an actor. Did the whole bit- the headshots, the auditions, even got into some fancy theatre school in the city. Thought he had it made. But, like it so often goes, the people in charge can't recognize talent, not if it was dancing naked in front of them. He couldn't get a job. He traveled around, took some blue collar jobs to get food on the table, married my mother with barely a cent in his pocket.

(She has been fussing around the kitchen up to this point, while CLEMENTINE listens politely from the table. Here, ISA turns back towards her)

ISA (CON'T)

You want some tea? (*CLEMENTINE nods consent. ISA starts to brew.*) Of course she, being who she was, couldn't stand the idea of the uncertainty, and when she had me she told him that he had to start contributing or that was it. That's when he took up the advertising job. He has that artistic eye they were looking for and he found a good position. And of course he was miserable. Hated the whole corporate world so much. When Seina started to show interest in theatre, naturally he was ecstatic.

CLEMENTINE

(With sympathetic sarcasm)

I'm sure your mother loved that.

ISA

(nodding) Well, you can only imagine! They fought all the time. She said he was setting Seina up for failure, the same failure he'd suffered. Said he was living through her and it was unhealthy, that he was pushing her too hard.

CLEMENTINE

What'd Seina think?

ISA

She just kind of went along with it. She's always loved the attention, and my father gave it to her, believe you me. *(Great jealousy creeps into her voice)* God, I remember, growing up, it was always, Seina this and Seina that- she and my father would disappear for days at a time while he took her around to auditions. Sometimes he'd even sneak her away so that by the time my mother found out it'd be too late already.

CLEMENTINE

I mean your mother was kind of justified in saying that that kind of lifestyle probably wasn't in Seina's best interest.

ISA

(Spitting the words bitterly) My mother only cares about what is in her best interest. She practically drove my father to drink- if she'd have cared about other people's "best interests" she wouldn't have abandoned my father and left me to rot.

CLEMENTINE

(Softly, trying not to upset her) Isa, I know you idolize him, but your father didn't always treat you so great either...

ISA

(sharply) My father did the best he could.

(CLEMENTINE bows her head silently, conceding that arguing the point is futile. ISA recognizes she may have been a little harsh, especially because she needs something from CLEMENTINE)

Which brings me to my question...

CLEMENTINE

Yes?

ISA

When Seina comes, which might be as soon as tomorrow, can she stay with you for a little bit? I just need some time to collect myself and to get everything together. It's such short notice.

CLEMENTINE

(Genuinely surprised) With me? I mean, where would she sleep?

ISA

Well, you have the guest bed right?

CLEMENTINE

(Blushing, realizing she's spoken without thinking first. Mumbles her response)
Oh, right, the guest bed...*(trails off)*

ISA

(Furrowing her brows in confusion) What?

CLEMENTINE

(Distracted, but trying to seem normal) Nothing, nothing. Yeah sure that's fine.

ISA

(Shaking her head with understanding) I didn't realize things between you were that bad.

CLEMENTINE

(Sternly; convincing herself?) No. Everything is fine. *(Quickly changing subjects)* But speaking of, I'd better get back and start dinner. And by start dinner I mean order in, because you know I'm a domestic disaster. *(laughing disingenuously)(calling)* Benoni, Benoni!

(A small boy appears from a door to the right of the kitchen. He has a sweet face and curly hair and is tall for his age, which is in that frustrating region when small tastes of independence have been given to him, so all public affection for his mother in particular are abandoned and reserved solely for times of little-boy-crisis. CLEMENTINE smiles at the sight of her son, reaching her arms out to him. He ignores her efforts, approaching ISA instead and in a comically serious air, announces...)

BENONI

Well, it looks like I must be going. Thank you for the movie and the popcorn.

(He shook her hand and proceeds to the door, looking back, injured, as the two women laughs at his miniature formality)

BENONI

Come on, mother.

CLEMENTINE

(Laughing) Ok, goofball. *(turning to ISA)* Thanks again Isa.

(ISA nods, furrowing her brows as if to indicate "of course" and shows CLEMENINE silently to the doorway. The two women kiss briefly on the cheek. BENONI leads the way down the empty hallway, stopping stiffly in front of his own door while his mother follows a few steps behind)

NARRATOR

CLICK.

(The door closes behind them)
LIGHTS DOWN

SCENE THREE

LIGHTS UP

(The next morning, about 9:30 am)

CHORUS GIRL 1

(From offstage)

Oop mind holding that door for just a minute? My hands are full...

CHORUS GIRL 2

Oh sure.

CHORUS GIRL 1

(Approaches with bags in each hand) God I wish they would fix that elevator. I mean I'm as much of a fan of getting in a little exercise as the next girl, but sometimes, convenience really does take precedence.

(CHORUS GIRL 2 laughs politely)

CHORUS GIRL 1

Who's even in charge of that? *(aside)* Hah, clearly I'm a very involved tenant.

CHORUS GIRL 2

Uh, I think it's 3B, so...Clementine and Jax.

CHORUS GIRL 1

Ohh. Well now I feel ratty. I promise I'm not a terrible person.

CHORUS GIRL 2

How do you mean?

CHORUS GIRL 1

Haven't you heard? I feel like everybody's gossiping about it. *(leaning in confidentially)* Well, apparently, Jax's been having a little affair on the side. Oh, nothing confirmed. Just, you know, coming in at all hours of the night and I even overheard her talking to 2A a couple days ago saying that he didn't even go to his mother's with them for labor day weekend.

CHORUS GIRL 2

Really? *(Quite interested)*

CHORUS GIRL 1

(Giving confirmation, with authority) Really.

CHORUS GIRL 2

Well (*shaking her head with disapproval*) I suppose the stress of moving into a new place and trying to settle down and all can be quite unnerving. Must have had something to do with it. I mean they've only been here, what, a year?

(*Looks to CHORUS GIRL 1 for her nod of approval*)

CHORUS GIRL 2 (CON'T)

So I suppose its his young blood just boiling over one last time before he tries to settle down into this...life. (*Reacting to CHORUS GIRL 1's raised eyebrows*) Not, of course, that I'd ever support that kind of thing. I'm just saying, when my Richard was still young, I remember the way he still looked at some of the girls who were younger or more attractive than I was, you know, especially after having had the girls. But at the end of the day, I always knew he'd come back to me. (*There is a touch of gloating in this*)

CHORUS GIRL 1

(*resentfully*) Well, I suppose we just can't all be as lucky.

CHORUS GIRL 2

Oh. I'm sorry. I'd forgotten...Andrew...I didn't mean to sound... (*trails off into silence*)

CHORUS GIRL 1

In any event (*still cold and bitter*), all I know is that, in her position, he'd be out on my doorstep faster than you can say betrayal. Kid or no kid!

CHORUS GIRL 2

Well, I really do hate to sound judgmental (*exactly what she is sounding*) but, well, she's already had the baby when they got engaged. And she was so young? I mean, it's just so..well... European. (*Sniff of disapproval*)

CHORUS GIRL 1

Well I don't know if its European, per say, but it somehow doesn't seem, decent...

CHORUS GIRL 2

Precisely. I'm just suggesting that this...er...unorthodoxy may be a cultural difference.

CHORUS GIRL 1

Well its certainly possible that he didn't realize just what he was getting himself into, hm? Although, to be honest, I wouldn't be surprised if they all turned out to be just rumors anyway. You how people around here get; they here one little thing and they misconstrue everything and just let their imaginations absolutely run away with them. And if it's one thing I simply will not stand for its unfounded judgment. (*Nose slightly into the air with a very "holier than thou" attitude that's totally unjustified*)

CHORUS GIRL 2

Right you are. Well, I've got to fly. Enjoy the day, dear!

CHORUS GIRL 1

Same to you!

(Simultaneously, they enter their apartments and slam the doors just as the top of JAX's head appears on the stair. He is slightly ragged looking, but there is a peace about his face. He carries a white paper bag with small oil stains in the corners. As he approaches, he straightens his tie and licks his free hand, running it over his head to smooth down any stray hairs. He pulls his keys from his pocket and is about to stick them into the keyhole when the door opens from the inside. CLEMENTINE's face appears. Dark circles under her eyes give her the impression of having stayed up all night.)

CLEMENTINE

Where the hell have you been?

(She stands in the doorway, refusing him entry. Behind her right shoulder BENONI stares at them over the island, his cheerios and comic of secondary interest)

CLEMENTINE (CON'T)

I've been calling you all night.

(He tries to move past her into the room. She holds her position, as if defending her castle from foreign invaders)

CLEMENTINE

You could have called from the office. Where were you?

JAX

(He shrugs nonchalantly) I ran into John on my way out. He invited me for a drink. Next think I know it's one and I really didn't feel like driving home then, probably wouldn't have been safe anyway, so I crashed at John's house. I didn't think it'd be that big a deal. I called this morning too, but no body picked up.

CLEMENTINE

(Rolling her eyes) I never heard it ring.

JAX

Is that my fault? Can you please move over so I can come in?

(CLEMENTINE steps aside. JAX enters and throws his briefcase down on the couch, before moving over to the island. He places down the paper bag next to the coffee pot, grabbing a cup from the open cabinet above the sink)

JAX (CON'T)

Hey buddy *(He rumples BENONI'S hair.)* I brought donuts.

(The boy eagerly hops down from his perch on the bar stool and stands on his tip toes to retrieve the bag, abandoning his soggy cereal altogether. He then promptly sits Indian style on the floor and gazes into the bag, his eyes wide with delight, carefully considering his options before pulling out a chocolate frosted

Boston crème and biting in with relish. CLEMENTINE hasn't taken her eyes off her husband)

CLEMENTINE

Look, Jax, I'm not the jealous type. I don't listen to rumors and I don't care what people think or say. But, seriously? You can't blame me for feeling suspicious. It's not even just me. People are starting to notice you're never around. Now you don't even come home at night? If I did that to you, you'd be livid.

JAX

(He stares at her.) So, what? You're accusing me of having an affair?!

CLEMENTINE

I don't know, are you?

JAX

You've got to be kidding me.

(Her eyes flashed to the little boy, still totally enveloped in his feast)

CLEMENTINE

Jax...

JAX

Jax, what? You're accusing me of having a goddamn affair! I had a drink with a friend and didn't want to drive home after. Jesus Christ, Clementine. I'm your husband and you can't even trust me?!

CLEMENTINE

That's enough. Not now.

(She raises her eyebrows obviously in BENONI'S direction. JAX stands, his eyes flashing with anger)

JAX

You're right. Ben, go to your room for a minute, okay? Mommy and I need to talk about something.

(The child looks down with devastation at his half eaten donut, his mouth ringed in yellowish crème)

JAX

(Cracking a smile) You can take it with you. But just this once.

(The boy scoops up his prize and disappears)

JAX

(Turning back to CLEMENTINE) Seriously. You had to start that in front of him?

CLEMENTINE

You started it! When you couldn't come home last night!

JAX

I told you where I was!

CLEMENTINE

You could have called!

JAX

Goddammit, Clementine-

(She clenched her mouth in fury. Her lips shrinking into a thin line under her straight, nearly Grecian nose)

BENONI

Mommy?

(The little boy's head emerges from the crack in his bedroom door. His mouth is still ringed in a sugary mustache, but his brows furrow with innocent concern. She looks at him, her features softening ever so slightly, and then back at her husband. She turns on her heel and disappears through the front door)

SCENE FOUR

(CLEMENTINE walks out into the hallway breathing heavily as if she's just been in a fight. She paces back and forth; a caged animal, trying to control her temper. She closes her eyes and mutters in anger under her breath. Leaning against the wall, she tips her head back slightly toward the heavens and slides down, until she is sitting next to her door in an upright fetal position. Minutes pass. Finally, she gathers herself together and re-enters the apartment. JAX has not moved from behind the island, yet he looks particularly pathetic standing there with his cup of coffee and vacant expression. They stare at one another in silence for a few minutes. JAX breaks the stance, moving to the refrigerator to pull out a small bottle of Bailey's, which he then pours carefully into his mug. CLEMENTINE closes her eyes in despair, but gathers her self before he turns back towards her)

CLEMENTINE

Jax...I'm...I'm sorry, ok? *(She clearly hates to admit she's wrong, and doesn't do it often)* I was...wrong. If you say you're not having an affair, then you're not. And that's the end of it.

JAX

I daresay I have just witnessed the first time in history that Clementine George admitted she was wrong. I feel we should notify the authorities. *(His attitude is totally slimy. He goes back to his coffee, very self satisfied.)*

CLEMENTINE

Jax. I'm trying to be the adult here. Indulge me for one minute? *(Meeting only silence, she continues...)* Baby...I know things have been a little..oh... rocky maybe...what with money being so tight and I know things at work haven't been great, and you've had to spend so many late nights there and working the whole weekend but it's gonna be ok, alright? We've gotten through a lot worse than this, huh? We're gonna figure it out and once we have enough money we'll leave this god forsaken place and go back...

JAX

I don't want to leave Clementine! God, I thought we'd talked about this before! This is the best place for Ben to go to school and its a safe and nice neighborhood to raise him...

CLEMENTINE

Safe and nice? Since when do you want safe and nice? What happened to the Jax I married, huh? *(She smiles, trying to make light of a very serious conversation)* *(Loses the smile slowly)* Huh? What happened to the guy I married?

JAX

(refusing to look at her) We have a kid now, Clem. Things are different. We can't just do whatever the hell we want. I'm just saying we can't raise a family in that opium den you call ho-

CLEMENTINE

(Sharply) I am not suggesting we go back there! I left that all behind a long time ago. And of course I want what's best for Benoni just as much as you do. God, I would give my life a thousand times over for that little boy.

JAX

(Under his breath) Yea, but would you give up your romantic little illusions for him?

CLEMENTINE

(Sharply) I would give up everything.

JAX

(Just as sharply, challenging her) Yea, well so would I. And right now, that means putting aside my need to, I don't know what it is you want from me...go out and see the world I guess.

CLEMENTINE

(Softly) I just don't want you to fall into this trap- this yuppy, suburban, close minded trap. Don't you feel it here? God, it seeps through the walls and permeates the rugs. I feel like I can't breath for all the gossip and the judgment. Everything that's just a little bit different, just a little bit not in line with the norm-

JAX

(Cutting her off, shouting) And what's so wrong with that? Huh? What's so wrong with trying to fit in, for once? I can't fight against this forever, Clem, and neither can you!

CLEMENTINE

(Softly, calculating) Oh can't I?

JAX

(Just as softly) You'll die trying.

CLEMENTINE

So be it.

(They fall into silence. CLEMENTINE closes her eyes for a moment with resignation and then begins rinsing the dishes that had been soaking in the sink. A fly buzzes in through the open window, buzzing noisily around the enticing aroma of the sweat pooling at the nape of her neck. She swats it away tiredly)

CLEMENTINE (CON'T)

It's ten in the morning and I already feel like I'm drowning. It'll be Christmas by the time they fix the goddamn air conditioner.

(Ignoring her, JAX moves towards the fridge out of force of habit, lingering for a moment before the delicious gust of cold air that rushes out. He closes it again in resignation, recognizing that a beer at this hour may be a little excessive)

JAX

(Mumbling, under his breath) I need a cigarette.

CLEMENTINE

Go outside please.

JAX

(Staring at her) Obviously.

He reaches into his pocket to check that they are still there and moves towards the door.

CLEMENTINE

Wait. *(She calls after him, the edges of her voice tinged ever so slightly in hysteria)*
(She moves close to him, smiling sadly as she places a hand to his cheek. She stretches up, closing her eyes to kiss him, which he receives, though does not return. Her eyes snap open, the gentle look of sadness which had so recently painted her complexion giving way to a look of confused recognition.)

CLEMENTINE (CON'T)

That perfume...my mother's...

JAX

I haven't showered since last night. Probably just from the bar.

(He answers hurriedly, crossing to the door in two long strides and snapping it shut behind him, leaving CLEMENTINE standing, utterly alone, in the middle of the kitchen)

NARRATOR

TICKTICKTICK.

(She jumps)

(The phone on the counter vibrates with the ticking. She stares at it)

NARRATOR

TICKTICKTICK.

(She flips it open)

VERRA

(A female voice simpers out over the phone) Hey baby!

NARRATOR

That voice. Why did she recognize that voice?

VERRA (CON'T)

You left your keys here last night-

(The voice. The perfume)

(Clementine drops the phone with a loud THUD)

(Her hands shake)

(She flies to the door and disappears)

SCENE FIVE

CLEMENTINE

Isa, Isa?!

(She storms through the door. Hysteria colors her voice red, her hair and eyes wild as a trapped animal's that sees the approaching fire and has no where to run)

ISA

What's going on?

(ISA's brow furrows with concern as she stands from the laptop perched on the kitchen table, nearly knocking over her mug of coffee in her haste to rush towards her friend. CLEMENTINE stands shaking in silence in the middle of the room. She looks somehow smaller, or maybe the room has grown, yawning its jaw wide, as if to swallow her. ISA's eyes scan her face)

ISA

What happened?

(CLEMENTINE makes no answer. ISA places a comforting hand on the small of her back and leads, nearly carries, her to the table)

ISA (CONT)

(She urges gently) Sit.

(The women sit in silence. ISA waits patiently, eyes remaining fixed on CLEMENTINE's vacant visage, which stare unblinkingly off into the distance)

CLEMENTINE

(Finally) Jax.

(She stops. ISA says nothing. Waits. Minutes pass)

CLEMENTINE (CONT)

He didn't come home last night- There was a woman- *(She trailed off brokenly)*

(Finally, she turned to look at her friend.) Isa, what do I do?

(ISA reached out her hand to stroke CLEMENTINE's hair out of her face, her own contorted with pity and sadness)

ISA

Honey, you can't stay with him. He's got to leave or you do.

CLEMENTINE

Leave?! No. No I can't. We have a child, Isa! I can't- I could never-

ISA

Clementine. He has broken the most sacred and fundamental bond you share. He has broken your trust. There is little so intimate as important as the trust between a man and a woman. Without that, there can be no love.

CLEMENTINE

That's not true.

(She cries these words in a near whisper, throwing her head forward as if to help the words out. Her neck drops and her eyes close with despair)

CLEMENTINE (CON'T)

The apartment's in his name. Everything's in his name. I can't legally tell him to leave. And I have no where to go. I can't support us alone. I have no family here, no friends. *(She looked up)* Besides you *(she adds this apologetically, then shakes her head in outrage)* But even beyond that, he is my husband! I can't- I won't- I will not!

ISA

Clementine you don't have a choice!

CLEMENTINE

I do! I do have a choice! My family is all I have. There is nothing else. And I will hold it together if it is the last goddamn thing I do. If it kills me!

(They stand opposite each other, both shaking with anger)

ISA

It just might. It just might!

(Suddenly, a rap on the door)

NARRATOR

KNOCKKNOCKKNOCK.

(Neither moves)

(Finally, ISA moves slowly over to the door and looks through the peep hole. She looks back at CLEMENTINE with a strange mixture of fear, excitement and anger. Opens the door. RAVID and SEINA enter. RAVID is an older haggard looking man. It is clear he was once very good looking but the years and a hard life have taken their toll on him. He has the slightly mad look of an artist and his eyes dart about everywhere at once. He is never still and though not physically particularly impressive, he fills the room. SEINA creeps in after. She on the other hand, could never fill a room, even if multiplied exponentially. She is beautiful and far too thin. She looks ill. Literally, a starving artist. Her alluded drug abuse is apparent in the slightly yellowish skin and the bags under her eyes. She is quiet; she is used to other people speaking or her, especially RAVID)

RAVID

Honey! It's so wonderful to see you.

(He heads straight for her bedroom and plops his things on the bed)

ISA

(Still floored by the open door)
Hey dad, I didn't know you were co--

RAVID

(Paying no attention and cutting her off)
Sparkling water? Seina gets dehydrated so easily, don't you Sei? It's terrible on her complexion.

ISA

I- I don't have any. *(apologetically)* There's tap...

RAVID

(Gasping in horror)
Do you want to kill her?
(He clearly meant this as a rhetorical question but ISA raises her eyebrows, turns her head away and quickly mumbles...)

ISA

Yes.
(Both RAVID and SEINA seem not to hear)

RAVID

Well, I suppose we'll just have to go get some. Isa, you don't mind do you?
(He stands expectantly looking at her)

ISA

Actually, I do mi-

SEINA

(Quickly)
It's fine, I'll go.

RAVID

(Barking)
Stay right there, Seina.
(Turning towards ISA)
What do you mean by this? Your sister and I are guests. Must you insist on making us feel unwelcome?

ISA

Dad, I-

RAVID

(Raising his hand to stop her)
I don't understand you. You refuse to be civil towards your sister, for whatever reason. And then you treat me disrespectfully. Really, jealousy suits you terribly. I knew your mother would be a bad influence. She always swayed you so easily!

ISA

(Incredulous. Her injury is nearly indescribable)
What?! I've only ever defended you! I have only ever loved you!

RAVID

(Sniffing as he turns away, arms crossed across his chest)
Funny way you having of showing it.

ISA

(Quietly)
And you don't at all.

SEINA

Isa-

ISA

Don't even get me started on you! You've never been grateful for what-

RAVID

Enough!

SEINA

I'm going to go get water.

(The door clicks behind her, resounding in the heavy, hate-filled silence)

SCENE SIX

NARRATOR

The few feet between that door and hers seemed to span centuries. What wise man had once said, "We seek the truth and will endure the consequences?" *(She sighs, stopping in front of the ominous white door.)* She never was good with names.

JAX

That you?

(His voice is slurred. CLEMENTINE looks down at her watch. 9:30. Yup. About right.)

JAX (CONT)

Where you been? Ben fell asleep like an hour ago and you promised you would read to him or something. I thought when you left at 7:00 you said you'd be right back. Where've you been?"

(He speaks slowly but seemingly without taking a single breath, gesticulating grandly with his left hand and holding tightly onto the Irish coffee in his right fist.)

CLEMENTINE

You, of all people, are in not in the position to be asking ME where I've been. Or anybody, for that matter.

(CLEMENTINE says this very matter of factly, though still quietly enough that he has trouble deciphering her a confusion that blooms over his face, stretching down wards from his pink, glassy eyes to draw down his long mouth into a grimace)

JAX

Whattzat supposed to mean, huh?

(She turns around suddenly, eyes narrow with hatred, and hair wild about her face. Lightning flashes behind her, casting an eerie, grotesque shadow across her contorted features)

CLEMENTINE

I know, ok? The jig is up. I know about her and I know about everything. I know where you've been and I know what you've been doing. I know...

(She trails off, choking into silence. Yet, she holds her head high, and never once do her eyes begin to glimmer with tears. She was far too strong for that. JAX stares at her blankly, although his inebriation betrays him far more than he would have liked. The embarrassed furrow of guilt digs its way into the fleshy skin on his forehead)

JAX

(Bluntly) I have no clue what you're talking about.

(He turns his attention back to his beer)
(Never before had she looked upon this man and found him pathetic)

CLEMENTINE

(Quietly, deliberately, excruciatingly) You can't even admit. *(She shakes her head in disbelief)* You've been caught, your play's been called, and even now, you're too much of a coward to even admit to your cowardice.

(They stand in silence, he avoiding her burning eyes, and she willing him to turn and face her wrath)

JAX

Clementine, I- I can explain- She-

(He starts towards her. She jumps and backs away from his hand)

CLEMENTINE

(Shrieking in outrage) Explain!?

JAX

You have to understand. I'm only human, and here, I've been...well... I've been suffocating. You can't deny things haven't been good between us for a long time. We've just...grown apart Clementine. We were great, we were once great. We were giants. But we've since crumbled and I can't keep up that facade. I'm surprised you can.

CLEMENTINE

It was never a facade, Jax. Not for me. I was never faking it.

JAX

Imagine yourself in a couple years *(He pleads with her)* Do you really see yourself here? Is that future you really happy?

CLEMENTINE

I see myself with you, Jax. I see myself with you and our son and yes, with those two things I'm happy. Because that's enough. That's always been enough.

JAX

(Shaking his head sadly) I don't know what it is I'm looking for, but its something more than that.

CLEMENTINE

So, what does that mean? The two of us have to wait around here for you until you find it? Have to wait at home knowing you're out living some other life and having to guess whether or not you'll come home to us every night?

(JAX looks at her calculatingly)

JAX

No. *(He begins slowly)* No, I couldn't ask that of you. Clementine, I've been talking to my lawyer and he says this can be very smooth- there's no reason for things to get

complicated or ugly. The papers are on the table. If you have any questions I left his business card with it.

CLEMENTINE

(Blankly) Papers? Papers, what papers? Whose business card?
(Denial soaks her questions with ignorance, yet the dread that colors its edges betrays her understanding)

JAX

(His voice sharpening with impatience) Clementine...

CLEMENTINE

Jax, you can't be serious. You have a family, we are your family. You can't just throw us out onto the street because some shiny new blond trinket catches your attention. Jax, I have no job and no family, no money and nothing to my name. If you leave us, you are condemning your wife and child to the streets, and you know that.

JAX

Not my wife... and child. Clementine, Ben is staying here with us. We can provide for him here, and he shouldn't have to be taken out of school or away from his friends. We want to preserve some level of normalcy for him.

CLEMENTINE

(Laughing hysterically) Oh really? He's staying here, is he? You've thought this all through, haven't you? She already gotten comfortable in my bed? It will still be warm from my body by the time she's under the sheets! *(She stopped, her eyes wild and bloodshot)*

CLEMENTINE (CONT)

(Her voice drops suddenly and she simpers with gentle affection) Baby, come on. I know, I know things have been hard. But this is a phase, just a phase. These things happen in relationships and we just have to work on things a little bit. It will get better, I promise. This...this...other woman. I know she's not what you really want. I know you. This is some wild crazy boyish fling you've gotten into your mind. Once you come to your senses... You know what, I bet you didn't eat, huh? You know how you get when you drink on an empty stomach.

(She begins fussing around the kitchen making the motions of preparing a meal. He grabs her arms to stop her and she snaps her wrist back and clings onto his forearm, digging her nails to make white marks in his skin. The stand eye to eye)

JAX

You'll have enough money. I can arrange for everything.

CLEMENTINE

(Shrieking) I don't want your money!

JAX

Well then what do you want?

CLEMENTINE

You.

(JAX looks away and they share a moment of silence)

CLEMENTINE

I won't go. I won't leave you and I won't leave my son.

JAX

You don't have a choice.

CLEMENTINE

I do. I do have a choice. This is my life too. I will not abandon my family. Although you seem to have qualms about it, I do.

JAX

CLEMENTINE!! You will do as I say!

(With that he swings back his right arm as if to bring it crashing down, empty bottle and all, across her cheek. Her eyes clench involuntarily as she flinches from the impending blow)

NARRATOR

For a moment, she could see her own body, cheeks and head bejeweled in broken green glass and the steady oozing of thick red blood. The blow never came.

As she staggered out, she remembered that another wise man had once asked, "Do you want the truth or something beautiful?" It was too late to question the choice she'd made.

LIGHTS DOWN

SCENE SEVEN

LIGHTS UP

(RAVID and SEINA are set up in the living room, he coaching her on the reading of a monologue and she looking beyond miserable)

SEINA

(Without emotion, miserably)

Art thou afeared to be the same in thine own act and valor as thou art in desire? Wouldst thou have -

RAVID

No no no! Angel this is all wrong! You are an artist! For Godsake, act like one! Again!

SEINA

-that Which thou esteem'st the ornament of life, And live-

RAVID

I said again! From the top, you idiot! Not continue! Listen to me!

SEINA

Art though afeared to be in the same in thine own act and valor as thou art in desire? Wouldst-

RAVID

Seina if you will not take it seriously then I will throw the towel in! After all I have done for you, after all I have given up for you, you are so ungrateful.

SEINA

(Quietly, we are surprised she even has her own voice)

I didn't ask you to. I hate this.

ISA

(Under her breath, though audibly enough)

O please! You revel in this shit. Don't think you could function not in the spot light...

RAVID

(Whirling towards her)

My dear *(this is particularly biting because there is nothing genuine about him)* It would serve you well to hold your tongue while your sister and I practice. Particularly considering you have nothing to add.

ISA

(Clearly hurt)
Daddy...

RAVID

(Turning back towards SEINA)
Shhhhh!

SEINA

(Eyes closed, as if pained by what she hears)
-a coward in thine own esteem, Letting "I dare not" wait upon "I would," Like the poor
cat i' the adage?

*(ISA rushes, upset, from the room. SEINA stops, looking after her sadly. RAVID
barely notices, but rather, snaps his fingers to regain her attention)*

RAVID

Continue!

LIGHTS DOWN

SCENE EIGHT

LIGHTS UP

CHORUS GIRL 2

Guess they haven't around to fixing that elevator yet, eh?
(Laughs humorlessly)

CHORUS GIRL 1

Not yet. Not that I'm surprised.

CHORUS GIRL 2

(Nodding in agreement)
I mean, she's always been odd, but lately, it seems she's outdoing herself!

CHORUS GIRL 1

(Leaning in confidentially)
Did you hear her talking to me in the lobby the other day? I thought I saw you passing through. Well she could barely hold a coherent conversation! Rambled on and on about god knows what, talking a mile a minute and changing subject nearly every sentence! I'd just had a simple question about the garbage collection and before I know it I'm positively being harassed by the woman!

CHORUS GIRL 2

Ha! That's nothing! She started asking me whether or not I had seen anyone go in or out of her apartment while she was off picking up her son from school. Couldn't have been gone for more than fifteen minutes! Paranoid.

CHORUS GIRL 1

(Shaking her head with disapproval)
Now I'm not saying the woman is an exhibitionist, but all this attention seeking behavior is going to earn her quite the reputation if she's not careful!

CHORUS GIRL 2

Her poor husband! I mean, I'd be embarrassed to be associated with her, I'll admit it.

CHORUS GIRL 1

Well that's the funny thing about it. Around him, she seems totally normal. The few times I actually see them together she is calm and collected, the very picture of serenity, always smiling and lavishing affection on him. Then the other half of the time she seems to be positively losing her marbles. I can't explain it.

CHORUS GIRL 2

I just don't understand.

CHORUS GIRL 1

Now far be it for me to pass judgement on her, but I'll say this, this wild irrationality and impulsiveness is sure to get her into trouble. Rationality. Prudence. That's what I say. She's got a good man and a good name and that's a lot to put at stake.

CHORUS GIRL 2

Not to mention that poor son of theirs! That kind of behavior can't possibly be a healthy example to set.

CHORUS GIRL 1

She's going to give us all a bad name!

(The two women sigh, and nearly in tandem, as if having come to some silent mutual agreement, turn and enter their apartments)

STAGE LIGHTS GO DOWN

SCENE NINE

BLUE LIGHTS GO UP

NARRATOR

The night was thick and heavy. Thunder hung in the air and pressed her face, swelling around her tongue and ankles.

(Yet, she breathes a silent prayer of thanks, as the oppressive humidity also swallows the sound of her softly padding bare feet around the apartment, gather such supplies as she deems necessary. She stops, taking a final sweeping glance around the apartment, as if to reassure herself that she's forgotten nothing. She then pads into BENONI's room. With one hand she tugs out from under the bed the duffel bag she had prepared for him earlier in the day and hidden there. With her other arm, she carefully scoops up the sleeping child, willing him to remain so. The keys jingle slightly in her hand as she fumbles with the three locks on the door)

NARRATOR (CON'T)

Ding.

(Her heart nearly drops right down to the floor as the white-faced clock above the door strikes half past midnight. She looks up at it with hatred, cursing time, and yet wishing the cover of night would last forever, to carry them safely away. The door closes with a light click behind her)

NARRATOR (CON'T)

Her ears filled with the deafening sound of pumping blood. The next moment, she was out on the street in the still balmy night air, flooded in the yellow light of the street lamps and the fluorescent lights that advertised VACANT, OPEN, 24 HOURS at her from all sides. She'd never felt like a stranger in her own city. Then again, she'd never been in it so alone. The closest bus stop was twenty three blocks. She set out.

IRIS

Haaaaaaahh!

(A harsh, sarcastic laugh jabs out from the shadows cast by the large building on the corner as she waits for the little white man to flash invitingly at her. As she probed the darkness with furrowed brows and cold claw like hand darted out from the same direction as the laugh and fastened itself around her ankle. She shook her foot in growing panic, but the iron hand would not let go)

IRIS (CON'T)

Where ya goin', honey?

CLEMENTINE

(Hoping to sound braver than she feels) I don't have any change I'm sorry, please let go.

IRIS

Haaaaaaahh! I don't want your change, foolish girl!

CLEMENTINE

(Impatiently) Well, what do you want, then?

(An arm joins the hand, then a shrunken chest raises itself off the ground, knees cracking with the effort of rising. Finally, a face emerges from the shadows. It is wrinkled and wizened, weather stained and missing a tooth or two. She is wrapped in long black robes, which she holds against her brittle frame with small, curled fingers, stained with dirt and nicotine, and, is it, blood?)
(Standing, CLEMENTINE still towers head and shoulders above the small woman. Suddenly, she darts out a hand from the dirty folds of her wrap and grabs CLEMENTINE'S dress under the chin drawing her close enough that CLEMENTINE can feel her rancid breath bathing her face every time she coughs out a word)

IRIS

By morning, this world will be gone. What if tonight were your last night on earth? What if this were it? This IS it. By morning this world will be gone.

(Just as suddenly as she appeared, the woman drops her grip on CLEMENTINE and melts back into the shadows, impervious to CLEMENTINE's cries for her return. After several moments of search in vain, CLEMENTINE and her still miraculously sleeping son continue on their journey, yet her steps are slower, less sure)

NARRATOR

The woman's words soaked her vulnerable mind, filling in the cracks of doubt and rejection that blossomed there. What if this WAS it? Would she be doing something differently? Would she be sneaking away from the love of her life in the middle of the night like a criminal? Would she suffer such utter betrayal? Was she simply allowing her mind to run away with her at the sound of some crackpot old fool's meaningless warning?

(The light turns green again and once again CLEMENTINE stands on the corner of the sidewalk awaiting a chance to cross, staring off into space, lost in thought. Suddenly, a familiar croaking laugh gasps out. CLEMENTINE'S head snaps towards the shadows at the side of the road from whence the sounds heralds. A claw-like hand grips her ankle...again. Again, a woman slowly rises from the shadows. Again, they stare into each others' eyes as she croaks a warning to CLEMENTINE...)

IRIS

By morning, this world will be gone. What if tonight were your last night on earth? What if this were it? This IS it. By morning this world will be gone.

NARRATOR

On every street corner stretching into the night, the same scene played out. 5 blocks, 10 blocks, 15 blocks. Again and again...

IRIS

By morning this world will be gone. What if tonight were your last night on earth?

NARRATOR

Again and again, Clementine spent her block of respite pondering the decisions she had made, the choices that had comprised her life. How had she suddenly ended up here, alone and unhappy? What did she have to show for herself? If she were truly to act on her most guttural emotions, if this truly is her last night on earth, what would she do? By morning this world will be gone.

(She looks down at the sleeping child in her arms, his brown hair curling angelically around his innocent, still baby-round cheeks. Suddenly, his heavily lashed lids flutter open and he whispers groggily...)

BENONI

Where are we, Mommy? Are we going for a walk?

(She nods silently. He smiles, satisfied with her answer, and nestles his head back against the warmth of her chest)

NARRATOR

This is it. By morning this world will be gone.

□ SCENE TEN

NARRATOR

How she made it back to the apartment, Clementine would never afterward be able to tell. She had no memory of walking, or of travel at all. She arrived in a daze and her actions were detached somehow, committed in the dream-like state of half reality that can only exist when the human brain utterly abandons reason for emotion, when it denies the inherent equilibrium it seeks to function and gives in to the madness that is pure passion. Third floor. One door, two doors, three doors down, stopping just long enough to slip something folded under another familiar door. It wasn't even locked. It was as if she had been waiting for her. Seconds, minutes, (or was it hours?) later Clementine stumbled from the apartment.

(Her hands, to the elbows, are covered in rich, dark blood, like thick wine, and it soaks the edges of her rolled back sleeves)

NARRATOR (CON'T)

She didn't bother wiping her bloody hand print from the door knob, to which two long blonde hair, stuck to her soaked hands, attached themselves, as if unwilling to abandon the corpse of their owner. She didn't even close the door the whole way. After all, all this would be gone in a few hours anyway.

(She leans down and scoops up BENONI, whom she had lain down peacefully in a makeshift bed of the clothing and pillows she had taken in preparation for their flight, now forgotten. She continues down the hallway. One door, two doors, three doors more)

(She rummages in her large bag, scraping her fingers along its deep bottom, hoping to feel the cold metal of the keys without having to place everything down. Once she has quietly unlocked the door, she shuffles through the bag once more, still standing in the hallway for fear of waking JAX with the commotion. She finally finds the crumpled piece of paper, and folds it smooth against the outside of her thigh as she walks into the apartment. Grabbing a pen she reads hastily over the letter she had drafted earlier that night, as she'd agonized over whether or not she'd be able to leave him, whether or not she wanted to, or had to)

NARRATOR

Jax-

Tonight. This is it. "All our yesterdays have lighted fools the way to dusty death." You will only see this if you wake before morning. If you don't, only I will ever know what I wrote. But know this- I have won. In your final hours, you are completely alone. And I, I have everything. He and I will die together, will die entwined, in this "last syllable of recorded time."

(Satisfied, she pulls the cap off the fountain pen with her teeth and signs her name;)

NARRATOR (CON'T)

Love always, Clementine.

(She turns on her heel)

NARRATOR

Click.

(She holds her breath for a moment, laboring under the weight of the burdens she carries)

The clock ticked away stoically, but no creaking of floor boards or menacing of pursuing footsteps joined its mechanical song.

(CLEMENTINE exhales slowly with relief)

SCENE ELEVEN

(SEINA pads silently into the kitchen to get a glass of ice water and dangle one leg out of the kitchen window onto the fire escape. As she passes the front door, a carefully folded piece of lined paper catches her eye)

SEINA

“What if this were your last night on earth? Would you live your life any differently? And if you would, then what has it meant up to now?”

(She looks up from the paper and toward her sister sleeping on the couch, then at her father in bed. Her eyes narrow with hatred and her hand reaches towards the kitchen knives)

ISA

(Sharply)

Seina!

SEINA

(The knife she drops rattles loudly in the stillness as she whirls around)

I could, you know.

ISA

(Nods)

I know.

SEINA

I never asked for any of this. I didn't want it.

ISA

Who would?

SEINA

You.

ISA

(Smiling, and shaking her head, she sits down at the kitchen table across from Seina)

No. I thought I did. I was looking for something, and I thought you had it. I thought you had taken it from me, and it had been denied me because of you. But what I needed, what I wanted, he (*indicating over to their sleeping father with her head*) never had to give. But I'm done being angry about it. Now, I just want some peace.

SEINA

(Nodding curtly once)
We'll be gone in the morning.

ISA

He will. I already have the bus ticket. To mom's. I...I want you to stay here Seina.

(The women stare at one another in silence. Finally, Seina sits down opposite her sister)

SCENE TWELVE

NARRATOR (CON'T)

The thick night air enveloped the midnight travelers once again. Yet this time, the scent of mint and cool rain covered the smog of the city and the air itself caressed them differently- it had lost its menace, its fear, and instead seemed to be holding its own breath with an odd dichotomy of anticipation and acceptance of fate. It had grown cooler as morning approached and a thin line just above horizon had paled to a faint azure. Soon, the dark water rushed below, throwing cold sprays and damp, cold air up as it smashed violently about the rocks.

(CLEMENTINE stands, eyes closed, smiling faintly in the blossoming dawn)

CLEMENTINE

In choosing the manner of our deaths, we are performing the ultimate act of choice. We are committing the ultimate act of defiance. Let us chose, and let us defy.

NARRATOR

She had never felt so weightless.

BLUE LIGHTS DOWN

SCENE THIRTEEN

LIGHTS STAY DOWN

(The stage is dark. Only three voices can be heard)

DOCTOR 1

It's a near impossibility that she survived at all. The child never had a chance.

DOCTOR 2

More than a hundred feet!

DOCTOR 3

Lucky as all hell.

DOCTOR 1

I don't know that she'd agree with you.

DOCTOR 2

Shhhhhh. She's waking up.

LIGHTS UP

(Three doctors crowd around her)

DOCTOR 3

(Leaning over her) Do you have any family we can call for you?

CLEMENTINE

(Whispering) My son...

(The doctors fall silent, and one shook his head)

(She falls back, eyes closed, onto the pillow)

CLEMENTINE

(Mumbling) It is a tale told by an idiot, full of sound and fury, Signifying nothing.

(The doctors exit and lights go down. As they leave...)

IRIS

(Sitting huddled up the edge of the proscenium bundled in her robes)

Everybody, sooner or later, sits down to a banquet of consequences.

LIGHTS DOWN