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Go Gently: a co-created adaptation for screen

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Go Gently
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ACT 1

SCENE 1

RUTH'S LIVING ROOM - DAY.

A SIDEBBOARD WITH DRAWERS AND A MIRROR STANDS AT THE BACK OF THE ROOM. A TEA SET AND A FEW RANDOM DRINKS BOTTLES ARE ON TOP OF IT.

RUTH (70) DRESSED IN A CASHMERE CARDIGAN AND SILK BOTTOMS SITS IN AN ARMCHAIR WITH A CUSHION ON HER LAP.

TO ONE SIDE OF HER IS A SMALL TABLE WITH HER PHONE, A TV REMOTE CONTROL AND A FLOWERY TEA CUP AND SAUCER ON IT.

TO THE OTHER IS A SMALL SOFA, DRAPED WITH A QUILTED TARTAN THROW.

RUTH FACES OUT TO THE AUDIENCE AS IF WATCHING TV, A GLOWING LIGHT ILLUMINATING HER FACE.

SHE'S HALF ASLEEP, BATTLING TO KEEP HER EYES OPEN.

SFX: A DAYTIME TV SOAP THEME TUNE PLAYS.

RUTH SITS UP IN THE CHAIR AND SHAKES HERSELF AWAKE.

ANNOUNCER (O.S.)

(FROM TELEVISION)

Next on, find your dream house on Retire to the Country.

RUTH LOOKS AROUND THE ROOM.

RUTH

(MUMBLING)

Been there, done that, bought the tea cosy.

RUTH LEANS OVER AND SIPS HER COLD
TEA, INSTANTLY SPITTING IT OUT.

SHE TAKES A HANDKERCHIEF FROM HER
SLEEVE AND WIPES HER MOUTH.

Blimmin' hell.

ADVERTS START ON THE TELEVISION.

ADVERT (O.S.)

(FROM TELEVISION)

Double action. I'm fighting back. Wrinkles, I attack them. Firmness,
I'm winning. Double action. Ultralift cream for women.

RUTH STARES AT THE TELEVISION AS
THE NEXT ADVERT COMES ON.

SHE LEANS OVER TO GRAB THE REMOTE
CONTROL.

ADVERT (O.S.)

(FROM TELEVISION)

Don't scare the grandkids with your gargoyle teeth. Keep that winning
smile with Denture Fix Pro-

RUTH PULLS A STRAINED SMILE AND
CLICKS THE CHANNEL TO ANOTHER
ADVERT.

ADVERT (O.S.)

(FROM TELEVISION)

Hectic jobs, the kids, the mortgage. Your family already has enough on
its plate. Relieve their burden with Casket Life Insurance, including
full funeral cover-

RUTH FLICKS THE TELEVISION
CHANNEL TO ANOTHER ADVERT.

ADVERT (O.S.)

(FROM TELEVISION)

Book now for cheap one way flights direct to Switzerland-

RUTH TURNS THE TV OFF.

RUTH

Blimmin' Nora.

SHE PUTS THE REMOTE DOWN.

They'll be selling nooses next.

SHE LIFTS HERSELF OUT OF THE CHAIR
WITH A LOUD GRUNT.

SHE PICKS UP THE TEA CUP AND HEADS
SLOWLY FOR THE SIDEBBOARD.

(MUMBLING TO HERSELF)

Hang Tight. Woven silk for the discerning suicider.

SHE CHECKS THE WARMTH OF THE
TEAPOT AND POURS ANOTHER CUP
BEFORE HEADING BACK TO HER CHAIR.

(GETTING INTO IT)

Lonely? Ashamed? Drain on society? Full of regret? Happy 70th
Birthday-

SHE'S INTERRUPTED BY HER PHONE
RINGTONE PLAYING THE OPENING
LINES OF 'SOUND OF SILENCE' BY
SIMON AND GARFUNKEL

PHONE

Hello darkness my old friend, I've come to talk with you again-

RUTH PICKS UP THE PHONE.

RUTH

Blimmin' bloody phone.

SHE LOOKS AT THE CALLER ID, ROLLS
HER EYES AND GROANS.

SHE ANSWERS ON SPEAKER.

Hello Bill.

BILL SPEAKS VIA THE PHONE.

BILL

Ruth, darling, long time and-

RUTH

(INTERRUPTING)

How do you change ringtones on these new phones?

BILL

Excuse me-

RUTH

(INTERRUPTING)

That little sod in the shop put it on for a joke and now it's like a goth
love in when anyone calls me.

BILL

What are you talking about?

RUTH

My phone...oh, it doesn't matter.

(TO PHONE)

Little sod.

(TO BILL)

So, to what do I owe this pleasure?

BILL

Have you just woken from a nap?

RUTH LOOKS AT THE CHAIR GUILTILY.

RUTH

Of course not.

BILL

I can tell, you know. You're not making any sense.

RUTH

(STRONG)
I have not and I do.

BILL

(LAUGHING)
Exactly.

RUTH GOES TO SAY SOMETHING BUT
STOPS HERSELF.

RUTH

What do you want Bill?

BILL

(CHUCKLING)
And lovely to chat to you too-

RUTH

(INTERRUPTING)
I haven't got all day.

BILL

Of course, I'm sure you've got a full schedule.

RUTH HOLDS THE PHONE AWAY FROM
HER AS SHE PURSES HER LIPS.

(CLEARING HIS THROAT)
Anyway, I need a favour.

RUTH ROLLS HER EYES.

RUTH

How much?

BILL

No, nothing like that. Ruth?

RUTH RAISES AN EYEBROW.

I'll come over.

RUTH

Bill, it's not a good time, I'm busy.

BILL

I can be there for five, okay?

RUTH

(SIGHING)
Okay.

BILL

Great. Ciao.

HE HANGS UP, LEAVING RUTH STARING
AT THE PHONE.

RUTH

(TO PHONE)
You git.

SHE CATCHES HER REFLECTION IN THE
PHONE AND TURNS ON FACE CAMERA.

SHE LOOKS AT HERSELF AND PULLS AT
HER FACE, TRYING TO SMOOTH OUT HER
WRINKLES WHILST SMILE / GRIMACING.

SHE GIVES UP.

You old bloody git.

SHE LOOKS DOWN AT HER CLOTHES
AND HURRIES OFF STAGE.

SCENE 2

RUTH'S LIVING ROOM - LATER THAT DAY.

FROM RUTH'S PHONE, A CLASSICAL MUSIC RADIO STATION PLAYS THE LAST FEW MOMENTS FROM GUSTAV HOLST'S 'SATURN, THE BRINGER OF OLD AGE'.

RUTH ENTERS, IN A 'WILLIAM MORRIS' - ESQUE DRESS AND ELEGANT PUMPS.

SHE'S NOW MADE UP WITH HER HAIR TIDIED.

SHE LOOKS AT HERSELF IN THE MIRROR AND ADJUSTS HER HAIR, PULLS AT HER CHEEKS, FORCES A SMILE.

SHE LISTENS AS SHE STRAIGHTENS HER DRESS.

PHONE

(FROM PHONE)

That was Saturn from Holst's The Planets. And keeping with the theme, here is Julie with our poem for the day.

RUTH'S EARS PRICK UP AS SHE LISTENS.

JULIE

(FROM PHONE)

Do not go gentle into that good night,
Old age should burn and rave at the close of day.

SFX: A LOUD 'SPORTS' CAR PULLING UP, CAUSING RUTH TO TURN OFF THE RADIO.

SHE LOOKS AT THE PHONE.

RUTH

Try doing that with my hips.

RUTH GOES AND LOOKS OFF STAGE AS IF OUT OF A WINDOW.

SHE GIVES OFF A PUZZLED FACE BEFORE HURRYING OVER TO THE SIDEBOARD.

SHE PULLS OPEN A DRAWER, TAKES OUT A PERFUME BOTTLE AND SPRAYS HERSELF.

SFX: A DOOR HANDLE CLICKS.

RUTH QUICKLY PUTS THE BOTTLE AWAY AND STRIKES A NONCHALANT POSE.

BILL (65) ENTERS, LOOKING CONFIDENT, WELL-DRESSED AND DISTINGUISHED.

BILL

Ruth.

RUTH

Hello Bill.

BILL KISSES RUTH ON THE CHEEK, HIS HAND LINGERING ON HER LOWER BACK.

RUTH PULLS BACK AND EYES BILL UP AND DOWN AS HE LOOKS AROUND THE ROOM.

BILL

I love what you've done with the place. So...
(SEARCHING FOR THE WORD)
Vintage.

RUTH WATCHES AS BILL STRIDES AROUND THE ROOM AS IF IT'S HIS OWN.

RUTH

Would you like a cup of tea?

BILL

Coffee.

HE WALKS OVER TO HER SIDEBOARD.

Or something stronger.

HE POURS HIMSELF A WHISKY.

RUTH

(RAISING EYEBROWS)

Help yourself.

BILL TAKES A SIP AND LOOKS UP AT RUTH, NODDING A FAUX APPROVAL.

BILL

Great dress.

(ANOTHER SIP)

You know, I think that style's going to come back in one day.

RUTH GOES TO SPEAK, BUT IS INTERRUPTED BY BILL SNIFFING THE AIR AND PULLING A FACE.

Is that lavender?

RUTH

What?

RUTH SNIFFS THE AIR AS BILL WANDERS BACK INTO THE CENTRE OF THE ROOM.

BEHIND HIS BACK, RUTH SNIFFS HERSELF AND REALISES IT'S COMING FROM HER.

SHE LOOKS UP TO SEE BILL DROP HIMSELF INTO HER ARMCHAIR.

RUTH

Please, take a seat.

BILL TAKES A SIP AND LETS OUT A SIGH.

BILL

Do you remember the crazy weekends we used to have here?

RUTH

Some of them.

BILL

Wild.

(TURNING TO RUTH)

Do you remember that time-

RUTH

(INTERRUPTING)

I'd rather not.

BILL JUMPS UP FROM HIS CHAIR, PUTS
THE GLASS DOWN AND TRIES TO GET
RUTH TO DANCE WITH HIM.

BILL

Well I do.

(TRYING TO LEAD)

That first dance at Tramp.

RUTH GIGGLES.

RUTH

I was so wasted.

BILL

You, stunning, catwalked right to me.

RUTH

Smashed out of my brains.

BILL SPINS HER.

BILL

The onlookers, the music, the emotion.

RUTH

Completely and utterly zonked.

BILL

Love at first sight.

RUTH

Do you remember how much I puked? It was like a champagne and curry volcano.

BILL PUSHES HER ASIDE AS RUTH
GIGGLES TO HERSELF.

BILL FROWNS AT HER AND GRABS HIS
DRINK.

BILL

No wonder I don't see you in town anymore.

RUTH STOPS LAUGHING AND LOOKS
OVER AT BILL, WHO SLOWLY SIPES HIS
DRINK.

HE GESTURES THE ROOM.

This used to be our oasis. Our respite from the city.

HE LOOKS DIRECTLY AT RUTH.

You've turned it into your own private little island. How quaint.

RUTH

(TO HERSELF)
Not private enough.

(TO BILL)
Come on then, enough of the unpleasantries, spit it out.

BILL SWALLOWS THE LAST OF HIS
WHISKY AND SLOWLY WALKS OVER TO
THE BOTTLE.

BILL

At least that wicked tongue of yours hasn't aged.

RUTH

Just tell me how much you want.

BILL

(EMPHASIS ON 'WANT')

I never want anything. I have needs, darling, needs.

RUTH

Then tell me what you need and hop it. I've got plans.

BILL

Undertakers coming around for a fitting?

RUTH GOES TO SAY SOMETHING, BUT
BILL INTERRUPTS HER.

You're just being very unfair. I don't want money.

RUTH

That would be a first.

BILL SUPPRESSES A RETORT.

BILL

But I do need a favour.

BILL POURS HIMSELF ANOTHER DRINK,
LOOKING AWAY FROM RUTH.

A friend of mine-

RUTH

(INTERRUPTING)

Friend?

BILL

Okay, my girlfriend-

RUTH

(INTERRUPTING)

Girlfriend? How old are you? At your age you have companions or escorts.

(SCOFFING)

Girlfriend, indeed.

BILL

She's sick. Sick in a bad way.

RUTH BACKS DOWN A LITTLE.

She needs somewhere to stay.

RUTH SHAKES HER HEAD.

Why not? This house is enormous.

RUTH

Can't she just stay with you?

BILL

You've seen the size of the apartment. And it's right over the shop.
Come on, you've got walk in wardrobes bigger than my place.

RUTH

(SIGHING)

If she's that ill, shouldn't she be in hospital?

BILL

She needs peace and quiet, somewhere to rest. Not surrounded by
dying people.

RUTH

I'd better cancel the undertakers then.

BILL LOOKS AT THE FLOOR.

BILL

It's serious.

RUTH WATCHES BILL FOR A MOMENT.

RUTH

I'm sorry, but it's not my problem.

BILL

(UNDER HIS BREATH)

Of course not.

(LOOKING DOWN)

I've never asked much from you.

(TO RUTH)

Except once.

RUTH HOLDS HIS STARE FOR A MOMENT
AND THEN LOOKS AWAY.

I'm asking now. Will you help me?

RUTH DOESN'T RESPOND.

Don't you at least owe me that?

RUTH TENSES UP, BREATHES HEAVILY
FOR A MOMENT, BEFORE HER BODY
RELAXES SLIGHTLY.

RUTH

What's her name?

BILL

Faith.

RUTH

What kind of ridiculous name-

BILL CATCHES HER EYE AND SHE STOPS
HERSELF.

Fine. You can stay here.
(POINTING AT BILL)
For two weeks and that's it.

BILL

It's just Faith-

RUTH

(INTERRUPTING)
I'll put you in the annexe.

BILL

I'm not-

RUTH

(INTERRUPTING)
It's self-contained so I won't have to see either of you.

BILL

I'm not staying-

RUTH

(INTERRUPTING)

I don't want to hear you going at it like a geriatric bingo machine.

Crying out like you've won the jackpot.

(IMITATING AN ORGASM)

House, house, house.

SHE LOOKS AT BILL WITH RESOLUTE
DETERMINATION.

BILL

It's just Faith.

RUTH

Oh, I see. But...

RUTH TRAILS OFF CONFUSED.

BILL

I need to run the shop.

RUTH STARES AT HIM.

There are some big things coming up.

RUTH

Things?

BILL

Very big things. Will turn the business around. A little investment and it will pay dividends.

RUTH

Things?

(POINTING TO THE WINDOW)

Like your new penis extension on the drive?

BILL

(NOT CATCHING THE SARCASM)

Exactly. I need to make the right impression. It's an important time right now.

RUTH ROLLS HER EYES.

Like I said, just a little investment...

BILL LOOKS DIRECTLY AT RUTH UNTIL
SHE FINALLY BREAKS.

RUTH

I'll add something to the regular payment.

BILL NODS AND HOLDS UP HIS GLASS.

BILL

Cheers. Bottoms up.

HE DOWNS THE REST OF THE WHISKY,
NOW ALL SMILES.

Anyway, must dash.

HE EYES RUTH UP AND DOWN, PASSING
HER HIS EMPTY GLASS.

You know, that dress really does suit you.

HE LEAVES.

RUTH STANDS SILENT IN HIS WAKE.

SFX: BILL'S REVS HIS CAR LOUDLY.

RUTH

(SHOCKED)
Blimmin' hell.

SFX: THE CAR SPEEDS OFF.

SHE LISTENS UNTIL IT'S GONE.

What an old bugger.

SHE PULLS AT HER DRESS AND
GRIMACES DISAPPROVINGLY.

SHE SNIFFS HER DRESS AND PULLS A
FACE.

I don't even like lavender.

SHE PUTS HER PHONE AWAY AND TAKES
BILL'S GLASS TO THE SIDEBOARD.

SHE SHUFFLES OVER TO THE CHAIR AND
SLUMPS INTO IT WITH A GROAN.

I'll show him.
(SIGHS)
I just wish I was twenty years younger.

SHE PICKS UP THE TV REMOTE.

What would I give for that?

SHE FLICKS THE TELEVISION ON AND
THE LIGHT SHINES ACROSS HER FACE.

AN ADVERT PLAYS.

ADVERT

(FROM TELEVISION - SINGING)
Heads, shoulders, knees and toes.
(SPEAKING)
Body part replacements. We don't just do hips-

RUTH TURNS THE TELEVISION OFF.

RUTH

Oh, fuck off.

LIGHTS DOWN.

SCENE 3

RUTH'S LIVING ROOM.

RUTH, DRESSED IN SLACKS AND A PATTERNED BLOUSE, SHUFFLES SLOWLY UP AND DOWN THE STAGE SIPPING A SMALL GLASS OF SHERRY.

SHE LOOKS OUT OF THE WINDOW NERVOUSLY AND THEN PACES BACK ACROSS THE STAGE.

SHE POURS ANOTHER GLASS OF SHERRY.

SFX: BILL'S CAR ROARS UP THE DRIVE TO A STOP.

SHE KNOCKS BACK THE SHERRY AND STEADIES HERSELF ON THE SIDEBOARD.

BILL WALKS IN FOLLOWED BY FAITH (35), SMARTLY DRESSED AND HOLDING HERSELF WELL.

BILL

Ruth, darling-

RUTH

(INTERRUPTING)
Well, where is she?

BILL GOES TO SPEAK BUT RUTH INTERRUPTS.

Don't worry, I haven't sharpened my claws. Please wheel her in.

BILL

Have you been drinking?

RUTH STARES BACK AT BILL AND THEN MAKES A SHOW OF TURNING TO FAITH.

RUTH

(TO FAITH)
Do you have any idea?

FAITH EYES UP RUTH, NOT TURNING
HER EYES AWAY AT ANY MOMENT.

(TO BILL)
Your new P A's a chatterbox.

(TO FAITH)
Sorry, no offence.

(TO BILL)
Goodness Bill, are you doing grad schemes at the shop now? You
always did like fresh meat...

BILL PUTS HIS ARM AROUND FAITH
CAUSING RUTH TO TRAIL OFF.

SHE LOOKS TO BILL, THEN TO FAITH
AND THEN BACK TO BILL.

BILL

(GESTURING)
Ruth meet Faith. Faith, Ruth.

THE TWO WOMEN SHAKE HANDS.

BILL PRETENDS TO LOOK AT A WATCH
ON HIS EMPTY WRIST.

Is that the time? Well, I'll leave you to it.

BOTH RUTH AND FAITH TURN SHARPLY
TO BILL.

I'll be back first thing tomorrow, I promise.

BILL GUIDES FAITH TO THE DOOR AS
RUTH SLINKS BACK TO THE CABINET.

(TO FAITH)
You'll be fine. If you need anything, just call and I'll be straight over.

THEY KISS EACH OTHER ON THE CHEEK
AND BILL LEAVES.

FAITH MOVES BACK INTO THE ROOM
AND SNIFFS THE AIR.

FAITH

Is that lavender?

SHE SNIFFS AGAIN AND COUGHS.

(LOOKING AROUND)
God, it's grimmer than I thought.

RUTH'S EYES WIDEN.

RUTH

(STUTTERING THE WORDS)
Excuse me? It's rosehip and you do not have to stay here.

FAITH

Believe me, I don't want to, but Bill insists it's for my own good.

RUTH

And why would you listen to him?

FAITH

My doctor told me to get out of the city. Bill suggested here.
(LOOKING AROUND)
But, my god, it's grim-

RUTH

(INTERRUPTING)
Grim. Yes, I got that. Luckily for us both you'll be staying in the
annexe.
(POINTING TO THE DOOR)
It's self-contained, has it's own entrance and lots and lots of pot pourri.
And if you don't like that, well...

RUTH STRIKES A POSE, HAND ON HIP, TO
FACE OFF WITH FAITH.

FAITH SHAKES HER HEAD AND HER
BODY DROPS.

FAITH

I didn't mean you. My whole situation is grim. Grim with a capital R E
A P E R.

RUTH DROPS FROM HER POSE.

RUTH

Would you like a cup of tea?

FAITH

Yes please.

RUTH GOES TO THE SIDEBOARD AND
POURS TWO CUPS OF TEA.

RUTH

Bill said you were ill.

SHE HANDS FAITH A CUP.

FAITH TAKES A SIP AND LOOKS DOWN
INTO HER CUP.

FAITH

Yeah.

RUTH

Ill ill? Or just ill?

FAITH

(NOT LOOKING UP)
I don't know.

FAITH TAKES A SIP OF TEA.

(QUICKLY)
Is this Earl Grey?

RUTH

(CORRECTING)
Lady Grey.

FAITH GIVES HER A BRIEF SMILE AND
PLACES THE CUP DOWN ON THE TABLE.

FAITH

Sounds about right.

RUTH GLARES AT FAITH, WHO SNIFFS
THE AIR.

FAITH CATCHES RUTH'S STARE.

The smell's a bit overpowering.

SHE QUICKLY INDICATES THE TEA.

The lavender.

RUTH

It's bergamot.

FAITH

Oh yes. That must be it. A bit musty.

SHE SNIFFS AGAIN AND COUGHS.

Could we open a window?

RUTH

If you insist.

FAITH

Do you have the key?

RUTH IS TAKEN ABACK, HER EYES
DARTING AROUND THE ROOM.

(MOVING BACK INTO THE ROOM)
Don't like draughts at your age, I guess.

RUTH

(SNAPPING)
So what is wrong with you?

FAITH

C O P D.

RUTH

What?

FAITH

Chronic obstructive pulmonary disease-

RUTH

(INTERRUPTING)

I know what it is. That's for old people.

FAITH

I smoked a lot when I was younger.

RUTH

(WAVING IT OFF)

So did everyone. The seventies was like swimming through nicotine.

You practically came out the womb with a fag in your mouth and a tar filled milk bottle.

(DISMISSIVE BLOW THROUGH LIPS)

C O P D indeed.

FAITH PURSES HER LIPS TIGHT AS SHE
LISTENS TO RUTH.

FAITH

I'm genetically predisposed to it apparently.

RUTH

Genetics.

(MOCKING)

Society. Mental health.

(DISMISSIVE)

You lot blame everyone else these days. No one takes responsibility-

FAITH

(INTERRUPTING)

I do. I smoked. I made it a hundred times worse and deeply fucking regret it now.

RUTH

Are you going to die?

FAITH

Excuse me?

RUTH

Is it terminal?

FAITH

Well it's not getting better if that's what you mean.

FAITH COMPOSES HERSELF.

But it might not get any worse. That's why I'm here.

RUTH

So you're not even that sick.

FAITH GOES TO SAY SOMETHING BUT
RUTH GETS THERE FIRST.

You kids are so dramatic. You don't know the first thing about pain and death.

FAITH

(TEARING UP)

I am in pain. It really hurts.

RUTH

That's just everyday life for old people. You've no idea. Ageing is like being haunted, everything creeps up on you. From brittle bones to constant chills to rebellious bowels. There's no escape. No respite.

FAITH

(WIPING AWAY TEARS)

That's not-

RUTH

(INTERRUPTING)

I'm afraid of a fall. I live in constant fear of one. It used to be the dark, or pancreatic cancer, or...

(SEARCHING FOR THE WORD)

...herpes. Now I worry my slippers will get caught in the rug.

FAITH

You don't think I'm scared? That I don't regret not listening as a teenager-

RUTH

(INTERRUPTING)

Regret is wasted on the young.

(POINTING AT FAITH)

You should try being elderly.

RUTH LIFTS HER ARMS OUT.

I'm one wrinkled skin sack of regrets.

(SHRUGGING)

I don't even know what most of them are anymore, I've forgotten.

FAITH

Senior moments, huh?

RUTH SHAKES HER HEAD.

RUTH

I wish we could trade places.

(ALMOST AN INCANTATION)

That I was young and you were an old bag lady.

(POINTING AT FAITH)

Then you'd know what it's like to fade slowly into obscurity.

FAITH

I wish I bloody could. Wouldn't have to listen to you going on.

(MOCKING)

I'm old. Everything's rubbish these days. Pity me.

(POINTING AT RUTH)

You had your life, what more do you want?

(COUGHS)

Can't you just leave us to it-

FAITH COUGHS, COVERING HER HAND
WITH HER MOUTH.

RUTH LOOKS AT HER UNIMPRESSED.

You don't contribute-

FAITH COUGHS AGAIN, THIS TIME
DEEPER AND MORE PERVASIVE.

SHE STRUGGLES BUT EVENTUALLY
REGAINS HER BREATH.

RUTH

Are you finished?

FAITH LOOKS UP AT RUTH AND GOES TO
SAY SOMETHING, BUT STARTS
COUGHING AGAIN.

RUTH WATCHES, HOLDING HER
GROUND.

Enough with your crocodile coughs.

FAITH DOUBLES OVER FROM
COUGHING.

FAITH REACHES OUT A HAND TOWARDS
RUTH.

RUTH LOOKS AT THE HAND AND
WATCHES THE SCENE FOR A MOMENT.
SHE THEN BREAKS HER POSE AND
RUSHES OVER TO FAITH.

SHE PUTS HER ARM AROUND HER AND
HELPS HER OFF STAGE.

SCENE 4

RUTH'S LIVING ROOM.

RUTH PACES UP AND DOWN, PHONE IN HAND WITH THE SPEAKER ON.

SHE WEARS LOOSE SLACKS AND A CARDIGAN.

SFX: PHONE RINGING FROM SPEAKER.

BILL (O.S.)

(FROM PHONE SPEAKER. SMOOTH)

Why hello. Bill Waters here.

(QUICKLY)

Well, not here, actually.

RUTH ROLLS HER EYES.

(RECOVERING)

Probably out doing something groovy or wicked. Or both.

RUTH PULLS A FACE.

So leave a message and let's hook up on the flip side.

SFX: AN ANSWERPHONE BEEP FROM SPEAKER.

RUTH

Bill. You sound like a nonce. And...you're behaving like a spanner. Why haven't you visited Faith? It's been three days now.

RUTH LOOKS TOWARDS THE BACK OF STAGE, MOVING FURTHER AWAY FROM IT.

SHE SPEAKS MORE QUIETLY INTO THE PHONE.

I mean, I understand. She's a proper pain in the arse. So demanding. And she coughs non-stop. She wheezes like a drunk harmonica.

(SOFTER)

It's awful to hear.

I've had to move her into the main house so I can keep an eye on her.
(PHONE TO MOUTH)

How long is she going to be here, Bill?

(HARSH)

You'd better come soon you old bastard.

RUTH LOOKS DOWN AT THE PHONE,
HOLDING IT AT ARMS LENGTH AND
PRESSING AT IT WITH AN EXTENDED
FINGER TO HANG UP.

SHE CATCHES A REFLECTION OF
HERSELF AND PAUSES, PULLING THE
PHONE TO LOOK CLOSER.

SHE RUNS A HAND OVER HER FACE AS
SHE LOOKS AT THE REFLECTION.

SHE GIVES A SLIGHT SMILE BEFORE
PULLING A SHORT SERIES OF FACES;
SULTRY, SEDUCTIVE, SEXY.

A WIDE SMILE SPREADS ACROSS HER
FACE.

SHE PUTS THE PHONE DOWN AND
WALKS ACROSS THE STAGE, PULLING
HER SHOULDERS BACK AND STEPPING
LIGHTLY, SWAYING HER HIPS.

SHE TURNS AND DOES THE SAME BACK
ACROSS THE STAGE, HER EYES
CATCHING THE TARTAN QUILT ON THE
SOFA.

SHE PULLS UP THE THROW AND HOLDS
IT IN FRONT OF HER WITH A FROWN.

SHE TAKES THE THROW AND DROPS IT
OFF STAGE.

BRUSHING HER HANDS TOGETHER, SHE REACHES THE CHAIR AND HOLDS ONTO IT, SLIGHTLY OUT OF BREATH, BUT STILL SMILING.

SHE SHIMMIES AROUND TO THE FRONT AND LOWERS HERSELF INTO THE CHAIR SLOWLY.

ONCE SEATED, SHE SMILES, SATISFIED WITH HERSELF.

SHE GRABS THE ARMRESTS, PUTS ON A DETERMINED FACE AND PULLS HERSELF UP, LETTING OUT A GROAN.

Bollocks.

SFX: THE DOORBELL RINGS.

RUTH JUMPS, BUT QUICKLY COMPOSES HERSELF.

SHE WALKS TO THE DOOR.

(CALLING THROUGH DOOR)

Gosh Bill, you came quickly, even for you.

RUTH OPENS THE DOOR TO REVEAL ELAINE (65), ELEGANT AND CONFIDENT. SHE WALTZES RIGHT IN AND SCANS THE ROOM AS RUTH WATCHES ON.

RUTH SLOWLY MAKES HER WAY BACK INTO THE ROOM, EYES ON ELAINE.

ELAINE NODS, SMILES AND SMIRKS AS SHE TAKES IN THE ROOM BEFORE TURNING BACK TO LOOK RUTH UP AND DOWN.

ELAINE OPENS HER MOUTH SLIGHTLY, SMILES AND BITES HER LOWER LIP. SHE LIKES WHAT SHE SEES.

SHE SPEAKS WITH A DRAWN OUT
AMERICAN ACCENT.

ELAINE

Ruth Rock, in the flesh.

RUTH GOES TO SPEAK BUT CAN'T FIND
THE WORDS.

ELAINE MOVES AS SHE SPEAKS, TAKING
RUTH IN FROM ALL ANGLES.

You are just as hot in real life.

RUTH

Stop it.

ELAINE

Just as sexy.

RUTH

Don't.

ELAINE

Still a goddamn bombshell.

RUTH CAN'T SUPPRESS A SMILE.

Still a star.

RUTH STRAIGHTENS HERSELF UP INTO A
'STAR' POSE.

RUTH

Okay, you can come in.

ELAINE LAUGHS A BIG LAUGH AND
PUTS OUT HER HAND.

ELAINE

Ruth Rock, so great to meet you.

RUTH SHAKES HER HAND.

RUTH

Ruth Rock. No-one's used that name in a while.

ELAINE

They should, it suits you.

RUTH

(PLAYING ALONG)

And who should I make my autograph out to?

ELAINE LAUGHS AGAIN, BIG AND
BOOMING.

ELAINE

I'm Elaine. Faith's Mother.

RUTH

(TO HERSELF)

Well, that's a surprise.

(TO ELAINE)

Bill didn't tell me about you.

ELAINE

Bill and I don't get along.

RUTH

Seems we've already got something in common.

THEY LAUGH AT THAT TOGETHER.

ELAINE

Damn right.

RUTH

I suppose you don't approve of the age gap between him and Faith?

ELAINE

No, it's because he's an asshole.

RUTH LAUGHS OUT LOUD.

I mean, have you seen that personality extension he drives around? My
god, what a cliché.

ELAINE ROLLS HER EYES.

Why the hell did you marry such a douche?

(QUICKLY)

No offence.

RUTH WAVES IT OFF.

RUTH

Drugs.

ELAINE

Seriously?

RUTH

It was a long time ago. It's hard to explain. I was surrounded by people from the industry and Bill was just so different.

(DIRECT TO ELAINE)

He can actually be quite charming.

ELAINE

You mean he gets his teeth into people.

RUTH LOOKS DOWN.

RUTH

Unfortunately that was me.

(LOOKING BACK UP)

I thought he was so sophisticated and dynamic.

(ENJOYING THE WORD)

Complex.

ELAINE

Bill?

RUTH

Give me a break. I was young and very naive.

RUTH GESTURES THROUGH HER
REMINISCING.

You see, I had this picture of him as being layered, like an onion.

ELAINE RAISES AN EYEBROW.

Every layer I peeled back would reveal something new and exciting. But as the years rolled by, all I ever discovered was more and more onion.

(TO ELAINE)
I do feel sorry for Faith.

ELAINE

Yeah.

THE TWO WOMEN AVOID EYE CONTACT.

FAITH (O.S.)

(SHOUTING)
Is that my Mother I can hear?

BOTH WOMEN LOOK OVER TO WHERE
FAITH'S VOICE CAME FROM.

ELAINE LOOKS TO RUTH FOR
PERMISSION.

RUTH NODS TOWARDS THE BACK OF
THE STAGE.

RUTH

Go ahead.

ELAINE TAKES A LONG BREATH,
GATHERS HERSELF AND WALKS OFF
STAGE.

RUTH WATCHES HER GO AND TURNS
BACK TO THE ROOM, BASKING IN HER
WAKE.

Ruth Rock.

SHE TAKES A DEEP BREATH AND THE
SMELL CATCHES HER.

SHE SNIFFS, FOLLOWING THE SCENT
WHERE ELAINE JUST STOOD.

SHE LETS OUT AN APPROVING MOAN.

SHE GOES OVER TO THE SIDEBOARD
AND OPENS ONE OF THE DRAWERS,
TAKING OUT NUMEROUS BOTTLES OF
PERFUME.

SHE SPRAYS ONE IN THE AIR, SNIFFS IT,
TURNS UP HER NOSE AND DROPS THE
BOTTLE IN THE BIN.

SHE REPEATS THIS WITH TWO MORE
BOTTLES AND THEN DROPS THE WHOLE
LOT INTO THE BIN.

MUFFLED RAISED VOICES CAN BE
HEARD OFF STAGE.

RUTH TURNS TO LOOK TOWARDS
WHERE THEY'RE COMING FROM.

THEY GET LOUDER UNTIL WE CAN
MAKE OUT FAITH'S VOICE.

FAITH (O.S.)

(MUFFLED SHOUTS)
I didn't even want you to visit.

ELAINE (O.S.)

(MUFFLED RAISED)
Honey-

FAITH (O.S.)

(MUFFLED SHOUTS)
Fuck you.

ELAINE (O.S.)

(MUFFLED SHOUTS)
Well, fuck you too.

ELAINE STORMS ONTO STAGE.

FAITH (O.S.)

(SHOUTING)
Fuck you, Elaine.

ELAINE TAKES A FEW BREATHS TO CALM HERSELF DOWN, RUNNING HER FINGERS THROUGH HER HAIR. SHE PATS HERSELF DOWN AND CATCHES RUTH WATCHING HER.

RUTH

How did it go?

ELAINE

To be honest, better than expected. She's quite a delight, my daughter.

RUTH

I had noticed.

ELAINE LAUGHS AT THIS.

Would you like a cup of tea?

ELAINE LETS OUT A BIG BELLY LAUGH THAT RUTH SMILES GENTLY AT.

ELAINE NOTICES AND STOPS LAUGHING.

ELAINE

Oh, you mean it.

RUTH NODS.

Sure, why the hell not.

RUTH POURS TEA AND ELAINE MOVES OVER TO THE DRESSER.

ELAINE CATCHES THE SMELL.

My god, what is that?
(SNIFFING)
Smells like a bomb went off in a care home.

RUTH SUBTLY PUSHES THE BIN AWAY AND HANDS ELAINE HER CUP.

RUTH

Must be the tea. I like it strong.

ELAINE RAISES AN EYEBROW AND
GIVES A WRY SMILE.

(GESTURES INTO THE ROOM)
Shall we?

THE TWO MOVE INTO THE ROOM AND
TAKE A SEAT.

So, you're not from around here.

ELAINE

Florida. I'm over for a period to see Faith.

RUTH

They let you out?

ELAINE

I had to bribe the guards with candy.

RUTH

Careful, you'll lose your place in the queue.

ELAINE

No such luck. The Villages are basically heaven's backyard.

RUTH LAUGHS OUT LOUD AND ELAINE
PLAYS ALONG.

I'm not kidding. It's wall to wall Zimmer frame line dancing, golf
buggy tailbacks at every junction and beach front funeral parlours as
far as the eye can see.

ELAINE TAKES A SIP OF HER TEA.

Honestly, I love it there.

RUTH

Really?

ELAINE

Yeah totally. I swim in the sea almost every day, cycle everywhere and
there's so much going on it's sometimes hard to find time for myself.

RUTH SITS BACK AND LOOKS BRIEFLY
AROUND HER LIVING ROOM.

RUTH

Sounds lovely.

ELAINE LEANS FORWARD.

ELAINE

So how come you never made it to Hollywood?

RUTH WAVES HER HAND IN DISMISSAL.

RUTH

I suppose they didn't want me.

ELAINE

But you were in some pretty big hits.

RUTH

They were the wrong hits though. I went from eye candy to sex
symbol to artsy and then...
(TRAILING OFF SLIGHTLY)
Nothing. The phone stopped ringing.

ELAINE

Well, I always liked your movies. I've been waiting for you to make a
comeback.

RUTH SMILES AT THE THOUGHT.

RUTH

I wanted to, but there're so few roles for-
(INVERTED COMMAS)
-senior women.
(GESTICULATING)
And they all go to the same ones. Dame bloody this, that or the other. I
don't even get offered their leftovers. Bitches.

ELAINE SPITS OUT HER TEA IN A BIG
LAUGH.

ELAINE

You've still got your comic timing.

RUTH

(SMILING)

Hmm.

ELAINE STANDS, FOLLOWED BY RUTH.

ELAINE

Look, I gotta go.

RUTH TAKES HER CUP.

I got a yoga class booked.

RUTH GIVES HER A SIDEWAYS LOOK.

It helps with the jet lag.

ELAINE STARTS BRUSHING HERSELF
DOWN AND PREPARING TO LEAVE.

RUTH WATCHES HER CLOSELY AS
ELAINE GOES TO THE DOOR.

RUTH

Will you visit again? Faith, I mean.

ELAINE GIVES HER A BROAD SMILE.

ELAINE

I promise.

(GESTURES HER HEAD TO RUTH)

You know, honey, I think you look even better in person.

ELAINE LEAVES.

RUTH STANDS LOOKING AT THE DOOR,
TWO TEA CUPS IN HER HANDS.

RUTH

(QUIETLY)

Honey.

SHE SMILES TO HERSELF AND THEN LOOKS DOWN AT HER CARDIGAN, A PAINED EXPRESSION SPREADING ACROSS HER FACE.

RUTH

God, I look old.

SHE WALKS TO THE SIDEBOARD.

FAITH (O.S.)

(MUFFLED SHOTS)
Has she gone?

RUTH PUTS THE TEA CUPS DOWN.

FAITH POKES HER HEAD OUT AND LOOKS AROUND THE ROOM.

RUTH

Yes, she's gone.

FAITH COMES OUT INTO THE ROOM, DRESSED IN TRACKSUIT BOTTOMS AND T-SHIRT. SHE LOOKS OVER TO THE DOOR AND OUT THE WINDOW.

FAITH

What a cunt.

RUTH IS TAKEN ABACK.

RUTH

She seemed perfectly nice to me.

FAITH

That's because she didn't abandon you.

RUTH

(SOFTER)
Did she abandon you?

FAITH GOES TO SAY SOMETHING, BUT PURSES HER LIPS.

FAITH

She hasn't been around.

FAITH SLUMPS ONTO A CHAIR.

The day I turned eighteen she fucked off back to the states.

RUTH

Could you not have gone with her?

FAITH

I didn't want to. My whole life was here. That's not a fair choice.

RUTH COMES AND SITS DOWN.

RUTH

Well, she's here now.

FAITH

Only because she thinks I'm dying. She's just paying lip service. The same as she did when I was a child.

RUTH

You don't think you're dying though?

FAITH

(EXACERBATED)

Oh, I don't know. Maybe, maybe not. I'm beginning to stop caring.

RUTH

Don't say that. We've still got hope.

FAITH LETS OUT A CALLOUS LAUGH.

FAITH

Hope is for people who've given up being pro-active and want a distraction from the inevitable.

RUTH SITS UPRIGHT.

RUTH

I have not given up, if that's what you're implying.

FAITH SLUMPS BACK DOWN.

FAITH

Not you, you, exactly.

FAITH LOOKS AROUND THE ROOM AND
BACK AT RUTH.

But kind of.

RUTH

Getting older is not the same as giving up hope.

FAITH

It is if you let it change your life.

(SITTING UP)

When was the last time you went to a party?

RUTH GOES TO SAY SOMETHING BUT
FAITH GETS THERE FIRST.

Or smoked a joint? Or got laid?

RUTH

I did enough of that when I was younger.

FAITH

What? Did the lights go out downstairs when you hit fifty?

RUTH

No, but the menopause hit me hard.

FAITH

That must have been thirty years ago. Get over it.

RUTH

You wait until it's your turn. It's not fun. You don't get wet anymore
and it hurts. Your moods are all off kilter. You don't know whether
you want to fuck or cry. It puts you off.

(LEANING IN)

But then, when it's done, your libido comes back with a vengeance and
it's too bloody late to enjoy it.

(QUIETER)

Even now, I still have...

(FINDING THE WORD)

Urges.

FAITH

Sounds like you should do something about it before it seals up down there-

(CATCHING HERSELF)

Oh, that's a ghastly image. Forget it. Please just shrivel up.

RUTH LOOKS AT FAITH PULLING
'DISGUSTED' FACES.

RUTH

I don't know why you've got a chip on your shoulder, but if you don't like your Mum you shouldn't take it out on everyone from our generation.

FAITH STARES DIRECTLY AT RUTH.

FAITH

Well, I don't. Obviously.

RUTH

No. I guess men, like Bill, get off easily. That's an age gap that doesn't seem to bother you.

FAITH

You know, as a young woman, I get told all the time to vote for older men. To work for older men. Older men with power, who actually make a material difference to my life.

(POINTING AT NO-ONE)

But if I should dare want to fuck an older man, then I'm naive and they're an abuser.

(TO RUTH DIRECTLY)

Bill treats me so much better than the younger men I've dated. It goes both ways, right?

RUTH PURSES HER LIPS, FINDING
NOTHING TO SAY. EVENTUALLY-

RUTH

Have you heard from him?

FAITH DROPS HER HEAD AND SHAKES IT.

SHE SUDDENLY JUMPS UP AND WALKS
OFF.

FAITH

I'll call him now.

SHE LEAVES THE STAGE.

RUTH WATCHES HER GO AND THEN
GRABS HER PHONE.

SHE PRESSES A BUTTON.

PHONE

(SPEAKER. DISJOINTED VOICE)
Send voice message to Bill the Bastard.

RUTH

(INTO PHONE)
You better get here as fast as you bloody can.

RUTH LOOKS OVER AT WHERE FAITH
LEFT AND THEN WALKS OFF HERSELF.

SCENE 5

RUTH'S WALK-IN WARDROBE.

FROM RUTH'S PHONE, A CLASSICAL
MUSIC RADIO STATION PLAYS THE LAST
FEW MOMENTS FROM RAVEL'S
'BOLERO'.

THERE IS A MIRROR AND A WARDROBE
RAIL HANGING WITH OUTFITS.

RUTH WALKS IN WEARING A DRESSING
GOWN.

PHONE

(FROM PHONE)

That was Ravel's Bolero, which should get you in the mood for our
poem for the day, read by Julie.

SHE WALKS TO THE WARDROBE RAIL
AND GRABS THE FIRST OUTFIT FROM
THE END.

SHE TAKES IT OFF THE RAIL AND GOES
TO REMOVE IT FROM THE HANGER, BUT
STOPS AS SHE LISTENS IN.

JULIE

(FROM PHONE)

Extracts from To His Coy Mistress by Andrew Marvell.
And your quaint honour turn to dust,
And into ashes all my lust;
The grave's a fine and private place,
But none, I think, do there embrace.

RUTH TURNS OFF THE RADIO.

RUTH

(AD LIBBING)

So off to bed we go post-haste,
To think and feel below thy waist,
To explore each other's every place,
And expire with a smile upon thy face.

RUTH STANDS UP BACK IN SURPRISE.

Ooh! I like that.

SHE PUTS THE OUTFIT BACK ON THE RAIL, PICKS UP HER PHONE AND TYPES HER LINES IN AS SHE MUMBLES THEM BACK TO HERSELF.

WHEN SHE FINISHES, SHE NODS AND PUTS THE PHONE DOWN.

SHE PICKS UP THE SAME OUTFIT FROM THE RAILS, BUT STOPS, LOOKING AT IT FOR A MOMENT BEFORE PUTTING IT BACK AND LOOKING THROUGH HER OTHER CLOTHES.

SHE PULLS OUT A COUPLE, ASSESSES THEM WITH A SMILE OR A GRIMACE AND THEN PUTS THEM BACK ONTO THE RAIL.

FINALLY SHE PULLS OUT A SMART BLOUSE AND PANTS.

SHE HOLDS THE OUTFIT UP IN FRONT OF THE MIRROR AND EXAMINES HERSELF.

SHE LOOKS AT HERSELF, POSES, TURNS AROUND, LOOKING AT HERSELF OVER HER SHOULDER.

SHE RUNS HER HANDS OVER HER WAIST AND HIPS, SMILING TO HERSELF IN THE MIRROR.

SHE PLACES THE OUTFIT AT THE END OF THE RAIL AND GOES BACK TO LOOKING THROUGH OUTFITS.

SHE COMES ACROSS A LONG SILK NIGHTGOWN AND STOPS, REACHES DOWN AND PULLS OUT A SMALL VIBRATOR.

SHE LOOKS IT OVER AND THEN SWITCHES IT ON, A LOUD BUZZING EMANATING FROM IT.

SHE JUMPS FROM THE NOISE AND STRUGGLES TO TURN IT OFF.

SFX: THE DOORBELL RINGS.

RUTH IS STARTLED AND DROPS THE VIBRATOR TO THE FLOOR.

SHE JUMPS UP AND SHOUTS THROUGH HER DOOR.

RUTH

(SHOUTING)
Who is it?

BILL (O.S.)

(THROUGH THE DOOR)
Who do you think?

THE VIBRATOR SEEMS TO BUZZ EVEN LOUDER.

RUTH

Shit.

SFX: THE DOORBELL GOES AGAIN.

(SHOUTING)
Coming.

SHE FUMBLES TRYING TO TURN THE VIBRATOR OFF, FINALLY SUCCEEDING BEFORE COMPOSING HERSELF AND WALKING OUT INTO THE LIVING ROOM.

SCENE 6

RUTH'S LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

RUTH WALKS ACROSS THE ROOM AND
OPENS THE DOOR FOR BILL, WHO
SWANS IN AND HEADS FOR THE
SIDEBOARD.

BILL

When did you start locking your doors during the day?

RUTH

It's about bloody time.

BILL POURS HIMSELF A WHISKY.

BILL

How is she?

RUTH

You'd know if you ever bothered to visit.

BILL TAKES A SIP OF HIS WHISKY.

BILL

And how are you?

RUTH PUSHES PAST BILL TO POUR
HERSELF A DRINK.

RUTH

Tired of looking after your mess.

SHE TAKES A LONG SIP AS BILL COCKS
HIS HEAD AT HER.

RUTH NOTICES BILL LOOKING HER UP
AND DOWN. SHE RUBS THE RIM OF HER
GLASS AGAINST HER LIP.

BILL

(STILL EYEING HER UP)
You look different.

RUTH TAKES ANOTHER LONG DRINK
AND THEN MOVES BACK INTO THE
ROOM.

RUTH

You know, it's strange, I feel different. These last few weeks I've felt energised, like a breath of fresh air.

BILL

(DISMISSIVE SMILE)

It's just having people around. It's obvious, if you live like a hermit, it's no wonder you were feeling closed up.

RUTH

It's more than that. Something's changed.

BILL

You've got more dramatic.

RUTH GIVES BILL A GLARE AND DOWNS
THE REST OF HER DRINK.

Being around young people will make you feel young. That's how I do it.

RUTH

Do I have to put my dick in them for it to work?

BILL GLARES BACK AT RUTH.

(SIDETRACKED)

I mean, how do you keep up with her?

BILL

Yoga.

(WRY SMILE)

And Viagra.

RUTH

I need to try it.

BILL

Viagra?

RUTH

Yoga. Elaine says it's-

BILL

(INTERRUPTING)

You've met Elaine?

RUTH

No love lost there, Bill. She thinks you're only after one thing with her daughter.

BILL

She's right. True love, of course.

(ALMOST TO HIMSELF)

I've one last chance at it.

RUTH LOOKS DOWN.

I didn't mean we never-

RUTH

(INTERRUPTING)

Have you been getting Faith's messages?

BILL

Yes.

RUTH

She's been trying to get hold of you.

BILL

Yes, yes.

RUTH

Why haven't you called?

BILL

I'm here now, aren't I?

RUTH

You should go in to see her. It will cheer her up.

SHAKING HER HEAD.

I think she really needs a distraction.

BILL NODS, FINISHES HIS WHISKY AND
WALKS OFF STAGE.

SCENE 7

FAITH'S ROOM - CONTINUOUS.

BILL ENTERS TO FIND FAITH LYING IN BED.

BILL

Faith.

FAITH PULLS HERSELF UP WITH A STIFLED COUGH.

FAITH

Bill. Where have you been? I've been calling you.

BILL SITS DOWN NEXT TO HER, TAKES HER HAND AND GOES TO KISS HER ON THE LIPS. FAITH TURNS HER HEAD AND GIVES HIM HER CHEEK INSTEAD.

BILL

I'm sorry darling. Work's been crazy. The business is really taking off...

BILL TRAILS OFF AS FAITH LETS OUT A KNOWING SIGH.

BILL TAKES HER BY THE SHOULDERS.

I'm building our future.

FAITH RELENTS INTO A SMILE.

How's it been with the queen of drama?

FAITH

Weird, I think she's trying to drown me with tea.

THEY LAUGH TOGETHER.

BILL

And how are you feeling?

FAITH

(PERKING UP)

Yeah, great. You were right, the fresh air's-

BILL

(INTERRUPTING)

Good, it's working. Just a couple more weeks.

FAITH STIFLES A COUGH.

FAITH

Will you take me home?

BILL

As soon as you're better.

FAITH

Please.

BILL

(TAKING FAITH'S HAND)

I promise. Okay?

(TOUCHES HER CHEEK)

Now, where's that lovely smile of yours?

FAITH RELENTS INTO A SMILE AND THEY
HUG.

FAITH

I've missed you.

BILL

Why don't I give you one of my special massages?

FAITH BITES HER LIP AND TURNS BACK
TO THE BED.

SCENE 8

RUTH'S LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS.

RUTH LISTENS IN, BUT THERE IS NO
MORE DIALOGUE.

SHE GETS CLOSER AND STARTS TO HEAR
SOUNDS OF HEAVY PETTING.

IT SLOWLY GETS LOUDER WITH BOTH
BILL AND FAITH MOANING AND
GROANING.

RUTH LOOKS AROUND IN
EMBARRASSED, TRYING TO FIND
SOMEWHERE TO HIDE FROM THE
NOISES.

THE SOUNDS RISE TO A CRESCENDO
AND FAITH STARTS TO COUGH,
STOPPING ALL THE MOANING.

BILL (O.S.)

I'll get some water.

THE COUGHS SUBSIDE AND BILL COMES
BACK ON STAGE, TUCKING HIS SHIRT IN.

RUTH

Is Faith alright?

BILL

(PATTING HIMSELF DOWN)
She's not really up to it.

RUTH

I can't believe you, Bill.

BILL

You said distract her.

RUTH

You know that's not what I meant.

RUTH GLARES AT HIM.

Why don't you take her in some tea?

BILL KEEPS HIS EYES AWAY FROM RUTH.

BILL

Not now, I've got to go.

RUTH

You've only been here five minutes.
(POINTING)
Get back in that room.

BILL DOESN'T MOVE AND RUTH GETS
CLOSER TO HIM. SHE SPEAKS ANGRILY,
BUT QUIET ENOUGH SO FAITH WON'T
HEAR.

Do your bloody job. She's not my responsibility.

BILL

No, you've never wanted to take responsibility for anything.

RUTH

We're not having that conversation now. You cannot blame me for this.

BILL

You promised to help.

RUTH

I said she could stay here for two weeks.

BILL

And she just needs a couple more.

RUTH

I really do not believe you, Bill.

BILL

I only ever asked you for one thing.

RUTH LOOKS AWAY.

Remember what you did?

RUTH SHAKES HER HEAD IN DISBELIEF.

I'm asking you now. Will you look after her?

RUTH TAKES A COUPLE OF BREATHS.

RUTH

(SOFT)
Yes.

BILL WATCHES RUTH, HER HEAD DOWN,
FOR A MOMENT.

BILL

Thank you.

HE LEAVES SWIFTLY.

RUTH COMPOSES HERSELF.

SHE WALKS TO THE SIDEBOARD, POURS
A CUP OF TEA AND TAKES IT INTO FAITH.

SCENE 9

RUTH'S LIVING ROOM.

RUTH WALKS IN WEARING SPORTS GEAR
AND CARRYING A ROLLED-UP THROW.

SHE TAKES THE THROW TO THE SOFA
AND OPENS IT OUT - BRIGHT AND
MODERN - SHE LAYS IT ACROSS THE
SOFA.

AFTER PATTING IT DOWN, SHE
SWITCHES ON THE 'TELEVISION', WHICH
EMITS A WARM GLOW OVER HER.

YOGI (O.S.)

(FROM TELEVISION)

Okay my friends and my new friends, let's begin in Sukhasana, the
easy pose, or the pose of ease.

RUTH CAUTIOUSLY SITS ON THE FLOOR,
CROSSED LEGGED.

SHE SETTLES INTO THE POSITION.

Now awaken and begin to enter yourself.

RUTH COCKS A CONFUSED HEAD.

Breathe in...and out.

RUTH UNDERSTANDS AND BEGINS TO
TAKE IN LONG BREATHS, CLOSING HER
EYES.

Bring your right arm up and stretch.

RUTH LIFTS HER ARM AND BENDS HER
BODY OVER.

And the other side.

SHE DOES THE OTHER SIDE.

Now up on all fours.

RUTH FOLLOWS AND GETS INTO
POSITION EASILY, SMILING AT HER
MOVEMENTS.

Lower the back and into child's pose.

RUTH FOLLOWS.

Now push your hips back into downward dog.

RUTH FOLLOWS.

Find your self-expression and reveal your inner soul.

RUTH GIVES A CHEEKY SMILE AS SHE
PUSHES BACK.

Turn over to corpse position.

RUTH ROLLS OVER ONTO HER BACK.

Widen, be free.

RUTH PUSHES BOTH KNEES OUT TO
EACH SIDE.

Feel yourself, your body's rhythms.

RUTH SMILES, GETS UP AND GOES TO
THE MIRROR, LOOKING AT HERSELF
ADMIRINGLY AND SLOWLY RUNS HER
HANDS ACROSS HER BODY.

RUTH BITES HER LIPS AND MOVES BACK
TO SIT DOWN ON THE CHAIR, PULLING
THE BLANKET OVER HERSELF.

SHE RELAXES INTO THE CHAIR.

Fulfil and be filled.

RUTH MOVES HER BODY UNDER THE
BLANKET.

RUTH'S BODY ARCHES.

Yes, yes, yes.

LIGHTS OUT.

SCENE 10

RUTH'S LIVING ROOM.

RUTH IS ASLEEP ON THE CHAIR, STILL DRESSED IN HER SPORTS GEAR FROM THE PREVIOUS SCENE.

THE, NOW SILENT, TELEVISION GLOWS.

SFX: THE DOORBELL RINGS.

RUTH WAKES UP AND LOOKS AROUND.

SHE LOOKS DOWN AT HERSELF AND CONTENTED SMILE CROSSES HER FACE.

SHE USES THE REMOTE TO TURN OFF THE TELEVISION.

SFX: THE DOORBELL RINGS.

RUTH IS STARTLED, BUT PULLS HERSELF UP - SHE DOESN'T GROAN.

SHE TAKES A STEP AND STOPS, LOOKING BACK AT THE CHAIR, A SATISFIED SMILE SPREADS ACROSS HER FACE AND SHE FIST PUMPS THE AIR.

RUTH

Yes.

SFX: THE DOORBELL RINGS.

SHE BOUNCES OVER AND OPENS THE DOOR TO ELAINE.

ELAINE

Hi.

ELAINE LOOKS RUTH UP AND DOWN.

RUTH

(INDICATING HER CLOTHES)

Yoga.

A BROAD GRIN STRETCHES ACROSS
ELAINE'S FACE.

Come in.

ELAINE FOLLOWS RUTH INTO THE
MIDDLE OF THE ROOM, EYES ON HER AT
ALL TIMES.

ELAINE

You look great.

RUTH

You've just missed the Doctor. Faith's sleeping. Doing her oxygen
thing.

ELAINE

Okay.

RUTH

(FLUSTERED)

Would you like some tea?

ELAINE TAKES A STEP TOWARDS RUTH.

ELAINE

I didn't come here for Faith this time.

ELAINE STANDS CLOSE TO RUTH.

This time I came here for you.

ELAINE REACHES OUT A HAND AND
TOUCHES RUTH'S FACE.

RUTH LOOKS BACK AT ELAINE AND
THEN GENTLY EMBRACES HER AND
THEY KISS.

ELAINE TAKES OFF RUTH'S SPORTS TOP
AND RUTH RECIPROCATES WITH
ELAINE'S JACKET.

RUTH PUTS A HAND ON ELAINE'S PANTS
BUT STOPS QUICKLY.

RUTH

What's that?

ELAINE SMILES, BUT DOESN'T REMOVE
RUTH'S HAND.

ELAINE

A pad.

RUTH

I'm guessing it's not your time of the month.

ELAINE

I leak, sometimes.

(SLY SMILE)

I blame it on Faith. She was a big baby.

RUTH LAUGHS WITH HER.

Let me sort this out and we can take it to the bedroom.

RUTH

You read my mind.

RUTH TAKES ELAINE'S HAND AND
GUIDES HER OFF STAGE.

SCENE 11

RUTH'S BEDROOM.

RUTH AND ELAINE SIT NEXT TO EACH OTHER IN RUTH'S BED, THEIR CLOTHES DASHED ACROSS THE FLOOR.

THEY LOOK AHEAD, CATCH EACH OTHER'S EYE AND THEN LOOK AWAY GIGGLING.

ELAINE LEANS OVER TO THE SIDE OF THE BED AND PICKS UP HER PURSE AND TAKES OUT A JOINT.

RUTH STARES AT HER.

ELAINE

What?

RUTH ROLLS HER EYES.

So what did you do after sex in your day?

RUTH

(DEADPAN)
Cocaine mostly.

ELAINE LAUGHS OUT LOUD WITH RUTH JOINING IN.

ELAINE

I wish I'd been in the movies. Sounds wild.

RUTH GIVES HER A BIG SMILE.

Did you ever make love to a woman before?

RUTH

Probably.
(INDICATING ELAINE)
But not like this.

ELAINE

Was it really like they say?

RUTH

Huh?

ELAINE

Casting couches and coerced sex parties?

RUTH

Looking back, yeah, possibly. But it didn't feel like it at the time. I was having fun, making lots of money. I enjoyed the scene.

(CONTEMPLATING)

I mean, there were a lot of older men and I was young and they convinced me that my body was just a tool. You know, in front of the camera...

(TRAILS OFF FOR A MOMENT)

And behind it.

(SMALL SMILE)

For all his faults, Bill tried to protect me.

(QUIETER)

I'm glad it's changing.

RUTH TAKES A BREATH AND THEN
COMPOSES HERSELF.

Don't get me wrong, I'm proud of my work and I would do every single film again.

ELAINE

I'm glad to hear it, I had my first orgasm watching you in Crimson Stars.

RUTH COVERS HER EYES IN
EMBARRASSMENT.

RUTH

No, don't tell me that.

ELAINE

It's true, I masturbated over everything you were in-

RUTH TRIES TO PUT HER HAND OVER
ELAINE'S MOUTH.

RUTH

Don't, it's so embarrassing.

ELAINE GIVES HER A CHEEKY SMILE
AND RUTH LAUGHS WITH HER.

ELAINE

I'm just saying, you always looked very hot.

RUTH

Thank you. I'm flattered, I suppose. Although, it never felt very sexy on set. Everything's so choreographed it's more like a military operation conducting a smear test.

ELAINE

Ah, you're ruining the illusion.

THEY PLAY TUSSLE FOR A MOMENT.

RUTH

Why do you like Crimson Stars, I'm only in it for about five minutes?

ELAINE

But what a five minutes. That scene where you seduced the alien general whilst slowly removing your space suit...

ELAINE WAVES HER HAND IN FRONT OF
HER FACE AND WHISTLES A 'PHEW'.

RUTH

(REMINISCING)

Oh yeah, that was so uncomfortable. The suit kept jabbing me in the breasts. They had to put concealer on my boobs to hide the bruises.

(GETTING INTO IT)

And that scene had nothing to do with the story. It was just flesh to be gawped at.

ELAINE

(BITING HER LIP)

Yeah.

RUTH GENTLY SLAPS HER ARM.

RUTH

I knew I was just eye candy in those early films. A bit of tit and thigh to up the box office ratings.

(THINKING BACK)

Then a few cheeky comedies. That was mostly boobs and arse, running around half naked and doing silly voices.

(LOOKING TO ELAINE)

I only got my pussy out for artsy projects. For foreign directors, like whats-his-name...

(REMEMBERING)

Burlesconti.

ELAINE

Oh yeah, wasn't there one where you were tied naked to an apple tree and grape vines grew all over you and took over your mind, or something?

RUTH

Eve's Garden.

ELAINE

My god, that was boring. I just couldn't get off to it.

(NODDING TO HER WAIST)

Dry as bone.

RUTH

(SCREWING UP HER FACE)

Please.

ELAINE

(LAUGHING)

That was your last film, right?

RUTH NODS.

What happened after that?

RUTH

The calls dropped off at the same rate my boobs sagged. Once you get past a critical droop point you'll only get a role if you've done Shakespeare or won a BAFTA.

(SIGHING)

And it's hard to be passed off as candy when you look like a prune.

ELAINE

Well, I like prunes. They keep me regular.

RUTH

Fuck off.

THEY LAUGH AND TUSSLE SOME MORE.

ELAINE

Is that when you married Bill? To do the whole settling down thing?

RUTH

I suppose so. At the time I really did think I loved Bill. But now, I see him more as methadone, weening me off the disappointment with my failing career.

ELAINE

Like a distraction.

RUTH

That's a good way to put it.

ELAINE

And children?

RUTH

(SHAKING HER HEAD)

I never wanted them. I've tried being around them but never felt the joy everyone talks about. I really tried to want them, even felt less of a woman for not. But I couldn't make myself.

ELAINE

Do you regret it?

RUTH

No.

ELAINE

Is that why you and Bill broke up?

RUTH

Partly. He always wanted a family, although he ended up not having one either. Probably why he's with a girl young enough to be his daughter.

RUTH QUICKLY LOOKS OVER TO CHECK
ELAINE'S RESPONSE.

ELAINE

I don't like him. Why do you keep in contact?

RUTH

What about you? How did you end up with Faith?

ELAINE ROLLS HER HEAD AND BODY
BACKWARDS ON THE PILLOWS.

ELAINE

Do not ask me that.

RUTH PRESSURES HER WITH HER STARE.

I was the exact opposite. I was desperate to have a kid. Back then it wasn't so easy for a single woman, let alone a lesbian, to get any help with that.

RUTH

What did you do?

ELAINE

I hung around a few bars until I got pregnant.
(SHAKES HER HEAD)
That's gotta be the worst few months of my life.

RUTH

Do you know who the Father is?

ELAINE

I do. They don't. I came here to give birth to make sure of it.

RUTH

And Faith?

ELAINE

No. And I won't tell her. It won't do anyone any good.

RUTH

Doesn't she have a right to know?

ELAINE

Probably. But I've disappointed her in so many ways now, this is just another one on the list.

(TO RUTH)

I envy you. Being a mother ain't all it's cracked up to be.

RUTH TAKES ELAINE'S HAND.

ELAINE LOOKS AWAY.

I'll be leaving in a few days.

(LOOKING BACK TO RUTH)

But let's stay in touch.

RUTH

I'd like that. I like you being around.

ELAINE

That's just post-coital talk.

RUTH

Well let's have some more then.

SHE LEANS IN AND KISSES ELAINE,
BEFORE THEY BOTH FALL BACK INTO
THE BED.

SCENE 12

RUTH'S LIVING ROOM.

UPBEAT MUSIC PLAYS OFF STAGE.

RUTH ENTERS CARRYING A SPEAKER,
DANCING AND SWAYING TO THE BEAT,
SINGING ALONG WITH THE SONG.

SHE MOVES CONFIDENTLY, SMILING
AND RELAXED.

SHE DROPS INTO A YOGA POSITION AND
BACK UP - AND REPEATS.

RUTH DOESN'T NOTICE AS FAITH,
WEARING PYJAMAS, ENTERS THE BACK
OF THE ROOM AND WATCHES. SHE
LOOKS TIRED, HER BODY SLOUCHED.

RUTH STRETCHES USING THE CHAIR,
SMILES AND SITS INTO IT.

SHE PUSHES HERSELF OUT OF THE
CHAIR, NO PROBLEM, NO GROAN.

SHE PUNCHES THE AIR AND GOES BACK
TO STRETCHING.

FAITH SHAKES HER HEAD IN DISBELIEF,
WALKS OVER AND TURNS THE MUSIC
OFF.

RUTH TURNS TO SEE FAITH, STANDING
OVER THE SPEAKER.

FAITH

What is that racket?

RUTH GOES OVER, TURNS THE MUSIC
BACK ON.

RUTH

Dance music.

SHE TAKES FAITH'S HANDS AND TRIES
TO GET HER TO DANCE.

FAITH STANDS, SLUMPED. SHE PULLS
HER HANDS AWAY AND TURNS THE
MUSIC OFF.

FAITH

Why can't you act your age? You shouldn't be dancing around like a teenager.

RUTH

But I feel like dancing.

SHE GLIDES INTO THE ROOM.

I feel like I can do anything. I could be a CEO. I could be a bricklayer.
(PIROUETTE)
I could be a backing dancer.
(TO FAITH)
I feel alive.

FAITH

I feel worse every day.

RUTH STOPS DANCING.

RUTH

Would you like some tea?

FAITH NODS AND SITS ON THE CHAIR.

RUTH POURS SOME TEA AND HANDS IT
TO FAITH.

How are you? You look down.

FAITH

My mother's left town.

RUTH SITS DOWN.

RUTH

Yes, I know.
(SHE SIPS HER TEA)
You don't really get along though, do you?

FAITH

She's still my mum and I want her to care about me.

RUTH

She does.

FAITH GIVES RUTH A SNIDE GLANCE.

FAITH

What do you know about my mother?

RUTH AVOIDS FAITH'S GLARE, TAKES A
BREATH AND SIPS SOME TEA.

RUTH

Your mother and I...

RUTH TRAILS OFF. FAITH'S EYES WIDEN
BEFORE TURNING HER HEAD AWAY IN
DISGUST.

FAITH

Oh...oh god, please don't tell me.

RUTH WATCHES, GETTING SLIGHTLY
ANNOYED, AS FAITH PULLS FACES AND
PRETENDS TO RETCH.

FAITH CONTINUES DOING THIS FOR A
MOMENT TOO LONG, RUTH'S FACE
SHOWING HER IRRITATION.

RUTH

If you don't mind-

FAITH SWINGS BACK AROUND TO
INTERRUPT.

FAITH

I'm not surprised.
(LOOKING RUTH UP AND DOWN)
She always did like them older.

RUTH

Seems to run in the family.

THEY GLARE AT EACH OTHER.

FAITH

Were you always a lesbian?

RUTH

I don't think I am now. I just feel...
(FINDING THE WORD)
Less hung up about it all.

FAITH EXHALES DISMISSIVELY.

For all your supposed fluidity, you kids are very black and white about things.

FAITH

I'm thirty five. And I'm not hung up.

RUTH LETS OUT A DISMISSIVE LAUGH.

(POINTING AT RUTH)
You're hung up. Set in your ways.
(GESTURING THE ROOM)
Stuck here in your bat cave, too scared to go out because the world has changed.

RUTH

Do you know how old I am?

FAITH

A hundred.

RUTH

Seventy. That's thirty five years more memories than you. Thirty five years more experience.
(SOFTER)
It brings nuance and contemplation.

FAITH

You mean prejudice.

RUTH

(SPITTING IT OUT)

I didn't turn sixty and start voting for the far right.

(CALMING)

I mean, we learn to appreciate the grey areas.

FAITH

What do you know about the world?

(GETTING ANIMATED)

You're a lonely, bitter old woman. One foot in the grave and the other in the past.

RUTH

I'm here now. Trying to help you.

FAITH

I don't want anything from you.

RUTH

What is it you have against me?

FAITH

You can't let go of the past.

RUTH

What do you mean?

FAITH

Bill. You've got your claws in him.

RUTH

Bill?

RUTH LAUGHS.

Is that what he's told you?

FAITH

No, but I can tell. I'm not dumb. You just won't let him go.

RUTH

(GIGGLING)
Bill? Seriously?

FAITH

Are you jealous?

RUTH

(NON-PLUSSED)
Of Bill?

FAITH

(POINTING TO HERSELF)
Of me.
(TO RUTH)
Because you're past it. Does it hurt your pride that he's with someone younger?

RUTH

(STACCATO)
You can have him.
(SHAKING HER HEAD)
If I never saw him again it would still be too much.

FAITH

Then why the hell is he always coming here, always calling you?
(LOUDLY)
Why the fuck am I even here?
(POINTING AT RUTH)
With you? His geriatric, has-been ex-wife?

RUTH

(LOUD)
It's because I owe him.
(SOFTLY)
Because of what I did.

FAITH BACKS DOWN SLIGHTLY,
WATCHING RUTH THE WHOLE TIME.

FAITH

What did you do to him?

RUTH LOOKS AWAY, AVOIDING FAITH'S
EYES. SHE LOOKS UP, FAITH PRESSES
HER FOR AN ANSWER.

RUTH

I had an abortion.

(TAKING A BREATH)

I was pregnant. He was happy.

(DROPPING HER HEAD)

I didn't ask him. I just did it. He never forgave me.

FAITH WATCHES RUTH FOR A MOMENT.

FAITH

If he hates you so much, why does he keep you around?

FAITH SHAKES HER HEAD, NOT
UNDERSTANDING.

What have you got on him?

RUTH

I'm the one paying for that stupid shop of his. I have done since we...

(SHE TRAILS OFF)

I felt so guilty and I've been trying to make it up to him.

(TO FAITH)

But, my word, he doesn't make it easy.

FAITH

How long ago was this? It must be years.

RUTH

I know, I know. But that's just how it is.

FAITH

Do you still feel guilty?

RUTH

Yes.

FAITH

Do you regret it?

RUTH LOOKS DIRECTLY AT FAITH.

RUTH

No.

FAITH HOLDS HER GAZE FOR A MOMENT
AND THEN SITS UPRIGHT.

FAITH

How does that even work?

RUTH

Huh?

FAITH

It's your body. It was your choice.
(QUICKLY)
Was it planned?

RUTH SHAKES HER HEAD.

How did it even happen?

RUTH

(SHAKING HER HEAD)
I don't know. We got high a lot. We weren't always careful.

FAITH

Then it's just as much his fault as yours.
(TO RUTH)
You shouldn't feel bad about it.

RUTH LOOKS UP TO FAITH.

You shouldn't let Bill push you around anymore.

FAITH LEANS IN TOWARDS RUTH.

You shouldn't let anyone push you around.

FAITH TAKES RUTH'S HAND.

I'm sorry I tried to.

RUTH CUPS FAITH'S HAND IN HERS AND
FAITH RECIPROCATES.

LIGHTS OUT.

SCENE 13

RUTH'S LIVING ROOM.

MONTAGE SEQUENCE.

RUTH GENTLY JOGS ON THE SPOT
AROUND THE ROOM, COMING TO STAND
IN FRONT OF THE MIRROR.

SHE LOOKS AT HERSELF AND THEN
DICTATES INTO HER PHONE.

RUTH

(RADIO VOICE)

And now the poem for the day by none other than Ruth Rock, read by
Julie.

SHE TURNS BACK TO FACE FRONT.

(RECITING)

Those who repeat expecting change,
Reason ascribes a mind deranged;
So when youth endeavours to start anew,
To differ from their elders, who,
For all life's curses, they point the blame,
But end up doing just the same;
Profound meaning they once sought,
In progenic cycles, comes to naught;
And so mindless generations pass,
With no desire to end the farce.

FAITH SHUFFLES ACROSS THE ROOM,
CAUSING RUTH TO STOP RECORDING.

RUTH DOES STAR JUMPS. FAITH ROLLS
HER EYES AND EXITS.

RUTH ON THE PHONE, SMILING AND
HAPPY, WATCHES FAITH, OUT OF
BREATH, STRUGGLE ON STAGE AND TO
THE CHAIR, BEFORE DROPPING DOWN
INTO IT, WHEEZING.

RUTH HANGS UP, BRINGS A CUP OF TEA
OVER TO FAITH.

FAITH WATCHES RUTH DO YOGA, SHE
COUGHS GENTLY.

RUTH HELPS FAITH UP AND
ENCOURAGES HER TO DO HER
EXERCISES, GENTLE BENDS AND TWISTS
TOGETHER.

FAITH BEGINS COUGHING AND RUTH
LIES HER DOWN ON THE SOFA.

FAITH SLEEPS ON THE SOFA, WHEEZING.
RUTH WATCHES FROM THE SIDEBORD,
DIALLING ON HER PHONE.

RUTH

You better come here soon Bill, she's in a bad way. We've had to call
a doctor out twice this week already.

RUTH AND FAITH WATCHING
TELEVISION TOGETHER, FAITH
CONTINUALLY DROPPING OFF.

FAITH STRUGGLES TO GET UP FROM THE
SOFA, RUTH HELPS HER UP.

RUTH, ARMS AROUND FAITH, HELPS HER
OFF STAGE AND BACK TO HER ROOM.

RUTH COMES BACK ON STAGE AND
PICKS UP HER PHONE.

SHE'S MID-CONVERSATION.

RUTH

(INTO PHONE)

...you sound sleepy. What time is it there?

(WAITS)

You dirty stop out, you should get to bed.

(SMILES THEN GIGGLES)

Don't tease.

(WAITS)

I'll come out there just as soon as...

(SHE TRAILS OFF. WAITS)

She's getting worse. They're worried about her results.

(WAITS)

I think you should. As soon as possible.

(WAITS)

I'll look after her. I promise.

(WAITS)

Miss you.

SHE HANGS UP.

LIGHTS OUT.

SCENE 14

RUTH'S LIVING ROOM.

FAITH IS LAID OUT ON THE SOFA
PROPPED UP ON PILLOWS, WIRED TO AN
OXYGEN CONCENTRATOR.

RUTH PREPARES TEA AND BRINGS HER
OVER A CUP.

SHE HANDS IT TO FAITH WHO CAN'T
TAKE THE WEIGHT AND PLACES IT
DOWN ON THE TABLE.

RUTH

Blimey, how much did they take at the hospital?

FAITH GIVES RUTH A WAN SMILE.

Should I knock you up a Bloody Mary?

FAITH COUGHS A SHORT LAUGH.

FAITH

God, yes. With extra tramadol.

RUTH LAUGHS, TOUCHING FAITH'S ARM.

SFX: RUTH'S PHONE RINGS, PLAYING
'WALKING ON SUNSHINE' BY KATRINA
AND THE WAVES.

PHONE

I'm walking on sunshine, woah.

RUTH DANCES OVER TO THE
SIDEBOARD TO PICK UP HER PHONE,
WINKING AT FAITH WHO ROLLS HER
EYES.

RUTH

(INTO PHONE)
Ruth Rock, in the flesh.

RUTH'S DEMEANOUR BECOMES MORE
SERIOUS AS SHE LISTENS.

(LOOKING AT FAITH)

Yes, she's here.

FAITH STRAINS TO LOOK OVER.

(INTO PHONE)

No, I am not her Mother.

(WAITS)

Well, I'm her...

RUTH LOOKS OVER AT FAITH FOR A
MOMENT.

(INTO PHONE)

We're not related.

(TO FAITH)

They have your test results.

FAITH

Can you?

RUTH NODS.

RUTH

(INTO PHONE)

You can tell me.

(TO FAITH)

They need your permission.

RUTH HOLDS THE PHONE TO FAITH.

FAITH

(INTO PHONE)

Yes, I am.

(WAITS)

Yes, I do.

FAITH NODS TO RUTH, WHO TAKES THE
PHONE AND MOVES TO THE BACK OF
THE ROOM.

RUTH

(INTO PHONE)

Go ahead.

RUTH LISTENS CAREFULLY, HER EYES
DARTING TO FAITH.

(INTO PHONE)

Okay, thank you.

RUTH HANGS UP THE PHONE, PUTTING
IT DOWN ON THE SIDEBOARD.

SHE HESITATES FOR A MOMENT AND
THEN SLOWLY WALKS TO THE CHAIR,
SITTING DOWN AND REACHING OUT
FOR FAITH'S HAND.

It's-

FAITH STARTS TO CRY, CUTTING RUTH
OFF.

RUTH WAITS UNTIL FAITH RUBS HER
EYES DRY.

It's not that bad.

FAITH

I can see why you never won an Oscar.

RUTH

They just want you to stay in the hospital for a while.

FAITH ROLLS HER EYES AND WAVES HER
OXYGEN PIPES AT RUTH.

FAITH

This doesn't get better. You know I won't be coming back.

FAITH PULLS HERSELF UP.

I do not want to die in a fucking hospital ward.

(CATCHING HERSELF)

I don't want to die at all.

FAITH SHRIVELS BACK INTO HERSELF
AND RUTH REACHES OUT TO HER.

RUTH

Faith-

FAITH SITS BACK UP, INTERRUPTING
RUTH.

FAITH

(POINTING AT RUTH)

You're the one who should die, not me. You've had your life and I've barely lived.

FAITH STARTS TO CRY AND REACHES
OUT FOR RUTH.

I'm sorry. I've been bitter for so long. I don't want to be now.

SHE HOLDS ONTO RUTH'S ARM.

RUTH

I know.

FAITH LOOKS UP AT RUTH.

FAITH

Have you thought about what it's like?

RUTH

Yes, I have.

FAITH

Will you take care of me?

RUTH

I can't.

FAITH INTERRUPTS TAKES OFF HER
OXYGEN PIPES AND LOOKS AT RUTH.

FAITH

When it comes, I want to be at home.
(TAKING A BREATH)
I want to be here with you.

THEY EMBRACE.

LIGHTS DOWN.

SCENE 15

RUTH'S LIVING ROOM.

FAITH IS LAID OUT ON THE SOFA,
PROPPED UP BY PILLOWS. SHE'S
LOOKING PALE AND TIRED AND HAS
OXYGEN CONCENTRATOR PIPES UNDER
HER NOSE.

SHE WHEEZES AS SHE BREATHES IN AND
OUT.

RUTH COMES IN CARRYING A MEDICINE
BOTTLE AND A GLASS OF WATER.

RUTH PUTS THESE ONTO THE TABLE
AND HELPS FAITH UP ONTO THE
PILLOWS.

RUTH TAKES OUT A PILL AND HANDS IT
TO FAITH, PASSING HER THE GLASS OF
WATER AFTERWARDS.

FAITH STRUGGLES BUT MANAGES TO
SWALLOW THE PILL.

RUTH HANDS HER A SECOND ONE.

SFX: THE DOORBELL RINGS.

BOTH RUTH AND FAITH LOOK TO EACH
OTHER AND TO THE DOOR.

RUTH INDICATES THAT FAITH SHOULD
TAKE THE PILL AND THEN HEADS TO
THE DOOR AS FAITH ABIDES.

RUTH OPENS THE DOOR TO FIND BILL,
LOOKING SLIGHTLY WEATHERED.

RUTH DOESN'T LET BILL IN AT FIRST,
BUT LOOKS OVER AT FAITH TAKING HER
PILL.

SHE WHISPERS TO BILL.

RUTH

Where the fuck have you been?

BILL TRIES TO PUSH PAST RUTH BUT SHE
BLOCKS HIM.

BILL

There've been problems with the business. I just need a little
investment-

FAITH

(INTERRUPTING)
Bill.

BILL DOESN'T MOVE, KEEPING HIS EYES
AWAY FROM FAITH.

RUTH STARES AT HIM AND NODS
AGGRESSIVELY IN THE DIRECTION OF
FAITH, BEFORE GOING TO THE
SIDEBOARD TO POUR TEA.

It's about fucking time.

RUTH COMES OVER WITH TEA, PUSHING
A CUP INTO BILL'S HAND AND
GESTURING FOR HIM TO GO TO FAITH.

BILL

(TO RUTH)
Would you mind giving us a minute?

RUTH LOOKS TO FAITH, WHO LOOKS AT
BILL. FAITH LOOKS BACK AT RUTH AND
SHAKES HER HEAD.

BILL GIVES RUTH A STARE. RUTH
STANDS HER GROUND AT FIRST,
LOOKING BETWEEN FAITH AND BILL
AND BACK.

FAITH GIVES HER A SMILE AND RUTH
MOVES FURTHER BACK INTO THE
ROOM.

BILL WATCHES HER UNTIL SHE STOPS
AND THEN LOOKS BACK AROUND TO
FAITH.

FAITH

What do you want to say?

BILL PUTS THE TEA ON THE TABLE.

BILL

I...
(TRAILS OFF)
I think we should take a break.

FAITH STARES AT HIM, HER EYES
WELLING UP ON THE VERGE OF CRYING.

It's nothing personal.

FAITH

Why?
(SHE SWALLOWS BACK A COUGH)
Is there someone else?

BILL GESTURES IN DEFENCE.

BILL

We've grown apart.

BOTH RUTH AND FAITH SHOOT HIM
LOOKS.

BILL BRUSHES IT ASIDE.

We just don't get to see each other much these days.

FAITH

What?

BILL

It's...
(FINDING THE WORD)
Unsustainable.

FAITH GLARES AT BILL, WHO DROPS HIS
HEAD TO THE FLOOR TO AVOID IT.

FAITH

Is it because-
(WEAKLY SHOUTING)
Look at me.

BILL FORCES HIS EYES UP TO MEET
HERS.

Is it because you think I'm dying?

FAITH STARTS COUGHING AND BILL
DROPS HIS HEAD, STEPPING AWAY.

RUTH COMES TO COMFORT FAITH.

RUTH

(TO BILL)
I think you should go.

BILL MOVES TO THE MIDDLE OF THE
ROOM AND LINGERS.

RUTH WATCHES HIM WHILST FAITH
RECOVERS.

(TO BILL)
Leave.

BILL

(MUMBLING)
I need to speak to you.

RUTH

You've said enough already.

FAITH HAS RECOVERED AND RUTH HELPS PROP HER UP ON THE PILLOWS SO SHE CAN PROPERLY BREATHE HER OXYGEN.

FAITH SQUEEZES RUTH'S ARM AND SMILES UP AT HER.

RUTH SMILES BACK, BEFORE STANDING TO FACE BILL.

BILL

Can we go somewhere...

HE TAPERS OFF AS RUTH SHAKES HER HEAD SLOWLY.

Look, I have some important business I need to discuss with you.

RUTH

We've nothing more to discuss.

BILL

Well that's the problem, you never wanted to discuss anything.

RUTH

Get out, Bill.

BILL

Fair enough.
(LOOKING AT FAITH)
This is not a great time.
(TO RUTH)
I'll send you the details when I get home.

HE TURNS TO LEAVE.

RUTH

It's not yours.

BILL STOPS IN HIS TRACKS.

It's mine. I paid for it.

BILL TURNS AROUND SLOWLY TO FACE
RUTH.

Just as I paid for this one.
(WITH VENOM)
And you've been leeching off me for years.

BILL

It's the least you can do after everything you-

RUTH

(INTERRUPTING)
We are not talking about that now.

BILL

That's just like you, a washed-up prima donna. You've never owned
your mistakes. Never faced anything.
(LOOKING RUTH UP AND DOWN)
How old are you? It's time you grew up.

SHE STARES BACK AT BILL.

RUTH

Grow up? Bill?
(SHE COCKS HER HEAD)
You're running around with skirt half your age.
(TO FAITH)
No offence.

FAITH SHAKES IT OFF.

(TO BILL)
How old would she be?

BILL PURSES HIS MOUTH, HOLDING
RUTH'S STARE.

About the same?

BILL DROPS HIS HEAD.

It's twisted Bill. You're twisted.

RUTH ROUNDS ON BILL.

And boy, did I face it. You've no idea how guilty you made me feel.
Everyday, I feel awful.

BILL

Then why did you do it?

RUTH

Because I never wanted a child. And you knew that. I never told you
any different. I don't know how I got pregnant, but it was an accident.

RUTH DROPS HER HEADS AND
SWALLOWS.

And I was an addict. We both were.

BILL DROPS HIS HEAD.

RUTH STEPS FORWARD AND TAKES
BILL'S HAND.

I don't regret it. Neither of us should.

BILL PULLS AWAY.

BILL

I didn't have a say in the matter.

RUTH SHAKES HER HEAD.

RUTH

(TO HERSELF)

Oh Bill.

(TO BILL)

You know, the only thing I regret is letting you make me feel guilty.
But you don't deserve that.

(SOFTLY)

You never asked me, never tried to understand.

(STRONGER)

You're cold Bill.

BILL

What do you expect after that?

RUTH

No, you were always cold, you just hid it under your charm. I realise that now.

SHE TAKES A BREATH.

I'm sorry. I should have talked to you. I should've told you what I was planning. I did you wrong, Bill. But even if we'd talked, the outcome would've been the same. It was my choice.

RUTH LOOKS DIRECTLY AT BILL.

And I made the right one. You can't blame me anymore.

(DIRECT)

I'm stopping your payments and selling the London flat.

BILL

You can't do that.

RUTH

I can do whatever I want.

BILL

How dare you threaten-

RUTH

(INTERRUPTING)

You've got two months.

BILL

I'll tell everyone. I'll make sure your name's-

RUTH

(INTERRUPTING)

My name? Who cares? That's all in the past and I'm done with it. I've moved on and I don't care what you think.

BILL

(SCOFFS)

God, what self-help column have you been reading?

(TO FAITH)

Did you put her up to this?

RUTH

Heaven forbid I make my own decisions. I'm just doing what I want for once. You should try it Bill?

BILL

(STRIKING A POSE)

Ruth, baby, that is is exactly how I roll.

RUTH LETS OUT A SHARP LAUGH.

RUTH

Gosh, have you taken a look at yourself recently?

BILL

(PULLING A FACIAL POSE)

All the time.

RUTH

You have not changed a bit. You've aged into the man boys want to be before they grow up and know better.

(SOFT)

You're getting older, Bill. There's no shame in that. The world doesn't actually revolve around being young, so why keep pretending? Surely you're more interesting than that.

BILL GOES TO SAY SOMETHING, BUT
STOPS. HIS EYES DROP FROM RUTH'S
DOWN TO HIS CHEST.

Whatever you're chasing, I'm not paying for it anymore.

(DIRECT)

Now, get out.

BILL

You are fucking senile.

RUTH

(STEPPING TOWARDS HIM)

Get out.

BILL STEPS BACK AND LOOKS AT FAITH,
WHO TURNS AWAY FROM HIM.

BILL LOOKS BACK AT RUTH, WHO TAKES
ANOTHER STEP FORWARD.

(FORCEFUL)
Get out.

BILL TURNS AND LEAVES.

RUTH WATCHES HIM GO BEFORE
SLOWLY CLOSING THE DOOR.

SHE TURNS TOWARDS FAITH AND THEY
LOOK AT EACH OTHER FOR A MOMENT.

FAITH STARTS CRYING AND RUTH
RUSHES ACROSS TO COMFORT HER.

FAITH CRIES AND COUGHS AS RUTH
CRADLES HER IN HER ARMS.

FAITH STARTS COUGHING MORE
VIOLENTLY, RUTH HELPS HER UP AND
SUPPORTS HER AS THEY BOTH WALK
OFF STAGE.

SCENE 16

FAITH'S BEDROOM.

FAITH LIES PROPPED UP ON THE BED,
OXYGEN TUBES UNDER HER NOSE.
SHE'S PALE, FRAGILE AND FINDING IT
HARD TO BREATHE OR SPEAK.

RUTH SITS NEXT TO HER, HOLDING HER
HAND.

RUTH

I need to tell you something.

FAITH TURNS HER HEAD SLOWLY
TOWARDS RUTH.

The day we met, I wished we could change places. That you were old
and I was young. I think I may have done this to you.

FAITH ROLLS HER EYES AT RUTH.

FAITH

Bill was right, you have gone senile.

RUTH SMILES AT FAITH, SQUEEZING HER
HAND.

RUTH

Thank you.

LIGHTS OUT.

SCENE 17

RUTH'S LIVING ROOM.

RUTH PACES UP AND DOWN, PHONE TO
HER EAR.

SHE STOPS WALKING AND TALKS
URGENTLY.

RUTH

(INTO PHONE)

I know you're on the plane, but don't go to your hotel. Call me
immediately and I'll let you know where we are. The ambulance is on
its way.

RUTH HANGS UP.

LIGHTS OUT.

SCENE 18

FAITH'S BEDROOM.

RUTH SITS IN THE BED WITH FAITH LYING ACROSS HER, OXYGEN TUBES UNDER HER NOSE.

FAITH WHEEZES, STRUGGLING TO KEEP HER EYES OPEN.

RUTH HAS HER ARMS AROUND HER, STROKING HER HEAD.

RUTH

Your Mum will be here soon.

FAITH TRIES TO TURN HER HEAD TO RUTH, BUT DOESN'T MANAGE.

SHE STARTS CRYING.

FAITH

I'm scared.

RUTH COMFORTS HER.

RUTH

Does it hurt?

FAITH

Yes.

FAITH TRIES TO WIPE HER EYES, BUT STRUGGLES TO LIFT HER HAND.

SHE GIVES UP.

I'm in so much pain.

FAITH'S BREATHING BECOMES DRAWN OUT, PAINFUL.

RUTH STROKES HER HAIR, NOTHING ELSE SHE CAN DO.

I'm so, so scared.

FAITH'S BREATHING GETS WORSE. THE MACHINE LOOP SOUNDS OF THE OXYGEN CONCENTRATOR BREATHING SLOWLY GET LOUDER AND SLOWER AS FAITH STRUGGLES TO TAKE IN AIR.

RUTH CONTINUES TO STROKE HER HAIR.

RUTH

Go gently.
Without hate. Without regret.
Embrace that good night,
For there comes nothing, yet,
In your wake still shines light.
As life behind fades,
Do not rage, but smile.
Welcome the end of day.
And go gently now, my child.

THE NOISE OF THE OXYGEN CONCENTRATOR HAS STOPPED.

FAITH LIES STILL, NOT BREATHING.

RUTH TAKES THE OXYGEN TUBES FROM FAITH'S NOSE AND HOLDS HER IN HER ARMS.

LIGHTS OUT.

CURTAINS.