

The Farm

by Alexandria Haber

Place: A farm in rural Ontario.

Characters :

Nyle, a rough and tumble kind of guy who drinks too much. He is in his early 30's.

Margaret, Nyle's estranged wife. She is in her early thirties.

Sam, Nyle's brother. Sam is around thirty. He is dead and appears in flashbacks.

Megan, Sam and Nyle's' much younger sister. She lives with Margaret on the farm. She is about nineteen.

Bartender, an older man played by the same actor who plays Sam.

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Act 1, Scene 1

Margaret is sitting on the porch reading a book. Nyle enters carrying a heavy knapsack. He sees Margaret and stops, staring at her. She does not see him. He takes off his knapsack and throws it to the ground. Margaret looks up, sees who it is and immediately stands up.

Marg: Nyle.

Nyle: Hello Margaret.

Marg: Hello? My God. Nyle. Where did you come from?

Nyle: The bus station.

Marg: Jesus, Nyle. The bus station. What are you doing here?

Nyle: I came back. I came back to see you. [Nyle picks up his knapsack and approaches the porch.]

Marg: To see me.

Nyle : Well, yeah. Hell, it's been a while-

Marg: Yeah, it has.

Nyle: Yeah.

Marg: [Moving away from Nyle] Jesus. Nyle what are you doing here?

Nyle: I thought it was time I came back.

Marg: Well, you're mistaken about that.

Nyle: I thought maybe I could give you a hand. Help out around here. It's the busy season ain't it? I could plow the fields, feed the horses be a good old farmhand. Thought you might need the help.

Marg: You're crazy you know that? Crazy. I always knew you were a son of a bitch but showing up here now and expecting me to take you on as what? A goddamned farmhand? After all this time. After everything you've done. Get off my land.

Pause. They stand staring at one another.

Nyle: I can't make the past any different. It was a long time ago. I just want to work.

Marg: Not long enough. *[Kicking his bag off the porch]*

Nyle: I just want a job. I just want to work.

Marg: You're not getting one around here.

Nyle: You don't have to pay me. You don't even have to see me. I'll sleep in the barn.

Marg: Get out of here.

Nyle: Please Margaret. I know how you feel about me-

Marg: Ha! I know how things were. I remember.

Nyle: I'm different now.

Marg: Ha!

Nyle: I am I swear it.

Marg: I'm not interested in your offer Nyle. You better get going or you'll miss the last bus.

Nyle: Margaret please. I want to make it up to you. That's all. I won't talk to you. I won't look at you I just want to work for you. Just let me work for you.

Marg: Why Nyle? Why should I?

Nyle: Because- just because I need it. I need to do this. *[pause.]* And it's still my farm.

A longer pause. Margaret begins to walk away from the porch and then stops.

Marg: Nyle? I got a new boyfriend now.

Nyle: *[Settling himself comfortably on the porch taking a bottle of whiskey out of his bag.]*
Good for you Margaret, I'm glad to hear it.

Marg: And Nyle?

Nyle: Yes Margaret.

Marg: Fuck you. *[She exits.]*

Nyle: Thanks, but I think I'll be okay in the barn. Nice to see you again too. You haven't changed a bit.

Act 1, Scene 2

Later that same day.

Margaret is in the kitchen getting supper ready. She is attempting to peel carrots

Meg (from off-stage): Margaret?

Marg: In the kitchen. (Meg enters)

Meg: Oh, hi. There you are. What are you doing? Just sitting here? Everything Okay? How was-

Marg: Where were you ?

Meg: (Eating the carrots as Margaret peels them) At Jane's. You should see the way she's done her hair. It looks amazing. She got it dyed at Effie's- bright red! She said Effie nearly fainted when she told her what she wanted. Jane said that-

Marg: (yanking the carrots away from Meg) Do you mind? I'm not peeling them for you to eat .

Meg: Sooorry. Jane said next month she's going to shave her head. Can you believe that? She is so brave. I'll bet it looks really good though. Maybe I should do that. You think?

Margaret does not answer.

Meg(Helping herself to another carrot which Margaret grabs quite violently from her): Is everything okay? You seem kind of weird.

Marg (throwing a carrot at Megan) You are such an idiot!

Meg: Margaret!

Marg: (throwing another carrot) You are. You are such a little idiot.

Meg. Okay , alright- hey stop it. I'm an idiot.

Marg: You told him he could come,

Megan does not answer.

Marg: You did, didn't you?

Meg: He's here?

Marg: Did you tell him he could come?

Meg: Not exactly.

Marg: Shit.

Meg: I didn't tell him to come-

Marg: How long has he been around? Never mind don't tell me. How could you let him come here Megan?

Meg: I didn't exactly let him come. I never thought he would come. Is he really here?

Marg: You knew he was back.

Meg: He said he couldn't wait to see you he wants to talk to you - he - he hasn't been back in so long.

Marg: I know exactly how long it's been since he was here. That's the way I wanted it. I don't want him here. I don't want him around. You knew that.

Meg: Nyle's not dead. Even if you wish he was. He's not. That's just the way it is.

Marg: Don't say that.

Meg: You didn't think he'd never ever come back did you? I mean I guess I kind of thought that for a while but now! It's hard to believe he's actually here. He's here isn't he? You didn't make him leave did you?

Marg: Oh shut up.

A short pause.

Meg: Well, like where is he?

Marg: He's in the goddamned barn. And that's where he's staying.

Meg: Oh.

Marg: It's not what you think.

Meg: You don't know what I think.

Marg: I know what you think when you get that dreamy, stubborn look on your face and you're wrong. Nothing that happened with Sam has anything to do with Nyle.

Meg: Who said anything about Sam?

Marg: Nobody. Not out loud but you did in your mind.

Meg: What I say in the privacy of my own mind is none of your business. And anyway since nothing happened, I guess it shouldn't bother you if he sticks around for a while.

Marg: Why are you doing this?

Meg: He's my brother.

Marg: And what about Sam?

Meg: Yeah, exactly.

Marg: Nothing- none of this- of Nyle or Sam and me has anything to do with you Megan. You weren't around. [Pause.] You shouldn't have told him to come here. It's not going to do any good.

Meg: Maybe not for *you*. This is his home, Margaret. He doesn't have anywhere else to go.

Marg: And whose fault is that? He's the one who left.

Meg: After you told him to. Why can't you just give him a chance?

Marg: He's had too many chances.

Meg: It's his home. You're the one who doesn't really belong here, you're the one who doesn't have any real connection here. [Pause.] I 'm sorry. I didn't mean that.

Marg: Yes you did.

Meg: No. No. I don't feel like that. I just feel so sorry for Nyle. I just want us to try and be a family again.

Marg: Don't waste your time feeling sorry for Nyle. Anyway it doesn't make any difference. He won't be sticking around here long . Something all three of you had in common not one of you could ever stay in the same place for more than a few months. No loyalty.

Meg: Loyalty? That is not fair . How long do you think it's going to take before he figures out the truth? Don't keep dinner for me. I'll be in the barn. I'm going to talk to my brother.

Act I, Scene 3. Nyle is in the barn drinking and listening to the radio. A horse neighs and the radio stops and crashes to the floor.

Nyle: Fucking Horse! *[Nyle disappears and returns with the broken radio]* Fucking, fucking horse. Broke my Radio. Goddamn horse. Too quiet out here. Got to have some noise. Quiet like this could drive a man crazy. Does. Has been known to. Jesus, I'd hate to be deaf Even if I was deaf I'd talk all the time. Just to break the silence. I'm not kiddin' ya fucking old horse.

The sound of the barn door being open as Megan enters the barn.

Meg: *[calling out]* Nyle?

Nyle: Megan. *[Nyle struggles to his feet, they embrace]*

Meg: You're really here. I can hardly believe it. You look pretty awful.

Nyle: Thanks.

Meg: Can I have a drink? *[Nyle hands her the bottle which is half empty, she takes a big swig and begins to cough like an idiot. Nyle thumps her on the back she tries to talk.]* I'm so glad you came back. I didn't think you would. I was pretty sure you wouldn't. I'd just about given up.

Nyle: I am glad to see you. Fucking old horse just broke my radio. It was getting too goddamn quiet.

Meg: Weird. So very weird. Life has been so weird. You got a smoke?

Nyle: Since when do you smoke?

Meg: I don't.

Nyle: You want to smoke my cigarettes and drink my whiskey? That's a lot to ask of a man who just travelled halfway around the world at your command.

Meg: I guess it is. But it sure took you a hell of a long time to get back.

Nyle: If I give you a cigarette will you stay the hell away from the rest of my whiskey?.

Meg: For a second you sounded exactly like dad.

Nyle: *[Imitating dad's voice]* Get the hell away from that whiskey.

Meg: Boy, he drank a lot. Smoked a lot too.

Nyle: Killed him.

Meg: He was 87. He would have died sooner or later. I think it was mom finding out he hid his whiskey in holes out back in the field that killed him.

Nyle: You might be right about that. Jesus Christ it's quiet around here. And these fucking horses smell. How the hell can you stand it.

Meg: *[Handing Nyle a lit cigarette.]* Here. Wave it around a bit. You'll get use to it again. I kinda like it now. I missed it when I was living in the city.

Nyle: That's one thing I sure as hell didn't miss. What are you doing out here again Megan?

Meg: *[shrugs]* Not too much. Just hanging out I guess.

Nyle: *(laughs)* Strange place to hang out. Kind of a dive.

Meg: I love being here. I love hanging out here. I always did. When I was little, I always wanted to live out here with you guys. I thought you had this ideal life living out here. Living close to nature, raising horses. Living in the same house you were born in.

Nyle: I don't remember it ever being like that.

Meg: It was once.

Nyle: Maybe once.

Meg: Maybe! Nyle I remember it. You and Margaret were like the mom and dad I wanted to have- young, happy in love. I loved it when you and Margaret took over the farm. Margaret would make bread and ride the horses and you'd be out working the fields like some cowboy Growing those organic tomatoes.

Nyle: I forgot all about those tomatoes.

Meg: You have any idea what that was like for me? Coming up here for the weekend, getting away from dad drinking all night and mom stuck in her head, staying with you guys where you didn't even have garbage!

Nyle: We had garbage.

Meg: No! No you didn't. You had compost, two buckets beside the sink. You even used the horse pooh. Don't you remember? All that stuff to grow the organic tomatoes. I used to sit in my apartment obsessing about all the things I wasted- not only garbage but time, my time, everybody's time. I never did anything. I went from useless job to useless job. Bars, clubs, movies. Drink, smoke, eat. All for what? At least here I don't feel wasted. As a person I mean.

Nyle: Places don't make that much of a difference. You can feel like a wasted person no matter where you go.

Meg: Well I didn't go. I came back.

Nyle: And I didn't.

Meg: I came to live with Margaret. We tried to find you. The last address we had was in Chicago somewhere.

Nyle: I know.

Meg: I wish you would have been here.

Nyle: I'm sorry.

Meg: Didn't you ever get any of those letters?

Nyle: Yes.

Meg: All of them?

Nyle: Meggie, look I'm sorry-

Meg: You never tried to reach us. Me.

Nyle: It was too late.

Meg: Too late? Why'd you bother coming back now then? What the hell is the point in coming back now?

Nyle: You asked me to.

Meg: I asked you then.

Nyle: I couldn't then.

Meg: You mean you wouldn't.

Nyle: No. I mean I couldn't. Not everything is a question of free will.

Meg: You knew. You got all those letters and you still waited a whole fucking year before you let us know -You stupid fucking useless jerk.

Nyle: Megan, I'm sorry. It wouldn't have done any good. My coming back. Not then. Not even then. It wouldn't have helped.

Meg: It would have helped me.

Pause.

Nyle: I brought you something.

Meg: I don't want it.

Nyle: You don't even know what it is.

Meg: I don't care, I don't want.

Nyle: It's from Sam.

Meg: Sam?

Nyle: [*Handing Meg a bag of letters.*] Letters. All from Sam. You have them Meggie. I don't need them anymore. [*Pause.*] You're letters are in there too. I kept them all.

Meg: You kept my letters?

Nyle: Every single one.

Megan begins to rifle through the bag of letters. Sam appears on the porch. Nyle slowly moves over to join him. Megan picks out a letter and begins to read it. Nyle pulls out a bottle of whiskey.

A long pause during which Sam settles himself comfortably and Nyle continues to drink.

Nyle: Have a drink?

Sam: Don't mind if I do.

Nyle: Good for you Sammy boy. What's the occasion?

Sam: I hate to see a good man drinking by himself

Nyle: Guess that's why you ain't been around here so much these past few months.

Sam: That's not why.

Nyle: Margaret's not here..

Sam: I can see that.

Nyle: Nope. She's gone over to Kingston to visit some old school friend. Don't expect I'll be seeing too much of old Maggie in the next little while.

Sam: Why's that? You taking off again?

Nyle: Fuck you Sam.

Sam: *[laughs]* Or is she taking off on **you** this time? Didn't think that could ever happen did you?

Sam: Where did she really go Nyle?

Nyle: Kingston.

Sam: You really did it this time didn't you. She up and left you and you can hardly believe it. Good for her. Pass me that whiskey boy. That deserves a toast. *[Sam grabs the whiskey bottle from Nyle.]* Is that it? And what are you gonna do now?

Nyle: *[laughing]* What do you want Sam? Why did you come here?

Sam: I came to see Margaret.

Nyle: */grabbing the whiskey bottle back from Sam/* Well, she ain't here and I have no idea where she is or when she's coming back. I plan on sitting here and finishing all the whiskey I've got left in the house and the heading off into the sunset myself. Now you are more than welcome to sit here and drink with me or not. Personally I could care less. But if you are planning to stay I suggest you head on down to the whiskey store and get yourself another bottle of drink cause the rest of this one is all mine.

Pause.

Sam: So Nyle what did you do to her this time?

Nyle: Should have figured you'd see it that way. Didn't you hear me? I said she left me. *Go on* though. Check over there behind the well and see if you can find where I stashed her poor old broken body.

Sam: You really shouldn't drink Nyle. It just brings out the worst in you.

Nyle: Just like dad right? Sorry to disappoint you.

Sam: You know, I'm glad she finally left you. She deserves a better man than you.

Nyle: Someone like you I suppose?

Sam: What's that supposed to mean?

Nyle: *[laughs]* Like I don't see what's going on. Now's your chance. I'm not coming back this time. You can move on in, ease her broken heart.

Sam: Don't flatter yourself Nyle. Nobody's going to be broken hearted about your departure.

Nyle: Maybe not.

Sam: Like father, like son.

Nyle: That's not funny. It's not even very interesting. You could have said the apple doesn't fall far from the tree. That's a much better metaphor. More your style school boy.

Sam: Where are you going?

Nyle: Don't know. Doesn't really matter.

Sam: What about the farm?

Nyle: Margaret will look after it.

Sam: You really going?

Nyle: I hate this place.

Sam: I guess you do.

Nyle: So I'm going.

Sam: Suit yourself.

Nyle: Say good-bye to Margaret for me.

Sam: I will.

Nyle: She'll be better off with you anyway.

Pause. Nyle and Sam stare at one another.

Sam: I'll take care of her.

Nyle: Yeah, right, okay Sam I'll see you around.

Sam: Not if I see you first.

Nyle: Ha ha.

Nyle returns to Megan.

Meg: *[looking up from a letter]* Do you ever see Sam in your dreams?

Nyle: *[still staring at Sam on the porch]* No. *[Lights begin to dim]*

Meg: I do. All the time.

The lights are completely down now.

Act 1, Scene 4

Margaret is in the kitchen furiously mopping the floor. Megan enters walks deliberately over the clean floor and sits at the table.

Meg: Are you alright?

Margaret doesn't answer just keeps on mopping furiously.)

Meg: I thought you might still be upset from before.

Margaret still doesn't answer.

Meg: I should have told you I knew he was around.

Marg: He's your brother. It's still his farm, your farm too I guess. Even though neither one of you give a goddamn about it. You've been a part of it from the very beginning. It was never really mine I just wanted it to be. You don't even know how to ride a horse. Nyle takes off ages ago the place could have gone to hell for all he ever cared about it. Back now for what? It's like he knew I'd finally gotten on with it, gotten my life together. I'm supposed to welcome him back with open arms.

Meg: You think he wants you guys to get back together again?

Marg: I don't know what he wants. I don't care what he wants. Only two people in the world Nyle ever cared about were Sam and your father. He doesn't know what to do with himself. That's probably why he came back here.

Meg: Why? I don't understand what you are trying to say. He cared about other people - you, me not just Sam and dad! He hated dad, God, Margaret even I remember how much he hated dad. He came back to see you to be with you.

Marg: No. It's just that we're his last chance. We're all he has. We're his last chance to prove himself

Meg: To prove what?

Marg: To prove that he's alright. To prove that he can be better than his father. I wish I had never set eyes on him.

Meg: Why? Why would you say that? You were crazy about each other. Everything was so romantic. What is wrong with you and Nyle anyway? Neither one of you remember anything properly. Nobody in this family ever remembers anything the way they're

supposed to. I watched you one night from my bedroom window . You were sitting on the porch drinking a beer and Nyle had just come back from helping out somebody who lived down the road. You smiled at each other and he walked over and you gave him a sip of your beer and then he poured some in your mouth, too much and it was dripping down the sides of your mouth and he just kept pouring it and you started laughing and he kissed you and you stood there kissing for a long time. I wanted that. I wanted somebody to kiss me like that. You made me believe that people could love each other.

Marg: I would like to be as sure as you are about love . I wish I could say, yes Meggie hold onto that, that one moment - that was love.

Meg: So say it then. Why can't you just say it.

Marg: I can't. Everything is coloured differently for me. There are things - things that happened between us that changed all of those moments for me.

Meg: What things?

Marg: *[gets up and begins to mop the floor rather carelessly again]* Just things.

Meg: Like what? Like he cheated on you? Like he spent all your money on drugs and booze ? Like he never worked very hard? Like what things Margaret? What could have made everything go so badly, so badly that he would have taken off for so long. What was so wrong that he wouldn't even come back when his own brother died? What did you ever do to him Margaret?

Marg: *[after a small silence]* Nothing.

Meg: Nothing? Nothing. So that made it okay for you to have an affair with Sam.

Silence.

Marg: Don't.

Meg: I'm not such a child Margaret. I might have been young, when all of these things happened but I was aware.

Marg: Nyle hit me.

Meg: You're a liar Margaret.

Marg: No. He scared himself He thought maybe one day he wouldn't stop.

Meg: You are such a liar.

Marg: That's why he left.

Meg: No.

Marg: Yes. Oh yes. There's some truth for you. It doesn't always come in the shape you want. Go ahead and ask him. He knows. He'll tell you.

Meg: You're lying! You lie all the time. Nyle would never- he could never have hit you not after everything that happened at home. You're a liar Margaret.

Marg: He doesn't have to face Sam now. Knows Sam won't be able to come to my rescue anymore. Probably figures he can scare me into doing anything he wants again.

Meg: I'm going to talk to him. I'm going to tell him what a liar you are.

Marg: But I'm not afraid of him anymore.

Meg: *[She is very close to tears as opposed to Margaret who seems to be getting stronger as she speaks.]* You don't know what you're talking about. You just don't know.

Marg: He can't get to me anymore. He can't even come close.

Meg: You're wrong Margaret. You don't know what you're talking about. You don't know what love is supposed to be. *[Meg exits.]*

Pause.

Marg: I know what it's not supposed to be. I just don't know how to make it stop.

Margaret sits down at the table with her mop and Sam enters.

Sam: I don't think this is such a good idea.

Marg: Will *you* help me find him? You've been there. You must have some idea of where he'd go.

Sam: You think this is going to make Nyle any different?

Marg: Yes. I do.

Sam: This makes you want Nyle back. A baby. A baby who's going to take as much abuse as

Nyle dishes out on you. This is what you want.

Marg: It'll be different now. He'll be happy about this. It's been so long since Nyle was happy.

Sam: I don't think so.

Marg: It will. Please Sam, you have to help me find him. I miss him. *[Pause.]* I won't ask you for anything again. Please. I love him. He has a right to know about this no matter what you might feel about it.

Sam: Marry me.

Marg: What?

Sam: Marry me. I love you. I'll look after you. I'll look after the baby. I'd love to have a baby. I'd be a great father.

Marg: You aren't the father.

Sam: I know. But I could be. Nyle's no good for you. Look at what he's done to you. I hate what he does to you. Marry me. I'll look after you. *[Pause.]* Anyway, I have no idea where he is.

Margaret begins mopping again.

Marg: *[not looking at Sam]* That's not true.

Sam: *[shrugging]* I don't want him to come back.

Marg: But I do.

Sam: I know.

Marg: You do now where he is.

Sam: Yes.

Marg: You're not going to tell me.

Sam: No. I'm not going to let him hurt you anymore.

Marg: You think you can stop me from hurting?

Pause.

Sam: I'd like to try.

Marg: I'm sorry Sam.

Sam: Why won't you give me a chance?

Marg: I think it's time you left Sam.

Sam: He won't come back. He wants to be lost. He won't come back Margaret, not even for this.

Marg: *[still not looking at Sam]* He might. I have to try. I have to give him the chance.

Sam: I guess I should be used to this by now.

Marg: I'm sorry Sam.

Sam: One thing. If you had seen me first before you ever laid eyes on Nyle would it have made any difference? Would you have been able to love me ?

Margaret shakes her head no.

Sam: Right. I won't be around bothering you again.

Marg: You don't bother me.

Sam: Still.

Sam exits. Margaret continues to mop the floor.

Act 1, Scene 5

Later that night.

Nyle is in the barn. Megan enters. She watches Nyle pitching hay for a long time.

Nyle: You just going to sit there?

Meg: Yeah.

Short pause.

Meg: Why do you think Sam died Nyle?

Nyle: What?

Meg: I mean why do you think it was time for Sam to die.

Nyle: It was an accident Meg.

Meg: I don't know.

Nyle: What's not to know. His car went over the side. He died.

Meg: Maybe.

Nyle: Not maybe. That's how he died.

Meg: But they can't really prove it.

Nyle: Prove what?

Meg: Prove that he fell asleep. No one was there so they can't really prove it.

Pause.

Nyle: No, they can't.

Meg: Exactly. They can't. So unless somebody is actually a witness to an event you can't be entirely sure of anything.

Nyle: Unless you just believe.

Meg: Like in God or something you mean?

Nyle: God, people, the truth, whatever. I don't have to go to Nova Scotia to believe it's there. I don't have to see Sam dead to know it's true.

Meg: How long are you going to be staying here?

Nyle: I just got here.

Meg: I know but about how long do you think you'll be staying?

Nyle: A while I guess. What's the matter, you sick of me already?

Meg: It's just a bit strange that's all. Margaret won't even talk to you. You're sleeping in the barn.

Nyle: Margaret will warm up to me. Pretty soon she'll be out here keeping me company. Don't you worry about that.

Meg: I don't know about that. I'm sure Margaret won't be out here talking to you any time in the near future.

Nyle: You just don't know her as well as I do.

Meg: Yeah, well maybe not, but she's pretty pissed that you're here at all. She's hardly speaking to me and it's not like it's my fault you decided to come back. I couldn't have stopped you from showing up. I figured she'd be surprised, even a little shocked at you showing up the way you did but not like this. Not so mad she won't even look at me. She wants you to leave Nyle. She doesn't want you around. She's not going to change her mind. She's even been telling me all kinds of terrible lies about you just to get me on her side. I think you should probably go Nyle. There's nothing here for you anyway. Maybe if Sam was still around it would be different.

Nyle: What kind of lies?

Meg: Nothing. Stupid stories. I didn't believe anything she said anyway.

Nyle: Why not?

Meg: Why? Because she was lying that's why. Nothing she said could have been true.

Nyle: What did she say?

Meg: [pauses] Just that sometimes the two of you didn't get along so well. Sometimes you used to have fights?

Nyle: Fights.

Meg: I don't believe her. You're my brother Nyle and even though I haven't seen you for a while I know what kind of a person my own brother is. We grew up in the same family. We're alike. You could never do anything like what Margaret was talking about. Right Nyle? You couldn't. Right?

Nyle doesn't answer.

Meg: It's not true is it?

Nyle turns away from Meg and starts pitching hay.

Meg: Nyle?

Nyle: It's true. I'm not like that anymore though. I don't know what made me like that Meggie. **Meg leaves.]** You can tell Margaret I didn't come back for anything to be like it was. Hell, I'd tell her myself if she'd let me. *[notices that Meg has left, sits on the ground]*

Lights down.

Act 1, Scene 6

Later that same night. Megan is in the kitchen mopping the floor. Margaret enters and watches her silently.

Marg: The floor is already clean.

Meg: I'm just going over the spots I walked on when I came in.

Marg: It's alright.

Meg: No. No it's not. It was dirty and you just washed it so I wanted to be sure it was clean when you woke up this morning.

Margaret walks over to Megan and puts her arms around her.

Marg: It's alright. The floor looks beautiful. Clean enough to eat off of

Meg: *[crying]* I'm sorry.

Marg: It's alright.

Meg: I feel like such an idiot.

Marg: You're not the idiot.

Meg: Nothing is turning out the way that I hoped it would.

Marg: Welcome to the club.

Meg: How could I not have known.

Marg: You were just a little kid.

Meg: Margaret I was 15.

Marg: So? That's still a kid. Anyway nobody knew.

Meg: Sam did.

Marg: Sam guessed. I never told him. He just figured it out for all the good it ever did him.

Meg: Do you think that was what was wrong with Sam?

Marg: What do you mean?

Meg: Knowing about you and Nyle is that what made Sam so sad?

Marg: Sam wasn't sad.

Meg: No? It seemed that way to me.

Marg: Don't be so hard on yourself. You can't know everything about people, even your own family.

Meg: Okay not everything then. I'd settle for knowing one thing that is true.

Marg: You shouldn't expect so much from people. You'll only end up being disappointed.

Meg: I don't care about disappointment. No wonder you never wanted to see him again. Do you hate him?

Marg: No.

Meg: I would have hated him.

Marg: Do you?

Meg: No. But I would like to.

Marg: Yes. Me too. Don't waste your time trying to hate him. It isn't worth it.

Meg: I never want to fall in love and have a family. I just want to live alone in a very quiet place with a cat or maybe just a fish that I could replace with another fish that looks exactly the same anytime one of them died. Things would always be simple then, manageable. I would always know the way things were.

Marg: No. You don't want to wish that for yourself. Love is alright. It's just not easy or ever what you think it will be. I'm not sorry I loved Nyle.

Meg: I am. I'm sorry I love him.

Marg: You're not me.

Meg: I know that Margaret. That I know.

Marg: I feel like I spent a whole lot of my life waiting for Nyle. I used to dream about him before I even knew he existed somewhere. Someone who would kiss me and make my knees go weak. Someone I could do things with I wouldn't even be able to think about afterwards without blushing, even if I was alone. That kind of man doesn't come in a nice clean package though. He comes dirty and wild and torn up around the edges. I thought I was prepared for that though. I wanted him no matter what the rest of it would be like. I never realized that the rest of it would be me. *[Pause.]* I used to look at those women, the ones whose husbands came home every night exactly the same time and help put the children to bed and hold their hands when they're watching T.V. and think I would hate that, you know? The ordinariness of it. The regularity. The knowing and knowing of someone so well a look can pass for a whole sentence. I was so sure I would have hated that.

Meg: I'm not sure but I think that maybe somewhere in between that and Nyle there might be something else. You could find something else.

Marg: Don't spend so much time figuring out the past Megan. It's not going to help you find anything very good.

Meg: It might. I might find something very good. There's always hope right? At least there's always the possibility of hope.

Marg: I guess.

Meg: Good then. I'm okay now. Go on back to bed. I'll be up soon.

Margaret nods and exits.

Once Margaret is gone Megan sits down and begins to go through the bag of letters.

End of Act 1.

Act 2, Scene 1

It is two years earlier than Act 1.

Early evening. Sam, Margaret, Megan and Nyle are playing cards at the kitchen table. The radio is playing.

Meg: Nyle it's your turn.

Nyle: I know, I know.

Marg: I love this song.

Meg: You would. It's so sappy. Hotel California. God Margaret. Nyle Go!

Sam: Hey what's wrong with Hotel California? It's a classic.

Meg: Yeah if you grew up in 1959. Nyle? Like are you playing or not.

Nyle: [slamming a card down] I went.

Sam: Anyway it's not from 1959.

Meg: Whatever.

Nyle: So I went.

Sam: Well it's not. Did you ever dance to this at school Nyle? Always asking the prettiest girl in the room to dance because you knew it was such a long song? Did he dance with you Margaret.

Marg: Nyle didn't dance much.

Nyle: Yeah well I'm with Megan on this one it is a pretty sappy song. Who's turn is it?

Sam: You never danced to Hotel California?

Marg: No.

Nyle: Is it your turn Megan?

Sam: That is very wrong.

Nyle : Well who's turn is it?

Sam: How about you Meg you ever dance to it?

Meg: Like I said they don't play relics like this at my school. Besides nobody goes to school dances anymore.

Nyle: So are we playing cards or what?

Sam gets up and turns up the music.

Sam: *[to Margaret]* Would you like to dance?

Marg: *[laughing]* Don't be such an idiot.

Sam: Come on. *[He pulls her up]*

Marg: Only if Nyle will dance with Megan.

Nyle: I'm trying to play cards. I might even be winning.

Sam: Come on Nyle. Dance with your little sister. Give me a chance to dance with your beautiful wife.

Meg: I don't know how to dance.

Nyle: *[throwing his cards down]* Alright. Let's just say I won. Come on Meggie. I'll teach you how to dance.

They all dance.

Meg: You know I actually remember mom and dad dancing like this in the kitchen.

Nyle: You must be thinking about some other parents. People from a movie maybe.

Sam: No, she's right. I remember it too. You must have been about three years old Meggie. How can you remember that?

Meg: I don't know but I do. It was a hot night. Just like this.

Sam: That's right. Don't you remember Nyle? It was some special occasion. Their anniversary I think.

Nyle: I don't think I was there.

Sam: Maybe not.

Meg: He was there.

Nyle: I don't remember.

Meg: I do. You danced with mom.

Sam: That's right.

Nyle: I don't remember it.

Marg: Let's switch partners. I want to dance with Nyle.

Meg: I gotta go pee. [She *exits.*]

Nyle: I don't really fee like dancing anymore. I need a beer.

The song ends.

Marg: Come on Nyle. Just one song.

Nyle: The song's over.

Marg: [*fiddling with the radio*] I'll find another song.

Nyle: I don't want to.

Marg: Fine. How about you Sam? You want to dance some more?

Sam: I guess not.

Marg: Please?

Sam: Well maybe one more song.

Nyle: [*Shuffling the cards*] I thought we were playing cards.

Marg: [*putting her arms around Sam*] After this song.

Nyle: No. Let's play now.

Sam: One more song isn't going to hurt anybody.

Nyle: It might.

Megan *enters*.

Meg: I think I'm going to bed. Thanks for the dance lesson.

Marg: Goodnight.

Sam: I guess maybe I'll hit the road.

Marg: You don't have to leave.

Nyle: No you stay. I'm going to get a drink.

Marg: Nyle.

Nyle: Night all. Don't wait up. *[He exits.]*

Sam: Sorry. It seemed like a good idea.

Marg: It was.

Another song comes on the radio.

Sam: Would you like to dance?

Marg: Yes. I would.

Megan enters silently and watches them dance The lights go dawn.

Act 2, Scene 2

Later that evening. Margaret is brushing her hair. Nyle enters and opens the fridge to get a beer.

Marg: There's none left.

Nyle lets the fridge door slam. He picks up a half empty bottle from the table and chugs it.

Marg: Where did you go?

Nyle: Nowhere.

Marg: I didn't hear the truck.

Nyle: I walked.

Marg: All the way to town?

Nyle: I didn't go to town.

Marg: Oh.

Nyle: I sat out in the barn. I found a bottle of whiskey. Must have been there since dad was alive. He was always hiding his whiskey.

Marg: Oh. I'm going to bed.

Nyle: How was your dance?

Marg: Fine.

Nyle: Sure looked like you were enjoying yourself

Marg: I was. Why shouldn't I? You wouldn't dance with me.

Nyle: We could dance now.

Marg: No thanks. I'm not in the mood anymore.

Nyle : I see. Maybe I am.

Marg: It's too late now.

Nyle turns the radio on loud.

Marg: You'll wake up Megan. *[She turns it down, he turns it up and the radio crashes to the floor.]*

Nyle: I guess we can't dance now.

Marg: Why do you have to make everything so hard Nyle?

Nyle: I'm not the one who makes it so hard.

Marg: Let go of me.

Nyle: No.

Marg: Come on Nyle I'm going to bed.

Nyle: I still want to dance.

Marg: I don't. *[She pulls away from Nyle.]*

Nyle: If I was Sam you'd dance with me.

Marg: Stop it.

Nyle: He's been hanging around here a lot lately.

Margaret shrugs.

Nyle: He should get a job. Or go back to school. Wasn't that his big plan?

Marg: He is going back to school.

Nyle: Yeah? When? *[laughs]* You're hair looks nice. *[He reaches out to touch it but Marg moves away.]* Come on Margaret dance with me.

Marg: No. Sam's a big help around here.

Nyle: Yeah a real big help.

Marg: You are so pathetic.

Nyle: Watch your mouth.

Marg: Then keep your hands to yourself *[struggling to get away from him]* Look tell him to stop hanging around if it really bothers you that much.

Nyle: *[still holding on to Margaret]* So this is what Sam's been talking about. You telling him I

been picking on you again?

Marg: I haven't said a word to Sam. He can see for himself what's been going on around here.

Nyle: Like I said he's been spending way too much time around here.

Marg: Only because you're too fucking drunk all the time to do any work. What is the matter with you Nyle? When did you decide to become a drunken pathetic farmer?

Nyle shakes Margaret.

Nyle: You're the one who wanted to live here remember? I hate this farm. I always did. Goddamn horses and fucking chickens. You wanted this. And you got it. So live with it.

Marg: Get out of here.

Nyle: You asking me to leave?

Margaret is silent.

Nyle: No. I didn't think so. Don't have the stomach for that do you?

Nyle lets go of Margaret.

Marg: I just want things to be different.

Nyle: Me too.

Marg: Right.

Nyle: Good. You coming to bed?

Marg: Soon. I'll be up soon.

Nyle exits. Margaret stays where she is. Lights go down.

Act 2, Scene 3

Early evening a couple of weeks later.

Marg: It's been a long time since you were by.

Sam: It seemed like a good idea to lie low for a while.

Marg: I'm sorry.

Sam: No I'm sorry.

Marg: You don't have to be sorry. I wish he was dead.

Sam: Who?

Marg: Duh. Who. Nyle.

Sam: You don't really.

Marg: You're right. [pause.] I wish I was dead.

Sam: You don't.

Marg: I'm such a coward. I can't escape out of this. I wish I had never loved him. If I had never loved him to begin with this would be so easy.

Sam: You could leave him. People leave other people all the time. It's very easy. You just pick up and go.

Marg: I can't.

Sam: You can. You won't. Why are you putting up with this? You're smarter than this.

Marg: It's got nothing to do with being smart. Shows how much you know about it. It wasn't always like this. I'm afraid of losing him.

Sam: Oh Margaret.

Marg: Don't do that. Don't give me that poor Margaret voice. It's not what you think. He loves me. It's not what you think.

Sam: **It** is exactly what I think.

Marg: No. You just don't understand. You don't see him the way that I do. You see it only from the outside where all the bad parts seem so obvious. You don't see it from the inside

where it's much less clear.

Sam: Whatever. I do know that things should have turned out better than they did.

Mar: That's not really for you to decide.

Sam: I think it is.

Mar: You can't take the responsibility for my relationship with Nyle.

Sam: It's my fault that Nyle is like this with you.

Mar: No.

Sam: It is. I knew what he was like. I knew how he felt. I never should have let him marry you. I could have stopped all this.

Mar: You never should have let him marry me?

Sam: He wasn't ready to marry anybody. I should have been the one to get married. I'm the one who really wanted to. Besides I saw you first.

Margaret laughs.

Sam: I did.

Marg: So what? Who the hell do you think you are? You just sit there and try to erase my whole life with Nyle. Try to make like it never should have happened as if I had no part or control over any of it. You try to take away everyone's feelings and replace them with your own, as if you could have controlled the whole situation, as if you could have seen into the future and changed everything. You think there would have been some big happy ending if I had married you?

Sam: That's not what I meant. Do you love him?

Marg: What kind of a stupid question is that?

Sam: Right now. Do you love him right now.

Margaret doesn't answer.

Sam: Do you?

Margaret doesn't answer. Sam kisses her. She looks at him and wipes her mouth off with the back of her hand.

Marg: Yes.

Sam: Shit.

Marg: You're not so very different from. He wants to force things out of me as well. Don't do that again.

Sam: Why don't you come with me?

Marg: Stop being such an idiot? Haven't you been listening to anything I said?

Sam: Every word.

Marg: Just leave me alone. That's what I want. Just to be left alone. I don't want your help.

Sam: I don't know what I ever saw in you.

Marg: Neither do I.

They stand staring at each other as Nyle enters.

Sam: I just came to say good bye. I'm moving back to the city.

Marg: You're leaving?

Nyle: Well goodbye.

Sam: Good bye.

Nobody goes anywhere.

Nyle: Kind of stupid to stand around saying good bye and then not leave isn't it?

Marg: Don't Nyle.

Nyle: Don't what? I'm just saying.

Marg: Can't you just say goodbye nicely and wish him luck? Do you have to make such a bloody big deal out of everything?

Nyle: I did say good bye. Jesus. Good bye Sam. Good luck.

Sam: Good bye.

Marg: How come you didn't tell me *you* were leaving?

Sam: I'm telling you now.

Nyle: Yeah. He's telling us now. Bye.

Sam: Bye.

Marg: Oh fine! Let's go inside. See you around Sam.

Margaret begins to walk off towards the house as Sam shakes hands with Nyle and exits.

Marg: Are you coming?

Nyle: What's the big hurry? Why don't you stay outside with me for a while?

Marg: Don't start.

Nyle: Start what? I just want you to sit out here with me. It's nice out. *[Margaret goes to him and he puts his arms around her.]* Your hair smells nice. *[He kisses her.]* It's nice to have you all to myself again.

Margaret pulls away from him.

Marg: He was a big help you know.

Nyle: I know.

Marg: I'm going in.

Nyle: What's the matter?

Marg: I'm cold.

Nyle: I'll keep you warm.

Marg: I'm too cold. I'm going in.

Nyle: Margaret.

Marg: *[not looking at him]* What.

Nyle: I just meant it's nice to feel alone with you again. I'm not against Sam.

Marg: I know what you meant.

Nyle: Christ. It's not like he's gone to war or something. He'll be back every second he can.

Marg: No. He won't.

Nyle: What the hell does it matter so much to you anyway?

Marg: It doesn't. He's your brother.

Nyle: Yeah.

Margaret exits and the lights go down.

Act 2, Scene 4

A few weeks later.

Megan is sitting at the kitchen table doing homework. Sam enters and stands looking at her for a little bit.

Sam: What are you doing?

Marg: Sam! You scared me. I didn't notice you there.

Sam: I just got here.

Marg: What are you doing here?

Sam: I came to visit. Thought you might be feeling a little lonely.

Margaret gets up and begins to tidy the kitchen which is already clean.

Marg: I'm fine. Megan's coming down this weekend. She should be here pretty soon. Really I'm so busy I hardly have time to feel anything. I'm fine.

Sam; That's good.

Marg: Yes it is. It's great. I'm fine.

Sam; So you said.

Marg: How come you're not working?

Sam: I quit.

Marg: Again?

Sam: It just wasn't working out for me.

Marg: Lucky you not to be affected by little things like money and paying your rent.

Sam: Very funny. I still have to pay my rent.

Marg: Yeah? Do you use your good looks or your charm?

Sam: So far charm has worked but I think it's about to wear off.

Marg: Too bad.

Sam: You're telling me.

Marg: Shouldn't you be looking for a job then?

Sam: In a sense I am.

Marg: How's that?

Sam: I was thinking maybe you could use some help.

Marg: I suppose I could.

Sam: I know my way around here.

Marg: I know you do.

Sam: So it might just solve both of our problems.

Marg: I don't think so.

Sam: Why not?

Marg: You know why not. Nyle won't be very fond of the idea.

Sam: Nyle is not here.

Marg: Not right now.

Sam: Not right now? He left. He's gone.

Marg: He's coming back.

Sam: He's not.

Marg: He is.

Sam hands her a letter.

Marg:(looking at the letter) What's this?

Sam: A letter.

Marg: From who?

Sam: You know who it's from.

Marg:(handing the letter back to Sam) I don't want it.

Sam:(Not taking the letter) It's for you.

Marg(Putting the letter on the table) I don't want it.

Sam: Why not?

Marg: I just don't.

Sam: Fine.

Marg: Why did you have to bring it over here anyway.

Sam: It's for you.

Marg: So?

Sam; So it's for you. It's your letter. Why the hell would I not bring it over here?

Marg: I know he's not coming back. I don't need a stupid letter from him to tell me that. I don't need anything so definite. I'm not interested in reading stupid words that won't mean anything. I don't care about a stupid letter. I just don't want it. I need to be left with a little piece of something, just a small blank piece of something with no meaning in it and no answers and no promises about anything one way or the other. Can you understand that?

Sam: Yes.

Marg: It seems like I'm saying I want to be able to hope there will be a happy ending.

Sam: That's alright.

Marg: It's stupid. I told him to leave why should I have to feel like I hope he comes back?

Sam: I don't know. You did the right thing.

Marg: Did I?

Sam: I think so.

Marg: I don't know. It feels very bad. It feels so bad I think I might have done the wrong thing.

Sam: Why don't you just read the letter?

Marg: No.

Sam: You didn't do the wrong thing. You felt bad most of the time when he was here.

Marg: That was different.

Sam: Yeah it was worse. You know what? I will take that letter back. You can pretend like you never saw it. We can make a fresh start.

Marg: Alright.

Sam: How about letting me help you out around here? I could start today. I don't have anything else to do. No other place I have to be. We can just see how it goes.

Marg; Alright. The horses need mucking out.

Sam: I'm on it.

Marg; Thanks.

Sam: Not at all. (he exits)

Margaret picks up the letter and caresses it, puts it down, picks it up **again** and puts it in her pocket. Lights down.

Act 3 scene 1

Lights come up slowly on Sam who is standing centre stage. Megan is sitting at the kitchen table asleep with her head on the typewriter. She is having a nightmare. She lifts her head from the typewriter and looks at Sam. She calls out his name as the lights go to black on Sam. She begins to cry. She rips the sheet of paper out of the typewriter and as she does so the typewriter falls to the floor. Megan kneels on the floor beside the typewriter and continues to cry. Margaret enters the room in her nightgown. She goes to Megan and puts her arms around her.

Meg: Damn typewriter. Sorry. I guess I woke you up?

Marg: It's alright.

Meg: Not really. *[She shivers.]* Someone just walked over my grave.

Marg: What?

Meg: You know when all of a sudden you get goose bumps and shiver its supposed to mean someone is walking over the place where you're going to be buried. Spooky thought. It's an old wives tale I guess. You never heard that before?

Marg: I don't think so.

Meg: I wonder who it was.

Marg: Who?

Meg: The person who walked over my grave. I mean I know where it is. I guess. I assume it will be in the cemetery up the road where dad is and where- What time is it?

Marg: About three o'clock. Look are you alright ? Because if you're just going to sit here and wonder about who's walking over your grave I think I might just go back to bed.

Meg: What day is it?

Marg: *[sighs]* Tuesday.

Meg: It's been three weeks exactly then.

Margaret nods.

Meg: Twenty-one days.

Marg: Yes. Please don't tell me how many hours. I don't think I could bear to know.

Meg: What a funny thing to say.

Marg: I don't think so. I'm going back to bed.

Megan nods.

Marg: Goodnight.

Meg: I had a bad dream. It was about Sam . About the accident. How it was all a big mistake.

Marg: Go to sleep Meggie. It's too late now.

Meg: *[after a pause]* Too late for what? To talk about it? Too late to wonder why this had to

happen?

Marg: I mean its too late at night to go into it.

Meg: Oh. Sorry. I just can't stop thinking about it. I mean how could he have done that?

Marg: Done what?

Meg: Fallen asleep. He never would have fallen asleep. He hardly ever slept anyway. He couldn't have been that tired. He was only a few miles away. Where was he going anyway?

Marg: He said he was going for a drive.

Meg: That's it? That's all he said. He was going for a drive. That's so stupid. How could you have believed that. How could you have let him leave.

Marg: I didn't have any reason to stop him. He was just going for a drive.

Meg: You could have stopped him.

Marg: He wasn't drunk or acting crazy. I didn't know what was going to happen. I didn't know he wasn't going to come back. Don't you think I would have stopped him if I had known that?

Meg; I'm not sure.

pause

Marg: It was an accident Megan. How could I have known what was going to happen? How could I have made him stay? It's not my fault.

Meg: You told him to go!

Marg: That's not true. We had an argument . He was very mad, hurt. But I never told him to go.

Meg: You didn't ask him to stay.

Marg: I never wanted him to go. But how could I let him stay? How could I ask him to stay any longer? It wasn't going to change no matter how long Nyle stayed away for. I could never give Sam what he wanted. But he wanted to leave. I didn't tell him to.

Meg: You didn't have to.

Marg: You can blame me if **you** want to. It's not going to make things any different. All we have is each other Meggie.

Meg: Unless Nyle comes back.

Marg: Nyle 's not going to come back.

Meg: He might if you asked him to.

Marg: I don't want him too.

Meg: But I do.

Marg: I'm sorry Megan I can't ask him to come back.

Meg: Please Margaret !

Marg: No.

Meg: It wouldn't be for you. It would be for me and for Sam.

Marg: Don't ask me to. I can't.

Meg: Fine. Don't. Don't, don't don't. Nobody in this family ever thinks about me. Everybody just does whatever they want dies or runs away or won't say anything. Everyone always has more control over events than I do. I hate this family. I really hate it. What am I supposed to do with a family like this? How am I ever going to get away from this. Don't tell me anymore about anything I don't want to know. Already all the things I do know are going to set me back years and years in therapy and I'm not even eighteen yet! I hate this family so much. Leave me alone now. Go back to bed. Go to sleep or something. I'm going to write to Nyle again. He will come. Even if you don't want him to. You can't stop me from trying. You can't stop me.

Marg: No. *[She exits.]*

*Megan sits down and begins to cry.
Lights down.*

Act 3 , Scene 2

A year later.

Nyle is in a bar somewhere. He has been drinking a lot and is painfully soberly drunk. Megan is in her room . She will read this letter as we see Nyle reading it to himself in the bar. A TV could be on in the background.

Meg: Dear Nyle,

I have been writing you these letters for so long now I don't really know what to say anymore. Sam has been dead for a year now. I'm sorry to have to be the one to tell you if you don't already know. It's really depressing starting every letter I write you with that little bit of cheery news but since you never write back I don't know if you know and I'd really hate for it to come as a shock to you. You must know by now. I found this address in his stuff so I figure maybe he wrote to you once in a while. I don't know. I still can't really believe that Sam is aea I guess maybe you feel that way too? Margaret doesn't ever really talk about him anymore. I think she thinks it's better that way. I don't. Never talking about him just makes it seem like he never was and that feels a whole lot worse. I guess by now that you probably won't ever come back. Maybe its easier to stay away. I think if I had been away when Sam died I might have stayed away too because maybe that way he wouldn't really seem so dead. At least you could imagine that he was alive . I do that anyway. Pretty stupid I guess. I really miss you Nyle. I think Margaret does too. She never says anything but sometimes I look at her and it feels to me like she is thinking about you and what it would be like to see you again. Of course I could be wrong about that. Margaret is a pretty hard person to figure out. Well, I guess that's it. I don't know if I'll write to you again. I'm beginning to feel like too much of a loser waiting for the mailman everyday. I think he's beginning to think I like him and that is truly pathetic because he's about thirty-five and he's already missing two of his teeth. Anyway, Bye. Love Megan.

P.S I just have to say one thing since this is the last letter I'll be writing to you and since you never answer anyway so what difference does it make? A) I am very angry at you for never writing to me for not letting me know if you are still alive for not caring at all about how I might be doing and B) I am going to miss writing to you. AT least when I sat down to write to you there was always the possibility of an answer not like with Sam. I thought with you I could at least have the chance to say good bye if nothing else. So good bye.

P.P.S. Today is my birthday. It's true, you never remembered it even when you were here but I just thought you might like to know.

P.P.S.S. I turned 18.

*Nyle takes a swig of a drink in front of him. He motions to a bartender to bring him another. He folds **up** the letter and puts it in a bag with a bunch of other letters.*

Nyle: Can I get my drink?

Bartender (not looking up from the paper he has been reading all night): Josh! Josh, man wants a drink. (Pause. No answer from Josh. Bartender throws down his newspaper pours a drink and brings it over swearing to himself the whole time)

Bartender: (handing Nyle his drink) Jesus. I'll be damned. Nyle! You old son of a bitch! That's been you sitting here drinking all night and I never even recognized you. Goddamn boy! How long has it been? You look like the devil himself sitting there, may he rest in peace, but, Jesus you do look like your old man. Drinking the same old whiskey too. When'd you get back on down here?

Nyle: Just got here.

Bartend: That right? And where have you been keeping yourself?

Nyle: A bit here and a bit there. Ireland mostly.

Bar-tend: Ireland! Jesus!

Nyle: I liked it.

Bartend: You must of. I haven't had you grace these doors in a good long time. How long has it been?

Nyle: It feels like forever.

Bar-tend: It does at that. How's that wife of yours- still your wife I guess, oh well no matter none of my business but how is she? and your pretty little sisters? Good little girl always remember those long braids of hers such a pity she cut them off. I always like long hair on a women, don't see so much of it these days. Women's lib and all that I guess.

Nyle: Couldn't say. I haven't seen them yet. It was Megan's birthday a little while ago. She's 18 now. Don't know too much about what Margaret is up to these days might have gone off and married somebody else for all I know. Can't say I'd blame her. Jesus. I seem to be talking a lot. I feel like I haven't said a word to anybody in a while. Probably better that way.

Bartend; it's the whiskey. it loosens the tongue. Where have you been staying if you don't mind my asking if you haven't been out to the old farm yet?

Nyle: Nowhere really. Thought I might stay here for a while. I just got in Town today. My stuffs at the bus station.

Bartend: Lucky you only decided to come back this year . They just built that station. (pause) I was damn sorry to hear about your brother, may he rest in peace. Nice guy. Never caused any trouble.

Nyle: Yeah. I was damn sorry to hear about him too. He did cause some trouble though. Not as much as me. Still. How about a refill?

Bartend: (filling up Nyle's glass) This one's on me. You weren't here for the funeral.

Nyle: No.

Bartend: Ireland must have had quite the hold on you.

Nyle; Met somebody over there.

Bar-tend: I see.

Nyle: Some old guy. Turns out we were related somehow. Some twice removed cousin of somebody married to someone or something. We had the same last name.

Bartend: They say every Irishman can trace his way back to a king.

Nyle; I lived with him. Him and his old dog. He was dying. The old guy, old Danny. Not the damn dog. Although that dog was pretty near death himself He had a bar. A pub. I did some work for him. I cleaned up stuff. Sent drunken old buggers home. Drank a lot of his whiskey.

Bar-tend; I guess you must of

Nyle: Good stuff they got down there. He was dying though, Danny. Never said anything about it but you could just see it. He talk about tomorrow and next year like he was going to live forever. It got so I half believed him. So when he died- well it took me by surprise. Stupid. Not like I hadn't seen it coming a mile away. Me and that damn dog just sat there staring at him sitting in his pub. Both of us waiting for him to get up. I can't blame the dog but Jesus I should have known better. I couldn't figure out what to do. First time in my life I ever realized what being dead meant. I thought about Sam being dead. Lying or sitting in his car somewhere dead like that like Danny was. He wasn't alive somewhere else. He wasn't somewhere. I didn't even know how long he'd been dead for. It looked like he maybe had been sitting there since closing time the night before. God. It made me feel bad like, to think of him sitting there dying all by himself you know?

Bar-tend: Poor old bastard. May he rest in peace. Jesus you're a cheery one to have in here on

slow night. I'm starting to wonder who would-be the one to find me if I happen to die in the middle of my bar.

Nyle; Danny didn't have anyone. Except that old dog. And me. Turns out I was the closest next of kin Danny had. Left me his dog. Left me his pub. I stayed till after his funeral. I had a big party in his bar the night that he was buried. A wake. An Irish wake. I would have liked to have done that at least for Sam. I left a few days later. Gave the Pub to one of the regulars. I would have taken the dog with me but he wouldn't leave. I guess I didn't feel like I missed Sam's funeral Truth is, I buried him the same day Danny died. It didn't seem to matter anymore, not having been around and all when he died. Not coming back then I mean. I felt like he was dead alright. I didn't need to see anymore. I couldn't stand the thought of it. Coming back here-well, I didn't think it could do any harm. I don't want to be like Danny. Die like that I mean.

Bartend: Can't blame you for that.

Nyle: Funny to be back. I can't seem to figure out how to go about getting home.

Bartend: Same way it always was, up the road about 5 miles.

Nyle: I guess so.

Bartend: One foot in front of the other like always. When you stand up, I'll point you in the right direction.

Nyle: I guess I know the direction. I think I might just sleep away the rest of the night at the bus station. Head out fresh from there in the morning.

Bartend: Suit yourself. Things usual do seem a wee bit brighter in the morning. That's what they say anyway. Good night boy. Good luck to you.

(He heads back to the bar and begins to close up for the night. The lights dim and he exits. Nyle is left sitting at his table, slowly he gathers up his bag of letters and exits)

Nyle: Yeah.

This scene should have a dream like quality to it. It is a flashback scene that we as an audience see but that does not happen in real time. Lights come up on Megan. She is in her room. She is putting her hair in braids and getting ready to leave for the city. Sam enters. He stands watching her as she does her hair. Eventually this begins to annoy Megan.

Meg: What?

Sam: I've been thinking about something.

Meg: So?

Sam: I know you think something is going on between me and Margaret.

Meg: I'm late. And it's none of my business what goes on between you and Margaret. Nyle's not here. Even if I think it's totally a terrible thing to do sneak around behind his back and try to I don't know, make her like you or something, still it's none of my business.

Sam: That's just it. It's not like that.

Meg: I know what I see. No matter what you might think of Nyle he's still your brother, our brother and she's still his wife. That's what I think. So there.

Sam: It's not so easy as that.

Meg: Why not? You can't have everything you want. That's just the way life is and you want her and you can't have her. You are not allowed to have her. You'd think you would know that by now. She doesn't want you anyway.

Sam: I know that.

Meg: So what are trying to do?

Sam: Have you ever been in love with somebody ?

Meg: Oh great. No. Of course not. I'm just a kid remember? I wouldn't have any idea what that's supposed to be.

Sam: I'm sorry.

Meg: No. People get to be a certain age and they think they can justify anything in the name of love. It just makes you look like such a fool. Look at Romeo and Juliet. Two of the biggest morons that ever walked the face of the earth. I mean I ask you was there no other way they could have worked things out? Had to go and kill themselves and a bunch of other people who got caught up in it.

Sam: Nobody is dying around here.

Meg: No, but people get hurt. I get hurt . Just thinking about it. I love you and Nyle and Margaret, Sam.

Sam: I know you do. That's why I'm telling you . I love her. I can't help it that I do but I do. From the first time I ever saw her. And I can see that you don't think very highly of me which is not something I like but at least I want you to know that it's only me.

Meg: I don't believe you.

Sam: It's true.

Meg: Then why? Why do you bother if you know it's not going to change?

Sam: I can't help it.

Meg: You're crazy.

Sam: Maybe.

Meg: Why did you tell me this?

Sam: Because it's how I feel and I want you to understand that.

Meg: Why?

Sam: It just feels important to me that you understand that.

Meg: But I don't. I don't understand at all.

Sam: Listen, Just remember one thing for me when it comes down to it okay? Just remember that if I could have changed this I would have.

Meg: What's that supposed to me?

Sam: Just that. It's not how I like to see things either. And I don't want you to believe that I did any of this on purpose.

Meg: Did any of what?

Sam; You're a good kid Megan. You'll fall in love someday. You'll figure all of us out.

Sam exits. Megan watches him leave. She sits down on the chair and puts her arms around herself to keep her from shivering. Lights go down.

It is the present. Lights come up on Megan who is sitting at the kitchen table putting most of the letters buck into the bug. It is very early in the morning. Nyle enters and Megan looks up.

Nyle: Kitchen still looks the same.

Meg: Yeah.

Nyle: *[opening the fridge]* No beer though. I guess things have fallen apart a little since I was around.

Meg: Here. *[she pours Nyle a drink from a bottle of whiskey]*

Nyle: *[looking at the bottle]* Where'd you dig this relic up from?

Meg: The linen closet. There's probably a hundred other bottles hidden around here somewhere. It's hard to tell sometimes if it was dad hiding them so mom wouldn't find them or mom hiding them so dad couldn't drink. Alcohol doesn't go bad does it?

Nyle: Not stuff like this.

Meg: Good. Cheers.

Nyle: Cheers.

Pause.

Meg: Here. *[She hands the bug of letters buck to Nyle.]* I'm keeping two of them. I hope that's okay.

Nyle: Fine. I told you could keep them all. I don't need them anymore.

Meg: I don't need them either. I remember everything anyway.

Nyle: So do I.

Meg: Not the same way I do.

Nyle: Did you find what you were looking for?

Meg: No. What are we going to do Nyle? I mean what's going to happen to us?

Nyle: Nothing. Everything that happens to everyone else is going to happen to us. There is nothing very special about us.

Meg: But what are we going to do?

Nyle: Whatever we want.

Meg: You do whatever you want. I don't even know what that is. [Pause.] When somebody asks you how many brothers and sisters you have what do you say?

Nyle: I say I have a brother and a sister but I don't see them very often.

Meg: That's kind of an understatement isn't it?

Nyle: Maybe so.

Meg: Sam is dead. It's just that I always think of him as alive. He never even said goodbye.

Nyle: I'm sure he wanted to.

Meg: No. I know what happened. If he had wanted to he would have. He didn't want to.

Nyle: Maybe he couldn't.

Meg: Sometimes I hate him.

Nyle: It wasn't his fault.

Meg: How do you know?

Nyle: I just know.

Meg: I wanted to say goodbye. I just want to say good bye. He didn't even have enough courage to say good bye.

Nyle: It would have broken his heart. It won't always be like this.

Meg: It broke mine. How did Sam die Nyle?

Nyle: Does it matter so much?

Meg: Yes. Yes it matters so much. How did he die?

Nyle: In a car accident.

Meg: Yes, but how?

Nyle: He fell asleep at the wheel.

Meg: But how can we know that? How can we prove it?

Nyle: We can't.

Meg: We can't.

Nyle: Is it better to think that?

Meg: I don't know. But why did he do it? Why did he want to die? There has to be some reason, some answer somewhere. I feel like I never knew anybody, like I don't know anybody. Do you think he killed himself?

Nyle: I like to believe he didn't. I like to believe he was just driving off into the sunset and he got lost in a moment.

Meg: I liked having him around.

Nyle: Yeah.

Meg: You're going to leave again aren't you?

Nyle: I don't know.

Meg: You do know.

Nyle: You can't go backwards. I don't seem to know very much but that I've figured out.

Meg: You can do anything you want. You guys should talk. You could work things out.

Nyle: We can't work things out.

Meg: You can! You don't know. You haven't even tried.

Nyle: It'll be better if I go.

Meg: Better for who?

Nyle: Better for me.

Margaret enters.

Meg: You chicken shit. You might as well leave. You really are a totally useless human being.

Marg: Alright Meg.

Meg: Alright what?

Marg: Alright that's enough.

Meg It's not nearly enough. I haven't even said anything yet.

Marg: You've said enough.

Meg: Nobody has said anything. Nobody ever really says anything except things like pass the salt and did you feed the horses. Don't you think that's a little weird? I mean don't you think that we possibly have more to say to each other? Nyle has been away for so long. He missed Sam's funeral he missed you he missed me. We are a family. A broken and unfunctional one its true but we are still a family. I don't expect it to be perfect. But God, couldn't we just speak to each other and expect imperfection? I know that some terrible and ugly things about us are true. I know that. But I also know there was a time when everything was not so tainted. I remember you and Margaret kissing. I remember Sam laughing. I remember dad teaching me how to ride a horse. These things did happen. They were true. I didn't make them up. I'm not wrong.

Nyle: No you're not wrong.

Marg: You're stubborn.

Meg: I'm stubborn? You pretend like nothing ever happened to us, to any of us.

Marg: Just let it go Megan, Can't you just let it go? I don't want to start this all over again. It's over. It's finished. I'm not going back. You're not going back. We don't really have anything to go back to despite what you might believe. I'm came out here not to have this discussion. Not to have any discussion actually. I came in here to ask you to leave. I want you to leave Nyle. I want you to go. It's time. It's too late.

Meg: No it's not. It's our life. It doesn't just affect you. It happened to all of us.

Marg: Maybe. But not now, not anymore.

Meg Please don't say that. Nyle?

Marg: It's time for you to leave. You've been here long enough. Nothing has happened I want

you to go.

Meg: Say something.

Nyle: You've gotten awfully brave.

Marg: Fuck you

Nyle; It was a compliment actually.

Marg: You don't get it do you?

Nyle; I mean it. You are brave. I admire it. I always did. Courage. All that stuff

Meg; You're brave too. You came back.

Marg; Like a criminal returning to the scene of the crime. Go away Megan. This has nothing to do with you. Leave it alone for once.

Megan exits visibly upset. There is a silence.

Nyle The sun is coming up.

Marg: It always does.

Nyle Yeah. How come you never told me about the baby?

Marg: What are you talking about?

Nyle The baby. Our baby. Why didn't you ever tell me?

Marg: How did you find out?

Nyle: Sam told me.

Marg: He told you?

Nyle: He wrote me after you lost it. Why didn't you tell me?

Marg: There was nothing to tell.

Nyle: Margaret.

She doesn't answer.

Nyle: I'm sorry.

Marg: Don't.

Nyle: I am sorry. I wish I had been there.

Marg: I wanted to tell you. Sam wouldn't tell me where you were. He said it wouldn't have made any difference, that you wouldn't come back even for that. Looks like he was right about that.

Nyle: He wasn't. I would have comeback.

Marg: It's too late now. I don't even want to talk about it now.

Nyle: I'd like to talk about it.

Marg: So what. Big deal. You'd like to talk about it. After it's over. After it doesn't even exist anymore. That is so perfect.

Nyle: I'm sorry.

Marg: Stop saying that. You sound like such an idiot. Like some kind of a beaten dog. You're sorry, you're sorry. You don't even know what you're apologizing for. What do you want Nyle? Why did you come back?

Nyle: I don't know.

Marg: You don't know. You don't know. You waited all this time. You didn't come back when Sam died. You didn't come back when you knew I'd lost the baby. You waited until everything had settled down and then you came back just in time to mess everything up again. You don't know. That's not good enough. Not this time. What do you want? What could there possibly be left that you want now?

Nyle: I didn't think it was going to be like this. I didn't know that being away would change so much. It didn't change that much for me. But it changed everything here. I never realized that. I never really thought about it. I see it now. You. This life. I wanted to come back for you when it would only be for you. If there was ever going to be a chance of anything being right between us again I wanted to come back and have that. I see now, well I suppose now that that couldn't be? Could it be? Just that. Another chance.

Marg: I haven't got that left. Maybe a better, stronger person could give you that chance but too many things have failed me since I met you. I'd like to live with the possibility of success just once. Stay or go Nyle. It's all the same to me. I wash my hands of you.

Nyle gets up to leave.

Nyle: Did you love him?

Pause.

Marg: Yes I did. I came to love him very much.

Nyle: He loved you. From the first time he saw you.

Margaret nods.

Nyle: Too bad you never told him. It would have made him very happy.

Marg: It wouldn't have changed anything.

Nyle: No. But it would have made him happy.

Nyle exits and lights go down.

Act 3, **Scene 4**

Later the same morning. Margaret and Megan are in the kitchen drinking coffee and having breakfast. They are quiet. Nyle enters with his knapsack and a bunch of papers in his hand.

Nyle: I'm taking off.

Meg: Nyle!

Nyle: I'm going back to Ireland. I'll write you this time. I'll keep in touch. If you want you could even come and visit Megan. You too. *[indicates Margaret]*

Meg: You're leaving?

Nyle: I won't be coming back. *[He hands a pile of papers to Margaret.]* It's all yours now. You can do whatever you want with it.

Megan *exits*.

Margaret looks at the pile of papers.

Marg: I don't know what to say. I wish it wasn't like this.

Nyle: [nods] Will you write to me?

Marg: [*shaking her head no*] I'm sorry.

Nyle nods and picks up his bag to leave.

Marg: Nyle?

Nyle stops.

Marg: There was a day a long time ago when I saw you for the very first time and I knew that I loved you. I'll try to think of you like that.

Nyle and Margaret look at each other and Nyle leaves. Margaret picks up the papers.

Megan is sitting outside. Nyle sits down beside her. She is crying.

Nyle: Don't cry.

Megan keeps crying. Nyle puts his arm around her.

Nyle: I have to go.

Megan nods.

Nyle: It's the right thing to do.

Meg: SO?

Nyle: So that's what I want to do now.

Meg: Why now? Why all of a goddamn sudden do you have to do the right thing? You spent most of your life not doing it. I count on you not doing it. I want you to stay.

Nyle: I can't

Meg: You're never going to come back are you.

Nyle: I don't know.

Meg: I know.

Nyle: Yeah. *[Pause.]* I'll write.

Meg: Big deal.

Nyle: You really could come and visit.

Meg: Maybe.

Nyle *stands up and begins to go.*

Nyle: Okay. Maybe.

END OF PLAY