

Wait Till Your Father Gets Home

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Act One

(Inside office at Schwartz & Weiss Tools. Two desks. JAKE's is ergonomically correct with the latest in computerware. SOL's desk is messy and covered with various trophies. Behind the desks are the mission statement of the company. SOL is doing situps with an infomercial situp device. Jake is typing on keyboard at the same rhythm. Jake notices Sol's pattern and alters his pace and thus Sol's. Phone is ringing at SOL's desk. Jake is counting the phone rings, while Sol is counting his situps. Jake counts first and second rings and Sol is up to 95 situps) (Lights up on Josie. Josie videotapes much of the interaction, as appropriate)

JOSIE

Hi, I'm Josie Schwartz. I'm going on 21- I guess that makes me that odd phenomena known as The Adult Child- but it's not always the parents that are the adults in the family - have you ever noticed that? Anyway, I'm in my last year at Hampshire College- completing a double major...I mean, a "Conglomerate Concentration" of film and psych. This is so cool- I'm doing my final project... about my family!! They're great subjects for my Jungian analysis class dealing with the abnormalities of their behavior- because they are SO INSANE!! Not in a straight jacket, hearing voices, kind of way. Just nuts.... Mishugeneh. And to add salt to the wound, they're in business together. *(phone rings)* You might have heard of it- the Schwartz & Weiss Tool Company- "Spreading Our Insanity Since 1929"

JAKE

Josie- would you answer the phone, please!?- if you're going to work here, you have to learn to do your job.

JOSIE

Like I want to work here. *(phone ring)* I told him- "I'm here for a class project." It's Cinema Verite- life not imitating art, but life as art- I'm making a documentary called Oxymorons- *(phone ring)* Your know, like Jumbo Shrimp, Military Intelligence, Family Business. I can't tell you how many times I've explained this to them, but they still think I'm planning to enter the business.

JAKE

Josie, if you're not going to do your job, why are you here? Who's coaching you, your Uncle Sol?

JOSIE

As my grandfather always says: "Family Business is a Great Institution- if You're Ready for an Institution." What drives me totally insane about my family is that nobody ever seems to listen. *(lights up on desks. phone rings getting louder)* Take my dad and Uncle Sol-please! My dad's the one with the neat-freak desk.*(goes to JAKE's desk- picks up a pencil)* Attention to detail! World's sharpest pencils. *(goes to SOL's desk.)* and over here is the Sol Schwartz Commemorative Landfill. My Uncle Sol's a good guy, though. He's like a second father to me, without the pain of being my father.

SOL

Josie, honey, could you get your sweaty uncle a towel? I'm schvitzing here.

JOSIE

How can identical twins be so night and day? Examine the behavioral peculiarities of a clan of wise fools, better known as Oxymorons, opening someday at a theater near you. Maybe you'll feel better about your family after you've seen it. *(starts to leave)* By the way, if you're rusty on your Yiddish, Schwartz and Weiss means black and white... such a fitting name for this bunch.

(phone ringing)

JAKE

Sol, how can you just hear a phone ring and not pick it up? We agreed we pick up on the third. Continuous Strategic Process Analysis! Enough with the situps!

SOL

Don't mess with the reps. Your fancy voicemail system will get it. *(phone)* Maybe not. How important could it be at 8 am?

JAKE

Well, I'm expecting an important call. And how would you know? The only reason you're here this early is because your wife kicked you out last night.

SOL

Not so. I left on my own.

JAKE

Would you answer the damned phone already!? Look what I have to work with here. Idiot!

JOSIE

It's not like these guys don't TRY to improve themselves. Here, listen to this *(reads excerpt of Schwartz & Weiss Code Of Conduct)* "Namecalling is counter-productive and does not contribute to our quality of life or to the bottom line. We commit to not calling each other idiots."

SOL

If you have something to say, Techno-boy, email it.

JAKE *(Crossing to SOL's desk to answer the phone.)*

Sol Schwartz's desk, Jake Schwartz speaking.

SOL*(Taking the phone.)*

Give me that phone.

(Pause.)

Talk to me.

(Picks up a hand exercisor from his desk.)

Yeah, Ralphie Boy..What's shakin, pal?

(Pause)

JAKE

Is that Ralph Johnson?

SOL

Heh, how's the old man?*(Pause)* He died last week? *(pause.)* Oy, that's right, I forgot. Sorry I've been crazy busy.

JOSIE

Crazy busy, otherwise known as "too self centered to get a life."

JAKE

I talked to him yesterday. Sol, give!

(Pause.Sol gestures him away.)

Sol, that's not your call. Ralph was supposed to speak to me.

(Sol gestures him away again.)

SOL

Excuse me, Ralphie.

(Covers phone.)

Will you cut it? I'm talkin' here. What's that you said Ralphie?

(Pause.)

You're what? Not renewing the contract? Why the hell not? We're better, faster,

cheaper!

(Pause.)

Well we're better and faster.

(Pause.)

Well we're better.

(Pause.)

Come on Ralphie, we can fix that. Huh? Come on! You can't do that!

(IZZY enters)

JAKE

(ranting and raving, pacing)

He's gonna mess it up, he's gonna mess it up.

JOSIE

It's grandpa, right on cue. *(sings Mighty Mouse)* Here he comes, to save the day.

IZZY

What's going on?

JAKE

Sol, give me the phone!

SOL

Ralph, not so fast! What about loyalty? We played football together. C'mon, what's a few bucks between pals? Don't tell me you can get better quality from those Koreans.

IZZY

Boys, what the hell's going on in here? Jake, who is your brother talking to?

JAKE *(to IZZY)*

listen..listen

JOSIE *(videotaping)*

Most of my classmates in film school are struggling to write stuff like this... that I get wholesale.

JAKE

Ralph Johnson seems to be cancelling our contract. I had an 8 am phone date with him-he wanted to discuss pricing, but he obviously has opted to weasel out with Sol, his old football chum.

IZZY

Sol, give me the phone.

(Pause)

Phone! Give!

(Pause)

NOW! Dammit!

(grabs phone)

JOSIE

As you can see, it's been awhile since the Carnegie course.

IZZY

Ralphie, what's this mishegas about cancelling our contract?! You know our families have a history of doing business together... my father and your grandfather, actually.... My father lent your grandfather quite a sum of money...saved your family's tuchus.... At 2% !!! Got your family over a big hump... Huh? *(pause)* Listen to me, Ralph, you're making a big mistake.... Give us a chance to make it better! ...give us 24 hours to make it better..Allright Ralph?...Allright? Allright! *(throws phone back to*

SOL) Uch...(Pause) Man, there's not even a Yiddish word for how much this stinks!

JAKE

Great! 30% of our business, down the toilet. After all we did for those shmendricks.

SOL

30 % ...I'd like to kick their butts in- better, faster and harder.

IZZY

His father never would have done this, rest in peace. All you young people talk quality, whatever happened to loyalty? What this country needs is Total Loyalty Management.

(Sarah enters.)

SARAH

What a ruckus ! Who needs loyalty management?

JOSIE

And here we have Sarah- resident Marketing Goddess, who has Unlimited Access to the Office of the President- my grandfather.

JAKE

Everyone needs loyalty... But ...nobody's willing to pay for it. Sarah, this is what we were saying yesterday at your marketing meeting. If we don't broaden our customer base, we're at the mercy of every schmuck who wants to save five cents and send our business overseas. Guess what? It just happened.

SARAH

Come now, there has to be a solution to this- we need to talk and think. Don't panic.

SOL

30% of sales with one whack. That's like...a third.

JOSIE

Maybe if he says it a few more times the problem will go away.

SARAH

Look, I'll talk to Ralph. He is much more reasonable with me than with any of you.

SOL

That's my mortgage payment.

JAKE

I wasn't aware you gave up your rent controlled apartment!

SOL

I better call my wife and tell her to get ready to live on the office couch. God, we have no Mazel! No luck at all.

SARAH

Sol, only schlimazels believe in mazel.. We create our own luck.

JOSIE

It astounds me how half of Yiddish is putdowns. Schlemiels, Schlemazels, Schmendricks, Schmo, Schmegegge, Schlepper-even to call someone a Chachem- a wise, learned man, a lot of times you mean an pompous jerk... Not an easy culture to take yourself very seriously.

SOL

Easy for you to say, Sarah. You got a great salary and no family to support. Are you people blind? This is 4th and 40! We're gonna be delivering pizzas really soon.

SARAH

Listen, Sol, we can be much more effective here if we don't flip out every five minutes. We need to pull together as a team.

JAKE

That would imply that Jocko here actually knows how to pass instead of go for the 3 pointer.

SOL

I suppose you know a lot about teamwork from the chess club?

JAKE

I can't believe I shared a womb with you! What I know about teamwork I learned from developing management strategies, something I think you could have a bit of respect for.

SOL (*escalating*)

It's all that sitting around strategizing like eggheads that got us into this mess in the first place.

IZZY

Break it up! What a tumult! Can't you two have a civil conversation? If it wasn't for me you'd kill each other. Give an old man a rest, for God's sake.

SOL

Get off it dad, we're not killing each other.

JAKE

I'm not killing anybody

IZZY

Well, you're killing me. Listen... you guys starting acting better, or I swear I'll.....

SOL

You'll what? Send us to our room? Maybe that's not where we want to go.

IZZY

So... who are you? Bill Gates? "Where do you want to go today?" When I was young.. I'd hop in my dad's old Knox and see the world - "Take you where you want to go as fast as you dare." What I know from the school of hard knocks, you two will never know.

SOL

You had it easy- you just did what you wanted - no womb-mates- Hey that's a good one! And when you did stuff the old fashioned way, it was new stuff. We have it harder.

JAKE

Sol, stop acting like such a jerk. Have some respect for your father.

SOL

Who are you to lecture me on respect?

SARAH

Can't all of you continue this fascinating display of testosterone after 5 pm?

JOSIE

Not that estrogen would fix this company. My dad and Uncle Sol do agree on one point- no contact after 5 pm. That leaves the workday for continuous quality destruction.

SARAH

In light of Ralph Johnson... I think you'll now see why Jake and I think we need to diversify.

JAKE

That's right- we need to take a risk here- grow or die!

SOL

What the hell choice is that? Grow or die? Easy for you. with your uptown bride and her trust fund. Some of us don't have a safety net.

JAKE

Some of us aren't walking a tightrope.

SOL

I have to make sure this business survives.

JAKE

We're all so fortunate to have someone around who cares as much as you.

IZZY

Sha! (*long pause*) Allright, look. We're not the only ones with problems. At the tool and die conference in Vegas, there was nothing but sob stories. In the sessions, at the breaks...If it's not ISO 9000, it's OSHA; if it's not OSHA, it's product liability suits, if it's not that, it's zoning, it's the EPA, it's military cutbacks, it's foreign competition, it's trademark infringement, it's employee theft. That's not even considering that new problem, low emotional intelligence. Geez, what ever happened to just making a good tool and selling the goddamned thing?

IZZY (*Pause. Looking at Sarah.*)

—But enough depression and digression: I have some good news.

JOSIE

We now interrupt our regularly scheduled argument for some rare...good news! (*goes in to videotape*)
Story at 11...

SARAH

Izzy, couldn't we put this off till a more appropriate time? Maybe brunch, this Sunday?

IZZY

Ever the strategist! That's one of the things I really love that about you.

SOL

Dad, get on with it. What good news? Where's the big order coming from?

IZZY

Listen, they'll be orders. This is personal. You boys must know that I had many happy years with your mother, may she rest in peace.

SOL

Oh, no- you're not selling the house?

JAKE

That's not it. When dad talks about mom....it's something big.

SOL

What's bigger than me having to move all my stuff out of the house?

IZZY

Sol! Can you act like a mensch for half a minute?! *(Pause.)* Things were not always easy, but they were good. Since your mother's been gone, I'm pleased to say Sarah has made me feel less lonely.... she's not only served this company faithfully as marketing director, but she's been quite the companion to me ...and my right hand.

SOL

So another raise for Sarah? Great!! Good timing, dad.

IZZY *(ignoring)*

So...we had a good time in Vegas, at the conference, and I lost a bundle...but I won...I won...

JAKE

Come on Dad, Cut to the chase.

IZZY

(pause) a bride. Say hello to the new Mrs. Schwartz. *(long Silence)*

JOSIE

All right!

SARAH

Thank you, Josie..I'm sure this is a shock.... but.... I can't imagine you didn't suspect.

SOL

You've got to be kidding me. Dad, I can't believe you didn't talk about this with us.

IZZY

Hey, can't an old man have a little craziness and spontaneity? Anyway, I'm so busy reffing between the two of you.... I didn't have a chance.

SOL

Maybe if you ever let us have it out, we wouldn't need a referee.

JAKE

How about a UN peacekeeping force?

IZZY *(Aside to the audience.)*

What's the Jewish for "agita"? *(Pause.)*

ALL

Fehklempt!!

SARAH

Jake... Sol..... please.... as a wedding present, could you please knock it off? *(pause)* Anyway, you know I was a dear friend of your mother, and I want you to know I loved her and respected her right til the end... I was faithful to our friendship. But your father and I have had a special relationship for three years.

SOL

Thank you for sharing.

SARAH

So.... well....being together in Vegas, we started to realize that life is too short. It was romantic! We had all the ingredients of a good marriage, except the license. Now it's official. I thought you knew what was going on, but obviously you're preoccupied. *(pause)*

IZZY

And...it won't hurt you at all to have a happy father.... believe me.
(IZZY sings- Love Me Tender, Love me True. JAKE and SOL stare at him until he stops.) And Sarah's no trophy wife-**(Sarah slaps Izzy on butt)** she works her butt off for Schwartz & Weiss Tools. You know, a lot of headhunters have tried lure her away, but she said "no." I know how to attract and retain my "key person."

SARAH

How sweet! Thank you darling. I just want to add that I am still the same person I always was. You're too old to need another mother, and old enough to understand your father's needs.

SOL

My father's needs? OY!

JAKE

Well, our family is so gracious, aren't we?

SOL *(Without graciousness, like little kid)*

—Well, isn't this a happy day? I have a new mommy and thanks to the third world, we're one third leaner and meaner. I'll go call my wife and tell her to sell the house. Can one of you please tell half the staff it's been nice knowing them.

JAKE

When are you going to grow up? Your attitude isn't helping the situation. No wonder the Far East is killing us, they understand that Crisis is made up of Danger and Opportunity.

SOL

Do you think we can beat them with your simplistic cliches and constant strategizing? What ever happened to going out on the field and kicking butt?

JAKE

Have you ever considered that life is more complex than Monday Night Football? Mr. Ready, Fire, Aim....

SOL

I'm what you call a Doer, not just a Thinker! And a Seller! I bring a lot of orders in here. This company prospers from my varsity management style.

JAKE

With the good old boy network maybe... but I seem to have detected a slight fumble on the Ralph Johnson play. That pass was meant for me.

SOL

You are out of your league.... Mr. Chess Club President.

IZZY

Enough. Time out. Both of you are out of bounds. This is my worst nightmare. It

makes me wonder if the two of you are fit to buy me out.

JAKE & SOL

Buy you out?

JOSIE

Just what they've always wanted...or thought they did. Be careful what you wish for...

SOL

What are you talkin.... buy you out?
(*silence*)

IZZY

Let me say that I'm looking to slow down and take it easy. Sarah and I want to enjoy ourselves. It's hard to believe, but I'm 70 years old already. In the prime of my second adulthood.

JAKE

Sounds like the two of you are planning on leaving the company. Or am I not understanding?

SARAH

You know it will be gradual. We're not looking to pull the plug or hurt the business. But, it's in everyone's best interest for your father and I to cash out our majority share.... and let you guys run the business.

SOL

Excuse me... "our" majority share?

IZZY

Yes..our share. Not "your" share. You boys haven't put a penny in here. Now you'll have the opportunity.

JOSIE (to audience)

Isn't it interesting that you have shares because you can't share, and establish trusts because you don't trust?

JAKE

With all due respect..... that's an opportunity you never had either.... dad. You inherited this business.

IZZY

I put in 45 years of sweat equity, twice as long as the two of you combined. I built this business and took a lot of risks. I think it's fair that you pay for the what I added to this place..

SARAH

It's kosher and good for you boys and the family business to treat him right.

SOL

Now we're your boys? That was quick. (*pause*)

IZZY

I don't know why I imagined that this would be different. This family has a knack for turning a nachas into a tsuris, pleasure into suffering.

JAKE

What I meant, dad, was that most of my friends whose parents were given the company, then gave the company. It seems a little unfair.

IZZY

Times change. I don't see this as unfair. I'm not forcing you to buy it.

JAKE

Well, if you say you're selling it, you are.

SOL

Not if we don't want to buy it.

IZZY

Oh, yeah? *(pause)* I could sell it to someone else. You know that I've had offers. I said no, because I want you two to have the opportunity to continue this business.

SOL

This whole situation stinks.

SARAH

Sol!

SOL

This is not an opportunity! You're very comfortable- you have more than enough.

IZZY

How would you know?

SOL

What about me? All of a sudden I have to pay money and go out on a limb, just to be able to come to work? *(Pause.)* UCHH! This family makes me ill.
(SOL starts to exit.)

SARAH

Don't leave that way, Sol.

SOL

I'll leave anyway I want! I'm a big boy..... mom.*(SOL exits.)*

JOSIE

Wait till they see themselves on tape.

JAKE *(moving back to his cubicle)*

How did I end up working with such a bunch of shoot from the hip, no clue, reactionaries? They wouldn't know a shared vision if it bit them on the ass.

SARAH

You know Jake, you and I have always been a great team. We think alike, we share some brain chemistry... but there's something I see... that you don't seem to be admitting- you're scared.

JAKE

Annoyed, yes...perplexed, yes. But why would I be scared?

SARAH

Your father has been protecting you and Sol from each your whole lives. When he leaves, you won't have that buffer. You're not prepared.

JAKE

Who's fault is that?

SARAH

The easiest thing in the world is to blame your parents. But how about taking responsibility?

JAKE

I'd take it... if my father would give it. But I'm not the one with the power to make the really big decisions. Like who's gonna control this company? *(slight pause)* I'm only a son- I didn't marry the boss.

SARAH

You know, Jake? I was hoping for a little more graciousness. I thought you were a friend. So act like one. *(She exits.)*

JOSIE

There's a lot of signs around here, but none as well-worn as the one that says EXIT. *(Josie exits)*

IZZY

So, everyone but you is thoughtless, selfish, blind, and running around taking care of themselves, is that it? It's not easy for me to even think of leaving this place?

JAKE

How hard could it be to not work?

IZZY

Work is who I am- how much golf can you play? I'm scared to death of retirement.

JAKE

So who do you think should be the boss, dad? It shouldn't be my job to tell my brother I'm more qualified to run this place.

IZZY

What? What are you talking about, qualified? *(pause)* I'm starting the next chapter, and so are you. So stop putzing around and get on the same page.

JAKE

You think I don't want you to be happy?- Half the stuff I've done in my life I did to please you. But getting married? **(slight pause)** I've also sort of thought of her as one of the family. Until now... 'cause she's not my mother.

IZZY

So what? Just say Mazel Tov and let me enjoy myself.

JAKE

Tell me I'm president and you say mazel tov.*(pause)*

IZZY

You'll find out- It's not easy to pick a favorite kid. What about your brother? He'll hate me.

JAKE

We're not talking favorite- this isn't a popularity contest- we're talking competence. We're talking survival of the company.

IZZY

You know... Ralph Johnson was picked because he was the oldest son.

JAKE

You'd consider picking Sol because he's five minutes older? Anyway, I was headed out first- I think he cut in line. (*Izzy and Jake laugh at that, then remember seriousness of topic*) I couldn't work for Sol...Imagine trying to get your money out of this company with him running the show. We both know- I'm the guy to fill your shoes. Think about it. (*exits*)

IZZY

Oy Gevalt! What a mess. Why did I do to deserve this?

JOSIE (*enters*)

Hi, grandpa. What do you deserve?

IZZY

I deserve better than what I'm being served now. But I must have done something right to deserve you.

JOSIE

Don't get funky on me, just because of old Jacob and Esau out there! (*slight pause*) Hey, congratulations on getting hitched with Sarah, grandpa.

IZZY

At least someone around here thinks it's a good idea.

JOSIE

It's a great idea. I love Sarah. I knew you were meant to be together right away.

IZZY

You did?

JOSIE

Sure! I kept hearing you laughing with each other. Unlike most of us Schwartzes, she doesn't take herself so seriously.

IZZY

Or me so seriously.

JOSIE

I guess it's hard to not take my dad and Uncle Sol seriously. Unless you're a big Abbot and Costello fan. (*Pause. They laugh.*)

IZZY

Hey, don't ruin Abbot and Costello for me.

JOSIE

You want to hear my fortune from the Chinese restaurant? "Do what you love and money will follow."

IZZY

~~That would be great.~~ You know.. I haven't followed my love since I brought in my loved ones.

JOSIE

Speaking of bringing loved ones in, how do you think it went with telling (*quotes in air*) "The Boys" your plan about you and Sarah ~~easyin' on~~ **getting** outa here?

IZZY

Eh!! It went. Their fuses are so short, we didn't really get very far. How can you pass the torch to guys who still shouldn't be playing with matches?

JOSIE

So they freaked.

IZZY

When do they not freak? If they would grow up... I could let go. So let me ask you. What am I gonna do here? Huh?

JOSIE

What do you want to do?

IZZY

A man works his whole life, and for what? The love of a good woman? Now I got one- a second one, actually. To relax a little. put my feet up after a long life of hard work. and if they'd buy me out... I could afford it.

JOSIE

Grandpa, do what you want to do. No one lives forever. You gotta follow that dream. I love film and video- I'm not wasting my life making tools- no offense.

IZZY

None taken- I haven't been running this business so my granddaughter would love drop forging. It's a living, but it's not the meaning of life.

JOSIE

So don't waste time. You know what it says on that coffee mug I gave you. Carpe Diem. Seize the day!

IZZY

Even my coffee mug is smarter than me.

JOSIE

No way- you're the smartest guy I know. You just have to realize you aren't a slave to your business...or your children. I wish my #1 Grandpa would look out for #1.

IZZY

You're so right. And, you know, I have a song!

(IZZY begins the vamp and JOSIE begins to dance. They sing)

IZZY

I'm the referee
In my family
While they pile up their debts
But my heart's on fire
I want to retire
And with NO REGRETS

Sol and Jake
They make me ache
They're losing all their bets
But Carpe Diem! --- Seize the Day ---
I scre-am, I'm Okay!
With NO REGRETS

IZZY & JOSIE

Oh, wonderful ,
The day is moving on!
No turning back

But where's it gone?

IZZY (*Firmly.*) It's my decision

JOSIE (*Gladly agreeing.*)
It's your decision

IZZY It's time to cast off my nets!

JOSIE A loving wife

IZZY I love my wife

IZZY & JOSIE And {I/you} have NO REGRETS

JOSIE My uncle's rigid
My dad is frigid
They're both as weird as it gets

IZZY Like Cain and Abel

JOSIE Yes, but much less stable

IZZY Oy, enough!

IZZY & JOSIE NO REGRETS!
How beautiful!
My life is moving on.
No turning back-

(phone rings)

IZZY (*Wistfully.*) How soon it's gone
(Music vamps softly under.)

IZZY

Oy, always with the work..Schwartz & Weiss.. .Ralph! Thanks for the call back. I appreciate a second chance to discuss this thing. Yes, and I appreciate that everybody wants the best deal for themselves.. but you know. you know our families are like ...family. We have to stick together. (*Pause.*) Ralph, I understand what you're saying.*(Slight pause.)* We both know what my sons are like even though you don't know them like a father does.*(False laugh.)* They're good boys, though*(Pause.)* Yes!!! I know they're not boys.....*(Slight pause.)* You have kids You'll see when they grow up.....well. yes. *(Slight pause.)* Well, yes...They should grow up..Ralph. *(pause.)* But, don't forget we make good products. *(Slight pause.)* Why is it your problem, anyway.. what my sons are like? Just buy the tools and make money with them. *(pause.)* Yes, I know my problem is not your problem. *(Making non-verbal sounds.)* Uch, your father would not be proud..*(heart attack)*

Ralph! RALPH! I tell them all the time ...their fighting will be the death of me.

JOSIE

Grandpa, take it easy,... listen, grandpa!!!!

IZZY (*clutches chest.*)

Oh.. Josie

Lights change- strobes. Actors make sound of sirens. SARAH enters, sees IZZY in throes of heart attack, ISRAH eads him off stage. First complete chaos which moves into a stunned silence, Music returns very slow and soft. Sarah re-enters, morose, without IZZY hangs up phone , to symbolize IZZY's death

SOL I wish

JAKE It's too late.
How could he

SOL Stop it!

JOSIE Not now (*holding back tears*)
Oh, Grandpa!

SARAH (*to JOSIE, firmly but gently*)
No (*beat*)
Let's.

JAKE & SOL Bring honor to him
(*faintly snidely*)
Just as much as due him

ALL (*The women together, optimistic and determined. The men against each other, bitter and confused*)

As he left With NO REGRETS

JAKE It's my decision
SOL It's your decision?!?

SARAH & JOSIE They're like the Sharks and the Jets!

ALL With Izzy leaving
You're (we're) too busy grieving
To accept your own regrets

SOL & JAKE How dangerous!

SARAH & JOSIE How sad he's gone away

SOL & JAKE The chips and all

SARAH & JOSIE Will fall
Where they may
(*nervously*)

ALL Any day.

JAKE (*solemnly, unaware of his inability to fill the shoes*)
Let us pray.

SOL (*pained, trying not to laugh at JAKE, for all it's worth*)
Oy, vey..

(*Music moves up a half-step.*)

ALL A mess we're in now
Where to begin now
We're stuck in glue as it sets

We're still in shock now
May go into hock now

But he's gone
(last line starts very slow, and becomes very fast)
With NO REGRETS!

(Blackout.)

(LONG PAUSE: JOSIE comes out on stage. Looks a bit distraught.)

JOSIE

Oy, vey is meir... are we up the creek now!!!... and my family was never known as great sailors. Life is so odd, isn't it? This is my first real death. I mean, with all the news and all the movies, I've probably seen thousands of people die, but grandpa! And someone who was so close...and was the glue that held so many parts and pieces together. *(pause...gets idea)* Listen, I could use some help here. Help us think about this... What are we gonna do here? What do you think we should do? And how did we get into this mess? I don't know about your family business, but now you've seen ours. What could we have done differently? Put yourself in our shoes: imagine you were my dad, my uncle, my grandpa, my ...well, Sarah. What would you do if you were them? Take five or ten minutes...talk about it. We need help.. We'll see you in a bit.

Act Two

(IZZY's funeral in progress.. Tool box,containing IZZY'S cremated remains on a table at center stage. Family members and are seated with their backs to the audience. JOSIE videotaping memorial service)

RABBI (V.O.)

So in closing, I know it would please Izzy to see so many friends and colleagues gathered to honor his blessed memory. And, at events like this, we are too often at a loss as to how to console our grieving friends. We are lost in thought.

(ALL are thinking, but audience hears)

JAKE

I knew we shouldn't have gotten this guy! Dad hated schmaltz.

SOL

Dad would be proud of this. Do I know how to pick em?!

RABBI (V.O.)

But only in our thoughts can we truly address our state of mournfulness.

SARAH

My remorse feels more like a scream than a thought.

RABBI

Life is short. But Izzy lived his fully. So many of us remember Izzy, who would always say "It's a mechaieh- a pleasure" about a good game of golf- or a good sale- or a nice pastrami sandwich. And we all know how he cherished working with his sons... imparting his know-how..guiding them....

JAKE (to himself)

Right! Guiding us back to our respective corners between rounds.

SOL

Dad, you were always too busy to coach my baseball team, so it was good we at

least got to work together. Too bad we all hated it.

RABBI

And then there is his new bride, Sarah....what can I say....words don't come easy...

SARAH

Izzy, it was wonderful working with you..the beauty part of being a family business... and in one second, it's all gone.

RABBI

Married for four days....some people have fifty years together... your time was short.

SARAH

The wedding pictures won't even be ready till next Tuesday.

RABBI

Yours was the classic spring/autumn relationship.... but winter came early....I believe it was John Lennon who said "Death is what happens when your busy making other plans."

JOSIE

I believe that it's "Life is what happens." This guy is terrible!

SARAH

Plans! My whole life is plans. Death is one contingency I never took seriously.

RABBI

Think about it! Life is so short, it's a second on God's watch.

SARAH

I could have married Izzy 3 years ago, but I thought it was inappropriate. Now who cares what anyone thought!?

RABBI

You know, Izzy believed, like Woody Allen, that 99% of life is showing up. He believed in having a good time, and good timing.

SOL

Sarah's timing is great! We get a big old \$10k of non voting stock a year, and now she's probably the major stockholder.

JOSIE

I wish he got to enjoy himself more- at least enjoy being married again- I guess his timing stunk on that one.

RABBI

Josie, your grandpa always described you to me as a mensch. Yiddisheh kup, street smarts- As a matter of fact, Josie - Izzy expressed to me that many of his family's best qualities skipped a generation... I mean...well.. Oh..my.....

*(ALL show reactions to **RABBI**'s faux pas, according to their perspective..**RABBI** attempts to recover)*

And of course, Izzy's greatest legacy is Schwartz & Weiss Tools, which is a foundation of our community: providing employment for many, his donations to local organizations, and let us not forget his "Hammers for Youth" program through the Technical High School.

IZZY (*appearing as ghost*)

Oy, all this schmaltz! I'd turn in my grave if I hadn't decided to have my remains remain in a Schwartz & Weiss Toolbox! For once, they listened. One night at the chamber, I bragged: "My toolboxes last for all eternity" Next thing I know, I'm announcing to all that I'll spend my eternity IN one."

(*waves hands before eyes of family- sees that he is a ghost*)

I bet none of you expected the ghost of a dead CEO in tonight's performance. Like many of you- I would always say "if I die".

(*pause*)

Entrepreneurs don't fade away so fast. do we?... we always like to have the last word.. right? Of course right! I hope this shows all you type A's out there you need to stop and smell the roses.

JAKE

Dad always threatened "are you two trying to kill your father?"

SOL

And then it turns out Ralph Johnson knocks him off on the phone. Sheesh!

RABBI

But nobody does live forever, and his greatest wish was that his two sons would be able to carry on, work together, and continue the good name of Schwartz & Weiss Tools.

JAKE

Dad agreed that I would be president. Or he would've. It's time to assert myself. As dad would say "Vos mer gevart, mer genart" He who hesitates is lost.

SOL

Look at him...I bet he's planning the coup, even now... so self absorbed...As dad would say, "Every ass likes to hear himself bray."

JAKE

Sol will resist, but thank me later- Lord knows he can't get us out of this mess.

IZZY

I appreciate what a smart guy you are. Everyone always admired you- but none more than your brother. You weren't smart enough to figure him out.

SOL

Dad's desk isn't big enough for the both of us. Nothing great ever happened behind a desk anyway.. It's being out on the front lines- where the action is.. But then -look who'll be at headquarters.

IZZY

You never were the desk type. But neither was I. You always felt inferior to your brother so you blustered and ranted at him and threw your athletics in his face. I just wanted to be fair. I guess I didn't do any of us any good.

RABBI

Friends, who can sum up a human life? - it's so much more than a list of accomplishments and possessions...the legacy is truly in the values ...in the hearts and minds of those who are still here..

IZZY

Rub my nose in it, why don't you?

RABBI

All who knew Izzy Schwartz were impressed by his good natured wisdom- which often came out in his pithy Yiddishisms- or Izzy-isms, and his friends used to call them. So I want to tell you that his epitaph has great significance.. I hope his family will find inspiration in it: "If I Will Be Like

Someone Else, Who Will Be Like Me?" And now we'll proceed to the Shiva at Aunt Rose's. See you all there.

(Josie and Sarah mime greeting and talking with visitors, including Cassius King)

JAKE

So, Sol, do you have any thoughts about who should be boss?

SOL

What kind of question is that? Of course you think it's you. You're the center of the universe- right? I don't really even want to be boss, except I don't want you to be.

JAKE *(takes SOL aside)*

Let's try to look at this intelligently. I'd say we need someone who can foster cohesiveness and agreement in the company.

SOL

Well, that would be neither of us. Admit it, we're such an embarrassment dad even hid us from our banker.

IZZY

What would you do? Have your business partners have a conniption in front of your lender? It's bad enough they want to see the books.

JAKE

Oh, God! Here comes Cassius King, the Regional President from First Trust & Loan.

SOL

Leave this to me. I think on my feet, like dad.

JAKE

Sure thing. Do all the thinking you want, just keep your mouth closed, for God's sakes.

CASSIUS KING

Gentlemen, I want to express my condolences for your father's untimely death. He was a close friend, and I respected him deeply.

JAKE

Thank you, Mr. King. My family appreciates your sympathy.

SOL

Thanks. I'm glad you're here. Dad always spoke so highly of you, and said that one day soon we'd get to sit in on meetings with you.

IZZY

By "soon" I always meant "over my dead body."

SOL

As a matter of fact we have a cash situation we need to discuss with you.

JAKE

What my brother is trying to say is thank you for your compassion and kind words.

SOL

What do mean "trying to say"? That's what I did say. And then I also said that we need to talk about money.

JAKE

Yes, Sol...Can't this wait?...

SOL

Dad wouldn't wait. *(Pause)*

CASSIUS KING

I understand this is a stressful time for you, and I know we have to talk. Let me call you in a week or two, after you've had some time to yourselves.

SOL

We don't have a week.

JAKE

Sol!

CASSIUS KING

Really?!

SOL

Yes, really! Would I talk about money at my father's funeral unless it was crunch time?

JAKE

Sol, don't you remember dad's rule about money? Never surprise or scare your banker?

CASSIUS KING

Well, perhaps we do need to speak sooner rather than later. Why don't you call my office in the morning? *(Pause.)* Again, my condolences. Your father was not only a customer, he was a friend.

JAKE

I hope we can continue that type of relationship.*(Pause)* I've been developing a strategic.....

CASSIUS KING

May I speak frankly? It's uncomfortable for me to tell you this *(slightly reprimanding)* at your father's funeral.... but your need to know seems exceptionally high.... I have a problem with the extreme tension in your relationship, and I'm quite concerned how that will affect your ability to lead this company.

JAKE

Well, on that topic I just want to say that Sol and I were...

SOL

We were what?

CASSIUS KING

It creates a major risk for us -as your partner, so to speak...so I guess what I'm saying is...First Trust and Loan needs to re-evaluate our lending relationship with Schwartz & Weiss Tools.

(Starts to leave.)

Take care, gentlemen. My deepest regrets about your father.

(CASSIUS moves over to SARAH and JOSIE.)

JAKE

Re-evaluate?

SOL

I don't get the "as your partner" part.

CASSIUS KING

Sarah, it was good, as always, to speak with you. I know this is a very sad time for you, but you're a survivor- better times ahead.

(JAKE & SOL follow conversation.)

SARAH

You always know the right thing to say, Cassius. Thanks again for your support.

CASSIUS KING *(to SARAH, JOSIE, SOL, JAKE)*

I'm sorry to speak about business at a time like this. They can fill you in.... You'll uh.. be needing a plan for the Lending Committee...Does two weeks sound do-able for you? *(silence)* Good, then. Sarah, please feel free to call me if you need a shoulder. at work or at home..I'm sorry to make this situation even more difficult. I'm a friend....In times like these, we all have to remember *(Preparing to leave.)* Take care. Goodbye Josie.

(SOL & JAKE mime squabbling about CASSIUS)

JOSIE

Goodbye Mr. King.*(CASSIUS KING exits and ALL watch in silence.)*

Wow, visited by the Grim Reaper and the Looming Lender - all in one week. What a one-two punch. **(Pause)** I just keep remembering grandpa's expressions- you know what he'd say now? "Borgen macht zorgen" "Loans will get you moans."

SARAH

Cassius feels for us- you can't kill the messenger. He has no choice but to do his job..
(long pause)

JOSIE

~~I'm exhausted! I never realized how much a funeral was all about taking care of everybody else.~~*(Pause.)* How are you doing, Sarah?

SARAH

Aside from the fact that life has lost all meaning, I'm feeling oddly calm.

JOSIE

You know, I've seen about a zillion people die in movies, and even when grandpa would read me the obituaries from the Times everyday, I never had a clue how death stinks.

(JOSIE crosses upstage to the toolbox and sits on floor.)

SARAH

What also really stinks is **being** ~~who is~~ left behind. I was looking forward to getting out of the rat race...

IZZY

Sarah, I'm sorry, we were both so **excited** to enjoy ourselves - traveling, laying back, joining AARP .. I don't have to tell you people, it's not easy to stop doing what you do best- but remember- even if you win the rat race- you're still a rat .

(Silence.)

JAKE

So, Sarah, how does Cassius know about our relationship? We've never even

spoken with him before.

JOSIE

What is all this paranoia? Dad.. you need to chill. It's grandpa's funeral.

JAKE

You think I don't know that?(*Slight pause.*) Sarah, we assume you have the best of intentions, but Sol and I .

SARAH

What are you talking about?

SOL

Have you talked with him?

SARAH

Of course I've talked with him. Your father and I socialized with him on a regular basis. He's a friend. So, yes, I do talk to my friends.

JAKE

I talk to my friends, too- but you've obviously told him more than he needs to know, and now it's all gonna bite us in the ass.

SOL

Yeah, what's next- are you going to "open up" with the guy from the IRS?

SARAH

I've done nothing to be ashamed of. You must be mistaking me with someone without a brain in their head. I know how to handle myself.

JAKE

But he obviously has a very, very clear idea of our .. internal dynamics.

IZZY

It should take a Sigmund Freud to see things between my boys aren't exactly copacetic ? But they think it's such a top secret.

SARAH

Did I create the mess between you two? You embarrass yourselves on a regular basis. Now that you might have your noses rubbed in it- again, something you brought on yourself, you blame me?! What Chutzpah!

SOL

What does the banker know? I don't think we're so bad. Bad enough to sink our business? He's not gonna do that.

JAKE

Right- and the tooth fairy will talk him out of it. We're up the creek and we need a plan. We have to persuade the bank that we can run this company. We need a quick fix here. (*ranting*) Must re-engineer... ..reinvent...create a new paradigm... Show that our house is in order. That we're a team. No matter what. Time to fake it till you make it. (*Silence.*)

SARAH

Can this wait? We have a shiva to get to- dozens of people and tons of food - all to help us be reflective ! So if you could put your neuroses on hold, I'd be most appreciative. (*SARAH starts to leave.*)

JAKE

I just can't stand that you've contributed to a wrong impression that we're so neurotic we can't run the business.

SOL

Sarah, we all know how much you meant to our father. You were a key person, in the company and- in his (*awkwardly*) personal life. But it's obvious we're going to have to take a look- to re-evaluate- where you fit.

JAKE

Yes...Sol and I share a concern about dad's will and where we stand...We're in the dark about how we're going to share ownership in the company- and who's in charge. It's bad enough that Sol and I don't see eye to eye on .. (*SOL and JAKE*) anything, but now you've gone and leaked very classified information here.

SARAH

Listen ..I'm done with talking about this. If this is your idea of teamwork, let's not waste the bank's time. (*pause*) I don't know what I want to do. Right now I wish I didn't have to see either one of you. Go get in your cars and go to your father's shiva.

SOL

Great! (*moves closer to Jake*) This goes to show what happens when you trust non family .

JAKE

Sol!! (*Exasperated, not only at Sol, but at all his frustrations*) ..
(*Exits.*)

SOL

Well. What I meant was ..

SARAH

(*glaring look*) (*Sol leaves*)

IZZY

You know, I should have taken more time to just BE with my kids. Finally, when I had the time for them, they were grown, and at each other's throats.

SARAH

When are those two going to find out the world is bigger than just them .. and their petty peeves? It's not my job to get their act together. The bank might be doing me a huge favor. Just to scream "I quit!" It would be such a relief.

JOSIE

I've never seen you quit anything. You have more perserverance than anyone I've ever met.

SARAH

It's the secret of my success- and my biggest failing. I can't quit anything . I still have my doll collection .. I still practice the trombone a half hour a day! And I hate it!

JOSIE

Really . But you are a great trombonist....Sarah- this might seem weird to say... but it makes sense to me if you want to leave the business. Grandpa and I were talking about that... "Seize the Day"... You can do anything you want.

SARAH

Maybe it's my attachment to Izzy's company- it's hard to let a family business die-

but it feels selfish to look out for myself. I can't just let go and let these guys drown.

JOSIE

You know what they say in Life Saving- If a person is drowning, and tries to grab you when you try to save him, you have to kick him away. It's a release!

SARAH

I need to think about that. I'm more the Go Down With The Ship type.**(pause)**
I was just remembering that story your grandpa used to tell. About the mouse in the barn.

JOSIE

That weird little story about the mouse running away from the hungry cat? He frantically tries to find a place to hide, he runs into the barn, slips under the cow, who is under a big..~~PLOP~~. And the mouse gets buried in the...mess.. And at first the mouse is relieved, because it's safe ...it's warm- there's no cat. But it's...

SARAH

But it's not a place to stay long term.*(laugh together)*

JOSIE

You know, I always hated that story- cause then the mouse wiggles out of his...refuge...and the cat eats it...

SARAH

Your Grandpa would always say "If you're in a warm place, and it's safe- even if it stinks- you better stay there." *(pause)* Sound familiar?

JOSIE

Unfortunately.

SARAH

I can't believe he really felt that way. I think he was just scared to find out what would happen if he escaped from his warm place.

IZZY

All right, all right!! A good story, but maybe the moral was wrong. Maybe a better moral would be. "Better to die upright than live on your knees"... So shoot me for wanting my children to be close. *(pause)* I always told them- "Stop that fighting- shut up. go to your rooms- respect your brother. " But they didn't. ...I never let them get to the end of any fight...never made peace...never resolved anything... God knows why, but I fancied myself a coach. a guide... So then when they'd fight, their mother would say "Wait Till Your Father Gets Home." *(pause)* I needed to be needed and I stopped them from learning how to grow up. I thought I was the solution but I made myself part of the problem... Sometimes the remedy is worse than the disease...So now they have a dead father and no credit..

JOSIE

Grandpa, you were always so hard on yourself. There's only so much a person can do. You have precious little control in life. Sometimes you've just got to let go.... Kids are sort of born the way they are. They're far from perfect.. *(Two measure vamp starts)* actually -we're all basically jerks, doing the best we can...

JOSIE

Don't kick yourself,
Just let it go --
That's how it works.
You couldn't hitch their wagon to a star.
It's not your fault

If they are jerks,
You're born the way you are.

IZZY

You do your best,
You bust your ass,
You try so hard.
You always think
You want the big cigar.
I couldn't ever stop the fight,
I thought I might
Make things allright
But now I'm dead - I see the light!
You're born the way you are.

(Boys enter. IZZY glides away, not quite offstage.. Boys move objects , striking set, according to their characters, undoing and re-doing each other's work)

SOL & JAKE

Your father is your father from the day you're born
It doesn't matter if he's near or far
He tried to guide us 'round the bends,
To make us friends, to make amends
No matter how much he pretends,
You're born the way you are.

(SARAH enters. She and JOSIE come down between the brothers.)

SARAH & JOSIE

Izzy never noticed they were not the same
That one plays chess and one's a football star
A shame they play a different game
You're born the way you are

SARAH

One is so strategic, he just loves to plan

JOSIE

The other thinks that planning is bizarre

SARAH & JOSIE

If one says black then one says white

SARAH

And one says day and one says night

JOSIE

And one says loose and one says tight

SARAH & JOSIE

It's not a very pretty sight
You're born the way you are

ALL *(with kick line)*

You think you shape your children?
You should think again
You think that they're the peasants,
You're the czar?
You can't control what they become

JAKE (at Sol)

A bum

SOL (at Jake)

Or glum

JOSIE (at Sol & Jake)

Or someone dumb

ALL

It isn't up to Dad or Mum
You're born the way.

IZZY

You die the way..

ALL

It's not your choice,
So listen chum:
You're born the way you are
(black out)

(Izzy waits for all to leave stage. Comes forward to address audience:)

IZZY

So, nu, you think you're watching some unusual family? Yours is so much better? How many of you are ready to pack it in? And head for that great retirement community in the sky. By "ready" I mean prepared to, not desire to. (pause) If you knew you had - let's say- 6 months to live, how would you get your house in order? (pause) You all have people who'll have to carry on without you- don't be so sure you get to stick around like me! A fat lot of good I am to them now- not that they ever listened, but now they can't even hear me! If you were me, what would you have done so much better? How about if you were Sarah, or Jake, or Sol? And what about that Cassius? He would always joke that he knows a lot of people who made a small fortune... the problem being they started with a large fortune. Sure he has a job to do, but why do a job on my kids? Such a group of experts like you must have opinions about all of this! It's good for you to talk about it- you know what they say: "It's good to learn to barber on someone else's head." So talk amongst yourselves for a few minutes- let's hear after what you think.

Act Three

(Two weeks later. The phone ringing throughout. **JAKE**, **SOL**, and **SARAH** are all onstage preparing for a meeting with the bank's loan committee. **JAKE** and **SOL** are on opposite sides of the stage. **SARAH** is in the middle. **IZZY** is in his space.) Cue: music fades.

JAKE

Josie! Would you take this to your Uncle Sol, please?
(hands Josie strategic plan)

JOSIE

While you've been sitting there for 10 minutes, we've had nearly two weeks of the Dynamic Duo at their most unpleasant. They want to change each other- but not themselves. I haven't heard this much silence since my mom and Aunt Sophie threw drinks at each other on that infamous Hawaii vacation fiasco- I mean "the retreat".

SOL (picks up JAKE's plan)

What are you going for here, Guinness World Records fastest, fattest brainspill? I

don't think the bank is gonna be so impressed just because you wrote a 300 page affidavit that completely avoids our problems.

JAKE

If you took the time to even read it, you'd see how comprehensive it is.
At least Sarah is making the effort to look at it.

SOL

All I know is the bank is looking for some magic way we're gonna get our act together, not to get a hernia picking up this thing. (*drops book*)

JOSIE (*to audience*)

You know, Freud said there's two main things people need in life: work and love. I don't believe he studied family business much.

JAKE

You have so little respect for my work. Do you know how much easier it would be if we weren't related?

SOL

It's crossed my mind.

JAKE

We could just go our separate ways. You would be just another problem employee- gone for the price of a rate increase in my unemployment insurance.

SOL

So your point is that I have no respect? (*pause*) You know, Jake, for the guy with the big brain, I'm not impressed with your narrow thinking.. I've generated many possibilities. (*Pulls out flipchart*)

JAKE

This is not another David Letterman list, I hope.

SOL

Ten (*pause*.) We split the company into separate divisions with each of us the boss of our own thing
Nine: We hire someone to deliver messages to each other so we don't have to actually speak.

JAKE

I'm sure the bank will support spending money on a person to do simultaneous translation for siblings.

JOSIE

Sounds like money well spent, if you ask me.

SOL

Eight: One of us sells the company to the other. Seven: Have Sarah be our boss.

JAKE

Did you arrange these so they get increasingly irritating?

SARAH (*enters around # 8*)

You don't think "Sarah As Boss" is #1 irritating? I'm touched, Jake!

SOL

Well, Sarah- my feeling there was "better the devil known than the devil unknown."

SARAH

The devil known? Gosh!!!

JAKE

Wait a second. *(Jake, mutters to himself)* Sarah as boss...*(out loud)* You know, I hate to admit it-but Cassius might actually fall for it.

SARAH

So pleased to be a pawn in your deception.

JAKE

Sol, I think you've stumbled on something here.

JOSIE

Works for me! What's the down side?... at least they'd have a "shared vision" about something.

SARAH

Why should I be part of a puppet regime, just to fool the bank?

JAKE

We don't have a lot of choices here.

SOL

Actually, I have six more. *(pause)* Six: One of us fakes our death and collects on the insurance...Five: You use your wife's assets for a new working capital loan.

JAKE

Stop while you're ahead *(pause)* So, if Sarah takes over as president, Cassius wouldn't possibly harm us. It's a no brainer.

SOL

I can't believe it. You love my idea and still the nicest thing you can say is it's a "no brainer."

SARAH

Here's my thinking. I have nothing to lose here: the most important thing in my life is gone. I have a reputation for staying power, but I have "going power" as well.

JAKE

And so what you're saying is ...

SARAH

That I'll head this company...sit at Izzy's desk...and work with you to save the business. *(pause)* I...

JAKE and SOL *(suspicious)*

If what?

SARAH

If you two treat me professionally..in an adult manner. I'll do it for Izzy, and for you, as his family. I don't care about the money, I don't need the glory, and I don't need any of your mishegas. I serve here at my own pleasure.

(phone rings- it's Ralph)

SOL

Sol Schwartz. Ralph?!?! What do you want?*(pause)* Haven't you caused enough damage? *(pause)* What do you mean we?!?! *(pause)* You're in serious denial, pal! What? *(hears Ralph give shocking news)* Of all the nerve!

JAKE

What? What nerve? Sol, give me the phone. give me the phone!

SOL

My pleasure...let's see how Mr. Brainiac handles this...*(throws phone)*

JAKE

Jake Schwartz here. *(pause)* **Yeah, yeah, great weather...whatever...**So, Ralph. if you had any dignity, you'd let us grieve in peace. *(pause)* Thanks, but that's too little too late. *(pause)* Where'd you hear that? *(pause)* No, we're not going out of business...**Sell to you?!?** Not if you were the last man on Earth!! *slam phone down ..Long pause Turns to face SOL)*

SOL

I knew you'd handle that well.

JAKE

Rumors abound that we're going down the toilet, selling the business.. *(pause)* Ralph wants to buy it... without us. ... says it's a win/win.

SOL

So?... I've heard it's good that people want to buy your company.

JAKE

Yeah, if you want to sell it, and if the reason it's for sale isn't that the owners are too inept to hold on.

SARAH

Where'd this rumor spring from?

JAKE

Does anyone want to share with the rest of the class? *(pause)* About what was discussed among a group of muscle-brained nosey-bodies at the health club? *(pause)*

SOL

Big deal, so what'd I do wrong? What is it with you and secrets? I'm not ashamed.

JAKE

Well, lacking common sense, maybe a little shame would be useful.

SARAH

Sol, what's the story? Did you really tell people we were selling the company?

SOL

All that happened is that I was reviewing my strategic plan. *(Continues from flip chart)* Four: Sell the company and say "See ya...wouldn't want to be ya!"

JAKE

And who, may I ask, were you with?

SOL

My outside board!

JAKE

What outside board?

SOL

Some buds from raquetball. It's helpful.. *(pause)* Who else can I talk to about stuff? I know this company is not for sale. Some blabbermouths obviously went running to Ralph.

JAKE

Glad you realize that - because nothing should happen in this company without my approval.

SARAH

Your approval?

SOL

You know, Jake, you don't really know me at all. You think you do, you always expect the worst.

JAKE *(condescending)*

Don't feel so misunderstood. What you see is what you get.

JOSIE

More likely: what you expect is what you see.

JAKE

Just remember to think before you speak. We are at a very tenuous crossroads here..
(phone rings)

SARAH

Schwartz and Weiss...Hello, Cassius *(pause)* I've been better... yes, I know you feel bad..Hey, we can't kill the messenger....Sure, I trust you...tell me...uh huh...interesting... Cassius, can you repeat that on speakerphone? Jake, Sol, and Josie are here with me. I think it's something we all need to hear.
(mutters to herself) Unbelievable!

Cassius

I said the buzz is that Jake has been fishing around for a buyer. Three people since yesterday told me... seems that Sol is not happy there, especially since Izzy's passing, and Jake doesn't want to run the company without his brother.

SOL

What!?

SARAH

I can appreciate your concern, considering the circumstances.

JAKE *(bullshitting)*

I can't stomach that bunch of rumor-mongers. Like a bunch of sharks in a feeding frenzy!

SOL *(seething)*

I'm sure, because, you know, the "tenuous crossroads" and all.

JOSIE

—You two are like a co-dependent Tweedle Dumb and Tweedle Dumber.—Your problem is you hate having someone who points out how *(pause)* **YOU** you are.

JAKE

Would you go do your job?

JOSIE

I see this as part of my job. *(doesn't leave)*

SARAH

Cassius...you know we're in a particularly difficult stage here. As a friend, I ask your indulgence- for a bit more time. We're beginning to understand the seriousness of our situation, but can't think straight with your deadline so near.*(pause) (indicates victory)* I thank you. My family thanks you. We'll speak soon.

SOL

Nice job, Sarah ! *(turns to JAKE)* You little schmuck! You're too uptight to look stupid, so you make me look sick?

JAKE

OK, so, you caught me in a little lie. What was I supposed to say: we always worked for our father, now he's gone, and so is our summer job?

SOL

I don't know when it was I realized how little I trust you- or like you- probably since you told my high school girlfriend, Janene, I was dyslexic, and she broke up with me.

JAKE

But don't forget- when I explained to her that it wasn't a sexually transmitted disease, she got back with you...

SOL

You only told her the truth because I hid your car before a hot date. Dammit, Jake! You're my brother. Would it be so hard to respect me? To let me be...ME!? Not a clone of YOU!? You know, I have lots of friends in my life who appreciate me...They're like family to me, more than you.

JAKE

Easy for them to be family, they're not related to you.

SOL

I can't go on like this. *(pause)* It's not worth it. You're not worth it! I QUIT !! *(starts to leave and then turns back)* And I quit you! I HAVE NO BROTHER!!...*(starts to leave and then turns back to JAKE)* One more thing. Here's the severance package .*(shoves JAKE)*.. I think you've earned it.

JOSIE

Uncle Sol, I'm sure that felt good.

JAKE

That's my thanks for the many years of me carrying you?! *(pause)* I'm sure you've been waiting to do that for a long time. Now that dad's gone, who's gonna stop you?

SOL

Nobody's gonna have to stop me anymore. I could pound the crap out of you. I'm not gonna work with people who drive me this nuts.

SARAH

But have you thought about what comes next?

SOL

I don't know and I don't care. I'm through always having to account to Mr. Day- Timer here.

JAKE

I can't wait to see how you do in the real world. Without me carrying you.

SOL

I'll do just fine. You'll be the one who'll sink like a stone! Nobody but me would put up with you! Without Schwartz and Weiss as your personal life boat, you'd be sunk!

JAKE

You'd leave me here to pick up the pieces? I've always had to pick up after you. *(pause, look around)* This place is damaged goods. **(pause)** So maybe I'll just quit too!! There! Now let's see who sinks and who floats! *(Jake pushes, Sol blocks, they wrestle)*

JOSIE

Why are you destroying our family with your self indulgent tantrums?

SARAH

So this is how you behave when you have to make it on your own, without your father? **(pause)** He failed you, and you failed him.

SOL

Don't talk about our father like that. He didn't fail us, he just...

SARAH

Your daddy's dead!!! *(pause)* Both of your parents loved you like crazy, but didn't get it that you couldn't act like adults-

JAKE

What is it with you and the "act adult"? Excuse me for not meeting your high standards.

JOSIE

I'd like to be adults with you too, dad. But you're either critical parent or dependent child.

JAKE (forceful)

Please will you cut all this psychology crap?

SARAH

Well, all you're gonna get out of me is adult. I don't do parent. *(pause)* My father always said, "when the horse is dead, get off," so I'll just call Cassius right now and put this company out of it's misery.

JOSIE

(to audience) Misery loves company... especially this company. *(to family..sorrowful but controlled)* My dear family, here we are, at the beginning of the end. As good a time as any to reveal this to you all..*(pause..suspense)* I actually found this while I was going through my work. It feels a bit private, but I hope it helps. Would you all sit down. Uncle Sol, hit the lights.

(light change to indicate we are now watching IZZY and JOSIE in interview:

JOSIE

Grandpa, you look so sad. I'm so sorry this has all been so hard, for all of us, really.

IZZY (in spotlight)

What was I thinking with this "family business"? It takes more than blood to make it work. My father and I had it good...maybe we were lucky. We were in synch, like birds of a feather. Like Rogers and Hammerstein. With these two, all you got is oil and water. They spend so much time trying to be beat the other to the finish line in some weird race. What the hell do they think they're going to win, anyway?

JOSIE

You don't win the race if you don't feel like a winner.

IZZY

I was remembering when Jake single-handedly won that old TV show, “It’s Academic.” The questions kept coming: French Literature, Physics, History- he wouldn’t be stumped (*pause*) It was the same day Sol pitched a perfect no-hitter- won MVP. Everyone kvelled so much for both of them- it was all over the local news. I realized at the end of the day, they hadn’t said a word to each other.. No congrats, nothing. It was like their thunder had been stolen...for boys who had each accomplished so much, it felt so empty to them- they hadn’t gotten that little praise they really wanted (*pause*) from the other one.

JOSIE

It’s amazing! They’d rather starve than feed each other the littlest nibble of support.

IZZY

You know, I’ve got to do what’s good for me before it’s too late. I want to see the world, upgrade my love life, get a little crazy... before I go a little nuts. If they fix what’s broken as brothers, Mazel Tov. But if they can’t, I know I gave it my best shot for as long as I could stand it.

(end of video scene. Izzy exits.

Josie turns to face family, who are moved by Izzy’)

JOSIE (to family)

Well, that’s all folks. (*pause*) So you can see, had grandpa survived, you’d be in the same fine mess as you are now. Same challenges, same opportunities.. Some things are just unavoidable, I guess.

SOL

It really hurt him that we couldn’t get along better.

SARAH

It doesn’t hurt you? (*pause*) Look at you!

SOL (to Jake)

This might surprise you, but at night (*pause*) I always commit to changing myself but then the next day we’re back at it. (*to Jake*) I always think if I could’ve had a partner ...just like you... that wasn’t you—~~my brother~~- I could’ve handled it better.

JAKE

Huh?! I’ve thought that same thing! I think “why can’t we behave more ... (*pause*) strategically?”

SOL

That’ll never happen now, I guess. Too bad. Hopefully, we learned something here. (*starts to slowly walk off stage, turns back*) Maybe we’ll be better brothers this way.

JAKE

Sol, wait... (*SOL turns to face JAKE*) It will be interesting to see what happens to each of us, on our own. (*pause*) I guess I’ll have to find people who can take me with a grain of salt.

SARAH

It’ll take more than a grain of salt.

(long pause)

JAKE

I guess I have a few control issues.

JOSIE

Just a few.—Humble looks good on you.

JAKE

It’s just that it feels sort of good to be out of business. I don’t feel ...quite as ...

pressed. *(shakes off years of tension in exaggerated motion) (to Sol)* You know *(pause)* I much prefer working behind closed doors, thinking things up, thinking them through. You're better at the people thing, you know, mixing it up; I can't do that, but you can't do what I do!! What I mean is...

SOL
Look! Now that we're not partners, who cares? You can stop all this "comparing and contrasting" already!

JAKE
You didn't get it. I'm accepting it. I'm accepting YOU! I mean I still would rather be me, but I'm feeling like YOU can just be YOU!

SOL *(not understanding...sarcastic)*
Gee, thanks!! (silence) Really? *(pause)* I've been so mad at you. And jealous. And proud of you! I wish I was more like you! Whoa! What am I saying!?

JAKE
Why in God's name would you want to be more like me? It's hell in here.

SOL
You make things happen. I'm like...a whiner, always

JAKE
...reacting...

SOL
I'm looser than you, sure, but my head is a big messy ..

JAKE
Chaos.

SOL
Nothing like your orderly, sanitary, clean.

JAKE
logical...

JAKE *(feeling appreciated)*
I love you, man!!

JOSIE *(to audience)*
And they say men are from Mars!

JAKE
I hope you end up somewhere where they appreciate you. Don't work with any schmucks like me ...

SOL
I could do worse ..I'd be glad to find someone who treats me as well as you've been... for the last few minutes.

JAKE
I think with Continuous Process Improvement I could keep up my good behavior for hours...days...even weeks.

SOL
It works on steel, why not on you? But I'll believe that when I see it.

JAKE

Want to put a little money on it?

SOL

How about you clean my office every time you lose your temper?

JAKE

How about you clean your office every time I don't?

SOL

Deal.

IZZY

Well, that's the story. What'll happen next? I can't say "happily ever after." They try. Better than not trying. As a great Yogi once said- Yogi Berra, that is...It's not over till it's over.

(Sarah crosses over to Jake and Sol, and joins in their handshake)

SARAH

Well, this isn't the way I thought this little drama would end. But if you really intend to cut it out, then cut me in. *(the handshake now includes all three)*

IZZY

I'm glad to see things MIGHT work out. Life doesn't come with a guarantee. Live in hope. Take each day as it comes. Spring ahead, Fall Back, Winter in Miami Beach... Better you should go home, try to do a little better yourselves.

SARAH

Oh, God, I think we're going to sing again.

SOL

I don't quite know how it happened, and
I wasn't sure what just happened, but
I couldn't cover my fear anymore
And before I could stop myself,
There I was.
Hating you , hitting you, shoving you
And then just suddenly loving you
Now I have a song:
Two rights don't make a wrong

JAKE

You thought that I'd keep you under my thumb
I was afraid of restraining you

I wish that I could go out in the world
With your drive and your style and your confidence.

What good's a plan or a vision
With no one to bring it to life?
Now we have a song:

SOL, JAKE

Two rights don't make a wrong

JOSIE | **SOL, JAKE:**
I wish that Grandpa could see | Two rights..
where you've come |

SARAH |
You wanted more than your |
share of his love | Two rights don't make a

IZZY |
I couldn't bear their despair, | Wrong..
It's not fair -- |
Now I know that they needed | Don't make a wrong.
me not to be there. |

IZZY, SARAH, JOSIE |
Now they're in synch and the |
future looks bright | Two rights...
We didn't think it would all |
turn out right |
But we knew along | Two rights don't make...
| ... all along

ALL
Two rights don't make a wrong.

Two rights don't make a wrong.

THE END