

Just Hours

Second Draft-Alternate Ending

by Irene Loy

May 7, 2014

CHARACTERS

MESS, female
GLORY, female
TAMPER, male
EYESORE, male
BOUNDS, female
FLIGHT, female

TIME

Current day

A NOTE FROM THE PLAYWRIGHT

It is important that the audience not know where the play is located until the end. They are given the clues noted in the script, but the set should by no means be realistic. Rather, use a highly post-realistic stage to indicate location broadly—a 12X15 ‘room’ with the items indicated and a hallway just outside. Make specific but bald set design choices. The intent is to defamiliarize location and focus audience attention on the relationships and the language being used to indicate place and their roles within it.

A dark stage.

EYESORE flips on a light, pushes MESS into the light, into the room.

The 'room' is a 12x15 space marked on the floor with thick tape.

There is nothing in the room.

EYESORE

You get one bed.

A bed comes into the room.

One window.

A window comes down.

One bedside table.

A table rolls in beside the bed.

One Bible.

A Bible appears the table.

One toilet.

A single bathroom door appears.

That's it.

EYESORE starts to exit.

MESS

You can't leave me here.

EYESORE

There's no place else.

For you.

This is the place.

This is where you belong.

MESS

I don't belong here.

EYESORE

This is your temporary home.

You need to get used to it.

You need to settle in.

MESS

I—I could never be at home here.

EYESORE

How about a corkboard?

A corkboard comes down and marks the placement of one of the walls.

There you are.

MESS

A corkboard.

What the hell is that for?

EYESORE

Pictures.

Letters from home.

Sentiments.

MESS

You've given me the space of a corkboard for my sentiment?

EYESORE

It should be sufficient.

EYESORE gestures to the tape on the floor.

You stay in this room.

You don't leave this room.

And you sure as hell don't leave this building.

MESS

What?

EYESORE

You understand me?

MESS

Why not?

EYESORE

It's not safe.

For you, or anyone else.

That is all.

EYESORE starts to exit.

MESS

Fuck you, Man!

Who the fuck are you?

You think you've done me a favor?

Fucking shit!

EYESORE

Oh, and one clock.

A clock comes down to mark another of the walls.

Good day.

EYESORE exits.

MESS looks around the room, bewildered.

MESS addresses the audience.

MESS

I'm lost.

I woke up—

I thought I'd be going home.

No such luck.

I'm stuck here for the time being.

I want to go home.

I want out of here.

What is this place?

Someplace awful.

Nowhere at all.

Irgendwo dreckig.

Überhaupt nichts.

BOUNDS helps GLORY enter the room.

GLORY walks with a walker.

BOUNDS guides her arm.

BOUNDS

Mess?

Mess, you have a roommate.

Won't that be nice for you?

MESS

Ooh goody.

BOUNDS

So.

We'll get you all set up.

You get one bed.

A bed comes into the room for GLORY.

MESS

We already have a window.

BOUNDS

One table.

A table appears beside GLORY'S bed.

A Bible.

A Bible appears on the table.

GLORY

Already have one.

The Bible disappears from the table.

BOUNDS

Alright then.

You get a water pitcher.

A water pitcher appears on her table.

MESS

How come she gets a—

BOUNDS

Protocol.

MESS

Yeah well.

Share a toilet.

GLORY

How 'bout a TV?

Do we get a TV?

BOUNDS

Alright.

One TV.

For the both of you.

GLORY

Fine.

A TV appears on a stand.

BOUNDS

Oh!

Eyesore gave you a corkboard.

MESS

(sarcastic) Yes, he's very generous.

BOUNDS

Isn't he just?

That you can share.

(to GLORY) You can leave the building, and/go into the courtyard.

MESS

/Why is she allowed to—?

BOUNDS

She's recovered to the point where/

GLORY

/You can't?

MESS

No.

GLORY

(genuinely) Sorry to hear that.

BOUNDS

But you come right back.

You hear me?

GLORY looks right at BOUNDS.

GLORY

Yes.

I'll do that for you.

BOUNDS softens, relieved.

BOUNDS

Thank you, Dear.

(to MESS) And from you.

No riff raff.

MESS
Who, me?

BOUNDS exits.

Mess.

GLORY
Glory.

MESS
What are you in for?

GLORY
Ha, ha.

MESS
You don't have to tell me.
I can see.

GLORY
Yes, but how's my hair?

MESS
Just ducky.

GLORY
Thanks.
Yesterday it was all—smooshed? In the back.
And I can't stand that.

MESS
No?

GLORY
I used to work in a hair salon?

MESS
Got it.

GLORY
It wasn't—I mean—my first choice, but—

MESS
When is it ever?

GLORY
Right.
So. May I—?

MESS
Go right ahead.

GLORY gets into her bed.

How long you been here?

GLORY
Since yesterday.
May get to go home tomorrow.
You?

MESS
Just since this morning.
But now I think I'll be here at least a week.

GLORY
Ah.

MESS
Why'd they move you?

GLORY
Getting better.

MESS
I feel like shit.

GLORY
You might for a while.

MESS
What is this place?

GLORY
It's a place where they help you get better.

MESS
Do they?

GLORY
If they can.
Yes.

MESS
Back to the way we were?

GLORY
I'm sorry.
No.

Pause.

Meals are served at 8am, noon, and 6pm sharp.
We always have to be here when the meals are served.
Protocol.

GLORY gestures to her table.

In—

She gestures to the bathroom door.

Out—
All right here.

MESS
What if I can't eat?

GLORY
What?

MESS
Can't eat. It's all—

MESS gestures to her throat.

GLORY
Then I guess meal times are the same.
But through a tube.

MESS
Yech.

GLORY
You said it.

MESS
So—what's next?

GLORY
Just—hours.

MESS
But what else—?

GLORY
Um?

MESS
What else will they do?

GLORY
Depends.
Varies.

MESS
Kommt darauf an.

GLORY
You speak German?

MESS
Ein bisschen.
Well—?

GLORY
You'll see.
It'll be revealed—at 4 in the morning.

MESS
Or 1 in the morning?

GLORY
Or 2 in the afternoon.

MESS
Or 11am.

GLORY
Or eight at night.

MESS
Or just before dinner.
Or right as you're eating.

GLORY

Or right when you want some peace and quiet.

MESS

Or whenever we wanted to make that phone call.

GLORY

Or when it's least convenient.

MESS

Or when we really have to pee.

GLORY

Yeah. It'll happen then.

You'll see.

MESS

K, so. Just—wait?

GLORY

Yeah.

At least there's TV.

MESS

Eh.

GLORY

There's—huh.

MESS

What?

GLORY

I—there's staring out the window.

MESS

K.

GLORY

There's—yeah, I don't know. You'll see.

MESS

Fine.

They wait.

TAMPER wheels by.

MESS
What are you doing here?

TAMPER
Huh?

MESS
Your wheelchair takes up half the fucking hall!

TAMPER
I can't help it!

MESS
Are you lost?

TAMPER
I'm a little lost, yeah.

MESS
You're in the wrong wing.

TAMPER
I thought I might be.
But I don't know.
I stopped looking.
What wing?
Bird's wing?
Airplane wing?
Uh—the West Wing?
Which wing?

MESS
You're on the fourth floor, dumbass.

TAMPER
Must've taken the elevator.

MESS
Mmmm.
Now you're putting it together.

GLORY
Are you alright, Love?

TAMPER
Who are you?

TAMPER (cont.)

Why are you talking to me?
(to MESS) Why is she talking to me?

MESS

It's her deal.
She likes being nice.

TAMPER

Fuck nice.
(to GLORY) What are you, some schoolmarm?

GLORY

I'm Mess's new roommate.

TAMPER

Ah.
Tamper.

GLORY

Glory.

TAMPER

Ha!

GLORY

What happened to you?

TAMPER

I got kicked in the head by a horse.
I got in a car accident.
It was an ATV.
I never saw it coming.
The motorcycle skidded out.
It hit the back of a minivan.
I fell through a glass roof.
I forget.
It was on a Tuesday.
No wait.
What day is it?
It was not today.
It was some other day.
It happened before now.
It happened.
It happened when I was pre-morbid.
Then I was morbid.
And now I'm post-morbid.

TAMPER (cont.)

I have after-death.

I have the after-death.

I'm after death now.

But they don't put it that way.

They don't say 'resurrection' in the chart.

They say—what is it—they say—um, they say that I'm—

I can't think of it.

But it's something with that moment.

That blinding—that sort of bright—in my face—

Ah. My face.

It's funny.

Out of everything, I miss my face the most.

Pause.

What was I saying?

Probably didn't matter.

Ah well.

GLORY

Oh my.

You poor thing.

TAMPER

Place is too damn clean.

MESS

I think it's dirty.

Underneath.

TAMPER

On its top parts though it's clean.

GLORY

Yes, very.

TAMPER

Nothin' to do here but sit.

Sit and shit.

Pause.

You wanna smoke later?

MESS

Sure. I'd love to.

TAMPER wheels off.

MESS
That guy.

GLORY
How do you know him?

MESS
I don't.

BOUNDS brings in lunch.

BOUNDS
Lunchtime.

MESS
(sarcastic) Great.

*BOUNDS sets a tray in front of GLORY.
GLORY starts eating her lunch.
BOUNDS crosses over to MESS and attaches a tube to her stomach.*

BOUNDS
So. How are my Dearies?

GLORY
Doing good.

MESS
Shitty, thanks for asking.

BOUNDS
Mess.

MESS
What?

BOUNDS
Are you settling in?

MESS
Not a bit!

BOUNDS
You've got to.

MESS
I'd rather not.

BOUNDS shakes her head.

BOUNDS
And you, Dear?

GLORY
Feel better today.

BOUNDS
That's good.
Let me check your—

BOUNDS goes over to check GLORY'S pulse.

Looking good.

GLORY
Glad to hear it.

MESS
Check mine, check mine!

She does.

BOUNDS
Not bad.

MESS
Not good either?

BOUNDS
Fair to midland.

MESS
Ah ha.

BOUNDS
You always this much trouble?

MESS
I try to be.

BOUNDS
Why is that, mmm?

MESS
Wouldn't you like to know.

BOUNDS smiles at MESS affectionately.

GLORY
You got any salt?

BOUNDS
You know better than to ask for salt.
Sodium content.

GLORY
Right.

MESS
That looks disgusting.

BOUNDS
It's what's for lunch.

MESS
It looks gross.

BOUNDS
She needs to eat it.

MESS
You eat it.

BOUNDS
I don't have to eat it.

GLORY
Why not?

MESS
Try it.

BOUNDS
No, thank you.

MESS
If she has to eat it, you should have to eat it.

BOUND
I don't.

MESS gestures to her feeding tube.

MESS
Or you could try this one.

BOUNDS
That's not the way it works.

MESS
Course not.

BOUNDS gestures to the tube.

BOUNDS
That'll take about twenty minutes to disperse.
I'll/check back.

MESS
/Time of my life!

FLIGHT enters.

BOUNDS
You can't come in/here.

FLIGHT
/I'm a family member.

BOUNDS
Ah.
Here to see—?

FLIGHT
Glory.

BOUNDS
Did you sign in?

FLIGHT
Of course.
That's how it works here.
Isn't it.

BOUNDS

Fine.

I'll let you visit.

BOUNDS starts to exit.

FLIGHT

Oh yeah.

I wanted to ask you.

Her back.

It's not so good for sleeping.

Prone.

Can we get her a more comfortable—a chair?

One of those recliners.

BOUNDS

We don't have one here.

I'll have to ask a different department.

FLIGHT

Can I help that conversation happen?

BOUNDS

It'll be difficult.

There's paperwork.

FLIGHT

I'll fill it out.

No problem.

She needs it.

BOUNDS

I understand.

FLIGHT

She's been mentioning it.

They didn't have one on the other floor/either.

BOUNDS

/I hear you.

We'll work on it.

FLIGHT

Okay.

BOUNDS exits.

FLIGHT (cont.)
(to GLORY) How are you today?

GLORY
Not bad.
My new roommate.
Mess.

FLIGHT
Flight.

MESS
Grand to meetcha.

FLIGHT turns to face GLORY.

FLIGHT
How are you really?

GLORY
I'm fine.

FLIGHT
Better?

GLORY
Fine.

FLIGHT
...

GLORY
...

FLIGHT
I brought you a book.

GLORY
Thanks.

FLIGHT
Set it here?

GLORY
Sure.

FLIGHT sets the book on GLORY'S bedside table.

FLIGHT
And a card.
It's a get well card.
Came to the house.

GLORY opens it, reads it.

GLORY
That's nice.

MESS
Not that we're getting well.

FLIGHT
Should I—?

FLIGHT starts to put the card on the bedside table.

MESS
You can put it on my corkboard.
Our corkboard.
If you want to.

GLORY
That's kind of you.

MESS
There's lots of room.

FLIGHT pins the card up on the corkboard.

(sarcastic) See how much cheerier it is in the room now?

FLIGHT
(to GLORY) What happened with her?

GLORY
She's not saying.

FLIGHT
Fair enough.

GLORY
Right.

FLIGHT
We've got to get you a—

GLORY
Mmmmm.

FLIGHT
You need to—

GLORY
Yes?

FLIGHT
You shouldn't be—

GLORY
What?
Dear?

FLIGHT
I feel—uh.
Saliva.
It's uh—
I can feel my own pulse.

GLORY
In your wrists?

FLIGHT
Everywhere.
It's like—
This—
It's coming through me.

GLORY
What is?

FLIGHT
I—don't know.

GLORY
Hon—?

FLIGHT faints.

Oh my God!
Bounds! Bounds!

GLORY hits a red button attached to her bed.

*BOUNDS runs in.
She splashes water in FLIGHT'S face.
FLIGHT revives.*

FLIGHT
Oh—

GLORY
Oh thank God.

FLIGHT
I blacked out.
Couldn't see—

GLORY
What was that?

BOUNDS
Happens sometimes.
When you're new here.

GLORY
Have you eaten?

FLIGHT
No. Not today.

GLORY
Get some lunch.

FLIGHT
Okay.

GLORY
You need it.

FLIGHT
I will.
I'll be back in a bit.
You need anything?

GLORY
I'm fine.

BOUNDS
We'll take care of her.

FLIGHT
Okay.

FLIGHT exits.

BOUNDS
That was good, Hon.
You need anything, you just push that button.
I'm right down the hall.
Maybe even next door.

BOUNDS smiles.
GLORY returns the smile.
BOUNDS exits.

MESS
That was intense.

GLORY
Yeah.

MESS
Never seen anything like it.

GLORY
Me neither.
She's usually quite tough.

MESS
Well.

GLORY
It can be a challenge.
Here.
Not for the weak of heart.

MESS
No.

GLORY
It's a whole other ball game.

MESS
Yeah.

Pause.

MESS (cont.)

I want to tell you something.

GLORY

So go ahead.

MESS

I can't.

GLORY

I don't understand.

MESS

Of course not.

GLORY

Well.

Can you tell me later?

MESS

I think so.

GLORY

You can try.

MESS

Sure.

GLORY

I'll tell you something.

I'm tired.

MESS

Yeah?

GLORY

I didn't get any sleep last night.

MESS

The beeping?

GLORY

Yeah.

MESS

Well if you need to—

GLORY
I think I will.

MESS
Okay.

GLORY
Will you wake me when Flight gets back?

MESS
Of course.

GLORY nods off to sleep.
MESS stares out the window.

Then she gets out of bed.
She addresses the audience directly again.

MESS
This fucking place.
Walled off.
Sealed in.
Dead to the world.
It's a trap.
A lie.
A contagion.
These sweat-stained walls.
These twelve by fifteen receptacles of time.
Of loss.
Of memory.
I trusted them.
Now look at me.
Exactly what it says it is, it is not.
Exactly what it says it's not, it is.
Das kannst du vertrauen.
Das kannst du voll glauben.

EYESORE enters carrying a clipboard.

Get out.
Nobody here wants to see you.

EYESORE
Too bad.

MESS
You come at the worst times.

EYESORE
I need to see her.

MESS
Can't it wait?

EYESORE
No.

EYESORE approaches GLORY.

MESS
Don't wake her up.

EYESORE
I have to.

MESS
Back the fuck up!

EYESORE
Excuse me?

MESS
Give it a minute.

EYESORE
Can't.

MESS
She just fell asleep.
She's exhausted.

EYESORE approaches GLORY.

Let her rest.

EYESORE
Can't.
Need to do this now.

MESS
It can't wait?

EYESORE
Nope.

EYESORE checks his clipboard.

EYESORE (cont.)

Says here I need to do this today.
And I haven't got that much time.

MESS

We've got loads of it.
Want some of ours?

EYESORE

There's no trading.

MESS

Come on.
Let her rest.

EYESORE

You know I can't.

MESS

I thought you could do whatever you want.

EYESORE

I don't want to leave. So.

MESS

So there's no stopping you?

EYESORE

None.

MESS

She just got to sleep.

EYESORE

I need to.

MESS

Don't.

EYESORE

Her time is mine.
I own it.

MESS

You can't own time.

MESS (cont.)

Why can't you see her in a little while?

EYESORE

All in order.

I do things in order.

MESS

Clearly.

EYESORE approaches GLORY.

I wanna leave.

EYESORE

You can't.

MESS

But I want to.

EYESORE

You can't.

MESS

Well then she wants to leave.

EYESORE

She can't.

MESS

But she feels ready.

EYESORE

She's not.

MESS

Well I want a say.

EYESORE

You don't get a say.

MESS

She wants a say.

EYESORE

She doesn't either.

MESS

So you get a say?

EYESORE

Mine's the only say that matters.

MESS

Is that right?

EYESORE

I sign off on everything.

MESS

Everything?

EYESORE

Yeah.

MESS

Whether I take a shit today?

EYESORE

I sign off on it.

MESS

Whether I eat?

EYESORE

Uh huh.

MESS

Whether I think a vindictive thought.

EYESORE

I have to sign off on it.

MESS

Same for her?

EYESORE

Same for everybody here.

MESS

Not Bounds.

EYESORE

She's with me.

MESS
Is that right?

EYESORE
She's the one asking me to sign off.

MESS
So your power is absolute.

EYESORE
Irrefutable.

MESS
Irrefutable?!
I refute! I refute!

EYESORE
You can't.

MESS
Why not?

EYESORE
Because I haven't signed off on it.

MESS
I want some real food.

EYESORE
Not time for it.

MESS
I want my programs.

EYESORE
Not yet.

MESS
I want what's good for me.

EYESORE
Not time for it.

MESS
I want what's bad for me.

EYESORE

No good!

MESS

You're not anything outside these walls.

EYESORE

Oh yes I am.

You're not anything outside these walls.

MESS

Oh yes I am!

What do I have to say?

What do I have to do?

What does she have to do, to get a little bit of freedom in here?

EYESORE

It never occurred to me.

The question.

I really don't see how it's relevant.

MESS

Bounds would.

EYESORE

Bounds doesn't either.

She likes you well enough.

But in the big scheme of things? She values me more.

MESS

As a person?

EYESORE

Just, in general.

As a fact.

MESS

You sicken me.

EYESORE

You're not very grateful.

MESS

Excuse me?

EYESORE

After what I did for you.

MESS
What's that?

EYESORE
I saved your life.

MESS
You prolonged my torture.
My suffering.

EYESORE
That so?

MESS
Made it worse.

EYESORE
How dare you.

MESS
You lied to me.

EYESORE
There were complications.

MESS
You cut for a living.

EYESORE
It worked, didn't it?

MESS
Is this the solution?

MESS shows EYESORE her scar.

EYESORE
Shut up.

MESS
You'd like that, wouldn't you.

EYESORE
You're damn right.
I call the shots in here.
You're just a chump.

MESS
You can't talk to me that way.

EYESORE
I do as I please.

MESS reaches for the red button attached to her bed.

EYESORE
She answers to me.

MESS
...

EYESORE
Now if you'll let me do my job—

EYESORE approaches GLORY.

MESS
Why won't you hear me?!

EYESORE nudges GLORY.

Why don't I get a say?!

EYESORE wakes GLORY.

LISTEN TO ME!!

EYESORE
Sit up.

GLORY does.

Hold out your arms.

She does.

Stick out your tongue.

She does.

Bounce.

She does.

EYESORE (cont.)

Jump.

MESS

She can't.

EYESORE

If I say jump, she'll jump.

MESS

She can't!

EYESORE

Oh now you decide what she can and cannot do.

MESS

I know well enough.

GLORY

It's fine.

MESS

It's not!

GLORY

Don't worry about it.

MESS

But your back!

GLORY

I'm sure he has his reasons.

EYESORE

See?

MESS

Don't kid yourself.

Nobody here wants to see you.

They may be nice about it, but—

When you walk in the room, it's a problem.

When you walk in the room, it's an aggravation.

It's a reminder.

A nuisance.

Something that will disturb our day.

Wreck our peace.

MESS (cont.)

That's what you are.

The embodiment of a problem.

And worse, you congratulate yourself as a fixer of problems.

But you make them so.

You actually make them worse sometimes.

EYESORE

Rarely.

MESS

Often.

GLORY gets out of bed.

She jumps up and down.

EYESORE takes notes on his clipboard.

EYESORE

Well. I'm finished here. So.

EYESORE exits.

MESS

Finally.

Ass!

GLORY is holding her back, getting back in bed.

GLORY

He's not so bad.

MESS

He's the worst.

I don't know how you can stand him.

GLORY

Look.

They've taken the way I've always cared for people.

And they've given me no other choice.

So I let them care for me.

And this is my greatest gift.

That they have someone to care for.

I mean, what would their lives be worth, if they didn't have somebody to care for?

MESS

But they don't care about us.

They don't give a shit about us.

GLORY

I disagree.

They go to school for a long time.

They show up here every day.

They come out of the sunlight for hours to tend on us.

They listen to that beeping.

They scuttle around in those stupid shoes.

They hear those rolling chairs, rolling back and forth to get a chart.

Get a chart.

Get a chart.

They listen to it, too.

MESS

But then why do they have their life force intact?

Why is it theirs?

And ours is like seeping out of our pores.

I try to reach for it.

And I can't get it back.

GLORY

I don't know.

I don't feel that way.

I feel like this is some—fruition of my life.

Being a mother, being a wife—I thought that was the ultimate.

But it's actually this.

Looking after these anonymous human beings.

These strangers.

Helping them feel like they did something useful today.

MESS

But they didn't!

They don't.

They don't help us.

Not really. Not at all.

The whole day long.

GLORY

But they feel like they do.

And anyway we're still alive, so what are we complaining about?

MESS

But that's just it.

The whole thing is built on just staying alive.

Just keep breathing as long as possible.

Breathing and eating and shitting.

Even if it takes a machine to do it.

MESS (cont.)

And not a goddamn word about living.

Just—life. For life's sake.

Cause we saved a life.

Look at us.

Isn't my dick big?—I saved a life today!

They don't think about what the life is actually like after that point.

They don't consider that maybe something, some spirit, or—

GLORY

You mean God?

MESS

Some spirit or something was trying to take us.

And they got in the goddamn way!

They got in the goddamn way.

And now we're stuck.

With this kind of half life.

This sort of shelf life.

GLORY

Didn't you want to live?

MESS

Of course!

That's why I agreed to it.

But I thought it would be different.

I thought it would be like before.

It isn't anything like before.

GLORY

Well.

I think it's a fine life.

It's God's plan for us.

MESS

You really believe that?

GLORY

With all my heart.

MESS

...

GLORY

Have a little faith, m'Dear.

It's God's will that we're in here.

MESS
Then he must be one sick bastard.

GLORY
...

MESS takes her Bible and starts ripping pages out of it.

Stop it!
Stop it this instant!
That's the holy word!

MESS
What good does it do us, in here?

GLORY
They're doing God's work!

MESS
Like hell!

GLORY
Mess.
You've got to get a hold of yourself.
This is how it is.
In here.
You've got to be okay with it!

MESS stops ripping up her Bible and goes to the window.

MESS
I'm getting out of here.
I can't breathe.

GLORY
You're fine.

MESS
No, I'm not.
I'm crawling out of my fucking skin.
I'm going to escape.

GLORY
What will that change?

MESS
Everything.

GLORY
Nothing.

MESS
It will.

GLORY
They won't let you.

MESS
They'll have to.

GLORY
I don't see how.

MESS
But they'll have to.

GLORY
I don't see how.

MESS
I'm a free person, aren't I?
I've got free will?

GLORY
Not in here.

MESS
That's not right.

GLORY
It's the way it is.
Mess.
(gestures to the feeding tube) You're still hooked up.

MESS
So?

GLORY
So you have to wait.

MESS
I hate this.

GLORY
It's the way it is.

MESS
Why don't we change it?

GLORY
Who's asking us?

MESS
They should be.

GLORY
They aren't.

MESS
I thought this was—about us?
For us?

GLORY
Hardly.

MESS
I'm speechless.

GLORY
(teasing) That's a first.

MESS
You said it was just hours.
But there's nothing just about it.

GLORY
I meant—
Don't take it so seriously.
We weren't here, we'd be someplace else.
Watching the hours go by.

MESS
But—

GLORY yawns.

You okay?
Sorry.
What do you need?

GLORY

Sleep.

Like a fish needs water.

MESS

Swim in it then.

I'll protect your slumber.

GLORY

How?

MESS

I'll do the best I can.

GLORY sleeps.

MESS addresses the audience again.

You see what I mean?

A trap.

They lure you in with promises.

And then strip you bare.

Dignity taken out with the laundry.

Downstairs somewhere.

Who knows?

Looks perfectly nice from the outside.

From the brochures.

Enchanting.

A bevvvy of health and wellness.

So ein Schiess.

Ein Dreck.

Eine Verwirrung.

I'll never be the same again.

MESS climbs up and takes the clock off the wall.

She throws it out the window.

TAMPER wheels by.

TAMPER

They won't let us out.

MESS

I know.

TAMPER

Sucks.

MESS
I know.

TAMPER
How 'bout we smoke here?

MESS
Sure.

TAMPER
I forgot the—what's it called?
But I brought a box of—
A bax of—they're matched.

MESS
Give 'em here.

*MESS lights two cigarettes, hands one to TAMPER.
They take long, slow drags.*

TAMPER
That's the good stuff.

MESS
Yeah.

They smoke in silence.

TAMPER
You ever—forgot your name?

MESS
Can't say that I have.

TAMPER
I forget it all the time.
Mine I mean.
TAMPER (cont.)
Like I'm reading other people's driver's licenses.
I come on one—it looks like me.
The picture's kind of like me?
But then—I forget.
Like we haven't met.

MESS
Yeah, I know that feeling.

The smoke alarm goes off.
GLORY wakes up.
BOUNDS runs in.

BOUNDS
What the hell?
You guys—you can't smoke in here!

TAMPER
Bummer.

The smoke alarm continues.
BOUNDS puts out the cigarettes.

Oh!
That was the sound.
That day.
That other day.
I remember.
It was—flashing.
There was that flashing.
And the—the weeooh weeooh weeooh!
And those men with the concentrated faces.
Shouting about something.
It was like that.
It was like this!
It was like how it will be, and how it was.
They came to save that person whose name I can't remember.
They came to save him and make him BE still.
Here he is!
There he was.
Here he will be.

BOUNDS succeeds in turning off the fire alarm.

BOUNDS
I'm gonna get him back down to his unit.

BOUNDS (cont.)
(to MESS) And you—you should know better.

MESS
Who says I don't?

BOUNDS wheels TAMPER out of the room, takes him down the hall.

GLORY

You know.

Those things are what got you in trouble in the first place.

MESS

Naw.

They're what saved me.

GLORY

...

FLIGHT enters.

How was lunch?

FLIGHT

Fine.

It's like a maze in here though.

Could hardly find the room again.

GLORY

Tell me about it.

FLIGHT

The elevator I get.

The hallways are a tangle.

GLORY

Good thing we got only one place to be.

MESS

(sarcastic) Hurrah!

FLIGHT

How is the food here?

GLORY

Edible.

MESS

Plastic!

FLIGHT

That so?

MESS

They won't even let us near the real stuff.

GLORY
What did you have?

FLIGHT
A salad.

GLORY
Mmm.

MESS
We don't get salad.

FLIGHT
That's a shame.

GLORY
Right.

MESS
Too many nutrients.

BOUNDS comes in.

She unhooks the tube from MESS'S stomach.

Speaking of nutrients.

BOUNDS
You're gonna make me old before my time.

MESS
Take a number.

BOUNDS gives a laugh.

You know you love me.

BOUNDS
I do.

MESS is touched.

MESS
Well.
I can almost feel it.

BOUNDS

But—?

MESS

But it's overshadowed by this gigantic pain in my ass.

BOUNDS

Oh, you.

BOUNDS grabs GLORY'S tray.

FLIGHT looks to BOUNDS.

BOUNDS

Oh! Hold on a sec.

Bounds exits for a second, drops off the tray, returns with a chair.

FLIGHT

What's this?

BOUNDS

To sit.

So you're comfortable.

And in case.

So you don't fall.

FLIGHT

Right, but—

Doesn't that strike you as odd?

BOUNDS

How so?

FLIGHT

It's that easy to get me a chair so that I'm comfortable, but we can't get her a chair so that she's comfortable?

BOUNDS

Well, it's different.

This was in the hallway.

Hers is from a different department.

FLIGHT

It's a chair.

You arrange for someone to carry it.

From one room to another.

And suddenly, Presto!
Someone else has the chair.
Why is it so difficult?

BOUNDS
Well.
It belongs to the other department.
Taking it without the proper documentation would be stealing.

FLIGHT laughs.

FLIGHT
Was there 'proper documentation' to take this chair from the hallway?

BOUNDS is genuinely perplexed.

BOUNDS
It's ours.

FLIGHT
I don't think that you get it.

BOUNDS
I don't think that you get it.

FLIGHT
I just find it wholly ironic that—
I can get things more easily than she can.

BOUNDS
There are protocols.
We follow protocols.

FLIGHT
Yes.
Of course.
What was I thinking?
Questioning protocol.

BOUNDS
Do you still want the chair?

FLIGHT
Yes.

BOUNDS
You wanna fill out the paperwork?

FLIGHT
Yes.

BOUNDS
Now?

FLIGHT
Sure.

BOUNDS
Okay.
Let's do it.

FLIGHT and BOUNDS exit.

MESS
She's a good advocate for you.

GLORY
Sure is.

Beat.

MESS
Who do you miss most, being in here?

GLORY
My husband.

MESS
Yeah?

GLORY
Never slept in a different bed from him.
For forty years.
Until I came here.
Until last night.

MESS
Really?
Not a single night?

GLORY
Not a single night.

MESS

Wow.

GLORY

Who do you miss the most?

MESS

My roommate.

GLORY

You got a roommate?

At home?

MESS

Yeah.

Share the rent.

Fifty-fifty.

GLORY

Good friends?

MESS

Like twenty years now.

GLORY

How'd you meet?

MESS

That moment in college where everybody's just standin' around.

Bummin' a smoke 'cause they don't know what the fuck else to do with their hands.

Or their time.

It was like that.

But then we got to talkin'.

And it separated out.

Like nobody else was there.

Like nobody else mattered.

Yeah.

That's my bud.

GLORY

She sounds nice.

MESS

She's my rock.

GLORY

My husband always says that.
About me.

MESS

Hey.

You wanna be my rock, while we're in here?
Like no pressure or anything.
I mean, I know, we just met.
And you might not think I'm the most stable.
Or the most like fun to be around.
But I tell you—people like me—
We need a rock.
Somebody to lean on.
Somebody to talk to.
Somebody that we're with a lot of the time.
Always.
And I don't really know if I—
I mean I miss that already, with her not here.
She can visit, but you know.
It's not the same.

GLORY

I know.

Pause.

You know.
I may be leaving tomorrow.

MESS

But you don't know that.

GLORY

But when I do/

MESS

/For the time being.
While we're both here.
While it counts.

Beat.

GLORY

Okay.

I'll be your rock.

MESS

You swear?

'Cause don't take that lightly.

That's not a light thing.

You can't just say that you will and not mean it.

'Cause I really do.

I need that.

Like something reliable.

Someone reliable.

That I can, you know—trust.

Pause.

GLORY

What happened to you?

MESS

I can't say.

GLORY

That bad?

Or you just don't know?

MESS

(laughs) That bad.

It made me feel like nothing—

Sticks.

Like you could throw shit at the wall all day, and nothing would stick.

And the one thing you could count on is that it would always fall the fuck down.

So you just kept expecting that.

And then—somebody like my roommate—

Breaks the pattern.

Breaks the rule.

And I'm so goddamn relieved.

And confused.

All at the same time.

That I just wanna hug her.

And push her away.

And pull her in.

And ask her to go.

MESS (cont.)

And take her name and tattoo it on my forearm.

So that she's always with me.

So that there can be something I can count on.

That will stick.

GLORY

Well.
I'm a woman of my word.
That you can count on.

MESS
You promise?

GLORY
Mmm.

MESS
That means a lot.

GLORY
What did you want to tell me?
Earlier?

MESS
Nothing.

GLORY
It must've been something.

MESS
It is.
I just can't put it into words.

GLORY
I see.

MESS yawns.

MESS
Ich bin plötzlich so müde.

GLORY
You're tired?

MESS
All the sudden.

GLORY
Ah.

MESS
Care for a nap?

GLORY
I'd love one.

MESS
Then let's.

They snuggle into their beds.

Sleep well.

GLORY
You too.

MESS
Und traum süß von saueren Gürken.

GLORY
What?

MESS
It means, basically, sweet dreams.

GLORY
(smiling) You too.

They fall asleep.

*After a moment—
BOUNDS and EYESORE come back in.
BOUNDS is carrying a chart and a donut box.
EYESORE is carrying a clipboard.
They are 'eating' plastic donuts.*

BOUNDS
No smoking allowed.

EYESORE
Huh uh.
It's not healthy.

They mouth their plastic donuts.

BOUNDS
Not at all healthy.

They look at both MESS and GLORY.

It's a shame really.

EYESORE
A shame.
These people.

BOUNDS
These poor souls.
Caught in limbo.
Like us.

EYESORE
Not like us.

BOUNDS
Can't leave.

EYESORE
We can.

BOUNDS
Sort of like us?

EYESORE
We can leave.
Any time we want.

BOUNDS
But they're here.
All day.

EYESORE
All night too.

*They put those donuts back in the box and get new two ones from the box.
EYESORE indicates MESS.*

EYESORE
This one.

BOUNDS
Right?

EYESORE
Mess.

BOUNDS

Sad really.

EYESORE

Mmm.

BOUNDS

Irreversible?

EYESORE

Mmm.

BOUNDS

Sad.

EYESORE

I guess.

BOUNDS

But fascinating.

EYESORE

Fascinating.

BOUNDS

Such a case study.

EYESORE

Thrilling really.

BOUNDS

You think you'll get published?

EYESORE

I bet I will.

BOUNDS

Case study like that.

Wouldn't be surprised.

EYESORE

Neither would I.

BOUNDS

Thrilling really.

EYESORE

Mmm.

BOUNDS
Never had one like that before.

EYESORE
It's the first.

BOUNDS
Such a strange—

EYESORE
Circumstance.
There's bound to be a publication in it for me somewhere.

BOUNDS
Prestige.

EYESORE
Notoriety.
That thrill that comes with recognition.

BOUNDS
Most definitely.

They put those donuts back in the box and get new two ones from the box.

EYESORE
You have the chart?

BOUNDS
Right here.

BOUNDS hands MESS's chart to EYESORE.

EYESORE
Grease stain?

BOUNDS
Guilty as charged.

*They both laugh.
EYESORE looks through the chart.*

EYESORE
Impeccable.

BOUNDS
Thank you.

EYESORE
You've done really good work.

BOUNDS
Appreciate it.
For you, Sir.
Anything.

EYESORE
Thanks.

BOUNDS
Think they can hear us?

EYESORE
Not a chance.

BOUNDS
You think they're dreaming?

EYESORE
Maybe.
Does it matter?

BOUNDS
It might.
To someone.

EYESORE
Mmm.

BOUNDS
Have you ever thought—if that was us?

EYESORE
It won't be.

BOUNDS
It could be.

EYESORE
It won't be.

BOUNDS

Someday?

EYESORE
Not possible.

BOUNDS
Why not?

EYESORE
We're above all that.
Beside it.
Around it.
But not in it.
Not like them.

BOUNDS
You're so sure.

EYESORE
We're on this side.
They're on that.

BOUNDS
It frightens me.

EYESORE
It shouldn't.

BOUNDS
We're all vulnerable.

EYESORE
Not I.

BOUNDS
And me?

EYESORE
Strength by association.

BOUNDS
That's a relief.

They put those donuts back in the box and get new two ones from the box.

Gotta get your exercise and proper rest.

EYESORE
Mmmm.

BOUNDS
It's healthy.

EYESORE
Yes.

BOUNDS
This afternoon?

EYESORE
Yes?

BOUNDS
Would you like help with—?

EYESORE
Of course.

BOUNDS
You'll be back then?

EYESORE
You betcha.

BOUNDS
Seems a little dead when you're gone.

EYESORE
You'll keep them vital, I'm sure.

BOUNDS
Your faith in me, Sir, it's—

EYESORE
Yes?
It's—

BOUNDS
Appreciated.

EYESORE
Lauded?

BOUNDS

Yes.

EYESORE
Good.
I think I'll—

BOUNDS
Yes, yes.
You must be going.

EYESORE
Most definitely.

They put their mouthed donuts back in the box.

You should note this.
Are you taking notes?

BOUNDS
Good to note.
Duly noted.
Yes Sir.

EYESORE exits.

BOUNDS approaches GLORY and MESS and rubs their foreheads, one at a time.

FLIGHT enters.

FLIGHT
You'd think we were applying for a mortgage!

FLIGHT hands BOUNDS tons of paperwork.

BOUNDS
You finished?

FLIGHT
Finally.

BOUNDS
Very well.
I'll process the paperwork.

FLIGHT
Thanks.

BOUNDS starts to exit.

And could you—try to speed things along?

BOUNDS
I'll do my best.

BOUNDS exits.

FLIGHT goes to the side of GLORY'S bed.

FLIGHT
Glory?
Glory?

GLORY stirs.

GLORY
Mmm?

FLIGHT
How you doin'?

GLORY
Fine, fine.

FLIGHT
Find anything good on TV?

GLORY
We've been talking mostly.

FLIGHT
That's nice.

MESS stirs.

MESS
Let her rest.
Let her rest!

FLIGHT
It's okay.
I'm visiting her.

MESS
But everybody wakes her up!

FLIGHT

I won't be long.
You can sleep after I've gone back to work.

MESS

Well what do you think we're working on here?
S-L-UMBER.

FLIGHT and GLORY laugh.

Well Jeez.

We're awake now anyhow.

GLORY

There's always something going on in here.
It's very difficult to catch any shuteye.

FLIGHT

Can we pull the blinds?

GLORY

It won't make a difference.

FLIGHT

Um. Okay.
Well maybe once they bring you something comfortable to lie on—

GLORY

Are you trying to get me one of those recliners?
Like what I have at home?

FLIGHT

Yeah, I'm trying.
I know it makes a difference at home, so.

GLORY

Dear heart.
The sunlight comes in.
That's the only way we know what part of the day we're in.

MESS

That, and they call one meal lunch, and one meal dinner.

GLORY

That's right.

FLIGHT

Where's your clock?

MESS

I took it down.

It started to piss me off.

I would think an hour had gone by.

And it was just like fifteen minutes.

Slower time moves, the longer we're in here.

So I just took it down.

FLIGHT

Makes sense.

I think most of the time we're okay with clocks 'cause we have things to do.

You know like, "I gotta be somewhere at 3!"

But if you didn't have anything to do?

Time'd be a real bitch.

MESS

Yeah.

FLIGHT

Like this never-ending—

MESS

Yeah.

FLIGHT

Well I mean you can both read this book if you want.

It's okay.

Or you could read it to each other.

I could bring another from home.

I mean, there's options.

We can work something out.

I mean if you guys are gonna be roommates, then—

MESS

I can tell you care a lot about Glory.

Quite a lot.

FLIGHT

I do.

She's my rock.

MESS

That's really—

Quality.

MESS leans toward FLIGHT to hug her.

FLIGHT feels sick again.

She almost falls.

She catches herself and sits in the chair.

GLORY
What is it?

MESS
It's me.

FLIGHT
No.

GLORY
It's not you.

MESS
It is.
When I come toward you—

FLIGHT
I don't know what it is.
I get nauseous.
I feel woozy.
I—
There's this—like if I don't sit down, I will fall.

GLORY
Strange.

MESS
Yeah.
I have that effect on people.
Always.

FLIGHT
I'm sure you didn't always.

GLORY
I don't feel that way.

FLIGHT

I'm not trying to do this.
I don't mean to make you feel bad.
It's just happening to me.
It's like—
A dark cloud.
Moving through me.

MESS
Well happy birthday to me.

MESS turns toward the window, folds her arms across her chest.

FLIGHT
I didn't mean to—

GLORY
Mess, Honey, it's fine.

MESS stonewalls them.

FLIGHT
Well.
Do you wanna go for a little walk?

GLORY
That might be nice.

FLIGHT helps GLORY out of bed and gives her her arm as they walk out.

Everything's okay, Sweetheart.
We'll be back in a little while.
You keep your chin up.

FLIGHT and GLORY exit.

*MESS fidgets, throws her covers off, pulls at her gown.
She hops out of bed and opens the window.
She climbs out of the window and stands on the ledge outside.
A different alarm goes off.*

*BOUNDS and EYESORE run into the room.
Working together, they pull MESS back into the room.*

MESS
Why won't you let me go?

EYESORE

You can't go until we say.

MESS

And then, as soon as you say it, I have to go right then, right?

EYESORE

Then there's no arguing it.

MESS

But until that moment, it's as if it were never thought.

EYESORE

Naturally.

MESS

I'm telling you—
I need to go.

EYESORE

You can't.

MESS

But I have to!

EYESORE

You can't.

MESS

I feel ready.

EYESORE

You're not.

*MESS lunges toward EYESORE and strangles him.
She is killing him.*

BOUNDS

Mess!

No!

*With great difficulty, BOUNDS pulls MESS off of EYESORE.
EYESORE gasps for breath.
BOUNDS tends to him.*

*MESS moves across the room from them, cowers in the corner.
She will not let them near her.
She addresses the audience instead.*

MESS

You think it's solid.
You think it's yours.
The whole time.
You think it's yours.
That your life belongs to you.
But it doesn't.

She is losing her shit.

She knocks over her bedside table.

She is a wreck.

You have no judgement.
Not anymore.
Not in here.
Here, you've no idea what's best for you.
It's all in their hands.
What's been dictated.
Passed down.
Studies have shown.
You lie here forgetting.
Forgetting you ever had a name or were worth something.
You lie here staring up, out, in, over.
Hoping for some clarity.
Some form of peace.
But it doesn't come.
What comes is this breakdown.
Between what you expected and what you actually got.
Between the promise of wholeness and the experience of brokenness.
Brokenness.
Being broken.
Partial.
Inept.
And it becomes a source of fascination.
Like a mermaid.
Or a mutant.
Or a circus freak show.
More like them.
MESS (cont.)
They're the people who forgot that courtyards are healthy.
Sunshine vital.
And music necessary.
They've become separate from all that.
Broken it all into parts to study it.
Made it known.

But no longer whole.
How freakish is that?
Yeah.
There are people all over the world congratulating each other on their disease.

*BOUNDS tries to approach MESS.
She growls at her.
She barks.*

Ich bin ein Mensch, oder?
Wir dürfen nicht vergessen.

BOUNDS
Stop it now.
You're worrying me.

Now MESS turns to address BOUNDS and EYESORE again.

MESS
You worry me more!
Yeah, you.
It's the walking well who worry me.
You're the ones who concern me.
'Cause you're the ones who don't remember.
And you have no idea what it's like.
To be on this side of things.
You have no idea.
So yeah.
It's the walking well who scare me.
You're the ones with the freedom.
You're the ones with the bodies that obey.
That have blood everywhere that they need it.
And breathe oxygen naturally.
And eat with your own mouths.
You're the ones who walk around.
And walk and talk.
And walk and talk.
And walk and talk.
With your life force intact.
And somehow the whole fucking thing becomes about you!
MESS (cont.)
Even when you're caring for us.
The whole thing is about you.
(to EYESORE) Mostly about you, you son-of-a-bitch.
(to them both again) I don't understand.
This is made for me.
This whole thing is made for me.

For us.
To get better.
To feel better.
And I just feel worse.
I feel sick.
I feel sicker than when I got here.
I feel sick at my heart.
I feel sick at my heart.
And nobody gives a shit.
Nobody checks that.
I can't let it go into my gut, 'cause that's a whole other department!
I can't let it move into my hips, because you can't explain that but in orthopedic terms.
I can't make it about my mind, because all you see there is a brain pulsing on MRI's and
in slices!
No.
Can't go there.
Can't make it about that.
Can't take it to my insides.
Where I hurt.
And where I dream.
And where I long for something more than what I have been.
I can't mention that.
Because you can't put that in a chart.
And all the while—
You've lost me to yourselves.
You've lost what I can be for you, and you don't even know it.
You think I'm a curious case.
You think I'm a study.
I am not a study.
I'm a human being.
And I ache!
And I remember.
And I forget.
And I'm sorry.
And I wish that I could go back.
And I hope that I can go forward.
And I try, and try.
And I make these small gains.
And you cheerlead me.
Like I'm a child. We're nowhere near pediatrics, and you treat me like a child.
MESS (cont.)
(addressing EYESORE) If for one day, you could lay in this bed.
If for one day, you could hear the beeping without going outside.
If for one day, you knew what it was like.
You would drop your fucking clipboard and go to your knees.
Begging me for forgiveness.
Saying, "I'm sorry!"

I forgot.
I forgot.
I'm sorry.
I forgot how to be a human being.
I forgot you were a human being.
I forgot I was a human being.
I forgot you were a human being.
I forgot, and I'm sorry.
I am so fucking sorry.
And I just wanna make it right.
Can I bring you juice?
Can I take you outside?
Can I give you leaves to touch?
Please let me give you leaves to touch.
And we won't even write about it.
We won't even make it into a thing.
I won't even try to collect data on that afternoon.
I will simply love you.
And feel free.
And hope that somewhere in your body that cannot anymore, you are skipping.
That you are running and laughing and doing things that you can't do anymore.
And that I forgot.
And I'm sorry.
I sought to quantify you.
I sought to build myself up in the eyes of my peers.
I sought to make a difference through your suffering.
But not for your suffering.
Just for my own gain.
I am so ashamed."
Yeah.
Yeah, if for once, you could say anything near that, then maybe for half a day, you would
be redeemable.
Not forgivable.
But redeemable.
Like some value in you might be reclaimed.
If you could just remember.
That I'm a human being.

EYESORE
You done?

MESS
No. I—

EYESORE
Bounds.

BOUNDS
Sir?

EYESORE
You know what to do.

BOUNDS
Do I have to, Sir?

EYESORE
Is there ever any questioning?

*BOUNDS pulls a syringe out of her pocket and sticks MESS with it.
MESS falls.
Together BOUNDS and EYESORE put her back into bed.*

That a girl.
Be sure to write that up.
Be good for the study.

BOUNDS
I was just wondering if—

EYESORE
There are protocols.
We follow protocols.

BOUNDS
Of course.

EYESORE
And according to protocols.
You'll need to chart this.

BOUNDS
Yes, Sir.

*EYESORE exits.
BOUNDS checks on MESS.*

BOUNDS
You sweet soul.
You sweet, lost soul.
Where did you go, huh?

Pause.

Sorry to have to do that.
Things were getting out of hand.
And when things are getting out of hand, I have to bring them back into hand.
You understand?
Yes?
I hope you do.
There are rules.
The rules keep things in order.
And the order is what we count on.
The control.
The way to say, “Okay, today our job is to stop death from happening.”
Kind of like fingers in the ears about death.
La la la la la la!
We all—
We all—
God, I can’t even say it.
We all—pass.
But even that sounds good, right?
Like, we passed a test!
We passed the border check!
But this kind of passing, it’s not normally a cause for celebration.
And it’s something that scares the shit out of me, frankly.
Out of us.
And I—I think we’re trying to push it?
We’re trying to hold it back.
Hold it away.
Make it not so.
Or at least stave it off.
For a while.
Like if it comes, we ask it to check in and follow our rules.
And wait.
In the waiting room.
We’ve got death waiting in the waiting room.
For ages.
Drinking shitty coffee and watching loud, annoying TV programs, so that we can make
sure it doesn’t come into these rooms.
And it’s powerful.
It’s very powerful.
Eventually it finds its way in.
But it’s my job—it’s our job—to try to make sure that it doesn’t.
BOUNDS (cont.)
And most of the time, it doesn’t.
But there are times—
I don’t like it when it comes down this hallway, or when it comes into a room, because
it gets so cold in here.
When it comes.
And I.

Have to deal with another loss.
I have to deal with more sleepless nights where I ask myself, “Was there something else I could’ve done?”
Was there something else I could’ve done, to help this person stave off death?
To make things right again.
And by right I mean—
I mean—
Ordered.
Chosen.
By our timeline.
You know?
We say.
We get to say.
And if I could’ve done something else, then am I a murderer?
Am I an accomplice—to death?
I can’t be.
So I work.
I work for the man who fights it.
And I hope that that does something to bring you another twenty years.
Or five years.
Or even one.

Inhale, exhale.

I’m so sorry.
I forgot.

*BOUNDS kisses MESS on the forehead.
She checks that MESS has blankets on her.
BOUNDS exits, turning off the light as she goes.*

This long, long moment of MESS, sedated, in bed.

FLIGHT and GLORY come back in. GLORY is holding some leaves.

GLORY
That was nice, Dear.

FLIGHT
Yeah, that’s a nice little courtyard. Filled with concrete, but/

GLORY
/I still love it.

FLIGHT
Yeah, there’s sunlight.

GLORY
Beautiful sunlight.

FLIGHT
Yeah, I used to take it for granted.
Not anymore.

GLORY puts the leaves on her bedside table.
FLIGHT helps GLORY get back in bed.

So—do you have everything you need?

GLORY
Yes, Dear.

FLIGHT
Do you need me to bring you anything?

GLORY
I'm fine.

FLIGHT
Do anything?

GLORY
You could just stay here.

FLIGHT
...

GLORY takes FLIGHT'S hand.

FLIGHT
Do you want me to turn the TV on?

GLORY
It's alright.
I can watch it after you go.

FLIGHT smiles.
MESS stirs.

GLORY
Wow, you were out.

MESS
I wasn't sleeping.

GLORY
No?

MESS
They sedated me.

GLORY
Oh.
What'd you do?

MESS
Nothing.

Silence.

How was outside?

GLORY
Marvelous.

FLIGHT
You should go, get some sunlight.

MESS
Some of us can't.

FLIGHT
Really?

MESS
Too big a risk.
For some of us.

FLIGHT
I guess.

GLORY
Brought you some leaves.

MESS
You did?

GLORY gestures to the leaves on the bedside table.

GLORY
Figured since you can't go get them, we'll bring them to you.

*MESS gets out of bed, sways, and touches the leaves.
She is moved.*

MESS
Thank you.
It's been ages since I/

FLIGHT
/I can't imagine.

MESS
Yeah well you don't have to.

GLORY
Mess.

MESS
What.
Does she?

TAMPER wheels by.

TAMPER
Need to piss.

MESS
So go piss.

TAMPER
I need help.

MESS
Have Bounds do it.

TAMPER
She's not on my unit.

MESS
Neither am I.

TAMPER
But we're buds.

MESS
Uh—

TAMPER

Come on.

MESS

You okay, that I'm a woman?

TAMPER

It's all the same to me.

Ain't nothin' work down there anyhow.

TAMPER looks at FLIGHT.

FLIGHT

I only help my family with things like that.

GLORY

Flight.

FLIGHT

What?

I do.

It's an—(whispers) intimate thing.

GLORY

...

MESS

Alright.

I'll do it.

MESS makes her way across the room.

She helps TAMPER wheel into the bathroom.

FLIGHT

Weird.

GLORY

Leave her alone.

It does her good to help others.

FLIGHT

But she doesn't even know him.

Does she?

GLORY

He's one of us.

FLIGHT

I don't know.
I can't imagine—
You're not like him.

GLORY

I am.

FLIGHT

He freaks me out.

GLORY

Only because he's lost his mind, and not part of his body.

FLIGHT

If you weren't—yourself?
Through all this.
Mom, I don't know how I would do it.
Like if I couldn't talk to you?
And say—I am I and you are you.
And we know exactly who we are.
And where we are.
And when we are.
And what we're doing.
And why.
If I couldn't do that—I'd lose my shit.

GLORY

You?
Oh, Sweetie.
This isn't about you.

FLIGHT

Yes, it is.
It's not all about me.
But it concerns me.

GLORY

I'm trying to—

FLIGHT

I never had any training in this.
And then all the sudden, I'm supposed to be your go-to.
I am your go-to.
And it's okay.
I don't mind.
I know that that's part of the deal.

I know—when parents get older, you just do what you have to do.
But it still freaks me out.
And if I couldn't—I mean, if you were here, but you weren't here?
You know like if your body was here but your mind wasn't—

GLORY
What?

FLIGHT
It'd be like caring for you, after you were dead.

GLORY
Funny.

FLIGHT
Or half-dead.

GLORY
That's what Tamper said.

FLIGHT
It's creepy.

GLORY
It's just people who are sick.
Or injured.
That's all.
And they're getting the help they need.

FLIGHT
But some of them are so severe, Mom—

*FLIGHT is overcome again.
She leans into the bed, holding onto the railing, stabilizes.*

Some of them are so—
I saw this one lady, in the hallway.
Her head was all kinked to the side.
And her foot was elevated.
A couple of her toes were missing.
FLIGHT (cont.)
I said good morning to her.
And she just looked at me with this blank stare.
Like—uuuuuhhhh.
Not words really.
Just—bluuuuuhhhh.
And she's somebody's grandma.

She's somebody's mom.
She's sitting in here.
How's she supposed to get any better?

GLORY
Some of us don't.

FLIGHT
Us, us, US!
Why are you identifying with these people?
You're different.
You're gonna get better.

GLORY
You think?

FLIGHT
Yes.

GLORY
Yes, I will walk out of here.
(gestures to her walker) With the help of that thing.
I will live on my own.
I will cook soup for myself.
But I will not get back what I had.
I will not get back to what I was.
And that has to be okay, Flight.

FLIGHT
...

GLORY
It has to be okay.

FLIGHT
It's you.
Exactly like I remember you.

GLORY
Exactly?

FLIGHT
...

GLORY
Flight, you need to look.

GLORY lifts her gown to show FLIGHT her chest.

You need to see that my body has changed.
And so my mind has changed.
I am different.
Just not—in ways that seem to interrupt.
Who I was.
I mean—
I still remember.
I can talk with you.
I love your father.
But I am fundamentally different.
There's this—mourning.
For this loss.
That I will never be able to explain to you.

FLIGHT

...

GLORY

And you won't know what it feels like.

FLIGHT is overcome.

She moves to the chair before she faints.

FLIGHT

I think I do.

GLORY

Honey?

Are you okay?

FLIGHT

I just—

GLORY

What is it?

Hon?

FLIGHT

It's—

It's coming from you now, too.

MESS and TAMPER come out of the bathroom.

MESS

You're all set now.

TAMPER
Thankfulness.
There's a thanking?
The thanksgiving.
For the giving of the thanks.
I don't think it's the time for that.
But I will do it.
Because—that was something.
That was really something.

Beat.

MESS
You're welcome.

TAMPER
What is this place, anyhow?

MESS
It's supposed to be a place where they help us get better.

TAMPER
There is no getting better.
No back.
No better back.
No getting better back.
Of all this.
What do they think?
What is—

GLORY
What do they think they're doing?

MESS
Helping.

TAMPER
This is—

GLORY
They are helping us.
In their own way.

FLIGHT
In their own way.

TAMPER

Don't see it.

I backed up today.

Hit a wall.

Came forward.

Hit another wall.

Turned around.

Three-point turnaround.

Three-point jump!

Three points to the win!

Foul!

Field goal!

FLIGHT

Shhhh!

TAMPER

They don't want me yelling.

They know I will.

MESS

Yeah.

TAMPER

So I just back up.

Go forward.

Progress!!

MESS

Yeah.

TAMPER

Used to be a janitor.

Used to do it so well.

Simple.

Very simple. Life.

I just—got up.

And did my thing.

Wasn't hard.

Beat.

TAMPER (cont.)

This place.

This place is clean.

No mop needed.

I'm not needed.

GLORY

Oh yes you are.
They need you to take care of.
Just like they need to take care of all of us.
It's part of how they're made.

TAMPER

Well how am I made?
I'm made to janit. Or.
Something.
But it's gone now.
The way to do that.
The way of—supplies.
Just sit.
Look out.
Bump into walls.
Damn shame!

GLORY

(sympathetic) Awww.

FLIGHT

(holding her head) Freaks me out.

TAMPER

Hit my head.
Jumbled now.

MESS

Yeah.
That's progress!

BOUNDS enters.

BOUNDS

Tamper! I told you.
You have to stay on your unit.

TAMPER

Unit.
Eunuch.
Units.

BOUNDS wheels TAMPER out of the room.

MESS

One thing after another.

GLORY

You said it.

FLIGHT

You tired?

GLORY

Exhausted.

GLORY yawns.

MESS yawns, too.

MESS

Tuckered. Out.

FLIGHT

You go ahead.

GLORY

But you got the time off work.

FLIGHT

No matter.

I'll pass the time.

GLORY

Don't need to go yet?

FLIGHT

I want to know you're comfortable.

For tonight.

GLORY

Well, comfy or no—

MESS

Here we go—

GLORY and MESS fall asleep.

FLIGHT gets up, picks up the book she brought, flips through it.

She puts it back, looks around.

She sits back in her chair.

EYESORE enters.

FLIGHT
Finally.

EYESORE
Are you the family member?

FLIGHT
I'm a family member.

EYESORE
For Glory.

FLIGHT
Yes.

EYESORE
You're here for Glory.
Me too.
Ha!

FLIGHT
Do you have news?

EYESORE
Documentation.

FLIGHT
For what.

EYESORE
The chair.
We need your permission.

FLIGHT
Ah.

EYESORE
Sign here.

FLIGHT signs the form.
EYESORE starts to exit.

FLIGHT
Are you doing everything that you can for my mother?

EYESORE
Yes.

Of course.
I assure you.

FLIGHT
How do I know that you're telling me the truth?

EYESORE
Why would you question.

FLIGHT
Most of the time, I take people at their word, but this is my mother.
You have to understand.

EYESORE
Well.
Do you have to understand my profession?

FLIGHT
No.

EYESORE
Do you need to know these procedures?

FLIGHT
No.

EYESORE
So why should I have to understand you?

FLIGHT
...

EYESORE
...

FLIGHT
Do you ever get overwhelmed?

EYESORE
Never.

FLIGHT
Tired?

EYESORE
After a 16-hour shift, sure.

FLIGHT

Annoyed, with the beeping?

EYESORE

It fades into the background.

After a while.

FLIGHT

I'm overwhelmed.

EYESORE

Is this gonna take much longer?

Because I need to—

FLIGHT

No.

I'm just—trying to undertand.

EYESORE

Well.

Unless you go to school for over a decade, I don't see how you could.

FLIGHT

And unless you've had this mother for over 35 years, I don't see how you could.

EYESORE

Po-tay-to, po-tah-to.

FLIGHT

But she's fine?

EYESORE

She's golden.

Back to healthy.

No worries.

FLIGHT

The...?

You know.

EYESORE

The threat?

It's gone.

I cut it out of her.

Both sides.

FLIGHT

Thank you.

EYESORE

You know.

That's something I hear less often than you'd think.

EYESORE exits, carrying the signed paperwork.

FLIGHT goes and looks very closely at GLORY.

FLIGHT kisses GLORY on her hairline.

GLORY wakes with a loud, startled sound.

GLORY

Whaa!

MESS wakes.

MESS

Whassat?

FLIGHT

Sorry—

GLORY

It's alright—

FLIGHT

I didn't mean to wake you.

GLORY

No matter.

FLIGHT

You were just so peaceful.

MESS

Matters to me!

FLIGHT

...

MESS

I was in the middle of a great dream.

GLORY

...?

FLIGHT

Sorry.

MESS

It was the most beautiful thing I've ever seen.

GLORY

Well. Tell us about it.

MESS

It was this gorgeous castle.

Huge.

But it wasn't cold.

It was the perfect temperature.

And it wasn't even grey.

It had color to it.

Sparkle.

There were jewels, in the spires.

It was on this massive rock.

So big that it reached into the sky.

And there were seagulls.

It was up in the clouds.

They were all around the castle.

We were in the castle.

All of us.

High up, but safe.

Solid.

We had a place to be.

And everybody in there smiled.

But like a real smile.

Like an I'm-actually-happy-to-see-you kind of smile.

Not plastic.

They came to us and wished our whole bodies well.

Not just wishing.

They worked with us.

They used their hands, their minds, their hearts.

They whispered to our bodies how they wished them to be well.

In this castle, there were people walking by who were radiating.

And there weren't any walls!

No rooms dividing us from each other.

MESS (cont.)

There were these large spaces.

Filled with music.

We were all there together.

And there was this buffet.

This magnificent buffet.

With the most overflowing salad bar.

Racks of lamb.
And tomato juices with celery sticks.
There was this—spirit—who came through.
Who ran the place?
Nodding his head.
Saying yes, good.
Yes, good!
We have made this well.
And whole.
And entire.
Everyone has been returned to what they once were.
Or become so much more than they ever dreamed they could be.

Beat.

Everyone pulsed.
Mit der Möglichkeit.
Mann hat sich wohlgeföhlt.
So eine Art von Gesundheit.
Like wind.
Or symphony.
And not an ounce of artifice.
Not a drop of pain.
I didn't even want to leave.
My roommate came there.
We made a home.
Nobody minded.
It wasn't separate.
It was grand.

GLORY
That's Heaven.

MESS
No, it's not.

GLORY
Sounds like Heaven.

MESS
Well, it's not!

GLORY
Don't you believe in it?

MESS
I want it here!

Not removed.
Not elsewhere.
I want it here.
Let's make it here.
Work with me!

GLORY

Well, I suppose it would be good if we had music playing.
But beyond that, we can't really hope for much.

MESS

No!
We have to dream bigger!
We have to make it better!
We have to make it better.
From the ground up.
Let's raze all of them.
To the ground.
And simply start anew.

MESS addresses the audience.

Can't you see it?
Please tell me you can see it.
I'm losing patience.
I'm all alone in this.
And it drives me crazy.
In a crazy system, arguing for sanity becomes insanity.
Es ist alles ein Wahnsinn.
Wenn man versucht, 'was Anderes zu machen, die Alle lachen.
Das ist so ein Schwachsinn.
Ich kann es kaum glauben.

Back to FLIGHT and GLORY.

Please join me in this.
Please.

They look at her with doubt.

MESS (cont.)

I know.
Some things.
Some people need to be separated off.
For the health of the whole.
But I miss it.
I miss what we could be, and what we never even were.
How can I miss it?

Huh?
How can I love it so much?

GLORY
Oh, Sweetie.
When you pass, you'll—

MESS
I want it here!

GLORY and FLIGHT look at each other.

You think I'm crazy, don't you?

FLIGHT
It sounds like it was a beautiful dream.

MESS
It was more than a dream.

GLORY
Mess, you were sleeping.

MESS
It was a vision.
Of a possible future.

BOUNDS enters.

BOUNDS
We got a green light on the chair.

FLIGHT
Great.
When can they deliver it?

BOUNDS
One catch.

FLIGHT
There's a catch?

BOUNDS
(gesturing to GLORY) It's easier for us to transfer her than the recliner.

GLORY
Ah.

BOUNDS
Lighter.

FLIGHT
We'll do what we need to do.

FLIGHT starts to gather the book and card.

MESS
You can't do that.
You can't take her from me.

BOUNDS
I have my orders.

FLIGHT
(to MESS) She needs this.

*BOUNDS helps GLORY out of bed.
She brings her the walker to use.*

MESS
But she's my rock.
My rock!

BOUNDS
We'll get you another roommate.

MESS
I can't build this without her.

BOUNDS
You're over-reacting.

MESS
You don't understand.

*The lights shift.
Many more realistic elements are added to the room—blinds, some photos and letters
on the corkboard, a heart monitor machine that is beeping, water cups, a remote
control, flower pot, gauze, a trash can, and other items.*

*MESS lifts the top of her undershirt, which is really just a collar, revealing that she has
a stoma (a hole) in her neck from a laryngectomy. It becomes obvious that she is
physically unable to speak.*

Now it is crystal clear where they are—an oncology unit at a major U.S. hospital.

FLIGHT
I'll leave you to it.

FLIGHT swoons, uses the walker to hold herself up.

Room number?

BOUNDS
423.

FLIGHT exits.
GLORY approaches MESS.

GLORY
(to MESS) You wanted to tell me.
So tell me.

BOUNDS
She can't.

GLORY
...

BOUNDS
(to GLORY) Had her larynx removed.
This morning.
Hasn't spoken a word since then.
She's waiting on discharge to a rehab facility.
For TEP placement.
If she can even use it.

GLORY
Why couldn't she?

BOUNDS
Took out half her tongue as well.

GLORY
Oh my God.

BOUNDS
Yeah.
It was like nothing we've ever seen.
It grew, basically overnight.
Taking the whole thing out—it was the only way to save her.

GLORY
That's awful.

BOUNDS
Hasn't said a word all day.
Won't be able to.

Pause.

Can you imagine, not being able to speak a single word the rest of your life?

GLORY
No.

BOUNDS
She might get one of those electro larynges.

GLORY
That sound like a robot?

BOUNDS
Yeah.
Or use her esophagus to speak.

GLORY
Like—burping?

BOUNDS
Mmm.

GLORY
That's speaking, I guess.

BOUNDS
Of a kind.

GLORY
Wow. Now I feel I got off lucky.

BOUNDS
In a way, Honey.
You did.

GLORY moves slowly over to MESS and squeezes her hand.

MESS looks at GLORY silently, locking eyes with her.

GLORY
(to MESS) There's no reason why you should be alone.

BOUNDS
(to GLORY) No.

GLORY
(to MESS) Okay.
I'll help you build it, Love.
Starting now.

GLORY gathers objects from around the room—the remote control, flower pot, gauze, etc.—and makes a small pile in the middle of the room.

BOUNDS
Glory, you're making a mess.

GLORY
I know.

BOUNDS
I'll have to clean it up you know.

GLORY
Leave it.

BOUNDS goes to pick up some of the items.

LEAVE IT!

GLORY gestures to the pile of things.

(to MESS) Your rock, m'Dear.

MESS smiles.
GLORY sprinkles the leaves on top of the pile.

We'll start with this.

GLORY touches her forehead to MESS'S. They weep.

BOUNDS escorts GLORY out of the room and down the hall on her walker.

MESS cries and cries in utter silence—just what crying looks like, not its sound.

EYESORE enters carrying his clipboard.

EYESORE

What's all this?

This won't do at all.

*He clears the pile of things from the middle of the room and puts them in the trash.
MESS jumps out of bed to stop him, but he goes ahead.*

We don't need any of this.

He guides her back into her bed.

Lemme have a look.

He goes to examine MESS'S neck.

Not that I have to justify myself to you.

But.

When we got in there, it was larger than we'd expected.

I know I told you we'd only take out a small part—that you'd be back to speaking in no time.

No cosmetic damage.

But once you get in there, you never know what you're going to find.

I did the best I could with what I had.

I'm sorry, if it upsets you.

Waking up this way.

I had to do it to save your life.

MESS gives him a look.

The therapists will help you after this.

I can't help you anymore.

I hope I've helped you.

I just want you to know—

MESS opens her mouth to say something, but can't.

I know, it's still painful. So—

You don't have to thank me.

EYESORE starts to leave.

MESS reaches for EYESORE.

EYESORE is out of her reach.

MESS tries to address the audience, but she cannot.

She is mute.

EYESORE sees her attempts.

EYESORE (cont.)

Of course.

You'll need to communicate.

Pause.

Let's start with one notebook.

And one pencil.

EYESORE pulls a notebook and pencil from his pocket and gives them to her.

You can have as many as you like.

MESS looks at him.

She writes something like, "It isn't fair."

I know it isn't fair.

Some people get out of here intact.

Others don't.

But we try.

Life takes all kinds of forms.

Death, too.

EYESORE exits.

MESS is alone.

MESS reaches for the pad of paper and pen, knocking them accidentally to the floor.

Carefully, picks them up and sits on the floor with her newfound treasures.

She takes the notebook and scribbles furiously on it as the lights fade.

End Play.