

# DANIEL/*DANIELLE*

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A Play In Two Acts

By  
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## CHARACTERS

DANIEL J. MAMMEN -- mid 60s, confident and authoritative but personable

DANIELLE MAMM -- late 20s and then late 30s transgender woman

DESTINY ANDRES -- late 20s Latina or African American woman

FABIANA MAMMEN -- late 40s Latina

SHUKO GISH -- late 30s Asian-American woman

DAN-O GISH -- 19-year-old man

## SETTINGS

### ACT I

Scenes 1, 3, & 5: A basement

Scenes 2 & 4: A hospital room

### ACT 2

Scene 1: A jail cell

Scene 2: A funeral parlor

TIME: 2007 and The Present

PLACE: Chicago

### AUTHOR'S NOTE

While writing the play, I imagined a wall anchored upstage and slanting downstage right in the first scene; then, to facilitate scene changes, I envisioned the wall moving left to reveal the second scene, and then moving back and forth to shift between scenes. But every theater and director should do what they think accommodates their production practically and artistically. The four sets can be as elaborate or simple, with a few suggestive props and set pieces, as the production allows.

*I contain multitudes.* -- Walt Whitman

ACT 1

SCENE 1

SETTING: A dark basement with only a door or stairs and light from a high window. A low fog drifts across the floor, gradually dissipating.

SFX: A DRIPPING FAUCET that recedes

DANIEL J. MAMMEN JR., wearing a suit and tie, sits in a chair bound and hooded. A pitcher of water and towel sits on a table near him.

A person stands in the shadows up stage.

MAMMEN

Hello?

(Beat.)

Hello? Is anyone there?

(Beat.)

Help! Somebody, please, help me!

He leans forward and shakes his head trying to get the hood off. He clasps it with his knees and pulls it off. He glances around at the environment.

MAMMEN (CONT'D)

Hello? Anybody here? Help! Please. Is anybody here?

VOICE

Yes.

Mammen starts and twists around.

MAMMEN

Wh...? Who...who's there?

Beat.

MAMMEN (CONT'D)

Please, what do you want?

Beat.

MAMMEN (CONT'D)

If it's money, tell me. We can work something out.

VOICE

That was fast.

MAMMEN

What?

VOICE

You, offering me money. I didn't even have to threaten you.

MAMMEN

You think kidnapping is ambiguous? Believe me, when strangers grab you off the street and put a hood over your head, your first thought isn't, "Yea, I'm going to a surprise party."

VOICE

We didn't hurt you.

MAMMEN

Nuance is lost when you're being shoved into a van.

VOICE

Okay. I should have said I didn't have to *torture* you.

MAMMEN

(alarmed)

No. You don't. There's no need for violence. We can work something out. In Bitcoins if you like. That seems to be made in the shade these days for contraband.

(facing forward)

We'll keep it anonymous. Then you've got nothing to worry about.

VOICE

Who says "made in the shade" anymore?

MAMMEN

What?

VOICE

That's Beatnik jargon, isn't it?

MAMMEN

Maybe.

VOICE

Are you a hipster?

MAMMEN

What?

VOICE

You sound like a hipster. Or hepcat. That's it. You sound like a jive-talking hepcat.

MAMMEN

What are you talking about?

VOICE

I'll bet you like Allen Ginsburg and Charley Parker.

MAMMEN

I like Parker.

VOICE

I knew it. You're a hepcat.

MAMMEN

Okay. I'm a hepcat.

VOICE

And a fuddy-duddy, too, out of touch with the times.

MAMMEN

What does this have to do with anything?

VOICE

You mentioned something current and described it with an anachronism. The words you use are emblematic of who you are. Take "peachy-keen." Peachy-keen says a lot about the person who says it. It indicates how old you are. How current. And how hip. I'll bet you say peachy-keen a lot.

MAMMEN

I never say peachy-keen.

VOICE

Really?

MAMMEN

No. I'm not Frankie Avalon, for Christ's sake.

VOICE

Okay. So "No" on peachy-keen. How about "midget?" Or "retard?" I'll bet you say those.

MAMMEN

What are you, an angry etymologist? Did you bring me here to force-feed me the Huffington Post PC Manual?

VOICE

There could be some force-feeding, but it won't be rhetorical.

MAMMEN

(rattled)

I thought we agreed, no violence.

VOICE

You agreed.

MAMMEN

Look, I'm a federal judge. Threatening a judge is a serious crime. It can get you 20 years. And that's twenty years in a maximum security prison, not a country club. So you want to think carefully about what you're doing. If you stop now, nothing will happen. I don't know you. You haven't hurt me. It's a minor...indiscretion. A mulligan, so to speak. So what do you say? You sound like an intelligent man, how about...

VOICE

What makes you think I'm a man?

Beat.

MAMMEN

I don't know. I don't, I guess. It's hard to tell. Your voice is, uhm...

VOICE

Ambiguous?

MAMMEN

Yes.

VOICE

Intersexual.

MAMMEN

I don't know what...

VOICE

Maybe effete?

MAMMEN

I'd rather not get into characterizations. I said "man" because kidnapers are usually men. That might be sexist -- I'm sure you'll let me know -- but that's the way it is. But it's irrelevant anyway.

VOICE

To you.

MAMMEN

No. To both of us. Because my point was that you sound like an intelligent *person*. And the intelligent move would be to let me go, before this gets out of hand. As I said, I'm a judge and...

VOICE

I know who you are.

MAMMEN

You do? (Beat.) Do I know you?

The stranger turns on a light, revealing a woman, about 30, dressed in black. She remains behind Mammen, but not necessarily stationary.

WOMAN

You're Daniel J. Mammen Junior. You were born in Chicago, the son of an immigrant, Daniel J. Senior, a policeman. You went to Catholic schools. You were an Eagle Scout. You graduated magna cum laude from DePaul University and went to Yale Law School. You were a collegiate chess champion. It helped you get a job clerking for an appellate judge. That led to a prestigious law firm and lucrative private practice. Then the Justice Department and a judicial appointment.

MAMMEN

How do you know...?

WOMAN

Is that accurate?

MAMMEN

More or less. Though I didn't get the clerkship because of chess. I wrote for the Yale law review. Judge Haynes liked my reasoning on the Unitary Executive Theory.

WOMAN

Oh. I stand corrected.

MAMMEN

Just being accurate.

WOMAN

Accurate?

MAMMEN

Yes.

WOMAN

You're trying to be accurate and you don't think I left anything out?

MAMMEN

Well, of course, but except for the chess thing, you hit the high notes.

WOMAN

Really? What about your wife? Two wives, *to be accurate*. And two children? Weren't those high notes?

MAMMEN

Well, certainly, but I thought you...

WOMAN

This is emblematic.

MAMMEN

Of what?

WOMAN

They're not top of mind.

MAMMEN

Yes, they are. I love my wife and kids.

WOMAN

Both wives.

MAMMEN

Yes. But my first wife died.

WOMAN

So one at a time.

MAMMEN

Naturally.

WOMAN

You're not a Mormon.

MAMMEN

No, I'm Catholic. You know that. You said it.

WOMAN

So you're saying you loved both wives, one at a time, and you're Catholic.

MAMMEN

Well, I'm not the most conscientious Catholic. I'd never claim that. But I had a good religious upbringing.

WOMAN

Which you gave to your sons.

MAMMEN

Yes. I sent them to Cath... Listen, where is all this...?

WOMAN

Didn't one of your sons commit suicide?

Beat.

MAMMEN

Why are you bringing that...?

WOMAN

One of your sons committed suicide, didn't he? That's all I'm asking.

MAMMEN

No. It was an accidental overdose.

WOMAN

Oh, accidental.

MAMMEN

Yes.

WOMAN

That's sad. But better than suicide. That's a mortal sin.

Mammen nods.

WOMAN (CONT'D)

I heard he ODeD in the Washington National Cathedral. Don't you think that's emblematic?

MAMMEN

What's with the emblematic all the time? He was depressed. He had problems.

WOMAN

But why there? I mean, he could have ODed at home. Or a park. Or a Vegas wedding chapel? Think of the spiritual irony. But he chose the National Cathedral.

MAMMEN

Why are we talking about this?

WOMAN

It's interesting. You have another son too. What happened to him?

MAMMEN

I don't know. I haven't seen him in years.

WOMAN

You're mad at him.

MAMMEN

No.

WOMAN

He's mad at you.

MAMMEN

(shrugs)

I guess.

WOMAN

Because.

MAMMEN

I don't know. We had a falling out and he took off. I tried to find him. I wanted to, you know, talk. -- Look, what business is this of yours?

WOMAN

I'm sorry. Is all this talk keeping you from something?

MAMMEN

Yes!

(struggling)

Which is the point, isn't it? Why don't we talk about that?

WOMAN

My party, my rules.

Mammon SIGHS.

MAMMEN

(looking at the pitcher)

Can I have a drink of water?

WOMAN

That's not for thirst.

MAMMEN

Then what's it for?

WOMAN

An experiment.

MAMMEN

An...?

Mammen shifts uneasily, but  
doesn't chase it.

WOMAN (CONT'D)

You said you're not a Mormon.

MAMMEN

Yes. I'm Catholic. We've been over that.

WOMAN

But you worked with one, didn't you? An infamous one.

MAMMEN

What? Why are you...?

(realizing)

Oh for Christ's sake, is that what this is about? Are you  
kidding me? That was a long time ago.

WOMAN

Not so long.

MAMMEN

Over five years. I've been out of government longer than that.

(getting an alarming  
thought)

Oh my God. You're not a... Are you a M...Muslim?

WOMAN

(smiling)

That would make sense, wouldn't it?

MAMMEN

Look. I was just doing my job. The president asked for...no, he *demand*ed a legal opinion. That was my job. Along with others. And when the president asks for something, you give it to him.

WOMAN

Yes, but is *opinion* the right word. I mean, it's not like you said: here's my opinion, sir, but hey, you know what opinions are like? Wouldn't the word "justification" be better?

MAMMEN

That's semantics. They mean the same thing in this context. We were lawyers. We did what we were hired to do.

WOMAN

Write torture memos.

MAMMEN

No, not... *Legal opinions*. And one of them was about enhanced interrogation. Not torture. That never came up. It never appeared in the memo.

WOMAN

Look who's into semantics now.

MAMMEN

In this case, it's important. Enhanced interrogation can mean many things.

WOMAN

So you don't think hanging someone from a ceiling for days is torture?

MAMMEN

We weren't privy to the details. I didn't know what they were going to do.

WOMAN

You didn't know about waterboarding and solitary confinement?

MAMMEN

No.

WOMAN

You were oblivious.

MAMMEN

It was above my pay grade. I was involved in legal arguments, not implementation. We were ordered to craft a...

WOMAN

Concoct.

MAMMEN

...crafted a legal foundation for enhanced interrogation.

WOMAN

So you were following orders.

MAMMEN

Yes.

WOMAN

Under a vague nebulous rubric.

MAMMEN

Exactly.

WOMAN

You and the Mormon.

MAMMEN

What does Bybee's religion have to do with it?

WOMAN

Nothing apparently. (Beat.) Do you know the origin of the word "penitentiary?"

MAMMEN

Here we go with linguistics again.

WOMAN

This is history. Do you like history?

MAMMEN

Does it matter?

WOMAN

Penitentiary is from the Latin word *paenitentia*. It means penitence. In early America, a penitentiary was a place for people who offended God and the church. Sinners were locked in tiny cells and ordered to be penitent. But instead of repenting, they went stark raving mad. It turns out solitary confinement isn't good for you. We've known that for hundreds of years.

MAMMEN

Listen...

WOMAN

Charles Dickens called solitary confinement torture.

MAMMEN

He'd call *this* torture.

WOMAN

Did you know we executed Japanese for waterboarding after World War II?

MAMMEN

Oh fuck me.

WOMAN

Collaborators, too.

MAMMEN

Do you know that a man released from Gitmo became the head of a Libyan prison and tortured prisoners? People do what they have to do under the circumstances. I was doing what I thought was best for my country. And civilized societies have an obligation to tame savage ones.

WOMAN

So the end justifies the means.

MAMMEN

I didn't know the *end*. Haven't you been listening? None of this stuff was in the Bybee Memo. Not waterboarding, not solitary confinement, none of it. And it's the *Bybee* Memo, not the *Mammen* Memo. *That's* emblematic! And Al-Qaida wasn't a nation and its members weren't soldiers, so the treaties on the rules of war didn't apply to the War On Terrorism.

WOMAN

It's a war?

MAMMEN

Of course.

WOMAN

But aren't wars fought by nations and soldiers?

MAMMEN

Yes, by our nation and our soldiers.

WOMAN

So it's a one-sided war.

MAMMEN

No. They were at war too.

WOMAN

But if they weren't a nation or soldiers, what were they?

MAMMEN

They were unlawful combatants.

WOMAN

Isn't that another way of saying criminals? This all sounds rather arbitrary.

MAMMEN

Look, it doesn't matter. John Yoo made a good legal argument that coercive interrogation is not torture.

(MORE)

MAMMEN (CONT'D)

And that not using it would hurt our ability to protect the nation against ruthless enemies! (Beat.) Of course, I had nothing to do with that.

WOMAN

Your hands are clean.

MAMMEN

Absolutely. That was all Yoo, just Yoo. I mean John Yoo, not you. Or me. You or me. It wasn't you or... No, I mean, it was Yoo, but...

WOMAN

I get it.

Mammen SIGHS.

WOMAN

You're getting rattled.

MAMMEN

Who would've thought?

WOMAN

So you don't think waterboarding is torture.

MAMMEN

(weary)

Oh for... I don't know. Some people do, some don't.

WOMAN

Would you like to see what it feels like?

Mammen freezes.

MAMMEN

No.

WOMAN

It will enhance our conversation.

MAMMEN

Please...

WOMAN

And help you be more accurate.

She throws a towel over his face  
and pulls his head back.

MAMMEN

What are you doing? Stop! Don't! Please! It's torture, okay?  
I know it's torture.

She takes the towel off his head.  
He's wide-eyed and breathing  
heavily.

WOMAN

Wow. You wouldn't been an easy prisoner. Just put a towel  
over your face and turn on the tape recorder.

MAMMEN

Because it's not necessary. I have nothing to hide.

WOMAN

I don't believe that for a minute.

MAMMEN

Just ask me *anything*. Without the histrionics.

WOMAN

Are you still thirsty?

MAMMEN

I don't know if I should answer that.

She fills a cup.

WOMAN

Probably wish I had something stronger, huh?

MAMMEN

Ha.

She fills a cup and brings it to  
him.

MAMMEN (CONT'D)

(turning away)

Don't let me see you. What I don't know can't hurt you.

WOMAN

But what you do know *has*.

MAMMEN

I don't know what you're talking about and I don't need to.

WOMAN

Yes, you do. Look at me.

MAMMEN

No.

WOMAN

*Look at me, dammit.*

He slowly turns.

MAMMEN

(gaping)

Oh my God. Danny?

LIGHTS OUT.

SCENE 2

LIGHTS UP ON:

SETTING: A hospital room with a bed and life support monitor. The back of the bed faces the audience, blocking a clear view of the patient's face.

Nurse DESTINY ANDRES stands next to the bed touching the patient's lips.

DESTINY

My goodness, your lips are so dry.

(grabbing a bottle)

We can't have that.

(dipping a stick with a cotton bud)

This is my special recipe.

(dabbing his lips)

Or my mother's I should say. She gave it to my Grannie when she was in your condition. A little on your lips. And then your tongue. Isn't that good? Pineapple-orange. Yummy, huh? Now let's see about your eyes.

(grabbing a bottle with a dropper)

I think they need moistening, too.

(administering drops)

One in there. And one there.

(grabbing a hair brush)

And let's make you look as handsome as you can be. I don't know how you mess up your hair just lying here. You're as bad as my boy. He gets messed up standing still.

(grabbing lotion)

Now let's moisten your skin and get your circulation going.

She massages his arm.

DESTINY (CONT'D)

(singing "Five Little Monkeys")

Five little monkeys jumping on the bed

One fell off and bumped his head

(MORE)

DESTINY (CONT'D)

Mama called the doctor,  
And the doctor said  
No more monkeys jumping on the bed.

Four little monkeys jumping on the bed  
One fell off and...

FABIANA MAMMEN bustles into the  
room with coffee and a sandwich.  
Destiny continues massaging.

FABIANA

Hey there, Destiny.

DESTINY

Good evening, Mrs. Mammen.

FABIANA

What did I tell you about that missus stuff? Makes me feel  
like I need work done. It's Fabiana. Or Fab.

DESTINY

Yes, ma'am.

Fabiana eye-dices her.

DESTINY (CONT'D)

(laughing)

Yes, Fab.

FABIANA

There you go.

DESTINY

I like Fab. It's got attitude.

FABIANA

It does, doesn't it? I always say Fab stands for fresh and  
bootlicious.

DESTINY

You don't.

FABIANA

I *do*, chica. You gotta be proud of what the Lord gave you.

DESTINY

Amen to that.

FABIANA

Can't be a shrinking violet with my name anyhoo.

She unwraps her sandwich and  
eats.

DESTINY

My friends call me Dez for short. Dez the Pez. Like my head  
belongs on one of those candy dispensers.

FABIANA

That's money, honey. They can put my head on one of those  
silly things tomorrow. And make my candy sweet and spicy.

DESTINY

And bootilicious.

FABIANA

Yes, ma'am.

Destiny gives her a look.

FABIANA (CONT'D)

See? You got me doin' it! But don't you listen to those nasty  
people. You're name's got romance novel pizazz.

(dramatically)

*Destiny*. She was the fate of all men's desires.

DESTINY

(laughing)

I don't know about that.

FABIANA

Don't sell yourself short, sweetie. It's hard to see in that  
pitiful pantsuit, but it looks like you got some gorgy goin'  
on under there.

DESTINY

Thank you.

FABIANA

My parents almost named me *Fatima* -- after an aunt. Can you imagine? Kids would've called me Fatty this and Fatty that. My aunt got into so many fights she became a lucha libre wrestler. Called herself Furia de Grasa -- The Fat Fury.

DESTINY

Lemon into lemonade.

FABIANA

That's it, chica. Made the *best* of what God gave her. How's our boy doin'?

DESTINY

Pretty much the same. But he's in no pain.

FABIANA

Gotta thank the Lord for that. Any visitors?

DESTINY

Not during my shift. But the day nurse mentioned you stopping by earlier with your son.

FABIANA

My son? My son is dead.

DESTINY

Oh my God. I'm sorry.

FABIANA

And he certainly didn't stop by earlier. Or me.

DESTINY

That's strange. She must've gotten confused.

FABIANA

I should say. I wonder who it was?

Destiny shakes her head.

FABIANA (CONT'D)

What was that you were singing when I came in?

DESTINY

"Five Little Monkeys."

FABIANA

(laughing)

Five little monkeys?

DESTINY

We sing to comatose patients. It helps them recover.

FABIANA

But why Five..?

DESTINY

Little Monkeys? I worked in the pediatric unit. Kids loved it.

FABIANA

It reminds me of a song my mother sang:  
Sana, sana, colita de rana,  
Si no sana hoy, sanará mañana.

DESTINY

What does that mean?

FABIANA

Heal, heal, little frog's butt,  
If you don't heal today, you'll heal tomorrow.  
She sang it when I got a boo-boo to make me laugh.

DESTINY

I'd sing what Mr. Mammen likes, but I don't know what that is.

FABIANA

Jazz, honey. Dan's a jazz man.

DESTINY

Oh. I don't know any jazz.

FABIANA

Who does? It's like expecting you to sing Babylonian Folk Songs. His favorite artist is Sonny Stitt. Ever hear of him?

Destiny shakes her head.

FABIANA (CONT'D)

Of course not. Wouldn't be normal. He's a sax man if anybody asks, but they won't. Daniel wishes he was a sax man.

DESTINY

Does he play well?

FABIANA

Not a lick. It's one of those things people think about when they get old. Like me wishing I'd hoochie-coochied with Antonio Banderas. Now that's a dream, chica.

DESTINY

(laughing)

I'm more of a Will Smith girl, but I hear you.

FABIANA

I like him, too, honey. And I got the rumper bumper he'd like.

DESTINY

What did Mr. Mammen do for a living?

FABIANA

He was a lawyer. Then a judge.

DESTINY

Wow. Didn't he like that?

FABIANA

I thought he did. He was certainly good at it. That's how I met him. He defended my first husband. You could say we bonded over a bond hearing.

DESTINY

What was the case?

FABIANA

Murder, first time. Drugs the second. Cops were always tryin' to pin something on Rudy. When po-po got it in for you, you can't imagine how bad it is.

DESTINY

You'd be surprised.

FABIANA

They never laid a finger on him, though. Dan was *too good*.

DESTINY

What did your first husband do for a living?

FABIANA

This and that. Rudy was born in Sinaloa and, when he left, it didn't leave him, if know what I mean. I loved the man, but I'm not sorry to be out of that life. There's a reason why Sinaloa's first syllable is sin.

DESTINY

Did you get divorced to marry Mr. Mammen?

FABIANA

Oh God no, sweetie. You don't divorce a man like Rudy. We got together after Rudy was murdered.

DESTINY

Murdered?!

FABIANA

(nodding)

By a rival gang.

DESTINY

Oh my God. How terrible.

FABIANA

A huevo! I'd be dead too, if not for Dan. He got the police to guard my house. They went from harassing Rudy to protecting me. Can you imagine? Thank God Dan knew people. He was so supportive. He was there for me when my boy was killed, too.

DESTINY

Oh no. Please don't say he was murdered.

Fabiana nods and SIGHS.

FABIANA

Like father, like son, chica. He tried to take the family business back.

DESTINY

What a shame. Do you have any other children?

FABIANA

Ah, mi cielito! She's a lawyer like Dan.

DESTINY

(smiling)

That's wonderful. So you had her with Mr. Mammen?

FABIANA

Oh Lord no. I was past birthin' babies when I married Dan. He was, too. Had two boys, one worse than the other.

DESTINY

What was wrong with them?

FABIANA

The oldest was maricón. You know, queer. Ran away at eighteen. Don't know what happened to him. The other was a druggy. Killed himself.

DESTINY

Oh. That's too bad.

FABIANA

(shrugging)

Neither one liked me. Always surly. I never did anything to them. They got mad when they found out Dan was seein' me while their mother was alive. I can understand them being mad at Dan, but why me? I didn't even know their mother.

DESTINY

Human nature, I guess.

FABIANA

Dan stayed with her because they were Catholic. I'm Catholic, so I get it. But she never knew about us, so why hold a grudge. I tried to be nice to them. Even the strange one. I don't care about gay. I say live and let live, you know? Dan said they talked before he went to jail, but I don't know. Sounds fishy. I know he *wanted* to talk to him. And would have if he found out where he was. But I think the rest is dreamed up. He's got a lot of guilt about those kids.

(MORE)

FABIANA (CONT'D)

Other things too. Tortures himself about it. He thinks too much, you know? It messes with your mind. And jail was hard on him. He came out twitchy and a little...

(gesturing toward her head)

...you know?

Destiny nods.

FABIANA (CONT'D)

(She hovers over Dan,  
scrutinizing him)

I wonder if he's dreaming now? Can you dream like this?

Destiny shrugs.

FABIANA (CONT'D)

(back to Mammen)

You got something going on in there, Daniel? It better be PG-rated if I'm not in it.

DESTINY

I didn't know Mr. Mammen was in jail.

FABIANA

Lordie, don't you watch the news? It was a big thing 10 years ago.

DESTINY

I was a teenager then.

FABIANA

Ay! Of course. You were thinking about boys, not nasty old trials. He was in jail for 8 years, hon.

DESTINY

For what?

FABIANA

The Feds claimed he fixed cases, but it was all bullshit. They railroaded him. The prosecutor gave drugs to snitches. Nobody knew about it until afterward. And the main witness was a shyster on the take. Everybody's crooked, chica.

DESTINY

You've had some interesting relationships.

FABIANA

Don't I know.

DESTINY

I've known women with bad men, but no two like yours.

Beat.

FABIANA

I didn't say my husbands were bad.

DESTINY

Well no, not that word, but...

FABIANA

Not any word like it.

DESTINY

You don't think a drug-dealer and a corrupt judge were bad men?

FABIANA

I *told you*, the charges were bullshit. And Rudy was a good man. He took care of me and our kids.

DESTINY

Yes, but with *drug money*. Poison. He sold poison. My God, did you ever think how many people died from that? Or how many people he killed before someone killed him?

FABIANA

Mierda santa! Look who's gettin' all high and mighty. Put her in an ugly pantsuit and she thinks she's Mother Teresa. No, I didn't *think* that. You don't think that way about the man who takes care of you. He did what a husband does -- what a *man* does.

DESTINY

And a woman, I guess.

FABIANA

Don't you judge me, fresca. You don't know me. You want me to be ashamed of Rudy with a cabrón in the White House who scammed college kids? And that Gates guy doing business with rag-head dictators? I thank God Rudy came into my life. He saved me. My daddy was a drop-down drunk. He left us when I was ten. My mother cleaned houses to get by. I had no money, no choices, no nothin'.

DESTINY

Oh please. Everybody has choices. You think I was born in this pantsuit? I know where you came from. I was on the ass end of it. *My man* was addict. *I* was an addict. I couldn't get high enough, fast enough, soon enough. Blow, heroin, sizzurup -- honey, you got it, I did it. I was so fucked up I'd sniff a tailpipe if nothin' else. But I wised up after *my cabrón* beat the hell out of me for the umpteenth time. I grabbed my babies and ran. We slept in the park for two nights. Two *cold* nights. That's when I figured out what's what. I said you are *better* than this, girl. And if you ain't better, you better get better or you 'n your kids are gonna be *dead*. That was my choice. And that's the choice you shoulda made and your boy might be alive today.

FABIANA

Don't you *dare* throw my dead boy in my face.

SHUKO GISH and DAN-O enter.

DESTINY

Who do you think got him killed, baby? It was *you*. You and your dope-dealin' husband. Take responsibility. Don't tell me you didn't have a choice, slingin' lame-ass bull. You come to the wrong room to be sellin' that shit, sister.

FABIANA

Fuck you, you bedpan bitch! Fuck you and your holier-than-thou attitude! And get the fuck outta here! Get outta this room!

She and Destiny see the visitors.

SHUKO

This is a bad time, isn't it?

FABIANA

Who are you?

SHUKO

(backing away)

We should come back...

FABIANA

Just tell me who you are. What do you want? What are you doing here?

SHUKO

I'm, uh, Shuko Gish and this is...

FABIANA

You know Dan?

She nods.

FABIANA (CONT'D)

How? I don't know you.

SHUKO

Are you Fabiana?

FABIANA

Yes, *I'm Fabiana!* How do you know me but I don't know you?

SHUKO

I'm sorry. This is awkward.

FABIANA

What's awkward? What do you want?  
(to Dan-O)

And who are you?

SHUKO

This is Daniel, my son. Dan's son.

FABIANA

What?

LIGHTS FADE.

SCENE 3

LIGHTS UP ON:

The basement.

MAMMEN

My...my God. I...I knew you were gay, but...

DANIELLE

You *thought* I was gay.

MAMMEN

Yes, okay, I thought. But...but you're...?

DANIELLE

Don't say trannie.

MAMMEN

I wasn't. I...I mean I wouldn't.

DANIELLE

Not in your lexicon?

MAMMEN

Don't start *that* again, God dammit.  
(looking around)  
So this is all your doing?

DANIELLE

Pretty much.

MAMMEN

Then it's not about torture.

DANIELLE

Yes...and no.

MAMMEN

(nodding)

Your voice, it's...

DANIELLE

Higher?

Mammen nods.

DANIELLE (CONT'D)

That's good, don't you think...*considering*?

MAMMEN

(nodding, looking at her  
chest)

Are those...?

DANIELLE

Uh hm. And they look amazing.

He smiles awkwardly.

DANIELLE

Guess what else?

MAMMEN

That's okay. I know enough.

DANIELLE

I shave my legs.

MAMMEN

Oh. Under your arms too?

DANIELLE

(nodding)

I guess I'm just a slave to convention.

MAMMEN

So what is this?

DANIELLE

I wanted to talk to you.

MAMMEN

I'm still in the White Pages, you know?

DANIELLE

Face to face.

MAMMEN

Did you consider lunch? I'm pretty sure I could've squeezed  
you in if I knew this was the alternative.

DANIELLE

I wanted to talk without you poking me in the chest and yelling.

MAMMEN

Well, you succeeded on one count. I certainly can't do the former, can I? Kudos there. You going to gag me if I yell?

DANIELLE

That would preclude a conversation.

MAMMEN

I'm so happy you noticed. And let me tell you something, if I yelled at you, it was for your own good. You were a stubborn kid with a lot of crazy ideas.

DANIELLE

Such as?

MAMMEN

Such as this! It's the craziest one yet. Whose brilliant idea was this?

DANIELLE

Mine. Who else would it be?

MAMMEN

I thought it might be that punk you hung around with.

DANIELLE

Blake?

MAMMEN

Blake.

DANIELLE

I haven't seen him in years. Why would you think of him?

MAMMEN

He led you around by the nose and got you into trouble.

DANIELLE

He didn't get me into anything.

MAMMEN

Baloney.

DANIELLE

A lot of kids smoked dope at the beach.

MAMMEN

You're lucky the cops knew me. You'd both have criminal records. And it cost a pretty penny. I had to grease three palms. Try remembering that instead of the yelling. You should have listened to me more instead of that punk.

DANIELLE

He wasn't a punk. He went to Yale.

MAMMEN

Which is where you should have gone. Or Notre Dame. You could have gone anywhere. You had all the advantages.

DANIELLE

We have different memories.

MAMMEN

Fine. Just don't waterboard me for disagreeing.

DANIELLE

That was just a stunt -- to get you to admit I was right. It's probably the first time ever.

MAMMEN

Bull.

DANIELLE

Name another.

MAMMEN

I don't keep a list.

DANIELLE

The witness is being argumentative, your honor.

MAMMEN

*Penitentiaries*. I didn't know about fucking penitentiaries, okay?

DANIELLE

Before today.

MAMMEN

Untie me and I'll check my diary.

DANIELLE

The witness is being evasive.

MAMMEN

The witness is being badgered.

DANIELLE

You always had to be right. Even to Mom. I'll never forget you calling her stupid in front of our relatives.

MAMMEN

What are you talking about? When was that?

DANIELLE

Thanksgiving.

MAMMEN

(shaking his head)

You're imagining it.

DANIELLE

I knew you'd forget.

MAMMEN

We have different memories.

She looks askance at him.

MAMMEN (CONT'D)

Okay, for the sake of argument, let's say you're right. That I poked you. That I thought I knew everything. Let's say I was a shitty husband and mean to your mother. Conceding *all that*...don't you think this is a little *excessive*?

DANIELLE

From where you're sitting.

MAMMEN

I'll concede that, too! How about that? You won the trifecta. I'm as pliable as Play Dough. Now untie me. I won't poke. I won't yell. We'll talk 'til we're blue in the face if you want to. Just get these god damn ropes off me.

Danielle deliberates for a moment and then pulls out a switchblade, triggering it and alarming him.

MAMMEN (CONT'D)

Hey.

Danielle shakes her head and walks behind him. She cuts the rope. Mammen stands and backs away.

MAMMEN (CONT'D)

Those are illegal, you know?

Danielle scoffs.

MAMMEN (CONT'D)

Well, they are.

She puts the knife away.

Mammen notices the hood on the floor and picks it up.

MAMMEN (CONT'D)

A grocery bag? You put a grocery bag over my head?

DANIELLE

We improvised.

MAMMEN

No wonder I kept smelling broccoli. You couldn't find a bag that didn't stink?

DANIELLE

Next time.

MAMMEN

Oh yeah, let's make this an annual event.

He tosses the bag aside.

MAMMEN (CONT'D)

Who were those thugs that jumped me?

DANIELLE

They weren't thugs. They're friends. And they weren't all guys.

MAMMEN

Of course. What was I thinking?  
(looking around)  
Where is this place?

DANIELLE

It's the house where I was brought by *Pray Gay Away*. After you had them jump me.

MAMMEN

Nobody jumped you.

DANIELLE

They came, they took, they browbeat. I had no say in it.

MAMMEN

(nodding)  
So that's what this is all about?  
(shaking his head)  
Unbelievable. You're still pissed about that, trying to get even.

DANIELLE

It's not about getting even.

MAMMEN

Seems like it. Kidnapping, threatening, and you know I hate broccoli. Don't tell me that was an accident.

(shaking his head)  
You have really lost it this time. Do you think you can kidnap somebody because you're pissed at them? You're in a lot of trouble young ma...young whatever you are. You *and* all your friends.

DANIELLE

So are you.

MAMMEN

What does that mean? Is that another threat? Are you going to stab me? Or...shoot me -- do you have a gun?

DANIELLE

Don't be ridiculous.

MAMMEN

(drifting toward the exit)

Excuse me. I didn't know kidnapping was the limit of your criminality.

(looking at the exit)

I suppose that's locked.

Danielle pulls out a key and flaunts it.

MAMMEN (CONT'D)

So why are we here, Danny? Or can I even call you that anymore? *Considering.*

DANIELLE

I'm Danielle, but my friends still call me Dani, with an "i."

MAMMEN

Spelling sticklers, huh? Okay, Dani with an "i," why now? Why did you suddenly come back today?

DANIELLE

When Michael killed himself, I....

MAMMEN

Hold it. Michael didn't kill himself. He overdosed. It was an accident.

DANIELLE

Oh, Dad...

MAMMEN

No, no. That's a fact. It says so on his death certificate: accidental overdose.

DANIELLE

Whose palm did you grease for that?

MAMMEN

Do you want him to go to hell? Is that what you're after?

DANIELLE

You still believe in that crap?

MAMMEN

Yes, I do. It's what I was brought up to believe.

DANIELLE

He ODed in the National Cathedral. He was making a statement.

MAMMEN

A statement about what?

DANIELLE

You. Your life.

MAMMEN

Really? Well, I didn't get the message. And you know why? Because I've lived a pretty damned good life. I have nothing to be ashamed of. I worked hard. I served my country. I provided for my family. What have you done? You've changed your sex. Whoop-dee-doo. Give him the Medal Of Freedom.

DANIELLE

You helped our government torture people. Should you get the Medal Of Freedom for that?

MAMMEN

I told you. I didn't know that's what they were going to do.

DANIELLE

If you did, would you have objected?

MAMMEN

I was in no position to object. I would have alienated powerful people. I would have ruined my career. I had no other choice. And stop being such a bleeding heart. They were bad guys.

DANIELLE

You sound like a kid talking about a John Wayne movie. Most of the people in Gitmo were released. Some with brain damage. You facilitated that. You were complicit, Dad. You're a criminal. A fucking criminal.

MAMMEN

(poking her in the chest)

Listen here! I served my coun...!

He stops, realizing what he's doing, and backs away.

MAMMEN (CONT'D)

I served my country. And I was appointed a judge in return for my service.

DANIELLE

For imprisoning people without due process. Talk about irony. But then, you'd already done it to me, why not strangers?

MAMMEN

Don't be melodramatic. I never locked you up.

DANIELLE

I was locked up down here. Right here in this basement, Dad. You don't have any idea what happened to me, do you? You handed me over to a bunch of strangers and said bring me back a hetero Mammen man.

MAMMEN

I didn't *hand you over*. They came highly recommended.

DANIELLE

By your friends in high places.

MAMMEN

That's right. Go ahead, sneer. But those friends helped you live a damned good life. You belonged to a country club. You lived in a nice house. Had *designer clothes* -- which you liked, as I remember. You think I had designer clothes growing up?

DANIELLE

They didn't have designer clothes when you were growing up.

MAMMEN

What are you talking about? We had designer clothes.

DANIELLE

Name one?

MAMMEN

(thinking)

Nehru jackets.

DANIELLE

Those were named after a prime minister, not India's Givenchy.

MAMMEN

The point is you had benefits I didn't. You met people who could help you in life. The mayor came to your mother's wake, remember? And a couple of congressmen.

DANIELLE

And your girlfriend. Don't forget her.

MAMMEN

My g...? No, no, Fabiana was a client then.

DANIELLE

Don't even try, Dad. She told me all about you two.

MAMMEN

She told you...? What? When?

DANIELLE

After she moved in with us.

MAMMEN

Why the hell would she...?

(shaking his head and  
sighing)

What did she say?

DANIELLE

Enough to know you were shtoothing her long before Mom died.

MAMMEN

Did Michael know?

She nods.

MAMMEN (CONT'D)

(sighs)

Well, that's a shame. (Beat.) But look, you're old enough now to understand how men ar...

He pauses, considering who he's talking to.

DANIELLE

You mean how men think with their dicks? No, not breaking news.

MAMMEN

That's not what I was going to say, but there's obviously some truth... Look, that doesn't mean I didn't love your mother. I've still got the painting of her hanging over the fireplace, dammit. So don't tell me I didn't love her.

DANIELLE

You were unfaithful.

MAMMEN

She didn't know, Dani.

DANIELLE

You drove Michael to suicide.

MAMMEN

And you into becoming a woman I suppose. Are you going to blame for that too?

DANIELLE

There's no blame involved. You can't even get that right. No wonder people think you're a shitty judge.

MAMMEN

Listen here, nobody thinks...!

(He starts to poke her again, but stops short. Then deliberately...)

I am a respected member of the judiciary. Whatever you may think of me, I can go anywhere in this city and be treated like a king.

DANIELLE

Not for long.

MAMMEN

What does that mean? What does it mean?!

LIGHTS OUT.

SCENE 4

LIGHTS UP ON:

The hospital room.

FABIANA

How long have you known him?

SHUKO

(shrugging, glancing toward  
Dan-O)

A long time.

FABIANA

*How long?*

SHUKO

About...twenty-two years.

FABIANA

Twenty-two...! We've been *married* for twenty-two years!

Shuko grimaces, nodding.

FABIANA (CONT'D)

(to Dan-O)

How old are you?

DAN-O

You need to chill, lady.

FABIANA

Don't you tell me to chill, chiquito.

SHUKO

He's nineteen.

FABIANA

Nine...!. No, no, that can't be. It's not possible. You're making this up. How could I not know about this all those years?

SHUKO

Did his first wife know about you?

FABIANA

That's not the point! That was a whole different thing. They were married a long time. She got sick. Do I look sick to you?

Shuko shakes her head.

FABIANA (CONT'D)

You're damn right I don't.

(moving toward her)

I oughta scratch your...!

DAN-O

(stepping between them)  
Whoa.

DESTINY

(grabbing Fabiano's arm)  
Mrs. Mammen. Calm down. Don't do anything you'll regret.

FABIANA (CONT'D)

(pulling away)

It's too late for that, chica!

DESTINY

Okay, but this is a hospital, not the octagon. Don't make me call security.

Fabiana walks away fuming and turns back, glaring at Shuko.

FABIANA

Why are you here?

SHUKO

What do you mean? I came to see Dan.

FABIANA

Why?

SHUKO

He's the father of my children. I wanted to see how he's...

FABIANA

Wait a minute, wait a minute! *Children?* Did you just say children? How many more of these are there?

SHUKO

Two.

FABIANA

Two! You and Dan have three kids?

She nods.

FABIANA (CONT'D)

He sido una idiota!

DAN-O

(to Shuko)

She's bitchcakes, Mom. Let's get outta here.

FABIANA

How old are the little shits?

SHUKO

They're not little shits.

FABIANA

They're not *legitimate*, are they? -- How old?

SHUKO

Ten. They're twins.

FABIANA

(rubbing her head  
incredulously)

Oh my God. My god.

(realizing)

Ten?

Shuko nods.

FABIANA (CONT'D)

That means...you must've had them right before Dan went to prison.

SHUKO

Right after, actually. It was a very trying time.

FABIANA

Trying ti...!

(she starts for her again)

DESTINY

(jumping in her path)

*Mrs. Mammen.*

Fabiana glowers.

FABIANA

So all the...the *nights* he was away on business...he was with you?

SHUKO

(shrugging)

I don't know. Maybe.

FABIANA

And you knew about me?

SHUKO

(nodding)

Yes, he was honest -- at least about that.

FABIANA

What does that mean?

SHUKO

Well, you have to be realistic. He cheated on his first wife with you. And cheated on you with me. So...

FABIANA

Don't tell me that. I don't want to hear that. I'm not used to you yet. You think I'm ready to hear about a *harem*! -- How did you two meet?

SHUKO

That's a long story.

FABIANA

Give me the condensed version.

SHUKO

Well, I was in college and got sick. With bone cancer. I had to have my ischium removed, so...

FABIANA

Your what?

DESTINY

That's the tail bone. It's one of three parts that make up...

FABIANA

(holding up a hand)

Got it!

(to Shuko)

And.

SHUKO

I was on painkillers and drank wine at a party. I shouldn't have, of course, and then I drove, which I shouldn't have, either, because the police pulled me over. They were pretty rough putting me in the paddy wagon and I fell and hurt my butt again. I was in terrible pain. I had to lie on my stomach and...

Fabiana holds up a hand. She stops.

FABIANA

Does Dan make an appearance in this tragic tale soon or should I have a cigarette?

SHUKO

I'm getting to him now. A friend's father recommended him. He got the charges dropped and then sued the city. He made them pay for all my medical expenses. He was wonderful.

FABIANA

That's not the word on the tip of my tongue right now, but...  
(she gestures for her to continue)

SHUKO

Then he sued the cops and some of them threatened me. Dan took care of that, too.

FABIANA

How?

SHUKO

I'm not sure exactly. He had some scary people to talk to them.

FABIANA

Please, please don't say they were friends of my first husband.

SHUKO

Did your husband's friends have Italian names?

FABIANA

(sighing)

Thank you Lord.

SHUKO

Anyway, I was feeling very vulnerable, as you can imagine.

FABIANA

I got triple X imagination for this, chica.

DESTINY

Wolves always take down the weakest in the herd.

FABIANA

Not me. I was taken down by a butt bone.

SHUKO

How did you get taken down? You're married to him. You go to a country club. You have all the benefits of a wife, not me.

FABIANA

Where do you live?

SHUKO

I don't think I want to tell you. You haven't been very nice.

FABIANA

I'm sorry. Have I offended you? You should come on a day when I don't find out I'm the bitch in a *love triangle*. You'll find I'm a lot more *fun*. -- Has Dan been supporting you all this time?

SHUKO

I work, but he's supportive. He goes to our daughters' dance recitals. He's helped Danny with college. He loves our children.

FABIANA

You're the all-American family, aren't you? Except for one thing: he's married to me.

SHUKO

That has complicated things.

DESTINY

This situation reminds me of an entertainer I read about. He was hard on his kids. But then his wife died and he remarried and was a much better with their kids.

FABIANA

Except I'm not dead.

DESTINY

That part doesn't quite fit.

FABIANA

Don't you have bed pans to empty?

DESTINY

That's very insulting. And I don't think I should leave you two alone.

SHUKO

Don't worry about me. I'm not mad. And she shouldn't be, either. I didn't hurt her.

FABIANA

You weren't an innocent bystander, fresca. It was your choice to get involved with a married man.

SHUKO

I didn't plan to. It just happened. It was an awful time in my life and Dan helped me. Then he hired me to work for him and things...

FABIANA

Whoa, whoa. He hired you? To do what?

SHUKO

Secretarial work. I wasn't ready to go back to school and Dan thought it would be good for me to be around people.

FABIANA

He's quite a guy, isn't he?

DESTINY

He's a wolf.

SHUKO

I never wanted to get involved with him. I was young and having a hard time and he was nice. And then I got pregnant and...

DESTINY

There we go. Knocked up and pinned down. Been there, girl.

They knock fists.

FABIANA

Hooray for the sisterhood of the vanishing pants. Did you visit Dan in jail?

SHUKO

Yes.

FABIANA

Of course! Why do I ask? I come one day. You the next. God knows who after that. Hijo de puta.

(looking at Mammen)

I figured he might have a little chula on the side, but the Brady Bunch? You motherfucker!

SHUKO

He's a man.

DESTINY

It's what they do.

FABIANA

(to Shuko)

And *you*. I know you. Una interesada, as my mother used to say.

SHUKO

What does that mean?

FABIANA

A gold digging bitch.

DAN-O

Hey, watch your mouth.

FABIANA

Don't mess with me, *chigito*. I know men will skin you alive. And *you* -- comin' here to remind him of your rug rats. To get your claws on his money. Well, you're too late, puta. He's unconscious. He doesn't even know you're here. So take your interesada ass and get out.

SHUKO

I didn't come here for money. I have a job. I can support myself. And I already know where Dan's money is going.

FABIANA

You don't know shit.

SHUKO

You get the condo, and the kids get the money.

FABIANA

Bullshit. How would you know that?

SHUKO

He told me. He changed his will when he got out of jail and gave me a copy.

FABIANA

More bullshit. He didn't say anything to me about it. Why would he tell you and not me?

SHUKO

(shrugging)

He probably thought you'd get mad.

FABIANA

(stepping toward her)

You're damned right I'd get mad!

Shuko backs up and Destiny moves  
between them.

FABIANA (CONT'D)

You're lying. You're a fucking liar. I can see it in your  
eyes. You're makin' this up to spite me. (Beat.) Aren't you?

Shuko shakes her head.

FABIANA (CONT'D)

No. No. I don't believe you. He wouldn't...

(falling apart)

He can't...do that. Not to me. Not after all these years.  
After all I've...I've...been...

(looking at Shuko)

Nothing? No money? At all?

SHUKO

(reassuring)

You get the condo.

FABIANA

How am I going to afford the condo with no fucking money?

(turning to Mammen)

You...you...!

She lunges at Mammen.

FABIANA (CONT'D)

(pounding on him)

You son of a bitch! You...you...cabrón!

Destiny tries to stop her, but  
Fabiana pushes her away and  
climbs on top of him.

FABIANA (CONT'D)

Te voy a matar! You hear me! I'll kill you! I'll kill you!

Destiny, Shuko and Dan-O drag her  
off the bed toward the door.

FABIANA (CONT'D)

You won't get away with this! You hear me? I'm your wife! I know my rights!

The life support monitor  
FLATLINES.

Everybody freezes, staring at the  
bed.

LIGHTS OUT.

SCENE 5

LIGHTS UP ON:

The basement.

MAMMEN

You're the one who should be worried. Fabiana probably has the cops looking for me right now. And know what? They'll find me.

(He pulls a phone out of his  
back pocket)

Because you forgot this.

DANIELLE

We didn't forget. We checked your coat. Who keeps a phone in their back pocket wearing a suit?

MAMMEN

The man with an escape plan.

DANIELLE

You don't need an escape plan.

MAMMEN

You and your friends, the owner of this house, you're all in a shitload of trouble. Who owns this place, anyway, one of your crew?

DANIELLE

My crew? What do you think: we wear bandanas and have the same tat? They're my friends, not criminals.

MAMMEN

Tell that to the Feds.

DANIELLE

And the house is empty. It's in foreclosure.

MAMMEN

What happened to *Pray Gay Away*?

DANIELLE

They went out of business. Thank God.

Mammen sneers.

MAMMEN

Why'd they bring you to this shitty place?

DANIELLE

You don't know?

He shakes his head.

DANIELLE (CONT'D)

(scoffing)

Of course. Details aren't important. Take my kid. Do what you want. -- They performed an exorcism on me down here.

Mammen grimaces.

DANIELLE

Yeah, pretty shocking, huh? We were a stone's throw away from the 21st Century and theistic thugs were chasing evil spirits out of me.

MAMMEN

But why here?

DANIELLE

It's closer to hell would be my first guess, but I think they were worried about the neighbors. A bunch of guys chanting about gay demons tends to freak people out.

MAMMEN

(looking around)

I presume it looked better back then than this.

DANIELLE

(shaking her head)

Not much. It was pretty much a shit hole then too. But it had a dime-store altar here, and a large cross hanging from the ceiling above it. Two guys led me onto the altar and a priest threw holy water in my face while making the sign of the cross and chanting the "Lord have mercy, Christ have mercy" like he was on continuous loop.

(MORE)

DANIELLE (CONT'D)

Then he put a hand on my chest and implored a litany of saints and angels and the Mother of God to have mercy on my soul. He smacked my forehead -- which hurt by the way -- and shouted, "Get out, homosexual demon! Get out, you evil spirit! Release this sinner from the wicked grip of Satan!" Everyone laid hands on me and shouted, "Get out, get out, you homosexual demon!" Then the priest pressed a crucifix to my chest and said, "Save this boy, O Lord, from the lewdness of homosexual thoughts and actions. Deliver him from eternal damnation and into God's grace." I was scared and confused and crying by then. I said I was sorry. That was the worst part: saying I was sorry for who I was. That I was ashamed of being me. Even now, it's painful to...

(sighing, then flatly)

But it's what they wanted and I did it. Then the priest recited the Lord's Prayer and told me I should ruminate on my wickedness and humble myself before the Lord. They left and locked me in here all night for penance. Kind of a blast from the colonial past.

MAMMEN

They didn't tell me any of this.

DANIELLE

That's why I wanted you to see it. I wanted you to get a sense of what it was like being shanghaied by strangers, not knowing what they were going to do to you.

MAMMEN

You could have told me without all the histrionics. I'm not an idiot.

DANIELLE

People tend to understand better from experience. It quickens their compassion. Like when Dubya went to the hospital and saw maimed soldiers. He cried, they said. War suddenly had substance and consequence. It was no longer something to bluster about and dress up in a flight suit. I think you're like him. You need a touchy-feely experience to get it.

SFX: A siren in the distance.

They turn toward the window,  
listening.

SFX: The siren draws closer.

MAMMEN (CONT'D)

Ask not for whom the bell tolls.

A FLASHING police light slices through the window.

SFX: A car screeches to a stop. Car doors open and slam.

DANIELLE

Don't be so sure it tolls for me.

MAMMEN

Always with the cryptic comments. What does that mean?

DANIELLE

I talked to the Feds, Dad.

Mammen shrugs and shakes his head.

DANIELLE

About you.

MAMMEN

Me? What would you talk to...?

(gets a flash and smirks)

Listen, I hope it wasn't about torture. That ship has sailed.

DANIELLE

Wasn't that. They came to me about something else.

MAMMEN

What was that?

DANIELLE

You fixing cases.

MAMMEN

Fixing cases?

DANIELLE

I told them about you paying your bills through currency exchanges.

MAMMEN

What the hell do you know about that?

DANIELLE

You took me with you sometimes.

MAMMEN

That was years ago.

DANIELLE

But you're still doing it.

MAMMEN

So what?

DANIELLE

They think that's how you're laundering money from bribes.

MAMMEN

Are you shitting me?

DANIELLE

They told me they were going to arrest you.

Police POUND on the door.

VOICE

Open up! It's the FBI!

Mammen looks from the door to Danielle.

MAMMEN

Oh my God. What have you done?

BLACKOUT.

ACT II

SETTING: A jail cell.

Mammen and Danielle sit on a bench.

MAMMEN

So what's next on the agenda? We go stir crazy together?

DANIELLE

This wasn't part of the plan.

MAMMEN

You actually thought they'd ignore kidnapping?

DANIELLE

I didn't hurt you. I didn't ask for ransom. You're my father.

MAMMEN

Imagine my surprise: I discover I not only raised a girl, but an idiot. Our matching genetic markers don't get you a pass on kidnapping.

DANIELLE

They wouldn't have found us if you didn't keep your phone in your back pocket.

MAMMEN

So sorry.

DANIELLE

You must make a hundred of butt calls a day.

MAMMEN

Said the ringleader of the floundering Gang.

DANIELLE

We're not a gang.

MAMMEN

Said the kidnapper going to the Grey Bar Motel. But I shouldn't complain. It's better to have an idiot in the family than a criminal. What are you doing these days, anyway -- besides joining the Society of Disgruntled Linguists?

DANIELLE

Psychotherapy. I work with LGBTQ clients recovering from homophobic environments.

MAMMEN

Do what you know, huh?

She nods.

MAMMEN (CONT'D)

You go to school for that?

DANIELLE

Of course. UCLA.

MAMMEN

How'd you pay for it?

DANIELLE

I did some stripping. Gay clubs at first, then transgender. I did what I had to do. And I learned a lot. I met interesting people. People who were smiling and dancing and celebrating who they were, flowering in God's glare. It helped me figure out who I was and what I wanted. For years, I felt bad about being gay and it wasn't even true. It took me a long time to realize I was a woman trying to get out of a man's body.

Beat.

DANIELLE

(cynically)

Boo hoo, huh?

MAMMEN

I'm sure it was difficult. Couldn't you have stayed at home and worked this out?

DANIELLE

After *Gay Away*?

(shaking her head)

I could never be sure what you'd do to me.

MAMMEN

You should have told me about the exorcism.

DANIELLE

That wouldn't have helped. You were always working on me instead of on yourself. Like pushing me into boxing and baseball and f...

MAMMEN

Wait a minute. You were good at baseball. I thought you liked it.

DANIELLE

Maybe, but please. All that dirt and sweat? Eech. And what's with the spitting? It's disgusting. Do boys forget how to swallow when they hold a bat?

MAMMEN

(shrugging)

They grab their crotch a lot too.

DANIELLE

That didn't bother me. Michael Jackson and Madonna did that. But you almost killed me with football.

MAMMEN

(nodding)

You were undersized for that.

DANIELLE

Remember Beefy Morrison? He nearly launched me into space. When I hit the ground, I couldn't remember my name. If I had an ounce of macho in me, he knocked it out.

MAMMEN

I let you quit. All of it.

DANIELLE

But you weren't happy. I could feel your disappointment. And then you didn't like what I wanted to do.

MAMMEN

That's not fair. I was fine with gymnastics. I could see you were good at it. Especially the floor exercise. But then you insisted on doing it to music.

DANIELLE

The music inspired me.

MAMMEN

Only girls used music. You knew that.

DANIELLE

Sometimes things need to change.

MAMMEN

See, that's your problem right there. You were always stubborn. Always had to be different. But I tried to make you happy. I talked to the coach, remember? Tried to let you do it. But he said nobody would accept it. Not your competitors, not the judges, nobody.

DANIELLE

Philistines.

MAMMEN

Listen, you didn't help your cause by choosing that Madonna song.

DANIELLE

(smiling)

"Hanky Panky."

MAMMEN

Yeah, "Hanky Panky."

DANIELLE

I liked the beat.

MAMMEN

It was a Catholic school, for Christ's sake. And it had a lyric about a good spanky, didn't it?

Danielle nods approvingly.

MAMMEN (CONT'D)

Well, come on. You think priests are going to let a boy roll around on the floor in spandex singing about hanky-panky-spanky? You're lucky they didn't expel you. -- I was fine with gymnastics until Madonna entered the picture.

DANIELLE

Then why did you send me to *Gay Away*?

MAMMEN

It wasn't the gymnastics.

DANIELLE

It was the ballerina costume.

MAMMEN

No, it wasn't... Okay, I admit the pink tutu was a bit mu...

DANIELLE

Pink and blue.

MAMMEN

Believe me, I remember.

DANIELLE

You should have knocked first.

MAMMEN

You should have shut the God damn door. You *wanted* me to see you. You liked provoking me. But that wasn't it either. It was a lot of things. And then I had a conversation with your principal.

DANIELLE

Skull.

MAMMEN

What?

DANIELLE

Everybody called him Skull because he was bald. What did he say?

MAMMEN

He thought you were going to hell. He said homosexuality was an abomination. A cause for *eternal damnation*.

DANIELLE

The iron fist of faith.

MAMMEN

Well, it scared me. You think I want my s...my child to be damned? I thought we wouldn't be together in the hereafter.

DANIELLE

We weren't together in the here and now.

MAMMEN

It's what people thought. What they were brought up to believe.

DANIELLE

The beauty of religion. Judgment and cruelty slathered in self-righteousness.

MAMMEN

I wouldn't think that now.

DANIELLE

You've evolved.

MAMMEN

Yes.

DANIELLE

You're woke.

MAMMEN

Okay, make fun.

DANIELLE

Well, you're acting like we live in a post-homophobic age. Didn't the cake-maker claim homosexuals threaten religious freedom?

Mammen nods, conceding.

DANIELLE (CONT'D)

Talk about turning discrimination on its head. And Skull should have been worried about his priests. One was convicted of molesting students after I graduated.

MAMMEN

I'm sure Skull...I mean Father Waller didn't know about it.

DANIELLE

Don't be so sure. That priest asked me to come to the rectory once in sophomore year.

MAMMEN

You're kidding? He didn't touch you, did he?

DANIELLE

(shaking her head)

I got a creepy feeling and managed to get out of there. What else did Skull say?

MAMMEN

He said I had to cast you out or...

Danielle SCOFFS.

MAMMEN (CONT'D)

What?

DANIELLE

It's what I always expected you to do.

MAMMEN

I would never do that.

DANIELLE

You did *that* when you sent me to *Gay Away*.

MAMMEN

No, no, that's not true. That was temporary. Like going to a baseball camp. You go, you learn, you come back. Father Waller said I had to cast out the sin or cast out the sinner. I chose the former.

DANIELLE

Skull thought anybody who was different was a problem. He juggled me every time I colored my hair.

MAMMEN

He did mention your purple/platinum phase.

Danielle shrugs "there you go."

MAMMEN (CONT'D)

I didn't get that either.

DANIELLE

(laughing)

Of course you didn't. But I had trouble with students too. One guy saw moisturizer in my gym bag and thought that was hilarious. He squirted it all over me and the locker room. And I was definitely too into *The Golden Girls* for a boy's Catholic school.

MAMMEN

You talking about that show with the old ladies?

DANIELLE

(nodding)

Uh huh. I would have used it's theme song for my gymnastics routine if it had a better beat. I suppose Skull mentioned that too.

MAMMEN

No. But he brought up *Gay Away*. And then the archbishop gave it the seal of approval. I thought I was doing the right thing. It's the same reason I sent you to therapy.

DANIELLE

Oh God. I forgot about that douchbag.

MAMMEN

That douchebag was a doctor. And cost a lot of money.

DANIELLE

Highly recommended I'm sure.

Mammen nods grudgingly.

DANIELLE (CONT'D)

He spent months trying to dredge up an *original wound*.

Mammen looks at her perplexed.

DANIELLE (CONT'D)

*Sex abuse*. He tried to get me to remember something that never happened. You're lucky you didn't wind up in jail a lot sooner. And he kept blaming Mom.

MAMMEN

For sex abuse?

DANIELLE

No. For how I was.

MAMMEN

She did coddle you.

DANIELLE

Don't go there.

MAMMEN

I'm not going anywhere. It was probably good since you think I was so hard on you. Tell me about *Gay Away*. What happened after the exorcism?

DANIELLE

You mean after a night commiserating with cockroaches? They took me to a religious boot camp.

MAMMEN

That I knew.

DANIELLE

So do you know what happened there?

MAMMEN

Prayed I assume.

DANIELLE

Yes, we did that. But first, there was an orientation. I was one of 25 men, mostly adults and a few teenagers. A pastor on a stage railed at us -- about 20 men and a few teenagers -- about the homosexual lifestyle. He said God created everyone heterosexual, but demons planted wicked thoughts in people's heads to make them gay, which led to disease, depravity and misery. While he talked, they projected gay lifestyle pictures on a screen. Most of the people in the shots looked like drug addicts, but some of the pictures were kind of erotic, which confused me. At the end, he urged us to work on our masculinity and buddied us up with drag kings.

MAMMEN

Drag kings?

DANIELLE

Hyper-hetros. Mine was tall, blond, and athletic -- pretty hot actually, which confused me again. His name was Josh Armstrong. I always wondered if it was his real name. He usually had a toothpick in his mouth and, whenever he talked to me, he'd put one foot up on a chair and lean on his leg like he was doing a Harley Davidson commercial. On the second day, he took me to a Target to buy blue jeans and Henley shirts. He made me throw away my penny-loafers and wear Chuka boots. I was afraid he was going to make me buy a gun. After that, we worked on man spreading. I had to sit like this all the time. From then on, if I crossed my legs, he'd slap my leg. It was very effective. I didn't stop sitting like this until I began wearing dresses. On the fourth day, they took me to electroconvulsive therapy.

Mammen shakes his head.

DANIELLE (CONT'D)

It's a form of electroshock therapy. They attached electrodes to my body and zapped me while I watched sex scenes in homosexual movies.

MAMMEN

It sounds like a scene in "Clockwork Orange."

DANIELLE

That's probably where they got it. Original thinking wasn't their métier. The next day they gave me nausea-inducing drugs and showed me more gay movies. After that there were cold showers, reading holy-roller books, and praying the gay away. They tried hypnosis, but I wasn't a good subject for that.

MAMMEN

You weren't a good subject for any of it.

DANIELLE

Nobody is. It just screws with your head and makes you feel bad. I thought I was ugly and evil. I considered killing myself.

MAMMEN

No.

DANIELLE

(nodding)

But I never got close to doing it. I couldn't figure out how. I hate heights, so that was out. I don't like the sight of blood, so I couldn't cut my wrists. And I didn't have any pills. But I think what really stopped me -- and this will shock you -- what really stopped me was I was afraid of eternal damnation. Just enough religious superstition survived in me to keep me from offing myself.

MAMMEN

I'm glad it served some purpose.

DANIELLE

After I came home, I went to a party with Benedict -- you remember, the tall skinny waiter at the country club?

MAMMEN

(nodding)

I always thought he was gay.

DANIELLE

He was. Anyway, he took me to a party at a friend's apartment on the north side. When we walked in, I noticed a tall woman standing in the center of the room with a bunch of guys. She looked amazing. I couldn't take my eyes off her. She seemed to glow. Benedict saw me staring at her and said, "You like that, don't you?" I wasn't sure how to respond. I mean, I was fascinated, but not attracted to her. So I just said, "She's beautiful." And Benedict said, "Yeah. Except she's not a she. She's a he." I was flabbergasted. I had never known a pre-op transexual. I don't think I knew they existed at the time. Benedict said her name was Aurora and she performed in gay clubs. Later, when I was alone, she spotted me staring at her and walked toward me. I nearly had a heart attack. I thought she was angry at me. But she introduced herself and said, "You're intrigued, aren't you? But you don't know why. And that's okay. You're young. You'll figure it out. And when you do, never be ashamed of who you are. Never be afraid to be your full self. Always remember, chaos gave birth to shimmering stars." Then she kissed me and walked away. I was so overwhelmed I almost cried. I felt like something had been released inside me. Like a dark cloud had drifted away.

(MORE)

DANIELLE (CONT'D)

That's when I realized *Gay Away* hadn't been a total waste. I had done my best to change and it didn't happen. I was who I was. I needed to learn to love that. And people needed to accept me just as I am.

MAMMEN

And has that been easy?

DANIELLE

Of course not. But not because of who I am. Because of who they are. Who you are.

MAMMEN

I was trying to protect you. That's why I sent you to *Gay Away*. I didn't want you to be harassed and persecuted. I wanted you to be happy. It's what every parent wants. That's why there are trust funds, for Christ's sake.

DANIELLE

You know, when Mom was dying, she told me not to let you bully me. Don't let him stop you from being who you are. I didn't know what she meant. I was fifteen. But I got a glimmer of it watching Michael. He missed you. He needed a dad even more than me. But you were never around. And when you were, you lectured and criticized him and beat him down.

MAMMEN

Don't say that. I loved your brother.

DANIELLE

Do you remember the year he got As and Bs on his report card for the first time? He was beaming when Mom looked at it. Then you came home and the first words out of your mouth were, "What's this D in religion?" *What's this D in religion?* Religion doesn't even count toward college. He said to me afterward, "What's the use? Nothing satisfies him." You crushed him. And the irony is your father treated you like the Second Coming.

MAMMEN

No, he didn't.

DANIELLE

Oh please. He never stopped telling us how great you were. You put yourself on a pedestal. Why do you think it was so upsetting when we found out you were two-timing Mom?

MAMMEN

Fabiana shouldn't have told you that. It was wrong.

DANIELLE

It's not like she said, "Hey boys, did you know I've been bangin' your dad for ten years?" We figured it out from talking to her. I was shocked, but Michael was devastated. He kept asking me if you were with her whenever you had been *working late*. It upended the narrative of his life. Or our lives. Your infidelity became the background noise to everything you said and did. And when he lost his sense of you, he lost himself.

MAMMEN

Look, I did everything I could for Michael. I sent him to three universities. He flunked out of every one, did you know that?

Danielle shakes her head.

MAMMEN (CONT'D)

I guess I'm not the only one who's oblivious. While you were gallivanting around, *finding yourself*, I was taking care of Michael. When I realized college was a no-go, I set him up in business. He loved wrestling, so I bankrolled a wrestling camp. I bought land, constructed buildings, hired his college coach, the whole nine yards.

DANIELLE

What happened to that?

MAMMEN

*What happened?* I didn't know shit about running a wrestling camp. And my partners were jocks, not businessmen. It tanked. That's when I got him a job with the city -- as an electrician. He didn't know a damn thing about electricity, but it was a union job. He made good money. Not that he appreciated it. He was strung out all the time, showing up late or not at all. I tried to clean him up.

(MORE)

MAMMEN (CONT'D)

I sent him to rehab three times. Highfalutin places, not dumps. They cost an arm and a leg. So spare me your guilt. I did everything I could for him.

DANIELLE

Except love him.

MAMMEN

How would you know? You've been MIA for 10 years.

DANIELLE

Because I never felt loved. And it wasn't because you were using it all up on him.

Mammen SIGHS.

MAMMEN

Even if that was true -- and it's not -- you got plenty of love from your mother.

DANIELLE

And then she died.

MAMMEN

I suppose you blame me for that.

DANIELLE

You weren't exactly Husband Of The Year.

MAMMEN

She had cancer. I may be a shitty husband, but I'm not carcinogenic. She didn't know. I never wanted to hurt her. I never wanted to hurt anybody. I did the best I could under the circumstances. And you may not like me, but my father was proud of me. I was a good lawyer. I was the lawyer he wanted me to be. And he would have been thrilled to see me become a judge. People always say follow your heart, but your heart pulls in a lot of directions. And you can't go back. No matter how much you want to. My father wasn't perfect? He cut corners and made compromises. He took bribes to let bars stay open late, did you know that?

Danielle shakes her head.

MAMMEN (CONT'D)

All the captains and lieutenants did. It helped feed their families and send their kids -- kids like me -- to college. That's all he wanted: for us to live a better life. And I loved him for it. *I loved him*. I could never hate him the way you do me. Never.

DANIELLE

I don't hate you. I did once. For a while. But over time, the hate turned to sadness. And I couldn't shake the sadness. I had a big hole in the middle of me that you were at the center of. That's why I came back. I wanted to see if we could look in each other's eyes and just once see who we were.

MAMMEN

Why didn't you come back for Michael's funeral?

DANIELLE

I didn't know about it until the FBI contacted me. Then they said you were going to jail and...

MAMMEN

(scoffing)

Pfft.

DANIELLE

What?

MAMMEN

I'm not going to jail.

Beat.

DANIELLE

Dad, you're in jail.

MAMMEN

It's temporary. They'll never convict me.

DANIELLE

How can you be so sure?

MAMMEN

Because I never fixed cases. It's bullshit.

DANIELLE

But they have a lawyer -- a guy named *Clapper* -- who's going to testify against you.

MAMMEN

Marty Clapper. A lowlife shyster. A bum.

DANIELLE

He claims you took a bribe from him.

MAMMEN

I wouldn't take a breath mint from that asshole. He's lying. It'll never stand up.

DANIELLE

What about the currency exchanges? They've got forensic accountants claiming you spend more money than you make.

MAMMEN

(glancing around, lowering  
his voice)

It's money from when I was a lawyer, Dani. My clients paid in cash.

DANIELLE

(working it out)

So it's what, money you didn't pay taxes on?

He nods "obviously."

DANIELLE (CONT'D)

And you're going to tell the Feds that?

MAMMEN

No, I'm not going to tell the Feds that.

DANIELLE

Then what are you going to do?

MAMMEN

(deliberately)

Well, I don't know, Dani. I just found out and I'm in jail.

DANIELLE

Oh., yeah.

(thinking)

Huh. I never figured you were innocent.

MAMMEN

Quite a blow, huh?

DANIELLE

But you're not really innocent.

MAMMEN

I'm not a corrupt judge. That's the point.

DANIELLE

To you maybe, but not them. I'm glad you told me, though.

MAMMEN

Yeah, nothing like a heart-to-heart in the hoosegow.

DANIELLE

(smiling)

You know, in the LGBTQIA community... Do I need to explain that?

MAMMEN

You lost me at the T, but I get the drift.

DANIELLE

In the transgender community, there's a feeling that we should claim who we are. It's a political act. You come out and say, "Here I am. This is me. My truth. My full self." That's what I did. I gave everybody a chance to accept or reject Danielle. But then I realized I had given everyone a chance but the most important man in my life.

MAMMEN

(surprised and touched)

Me?

DANIELLE

You only get one father, Dad.

They stare at each other, taking  
it in for a moment.

MAMMEN

What about stepfathers?

DANIELLE

You're going to quibble?

MAMMEN

No, no. It's good. It's good.

(nodding)

I always wanted a daughter, you know?

DANIELLE

Ta-dah.

He smiles and pats her on the  
knee.

MAMMEN

I can still do that, can't I?

DANIELLE

As long as it doesn't get creepy about it.

MAMMEN

(standing)

It's too bad we couldn't have done this a long time ago. Over  
a beer.

DANIELLE

Or maybe a Cosmopolitan.

MAMMEN

I don't know what that is, but I'd take anything over this.

He walks to the bars.

MAMMEN (CONT'D)

You know, it's funny. I worried about you being gay because I thought it would make your life harder. And what do you do: raise the ante.

DANIELLE

I had no option, unless I wanted to live a pretend life.

MAMMEN

You mean like the rest of us? -- Guard! Hey, guard!

MAN'S VOICE

(from speaker)

Yes?

MAMMEN

(turning toward speaker)

What is my daughter doing in here?

MAN'S VOICE

She kidnapped you.

MAMMEN

She did not. Where'd you get that idea?

MAN'S VOICE

I think from you, sir.

MAMMEN

Well, it's a mistake. Nobody's been kidnapped. Least of all me. And least of all by my daughter. And what's the idea of putting a woman in a cell with a man anyway? What kind of a jail are you running here? I'm the judge of the northern district of Illinois and unless you want trouble you'll get her out of here. Pronto.

Pause.

VOICE

We'll be right there, sir.

Mammen nods.

DANIELLE

Trying to be the hero?

MAMMEN

If that's possible in the jug.

(Beat.)

People can be both good and bad, you know?

DANIELLE

(nodding)

Dualities abound in nature. As the physicist Niels Bohr said, "The opposite of a deep truth is also true."

MAMMEN

(nodding)

And I'm the opposite of a guy who understands that. But I once read a line by Doris Lessing... Ever read her?

Danielle shakes her head.

MAMMEN (CONT'D)

Good writer. I think you'd like her. Anyway, she said, "What matters most is we learn from living."

(nodding approvingly)

I always liked that. We learn from living. She was a communist, but don't hold that against her.

Danielle smiles and nods.

He makes a sweep of his hand toward the bars, signaling a change of places, and she stands up. But as and they approach each other, they slow and stop, staring into each other's eyes. Mammen steps forward and embraces her. They break apart suffused with emotion. He walks to the bench and sits. She goes over to the bars and then looks back.

DANIELLE

But what about you?

MAMMEN

Don't worry about me. I'll be all right. I know people.

LIGHTS FADE.

SCENE 2

LIGHTS UP ON:

SETTING: A funeral parlor with chairs and a casket.

Shuko and Dan-O sit together. She is prim, motionless. He is checking his phone. After a few moments, Shuko looks at her watch and SIGHS.

SHUKO

No one's coming, Mom.

DAN-O

People hate him, Mom.

SHUKO

They don't hate him.

DAN-O

Like a leper.

SHUKO

Don't talk about your father like that.

DAN-O

It's not how I feel.

(He turns back to phone)

They're pussies.

SHUKO

They're not...

(sighs, nods)

Okay.

DAN-O

(pleased)

Fair weather friends.

SHUKO

Way of the world, honey.

DAN-O  
But even his partner?

SHUKO  
(sighs)  
Bob.

DAN-O  
*Bob.*

SHUKO  
McDougall.

DAN-O  
McDouchbag.

SHUKO  
I don't think he could come if he wanted to, sweetie. Felons  
can't consort with felons.

DAN-O  
Mom, he's dead. Dad's unconsortable.

Shuko shrugs.

DAN-O (CONT'D)  
Dad told me he helped Bob get started.

SHUKO  
(nodding)  
And finished.

DAN-O  
That wasn't his fault. He just got caught up in it.

SHUKO  
Jail changes people. It makes them bitter.

DAN-O  
It was sure hard on Dad.

SHUKO  
Crushed him.

DAN-O

Sometimes, when we were alone, he would hug me and say I was the only son he had left. And then he'd start crying.

(shaking his head)

I didn't know what to...say, you know?

Shuko nods.

DAN-O

And he has another son, right?

SHUKO

(nodding)

But they're estranged. Hasn't seen him in years. That's probably what he meant.

DAN-O

He told me a crazy story about being kidnapped by him. Did that happen?

SHUKO

I don't know. Your Dad tortured himself about a lot of things. And he was haunted by what happened with his first two sons.

DAN-O

He told me another one about Washington fat cats meeting in some place in California every year and running around naked and worshipping an owl.

SHUKO

He wasn't himself after prison. He got things mixed up.

DAN-O

The twitching was the worst. Hard to look at.

She nods.

DAN-O (CONT'D)

But in some ways he was better. Not as hot-headed, you know? Dad seemed angry a lot when I was growing up. Like that time he lost his shit at Xmas, arguing with Uncle Tim about something stupid.

SHUKO

The Beatles.

DAN-O

That's it. That was wild. Especially since I didn't know who the Beatles were. I thought they were arguing about bugs.

SHUKO

Nobody could tell your father anything about music.

DAN-O

Yeah, but man was he old-fashioned. Did you ever see his records? They're sixty years old.

SHUKO

Some even older.

DAN-O

All jazz music. By dudes I never heard of. He made me listen to some once. It was brutal. How did people party to that shit?

SHUKO

Don't ask me. I was into Madonna and Tears For Fears.

DAN-O

Tell me about it. I listened to one of your moldy mix tapes. What a trip. Janet Jackson and Mariah Carey. I almost lost my lunch. And how 'bout MC Hammer? That was some potato quality shit.

SHUKO

It was good dancing music.

DAN-O

It was like havin' your ears roto-rootered. But Pop's was worse.

SHUKO

At least it gave him pleasure at the end.

DAN-O

He was groovin' on it all right. I caught him air-saxing once. You should've seen him, hittin' it like The Big Man. He just looked at me and smiled. Didn't miss a beat.

SHUKO

I went to a couple of jazz lounges with him before you were born. I pretended to like it because he did so much. He wanted to be a musician. His father pushed him into law.

DAN-O

That sure worked out well.

SHUKO

It did for us, honey. If he had become a musician, I wouldn't have met him and you wouldn't be here. He made a good living and took care of us. His mother, too. People want to paint him one color, but he had a lot of different sides. Everybody makes compromises.

DAN-O

I guess you just gotta skate on the bad ones.

SHUKO

That's the trick.

Danielle enters.

SHUKO (CONT'D)

Oh, look. Someone's here.

(standing)

Hello. Please, come in.

DANIELLE

(glancing around)

I'm not too late, am I?

SHUKO

No, no, please. You're very welcome. I'm Shuko Gish and...

She pats Dan-O's arm and he stands.

SHUKO (CONT'D)

...this is my son, Daniel.

DANIELLE

I'm Danielle Mamm. Are you the only people here?

SHUKO

Afraid so.

DANIELLE

What about his wife, Fabiana? Isn't she here?

Shuko shakes her head.

DANIELLE (CONT'D)

Is she alright?

SHUKO

Well...yes and no. She and Dan had a falling out before he died.

DANIELLE

Oh, no. How long before?

SHUKO

Right before, actually.

DANIELLE

Really? What happened?

SHUKO

(looking at Dan-O)

Well, that's hard to explain.

DAN-O

The bitch killed him.

DANIELLE

What?

SHUKO

No, no. To be fair, that's open to debate. But it's what the police think.

DANIELLE

Why?

DAN-O

She had her hands around his neck when he died.

DANIELLE

Oh my God.

SHUKO

So we don't expect to see her.

DANIELLE

I'm...I'm stunned.

SHUKO

We were pretty shocked ourselves.

DAN-O

And had our hand's full getting her off him.

DANIELLE

I'll bet she could use a good lawyer.

(looking at casket)

Too bad Dad's dead, huh?

DAN-O

One of the downsides of killing him.

SHUKO

Excuse me, did you call him Dad?

Danielle nods.

SHUKO (CONT'D)

I wasn't aware he had a daughter.

DANIELLE

He wasn't either. I played his son for a while. People called me Daniel then.

SHUKO

Oh my God. You're Danny?

DAN-O

Holy shit.

SHUKO

Excuse me. I didn't mean to be... It's just such a surprise. When did you...?

DANIELLE

Go girlie? People ask that all the time, but it's hard to explain. There wasn't a big, *voila*, "I am woman" moment. It was more like a lot of big and small decisions over time. Even after surgery, there was an acclimation period, physical and psychological; plus I had to get used to the transphobia stuff from people. And the threat of violence. But if you're asking when I converted to Danielle, that was about 10 years ago.

DAN-O

Does that mean you don't have a schwanz now?

SHUKO

(slapping his arm)

Danny!

DAN-O

What? She brought it up.

DANIELLE

I don't recall making a phallic reference, but if you must know, my equipment is fully updated.

DAN-O

Cool.

DANIELLE

But that's not the measure of a man - or woman, for that matter. We're more a *posteriori* than a *priori*.

DAN-O

Huh?

DANIELLE

The schwanz isn't everything. We're the sum of many parts.

SHUKO

Like your name. You changed it. Even the last one.

DANIELLE

(nodding)

When I became Danielle, I didn't want to be Mammen anymore.

SHUKO

Because your father went to prison?

DANIELLE

Oh, God no. I changed it long before that. I wanted something feminine to go with Danielle. I considered Pearl and Grace -- they're soft and lovely, you know? Then I imagined myself dark and mysterious. That's when Raven made a strong run. And Slayer -- an homage to Buffy the Vampire Slayer.

DAN-O

She was hot.

DANIELLE

Yes, but I got over that. And then it occurred to me that Mamm is the first syllable of my last name. What's more feminine than Mamm?

DAN-O

Doll?

DANIELLE

Hm. I didn't think of that. Danielle Doll. I like the alliteration, but it's a little stripper-ish. Been there, done that. And Mamm is part of my birth name. It felt organic.

DAN-O

You're Miss Mamm! What a riot!

DANIELLE

And it's funny --- who knew? But enough about me. How do you know Dad?

SHUKO

Well, that's a long story.

DAN-O

He's my Dad, too.

DANIELLE

What? You're kidding?

Dan-O shakes his head.

DANIELLE (CONT'D)

Oh my God.

(to Shuko)

Then you're his...? I don't want to use the wrong word.

SHUKO

(shrugging)

I've never found a good one.

DANIELLE

Roomie doesn't quite cut it, does it?

SHUKO

No.

DANIELLE

How about non-traditional family ladylove?

DAN-O

Kind of a mouthful.

SHUKO

I'll take it.

DANIELLE

How long have you known Dad?

SHUKO

About twenty-two years.

DANIELLE

(staggered)

Twenty-two!

SHUKO

Are you okay?

DANIELLE

I'm...I'm just...shocked.

SHUKO

Do you need some water?

DANIELLE

I need nitroglycerin.

She finds a chair and sits. They  
sit beside her.

DANIELLE (CONT'D)

Let me see if I've got this straight. It sounds like you and  
Dad got together around the same time Dad and Fabiana got  
married.

SHUKO

The timing wasn't ideal.

DANIELLE

No. That was right after my mother died. And when I ran away.  
God, my head is spinning.

SHUKO

You sure you don't want some water?

DANIELLE

Not nearly strong enough.

DAN-O

There's a bar around the corner. We could get something.  
There's not much happenin' here.

DANIELLE

Not for you maybe.

(to Shuko)

Are there more of him?

SHUKO

Two girls.

DANIELLE

Oh my God!

(charmed)

I have sisters?

Shuko nods.

DANIELLE (CONT'D)

(flabbergasted)

That's...

(looking at casket)

Who *is* this man?

(back to Shuko)

How old are they?

SHUKO

Ten. They're twins.

DANIELLE

Twins! I have twin sisters! What are their names?

SHUKO

Grace and Hope.

DANIELLE

Grace! I considered that.

Shuko nods and smiles. Danielle  
LAUGHS, enjoying the moment.

DANIELLE (CONT'D)

(tentatively)

Can I meet them?

SHUKO

I don't see why not.

DANIELLE

(to Dan-O)

And you're my brother.

DAN-O

Pretty wild, huh?

DANIELLE

I'm sorry. I forgot your name.

DAN-O

Daniel. But my friends call me Dan-O. You know, like *Hawaii 5-O*.

(he mimics the theme song)

DANIELLE

(laughing)

I get it. But you're real name is Daniel? After Dad?

DAN-O

Daniel J. Mammen the Third.

DANIELLE

The Third?

DAN-O

Yeah.

DANIELLE

No.

DAN-O

What do you mean "no?"

DANIELLE

*I'm* Daniel J. Mammen the Third.

DAN-O

Not any more.

DANIELLE

But I *was*. I was when he named you that.

DAN-O

(shrugging)

So.

DANIELLE

So you can't have two thirds?

DAN-O

Sure you can. There are three thirds in a whole.

DANIELLE

That's like saying we're one-third human beings.

SHUKO

African-Americans were once considered two-fifths human beings.

DANIELLE

That's a totally different thing.

SHUKO

I know. You just made me think of it.

DAN-O

Mom's a history teacher.

DANIELLE

Fine, but nobody gives two sons the same name.

DAN-O

George Foreman named all five of his sons George. He even named his daughter Georgette.

DANIELLE

He was afraid of getting punch-drunk. What's Dad's excuse?

DAN-O

I don't know. Why are you getting worked up about it.

DANIELLE

Because he gave you *my name*.

DAN-O

But you're not using it anymore.

DANIELLE

Yes, that's true, but...I don't know, it just... It's a shock, that's all. You think you have a name, an identity, and you find it's fungible. That *you're* fungible. But you're right. You're absolutely right. I don't need it. I don't use it. You're welcome to it. You are forever the one and only Daniel J. Mammen the Third.

SHUKO

Hopefully.

Danielle and Dan-O look at her.

SHUKO (CONT'D)

As far as I know he is! It's just... Well, Dan had so many secrets. From so many people. I never felt like I completely knew him.

Danielle nods. She looks at the casket and gets up and walks over to it. Shuko and Dan-O follow and stand beside her.

DANIELLE

You think he ever figured it out for himself?

SHUKO

I think he tried. He had a lot of time to think in prison.

DANIELLE

What a place for him to end up. Who would've thought?

SHUKO

He was still trying to get his conviction overturned, right up to the end. It drove him crazy that he was convicted of a crime he didn't commit.

DAN-O

Yeah, that sucks.

DANIELLE

Think of it as a dyadic completion -- a balancing of debts and penance. It makes it easier.

DAN-O

Maybe if you're a philosophy major.

SHUKO

Why did you come here after so many years?

DANIELLE

He was my father. I can change a lot of things, but not that. I wish I had come sooner. Maybe we could have looked into each other's eyes and for once seen who we really were.

SHUKO

He said you patched things up before he went to prison.

DANIELLE

We never patched things up.

Shuko nods. Beat.

DAN-O

Maybe you did in a parallel universe. Maybe there's an alternate reality where he was a musician and you were a girl and everything was awesome.

DANIELLE

(smiling)

And I'm what then, the daughter of a starving musician?

DAN-O

Yeah, but it's cool because he smokes dope all the time.

DANIELLE

And how do you fit into this sunny scenario?

DAN-O

Nowhere, dude. We're outta this scene. Mom hooks up with Brat Pitt and I'm a made man.

DANIELLE

Dan-O paradise.

DAN-O

The yin to our yang. If only universes collided.

DANIELLE

I think they have.

Danielle walks back to a chair.

Dan-O and Shuko join her.

DANIELLE (CONT'D)

How much longer are visiting hours.

SHUKO

(checking her watch)

About 45 minutes.

DANIELLE

I'll wait with you.

Shuko nods. Beat.

SHUKO

Are you coming to the funeral?

DANIELLE

I hadn't thought about it. Do you want me to?

SHUKO

I think it would be nice. Don't you think it would be nice, Dan?

DAN-O

Sure. It's not like the limo's gonna be crowded.

SHUKO

You could come to the house afterward. Meet your sisters.

DANIELLE

I'd like that.

Beat.

SHUKO

Did you know Dan left 25% of his estate to you?

Danielle nods.

SHUKO (CONT'D)

I think he wanted you to be happy.

DANIELLE

He always did.

SFX: A saxophone plays a wistful song, such as "Smile."

A light comes up on Mammen playing the sax. Lights fade on Danielle, Shuko and Dan-O, and then Mammen.

BLACK OUT.

THE END.