

He'll Also Tell You He Loves You

Drama

By

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In loving memory of Bear Heckard

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CHARACTERS

ROGER. An alcoholic father who is struggling to care for his son, and ex-wife.	23- 38.	Male.
HEATHER. Roger's ex-wife and the mother of Davin.	22-35.	Female.
YOUNG DAVIN. Roger and Heather's son.	4-5	Male.
DAVIN. Roger and Heather's son.	8-14	Male.
CHELSEA. Heather's sister.	16-31.	Female.
DARLA. Heather and Chelsea's Mom.	51-61.	Female.
GIRL. Heather's friend from when she was younger.	24.	Female.

TIME & PLACE

This story takes place from 2005 - 2020. There are flashbacks to different years throughout the play, not in a chronological order. Gainesville, Florida.

SETTING:

Darla's and Heather's living rooms will be a collapsible set, where one side is Darla's living room and the other side is Heather's living room. Darla's Living Room is colorful, eclectic, and spacious with southern, beachy items, and lots of family photos. There is a pool in the backyard that you can see from the window. There is also a table and a couch. Overall inspired by the 80s. Heather's living room is in her apartment. Her living room is a basic living room area, the living room of a single mom with a small child. It is scattered with some of Davin's toys, except in the last scene where he is a newborn. Both rooms are abstract. On Darla's side, at first glance it appears to be normal, but some items will be significantly disproportionate. On Heather's side, the walls and set will all be the same dull color. This is the shell of what the apartment and her life used to be life. There's a car on the side of the stage, but that can be two car seats, and the actors will pantomime the driver's wheel and the car itself. Every other location like the backyard, the street in downtown Gainesville, that is not in the living rooms, the actors will move the collapsible set upstage and the scenes can take place downstage with unique lighting true to the feelings and tonality of the scenes.

NOTES:

All transitions between the scenes should be done by the actors and their changing of the scenes should be done in character. The lengths of the transitions should represent the impact that time and grief have had on the characters. Chelsea never leaves the stage. When there is a scene taking place that she is not participating in, she'll spend her time observing what is happening and reflecting. She also stays the same

age when narrating, but plays her younger self when the scene involves her. When characters are offstage, they can be behind the collapsible set and enter from there.

SCENE ONE

Staying the Night. 2009

Inside HEATHER's living room during the evening.

ROGER is sitting on a chair, drunk and exhausted.

CHELSEA:

Family. It's such a weird word, you know? Why did we have to attach the word family to define whatever the hell "family" is. Like, I could replace the word "family" with "puppies" and no one would question it. I could say "Oh, you know how puppies get sometimes, but you still can't help but love them." I feel like God, that is if there is one, just selects people who annoy the hell out of each other, and puts them in groups with shiny red ribbons, and randomly declares them family, just to see what'll happen. And by some miracle, they somehow grow to love each other through the hard times. That word "family" that we made up, is what keeps us together, or that's what we'd like to believe. Depends on the family, I guess. I love my family, with my whole heart. We were gonna be the family that sticks together, no matter what.

HEATHER is offstage tucking 4 year old DAVIN in his bedroom. HEATHER'S voice is carrying to where the audience can hear her.

HEATHER (OFFSTAGE):

This little piggy went to the market, this little piggy stayed home, this little piggy had roast beef, this little piggy had none, anddddd -

DAVIN (OFFSTAGE):

Oh no mama! (*Giggling.*)

HEATHER (OFFSTAGE):

This little piggy went wee wee wee all the way home. I love you sweetie. So much.

Davin is laughing uncontrollably.

DAVIN (OFFSTAGE):

I love you too, Mommy.

HEATHER (OFFSTAGE):

Goodnight.

We hear her kiss him on the forehead. Heather enters the living room to see Roger waiting on her.

HEATHER.

Roger, what are you doing here?

ROGER:

I just- I really want to see Davin.

HEATHER:

He's asleep.

ROGER:

Please Heather -

HEATHER:

No Roger. Davin is already tucked in. He has school tomorrow, he won't be able to sleep tonight if-

DAVIN wakes up and enters from the other room.

DAVIN:

Daddy?

ROGER:

Hey kid! Come here.

DAVIN runs to give ROGER a big hug and ROGER picks him up. DAVIN is exhilarated.

HEATHER:

Roger, please.

Heather gets ignored. At this point, DAVIN is swinging from ROGER'S arms.

ROGER:

You're getting big, kiddo. I can hardly hold you up anymore.

HEATHER:

He needs to sleep, Roger.

DAVIN:

Daddy let's play hide and seek!

ROGER:

Yeah! Why don't you go and hide, and I'll come find you.

DAVIN runs to hide from both parents. ROGER is now looking for DAVIN. He closes his eyes and counts to ten.

Davin rushes to hide behind something. Roger is trying to talk to Heather while also entertaining Davin.

HEATHER:

Roger, What are you doing?

ROGER:

I'm spending time with my son. *(to Davin)* Okayyy, I'm about to open my eyes.

HEATHER:

If you're not gonna leave, I'm calling Chelsea.

ROGER:

Don't!

CHELSEA:

Davin would stay with me, at my apartment when things got messy with Roger and Heather.

DAVIN:

Davin comes out of hiding, wondering why Roger isn't looking for him.

Daddy? Are you gonna come find me?

ROGER:

(Mutters to himself.) Oh, shit. *(Pretending Davin is invisible.)* Davin? Davin? Where did Davin go? Oh no! I think he disappeared. *(Looks around frantically.)* Davin? We gotta call the police!

DAVIN:

Daddy! Daddy! I'm here.

He tugs on Roger's shirt.

ROGER:

There you are! I thought I'd never see you again. I was about to file a missing Davin report.

HEATHER:

(to DAVIN) Sweetie, Daddy is feeling really sleepy, so maybe we should say goodnight.

ROGER:

(To HEATHER) What are you doing? This was just getting started.

DAVIN:

Is Daddy staying the night?!

ROGER:

Hey I should shouldn't I? Let's have a sleepover.

HEATHER:

Daddy is not staying the night. Daddy has his own place to go to.

ROGER:

Come on. Why can't I just stay tonight?

HEATHER:

(Discreet.) Please stop this.

ROGER:

No, I'm serious. It's not like he doesn't remember when we did live together.

HEATHER:

Davin, say goodnight to Daddy.

DAVIN:

Goodnight Daddy, I love you.

ROGER:

Love you too, kid. World's Best Son.

They hug and ROGER kisses him on the head. Heather walks him to the bed and Roger follows. They both tuck him in, and come back into the living room. Roger is trying his best to participate while being drunk.

ROGER:

So, staying the night is off limits then?

HEATHER:

Why the hell would you encourage that?

ROGER:

I don't know, I thought it would be nice to be a family again for a night.

HEATHER:

Oh my God, do you hear yourself right now?

ROGER:

You and Davin are my life.

HEATHER:

Where the fuck were you today then?

ROGER:

Uh... today...

HEATHER:

You had all day to spend time with him, and for someone who loves his son, I figured you would care enough to show up.

ROGER:

Work lasted longer than I was planning for it to.

HEATHER:

Davin hasn't seen you in 2 weeks.

ROGER:

I know, I'm so sorry.

HEATHER:

What is going on with you?

ROGER:

I've just gotten so many clients lately, it's been taking up all my time.

HEATHER:

You don't think I smell the booze Roger? Did you think I was *that* stupid not to notice?

ROGER:

I-

HEATHER:

And you still showed up drunk to see your son? If you can't be sober, don't bother coming to see him. I don't want him around you like this.

ROGER:

You can't tell me when I can and can't see my son!

HEATHER:

Do you take care of him?

ROGER:

Huh?

HEATHER:

Do you take care of him? Do his laundry? Take him to school? Fix his lunch? Tuck him into bed? No, you've never done that. Davin needs a father, not someone who shows up here at night and can barely even function because he's so drunk.

ROGER:

Let me fix this.

HEATHER:

Just come when you say you're gonna come. That's all you have to do.

ROGER:

I wanna fix us too.

HEATHER:

Roger, it's way too late for that.

ROGER:

Please Heather. I'll buy you dinner. Hell, I'll get us dinner and we can all go out as a family. We just need to spend more time together. I haven't talked to you, just the two of us, in forever.

HEATHER:

I'm sorry, but I can't.

ROGER:

I love you.

HEATHER:

It'll pass.

ROGER:

It won't. Probably never will.

HEATHER:

It will pass. *(ROGER laughs out of sadness and frustration.)* Look, you don't have to show up for me. It's over, it's done. But please, please show up for Davin. I'm begging you Roger. He needs you, he really does. You make him so happy.

LIGHTS SHIFT.

SCENE TWO

The Introduction. 2004

ROGER and HEATHER are outside the door of her mom Darla's house on a Saturday afternoon. It's ROGER'S chance to meet his fiancée's mother.

ROGER:

(Sees HEATHER is nervous.) Baby, it's gonna be fine. You're mom can either love me or hate me, I'm still gonna marry you. And to be honest, I don't give a shit what she says, I fuckin love you. *(HEATHER giggles.)*

HEATHER:

I love you too. I'm just nervous, that's all.

ROGER:

I know, I'll have your back baby.

They kiss. Heather knocks on the front of the door. Darla enters and opens it.

DARLA:

Oh my goodness! Sweetheart, how are you? I missed you so much!

DARLA squeezes HEATHER into a warm hug, then looks at Roger.

Sweetie, who's this?

HEATHER:

This is Roger, mom. I told you about him, remember?

DARLA:

Oh, yes! That's right. I remember now. It *just* escaped me. *(Pause.)* Welcome! Come in.

She opens the door for HEATHER and ROGER as they enter the house.

ROGER:

Thank you.

DARLA:

Mhm.

HEATHER:

I love the new decorations. My eyes don't know where to look though.

DARLA:

Don't you just love it?!

Roger is taken aback by how nice the house is. Notices a large antique clock on one of the walls.

ROGER:

This is a very nice place.

DARLA:

You're too sweet.

ROGER:

I really like this clock.

DARLA:

Thank you, hun.

ROGER:

Did you get it at the farmer's market? I saw a sale goin' on a few weeks back. They had some neat stuff.

(HEATHER looks surprised at him.)

HEATHER:

Since when did you pay attention to interior design?

DARLA:

(Offended.) No, this didn't come from the market. But I'm glad that it looks like it does.

HEATHER:

Mama.

DARLA:

I just didn't know my decorations looked so cheap, that's all.

ROGER:

Ma'am, that's not what I was tryna say. I just thought I recognized it, that's all.

Chelsea is peering at them from a cracked door.

DARLA:

This clock is a family heirloom. Heather is gonna get this when I'm long gone. It's very precious to me.

ROGER:

It's a beautiful clock.

DARLA:

So, what do you do Roger?

ROGER:

I work in construction.

DARLA:

Oh, I bet that gets exhausting.

ROGER:

Yeah, it does, but it gets the bills paid.

HEATHER:

Roger plans on starting his own business soon.

DARLA:

Oh, that's great. And you feel like you're ready to take on a responsibility like that?

ROGER:

Why wouldn't I be?

DARLA:

I was just curious, that's all. It's very involved, Darlin'. I wouldn't want you to get ahead of yourself.

ROGER:

What's THAT supposed to mean?

DARLA:

You're just young, that's all. But don't let those dreams go.

Chelsea walks towards Darla.

Chelsea! Darlin. Come see your sister and her, uh, friend.

Roger looks at Heather realizing that Heather has not told her mother that they are engaged.

CHELSEA:

Hi. It's nice to meet you. I'm Chelsea.

ROGER:

Roger.

They shake hands.

DARLA:

Chelsea is such a talented artist. She painted this painting for me for Mother's Day.

She leads them to a painting on one of the walls of a cloudy day marsh landscape, with a woman tanning on a beach chair.

Isn't it the most gorgeous thing you ever seen?

ROGER:

Holy shit! That's incredible. You did that?!

CHELSEA:

Yeah. It took a while to make but it didn't come out too bad.

ROGER:

No. No! You can't be THAT talented and have that attitude! That is the most beautiful piece of art I've ever seen in my whole god damn life!

CHELSEA:

(Laughs out of shock.) Uh, thank you. That means a lot.

ROGER:

Well, it's true and you better believe it.

HEATHER is smiling at their interaction, DARLA is unsure and upset. They make eye contact and HEATHER looks away sad.

DARLA:

So, does anyone want anything to eat? I have crackers, apples- oh ! I have fresh lemonade I squeezed this morning.

HEATHER:

That sounds wonderful.

DARLA:

Would y'all like some?

ROGER:

Yeah sure.

Heather elbows him.

Yes Ma'am.

DARLA:

Great, I'll just fix some for everybody

She leaves off stage to pour lemonade in the kitchen.

ROGER:

Heather tells me you're an amazing cook.

DARLA:

Aw, well she's too sweet. I'm a good cook, but she is the best. I do make some good custard though.

She comes back into the living room with a platter of glasses filled with lemonade, and all three take glasses and drink. It's delicious. They spend these next few moments in silence, sipping their incredibly tasting lemonade.

HEATHER:

Mom, we have some big news to tell you.

DARLA:

Oh, you do, don't you?

HEATHER:

Yes. Uh

She puts down the drink, grabs ROGER'S hand.

We're having a baby. (*Darla is frozen and speechless.*) Mama?

DARLA:

(*Still stunned.*) How come this is the first time I'm hearing this?

HEATHER:

We just found out.

DARLA:

Excuse me for a moment.

She leaves the room. There is silence among the others and an exchange of looks. Darla returns, fuming.

HEATHER:

Mama, are you alrig-

DARLA:

So what, you're just gonna start a family with *him*?

HEATHER:

That's the other thing I wanted to tell you. Roger's my Fiance now.

DARLA:

Oh. Oh wow. I don't know what to say.

CHELSEA:

Congratulations. (*Darla looks at her with daggers for eyes.*) Too soon?

HEATHER:

We were thinking the wedding would be in December. We have so much to plan, and of course you'll be my Maid of Honor.

CHELSEA:

I was gonna say, who else would it be?

HEATHER:

That means you're gonna have to plan my bachelorette party. Oh, and my baby shower.

CHELSEA:

I already have the theme picked out. You'll have to take a look.

DARLA:

(to Chelsea) You knew about this?

CHELSEA:

Heather told me last week.

DARLA:

I can't do this right now. *(To HEATHER and ROGER in an ultra sweet tone.)* Thank y'all for coming.

She stands up and walks them out of the door.

I hate to cut family time off, because I guess you're *family* now, Roger, but I'm feeling a little ill.

HEATHER:

Oh no! We could go get something from the store if you want Mama.

DARLA:

Aw darlin, that's okay. I'll be fine. Come back again!

Darla closes the door and sobs, then screams and curses on the couch. Chelsea goes to her to comfort her. On the porch outside the door, Heather and Roger can hear them. Heather looks concerned but Roger whispers something into her ear, and she starts to laugh. They kiss and leave like nothing ever happened.

CHELSEA:

I remember every detail. My mama, crying like the world was ending while Heather and Roger carried on like it was a typical Sunday afternoon. I knew she had to be at least a little concerned or scared for the future, but there was no way of knowing.

Chelsea lets go of her mother and goes to young Davin who is entering as the lights change.

SCENE THREE

Playdate in the Backyard. 2010

Chelsea and Davin are outside of Davin's house waiting on Roger in the afternoon. Chelsea is holding Davin's hand. Davin is 5 years old.

DAVIN:

When's Daddy coming?

CHELSEA:

He'll be here soon, big guy.

DAVIN:

Are you sure?

CHELSEA:

Yeah, of course! You guys are gonna have so much fun, and you have to train for your soccer tryouts. Are you excited?

DAVIN:

Yeah!

CHELSEA:

(To herself.) Come on Roger, where are you?

Suddenly, the car pulls up and Roger gets out. Chelsea is relieved and Davin ecstatic. Davin sprints towards him, and Roger hugs him tightly.

DAVIN:

DADDY!

ROGER:

Hey kiddo! What's goin on?

CHELSEA:

Roger and Davin had a playdate today. Davin stayed with me the night before and we watched the Toy Story Movies, he loves those. Heather and Roger were figuring out paperwork for their divorce, and started fighting again. So, Dav got to have a slumber party with his Aunt Chelsea. He'd been staying with me more and more times, but I loved having him over. We had fun, but he was ready to see his dad again. It'd been a long time.

Roger and 5 year old Davin are out in the backyard playing soccer. There are two ratty miniature goals on opposite sides of the stage.

ROGER:

You better watch out, son. Daddy's about to score the goal!

Davin unenthusiastically tries to defend his goal. Roger purposely misses.

Oh no! Darn, I missed.

He runs after the ball and guides it with his feet in position to kick it in the goal.

Here I go again! You better defend, tough guy!

Roger kicks in the goal, and Davin flops about lazily.

What is going on with you, son?

DAVIN:

Mommy said I can't see you anymore.

ROGER:

When did she say that?

DAVIN:

Last night.

ROGER:

Oh. Did she say anything else?

DAVIN:

I don't know, Daddy.

ROGER:

Just try and remember. Did Mommy say anything about how long?

DAVIN:

I can't remember.

ROGER:

That's okay, Dav.

DAVIN:

Daddy?

ROGER:

Yes?

DAVIN:

Is this the last time I'm gonna see you?

ROGER:

No, of course not! Son, come here.

Davin comes to him and Roger puts his hands on Davin's shoulders. Roger is defeated but trying to hide it.

Things are gonna change a little bit. Mommy and Daddy are going to get something called a divorce.

DAVIN:

Oh yeah, Mommy said that word too.

ROGER:

All that's gonna change is that Mommy and Daddy won't live together anymore. We'll just take turns seeing you and we'll have lots of fun doing it! How does that sound?

DAVIN:

Good, I guess.

ROGER:

Oh, it's gonna be the most fun you've ever had! And then you and Mommy will have lots of fun too.

DAVIN:

Oh...why can't you and Mommy have fun together?

ROGER:

You know Davin, some Mommys and Daddys are happy living together, and some aren't. It happens sometimes, but we both still love you so much. You're still the World's Greatest Son, kid. You know that?

DAVIN:

Yeahhh.

ROGER:

(Laughs.) See I knew you knew that, and don't you ever forget it.

DAVIN:

So it's just gonna be me and Mommy now?

ROGER:

Yeah, for a little while. I've just gotta take a few dumb classes and then when I'm done, I'll come see you everyday.

DAVIN:

Okay. *(Sad.)*

ROGER:

I will come. I promise.

DAVIN:

I love you Daddy.

ROGER:

I love you too, Davin.

They hug and Roger gives Davin a kiss on his forehead.

I'm sorry I didn't tell you sooner. *(DAVIN is still upset.)* Dav, look at me. We're still gonna be a family. I ain't gonna leave you, okay? We can hang out soon.

DAVIN:

When?

ROGER:

Soon.

DAVIN:

(Bummed.) Okay.

ROGER:

When I get back, I'm coming straight over to see you. We'll play soccer, go to Animal Kingdom. I'll buy you anything you want. I'll get you a puppy. What kind of puppy do you want?

DAVIN:

(DAVIN'S face lights up.) Really?! Oh my God! I get a puppy?

Davin runs and jumps around the space.

ROGER:

Anything you want.

DAVIN:

I GET A PUPPY! I GET A PUPPY!

ROGER:

What kind you want, Dav?

DAVIN is still over the moon excited and jumping around.

You know what? I'll surprise you. How does that sound?

DAVIN:

YAYY!

ROGER:

(ROGER laughs.) I knew that'd sound good to you. World's Greatest Son?

Roger opens his arms out. Davin hugs Roger, and Roger hugs him back.

World's Greatest Son. Love you, kid.

LIGHTS CHANGE.

SCENE FOUR

That Silk Black Dress. 2008

It's evening on a street in downtown Gainesville. There can be lively music playing softly in the background and colorful lights.

CHELSEA:

When I first met Roger, I thought he was perfect for my sister. He was thoughtful, a go-getter, showered her with attention. And no matter what the situation was, he could always make her laugh. She looked so happy with him... until she wasn't. I was walking down the sidewalk in downtown Gainesville, the lights were shining, the shops were filled with people. I had just had some coffee with my friend, and walking the other way was Roger and this other woman wearing a silk black dress.

Roger enters on the opposite side of the stage, facing Chelsea.

CHELSEA CONT':

I didn't know what to do. I panicked. He panicked too, when he saw me. He stood directly across from me, frozen, and either wasted or close to it. I could see him running through potential scenarios in his mind about what to say, how to act, how to explain this woman standing by his side to his sister in law. He eventually muttered out: "She's my co-worker. We're just grabbing a bite to eat after work." Kate was her name. But I knew. I knew what was happening, it was too late. After some painfully awkward small talk, he offered to walk with me to my car.

ROGER:

(Panicked.) Chelsea. I know this looks really bad. Really, really bad. But nothing is going on between that me and that woman, I. I'm telling you the truth. *(No response.)* Chelsea? Say something please. You're kinda freaking me out there. You don't plan on telling Heather do you?

CHELSEA:

Her dress. You were out on a date.

ROGER:

(Laughs.) A date. Chelsea. Come on, are you crazy? I wouldn't expect you to understand this or anything, but we were having a business meeting. I'm about to get this deal that is gonna change my fucking life. It'll change your sister's life, Davin's life. Heather could get that house she's always wanted. She wouldn't have to work anymore. Hell, Davin could go to private school if he wanted to.

CHELSEA:

Some kind of deal, huh?

ROGER:

I've been working at this for 5 years.

CHELSEA:

Doing what?

ROGER:

Oh, come on. Don't start that shit with me. You know how hard I've worked to get where I am? Way too fucking hard, and I've gotten nothing but shit from Heather, and now from you.

CHELSEA:

Who was she?

ROGER:

She's my business partner. I told you this already.

CHELSEA;

I've never seen her before.

ROGER:

Well, you're not at the shop to see her when she comes by.

CHELSEA:

Has Heather?

ROGER:

What?

CHELSEA:

Has Heather seen her before?

ROGER:

How would I know? Maybe, I don't know. Maybe they're getting their nails done together talking shit about me, I don't fucking know Chelsea.

CHELSEA:

Does she know you're married? A father? But that wouldn't come up in business, right?

ROGER:

Chelsea.

CHELSEA:

It doesn't seem like she does.

ROGER:

Chelsea, stop.

CHELSEA:

Why don't I go and ask her.

ROGER:

Chelsea don't fucking say anything. You don't understand what you're getting yourself into.

CHELSEA:

Yeah, maybe I just don't understand. Why don't you clarify some things for me.

ROGER:

Heather's happy. My family is happy. Please don't ruin it. For your sister, at least. Like I said, she is my business partner, nothing more. Okay?

CHELSEA:

(Bitter.) Okay.

Roger opens the car door for Chelsea, and she gets in. Suddenly, the lights change to a nostalgic color and he has a flashback to the first time he met Heather. There's a pool table, and they both have beers either in their hands or near them. It's him at a bar and he sees Heather playing pool with her friends. The lighting is dim but colorful. Heather instantly stands out, like sunlight after a storm. A Rock n Roll song is playing in the background. Roger approaches her.

ROGER:

Hey.

GIRL:

Hey.

ROGER:

Y'all mind if I join you? I've been looking to play some pool.

Sure, come on over.

GIRL:

These girls are casually flirting with him. He sees Heather playing.

Can I play you?

ROGER:

HEATHER:

If you can keep up.

ROGER:

Is that a challenge?

HEATHER:

Do you want it to be?

ROGER:

Hell, it's on girl!

They play pool. He can't stop staring at her. He realizes that she is very skilled and is amazed. She is beating him.

CHELSEA:

Chelsea gets out of the car, frustrated. Two different timelines are going on. Heather and Roger are in the past, and Chelsea is still in the aftermath of her conversation with Roger.

God! What the fuck is wrong with him? Fucking asshole.

She hears Heather giggling at Roger and she notices them together. She approaches them, but they can't see her.

CHELSEA CONT'

Heather. Oh no. Heather.

ROGER:

Oh my God! Where did you learn to play like that?

HEATHER:

My sister. She's the best one in our family.

CHELSEA:

Damn right.

ROGER:

Well, I might have to challenge her, once I beat you.

HEATHER:

There's no way that's gonna happen.

ROGER:

(Timid.) Oh. Sorry, I didn't mean it like that- I- was just kidding. / I don't even know why I said that.

(This is said simultaneously).

HEATHER:

Oh, that's not what I meant. I wasn't trying to be an asshole. We could make that happen... if you beat me. Sorry, I don't know why I can't talk right now. Words are- you know what? Let's just play a round and see what happens.

CHELSEA:

She was so nervous that night. I remember her telling me how much her heart was pounding out of her chest. She told me he was everything she ever dreamed of, but she had no idea until she met him. Then, everything made sense. I just laughed and told her she was crazy, but she was just so happy.

They both can't stop smiling as they grab their cue sticks and prepare to play. Heather begins to prepare to hit the ball and ROGER tries to distract her right as she first hits the ball.

ROGER:

Don't miss!

HEATHER:

Damnit!

Heather misses the hole and Roger starts laughing uncontrollably. She tries to get another ball in the hole and misses again. Roger is getting in her head..

ROGER:

Look out!

Heather's girlfriends enter and tell her they're going to go dancing.

HEATHER:

I think we're gonna make our way to the dance floor, if you wanna come dancing with us?

ROGER:

Yeah, sure, I'm just gonna grab another beer and meet y'all there.

They begin to part ways but Roger turns around.

Hey, I really like you.

HEATHER:

I really like you too.

ROGER:

I didn't catch your name.

HEATHER:

Heather. What's yours?

ROGER:

Roger. Nice to meet you. Hey, what's your number? I would ask later but I might be too blacked to remember to ask.

HEATHER:

(Laughs.) Here, I'll write it down for you.

Grabs a pen and a crumpled square piece of paper out of her purse. Maybe an old receipt. Writes her number down and hands it to him.

I'll see you later, hopefully.

She walks off. Roger is still mesmerized by her, and takes the piece of paper, kisses it, and puts it in his pocket.

LIGHTS CHANGE.

SCENE FIVE

Davin's Birthday. 2013

Darla's Living room. It's a hot summer afternoon and there is a Birthday Party for Davin hosted by Darla at her house. Heather is putting sunscreen on Davin.

CHELSEA:

It was Davin's 8th birthday, June 15th. He was so excited to show all his friends the pool, where they would play Star Wars and shoot each other with water guns. Heather hadn't slept in the last 36 hours. She didn't sleep most nights. Trying to keep up with work or being involved with the school clubs Davin was in, or thinking about Roger. This party was going to be perfect, Heather was sure of that. Stress free and exciting, for Davin at least.

HEATHER:

Mom? Can you pass me the face sunscreen?

DARLA:

Well Heather, I don't see any face sunscreen.

HEATHER:

It's on the front left table, right in front of you.

DARLA:

Baby cakes, I don't see it, I'm telling you. I'm looking everywhere.

She keeps lazily looking for the sunscreen. Notices the trash.

Heather! You need to throw these dirty plates away. (*Keeps checking.*) Heather, my God, why'd you leave the food out like this? Oh my lord, these flies are getting into the cake.

HEATHER:

Mom, I've been busy. Why can't you do it?

DARLA:

Oh Honey, you know how squeamish I get around bugs.

HEATHER:

Fine, I'll just get it.

DARLA:

Honey what did I do? Did I make you mad? I don't want you mad at me.

HEATHER:

No, Mom. You didn't. I'm just a little busy. Davin! Come back here. You can't swim until your sunscreen dries.

DAVIN:

Ughhh, Mom! Everyone else is swimming.

HEATHER:

I don't care Davin. You can swim in a little bit.

DAVIN:

(Whiny.) Mom please!! We only have an hour left until they leave.

HEATHER:

Davin, -

DAVIN:

But Mom! Please please please please-

HEATHER:

Fine. Go if you want. It's your choice to get sunburned. Go wash off all your sunscreen.

Davin looks relieved and sprints back to the pool to go play.

DARLA:

You know, he'll probably be fine. I mean look at you, I didn't put any of that sunscreen on you, and you turned out fine. I didn't turn out half bad either.

HEATHER:

Pretty soon you're gonna have to get skin cancers removed every month.

DARLA:

I'll be tougher for it.

HEATHER:

Oh, like Grannie was so much tougher right?

DARLA:

Heather, I'm only tryna cheer you up.

HEATHER:

By telling me I'm overreacting for trying to not make the same mistakes that you made with me?

DARLA:

Don't you dare talk to me that way.

HEATHER:

Well it's true isn't it?

DARLA:

Let me tell you something. I wasn't a perfect mother, but I did do something right.

HEATHER:

What was that?

DARLA:

I didn't think that every tiny thing that went wrong would be the end of the world.

HEATHER:

I don't think everything is the end of the world.

DARLA:

You can't control everything, Sweetpea.

HEATHER:

I'm not trying to control everything! I'm trying to protect him.

DARLA:

You're tryna shelter him from sunrays and cuss words, but you let Roger hurt him over and over again.

HEATHER:

Shut up! You have no idea what the hell you're talking about!

DARLA:

Davin is the best thing that's ever happened to you, and to me. Don't you dare take him for granted. He didn't ask for any of this, Heather. You're the one that got knocked up, so make his life the best it could ever be. *(Heather starts crying.)* Honey. *(Puts her hand on Heather's shoulder.)* None of this is your fault. What's goin' on with Davin is cause of Roger, and he's dragging you all down with him.

HEATHER:

I don't know what to do, I feel so bad Mama. Davin loves him. It's not fair to him to cut Roger out of his life.

DARLA:

You need a fresh start, sweetheart. Davin'll be happier too.

HEATHER:

But what if he isn't?

DARLA:

Babycakes, there'll be less pain. That's all that matters. If he's the happiest he's ever been when he sees his father, and his father ignores him and hurts him, what's the point?

HEATHER:

It's not that simple. Roger's trying to be better. Addiction isn't an easy thing to deal with.

DARLA:

No, Heather. I've been through this before. That's just what he's telling you so he can trap you into this marriage, again. Your father did the same thing to me and now that he's gone, things have been so much easier. Haven't they? You've seen me, I haven't been this happy in ages.

HEATHER:

That's true.

DARLA:

Then you know what to do.

HEATHER:

No, I'm not ready. I know I sound crazy but I think we can still make this work.

DARLA:

Heather, no.

HEATHER:

I'm serious, Mama! If we could make it work, we should try. Roger has been sober for three months now. He's been showing up to his meetings, he's even shown up to see Davin, more than he has to!

DARLA:

And how long will that last?

HEATHER:

I have faith in him.

DARLA:

No, you're being delusional.

HEATHER:

He loves me.

DARLA:

That doesn't matter.

HEATHER:

His business is doing really well too. He's gotten me so many gifts, spoiled me.

DARLA:

Oh yeah, that's love. He'll also tell you he loves you while he's sleeping with other girls and barely seeing his little boy.

HEATHER:

Mom! That happened-

Davin and his friends come back to get more food. He's shooting a water gun

DAVIN:

Hahahah! I got you!

He gets water in the food. Heather starts to chase him.

HEATHER:

Davin! Don't get water in the food! Stay away from the food.

DARLA:

He's gonna do it again, you mark my words Heather.

HEATHER:

I know Roger more than you think. He loves me, Mama. It'll take time for you to see it, but he loves me and Davin so much.

LIGHTS SHIFT.

SCENE SIX

World's Best Son. 2020

ROGER is in the truck, and shows up to DAVIN'S new High School to pick him up. He is intoxicated and sees Davin getting out of class. Chelsea is staring at them throughout the scene.

ROGER:

Hey kid.

DAVIN:

Dad! What are you doing here?

ROGER:

I just figured I'd come pick you up from school.

DAVIN:

Did you talk to Mom?

ROGER:

Talk to Mom? Why?

DAVIN:

Well, she's the one who usually picks me up.

ROGER:

Well, hell! She doesn't have to pick you up today. I took the new truck with me.

DAVIN:

It looks dope. I like the black on black combo.

ROGER:

It looks slick doesn't it? Wanna take this bad boy out for a drive?

DAVIN:

Hell yeah!

Davin is about to open the door, but stops.

Wait. You're still...

ROGER:

What?

DAVIN:

Nothing.

ROGER:

I'm still what?

DAVIN:

You're still sober, right?

ROGER:

Why the hell wouldn't I be?

DAVIN:

I don't know. I just thought I should ask. Just in case.

ROGER:

There is no "just in case", fuck that! I'm sober. And I'm gonna stay sober for the rest of my goddamn life!

You got that son?

DAVIN:

Yeah. Forget I asked. Stupid to ask that anyway, of course you're sober.

ROGER:

Sorry I yelled. I've just been struggling lately, and you're all I got. I need you to believe in me. That's the only thing keeping me going.

DAVIN:

I believe you, Dad. Always.

ROGER:

Thank you.

DAVIN:

I love you, Dad.

ROGER:

Love you too, Davin. *(Beat.)* What do ya say? You ready to take this bad boy on a ride?

DAVIN:

Yeah.

Davin opens the door and gets in the car with Roger.

CHELSEA:

I saw them that day. I saw Davin get into his truck. I saw the unsure and scared look on his face. I knew something wasn't right, but it could've been anything, I told myself. Davin was an anxious person. It could be anxiety about school, his Mom's new job, a bad day with friends. It couldn't have been more right? Besides, Roger was sober. We all thought he was, clinged to that because it was our only hope.

ROGER:

What do you wanna do? Nike's down the road. Oh! The beach. Let's go to the beach! I'll teach you how to surf.

DAVIN:

(Suspicious.) You know how to surf?

ROGER:

When I was your age I did. You can pick up some cute girls too. Girls love when a guy can surf.

DAVIN:

Really?

ROGER:

Oh yeah, son!

DAVIN:

Do you have a board?

ROGER:

Oh... shit. I forgot about the board. *(He is laughing and Davin is anxious.)* There's gotta be a place here that sells them.

Roger starts swerving and takes his eyes off the road.

DAVIN:

Dad! Look out!

BLACKOUT.

SCENE SEVEN

First Heartbreak. 2008

Lights come up. Heather's living room.

CHELSEA:

I remember when Heather first found out what I had known all along, about Roger and that woman. Heather was always the strong one in our family. Always spoke her mind, was always there for the ones she loved. She was kind too. Always tried to do what's best for the family. When she was hurt, she rarely ever showed it. She would just brush it off and reinvent herself in some way. But, with Roger, she could barely even speak.

They're in their apartment. Very gloomy and cluttered. Heather is sitting in a chair with tears in her eyes saying nothing, completely frozen. Roger approaches her.

ROGER:

Heather I- I'm so sorry. I don't even know what to say. I never wanted to hurt you. *(She says nothing, refusing to look at him.)* I love you so much, Heather. I love you. I don't know what's wrong with me. You are the most incredible woman I've ever been with, and I fuckin mean that. Baby, please say something. I love you so much. I'm so sorry I fucked everything up. Let me make it up to you. I'll take you out to dinner. A really fancy restaurant. Anywhere you like, your pick. Heather please, say something.

He tries to touch Heather's arm.

HEATHER:

Don't touch me.

ROGER:

I'm sorry.

HEATHER:

We're done.

ROGER:

Baby, please. I won't do it again, I promise. I swear. I love you.

HEATHER:

It's too late for that.

Roger gets on his knees.

ROGER:

No, baby please. It's not. We can sort it out, go see a therapist. Anything.

HEATHER:

I'll help you pack your things.

She gets up to go to their room.

ROGER:

Heather, don't do this!

HEATHER:

I'm not the one who's doing this. You did this. You fucked up.

ROGER:

I know I did, and I'll hate myself for the rest of my life for doing what I did.

HEATHER:

And it won't be enough. There's no amount of hate in the world that would make you change, and I realize that now.

ROGER:

I still love you. We can make this work!

HEATHER:

No.

ROGER:

What about Davin? He's just a little boy.

HEATHER:

He's my son. I'll take care of him.

ROGER:

He's mine too!

HEATHER:

Well, you're never here to fucking take care of him! You know what? Why am I even fighting you about this? I am his mother!

ROGER:

I need him! Please!

HEATHER:

Pack up your things.

ROGER:

Heather, I just wanna explain everything.

Heather goes to their closet and grabs a suitcase, and a handful of clothes, and begins stuffing them in the suitcase.

ROGER:

Heather. Heather, please.

She doesn't stop. Roger paces around, panicking. He punches the table.

Damn it, Heather! Will you fucking listen to me?!

HEATHER:

I don't ever want to see you again unless it concerns our son. He can stay with Chelsea when I don't have time to watch him. *(She waits for Roger to leave, he doesn't.)* Get out. *(Roger doesn't move.)* Get out! *(He still doesn't move.)* Get out! Get out! Get out! *(Heather is screaming at this point)*

She attempts to punch him and push him out of the house. She shoves the suitcase towards him. He eventually leaves. After he closes the door, Heather breaks down crying.

LIGHTS FADE.

SCENE EIGHT

Reflection. 2020

Resumes from scene 7, where DAVIN and ROGER are driving in ROGER'S truck on the way to the beach. ROGER struggles to stay awake. The stage will be black except for the car that Davin and Roger are in. There are spotlights on both of them. Suddenly there will be the sound of a crash and the spotlight on Davin's head will go out. Other characters enter from the future to collapse the set and move it offstage for good. It should feel completely blank. They are reflecting on what happened. They stand there, lifeless, shells of who they once were.

HEATHER:

Roger tried to stay awake.

DARLA:

He was 14.

HEATHER:

He would've taken Davin's place in a heartbeat.

DARLA:

He was 14.

HEATHER:

I always thought Roger was a good person.

DARLA:

He was 14.

HEATHER:

I can't save him.

DARLA:

He was 14.

HEATHER:

He was 14. My son. My baby boy.

DARLA:

Why wasn't it Roger?

HEATHER:

He was 14.

DARLA:

Why wasn't it Roger?

HEATHER:

He was 14.

DARLA:

God, why wasn't it Roger?

HEATHER:

He was 14.

CHELSEA:

When you come from poison, you poison others.

HEATHER & DARLA:

Why wasn't it Roger?

CHELSEA:

When you come from poison, you poison others.

HEATHER & DARLA:

Why wasn't it Roger?

CHELSEA:

When you come from poison, you poison others.

HEATHER:

He loved us.

DARLA & CHELSEA:

Why wasn't it Roger?

HEATHER:

Love isn't enough.

DARLA & CHELSEA:

Why wasn't it Roger?

HEATHER:

He took my baby away.

CHELSEA & DARLA:

He was 14.

HEATHER:

14.

DARLA:

He took my baby away.

CHELSEA:

When you come from poison, you poison others.

HEATHER:

He would've taken Davin's place in a heartbeat.

CHELSEA:

When you come from poison, you poison others.

HEATHER:

My baby. I couldn't save my baby.

DARLA:

He's playing soccer with the angels.

CHELSEA:

He's playing soccer with the angels.

HEATHER:

He's playing soccer with the angels.

CHELSEA:

(Breaking the sequence and formation.) I'm so sorry, I should've told you when I saw Davin get in his car.

HEATHER:

(Resigned, numb, still facing forward.) It doesn't matter.

CHELSEA:

I never should've trusted Roger.

HEATHER:

Everything is gone.

CHELSEA:

We're family. We're supposed to stick together, tell each other when something isn't right. This all happened because of me. Davin died because of me. I'm so sorry Heather, this is all my fault.

HEATHER:

I need to see my baby.

26 year old ROGER enters the stage with newborn Davin cradled in his arms. HEATHER goes to him immediately. Suddenly, they are in their living room, getting back from the Hospital 14 years ago, when Heather first gave birth. Although the stage is still blank and the set gone. HEATHER is holding the baby in a bundle of blankets. ROGER is by her side, both of them lovingly adoring the baby. They should be the focus, as if they are in a vignette picture together, nothing else matters at that moment.

HEATHER:

He's so precious.

ROGER looks at the baby, looks at HEATHER, and then kisses her.

Look at his little feet. His little toes.

ROGER:

He's got your eyes.

HEATHER:

He has that scrunched up face that you get when you're really focused.

ROGER:

Yeah, he kind of does. How're you feeling?

HEATHER:

Tired.

ROGER:

Is the ice helping?

HEATHER:

Yeah.

ROGER:

Good. I can't believe you actually pushed this little guy out of you.

HEATHER:

(Laughs) I know. Amazing, isn't it?

ROGER:

Incredible. You're incredible and I'm so beyond in love with you.

HEATHER:

I love you too. This is the happiest day of my life.

ROGER:

Me too.

LIGHTS FADE.

END OF PLAY.