

**SECRETS ©**

**A Full Length Play In  
Two Acts**

**By  
Blues Bland**

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Approximate running time:  
1.0 hour 20 minutes**

**Secrets** – Siblings gather after the funeral of a murdered sister. Unexpectedly the oldest, a brother, a world wise college graduate, arrives, who has been estranged from the family for years. He had divorced himself from the raw, bigoted, racist personalities of his siblings who have had only high school education at most. During the course of a drug and alcohol, hate filled night and a day, old wounds reappear and secrets revealed, including one of horrific consequence that will change all involved.

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Blues Bland  
10000 45<sup>th</sup> Avenue North #304  
Plymouth, Minnesota 55442-2655  
Email: [tozaiminka@yahoo.com](mailto:tozaiminka@yahoo.com)  
Phone: 763.533.5355

**SECRETS**

**Cast of Characters:**

**Vicky:** Late 50's. Attractive. Former stripper, escort.

**Morgan:** Early 50's. Burly. Handsome. Worked heavy labor most his life

**Cass:** Mid 50's. Plain. Weak.

**Frank:** Early 60's. World wise. College educated. Self-important.

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**Setting:** Apartment condo; mid 1980's.

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- It is vital to note that the racial slurs used by the characters are/were normal for the strata of people of the time and should not be censored as the impact of the language is necessary to convey their prejudice and racial bigotry.
- The characters of Vicky, Morgan, Cass all have colloquial speech patterns, hence some of the writing indicates the thrusts of the accent as well as including the actual rhythm and sound. Some of their grammar is not exact. They tend to use contractions to make their words go faster and sentences smoother for them. They speak in heavy "Baltamorese" (see Wikipedia under "Baltimore accent").

**ACT I**

The action takes place in Suzanne's apartment condo, mid 1980's.

**SCENE 1 AT RISE:** VICKY and MORGAN enter.

VICKY

Just what the hell was that outburst about?

MORGAN

You know damn good and well what it was about.

VICKY

But it was Suzanne's funeral. You should have shown some respect.

MORGAN

What kind of respect did that little fucker show her?

VICKY

That wasn't the time or place to start in on such a rant.

MORGAN

I can't think of a better time to put it all out there. How else will her friends know what really happened? Little shit killed her and now his family's lawyer is trying to bury it. Probably won't get more than a couple of years and those might just be in juvie.

VICKY

He's underage so the law will say what he gets.

MORGAN

I know what I'd like to give him. I'm sure as Hell pissed at that nigger. And you know they'll scream that any heavy punishment is just the law coming after them because they're black.

VICKY

But Morg today was not a time to go off on it. Most everybody there knew what happened. They were grieving and needed someone to stand up and talk about Suz's life, not how horrible an end she had.

MORGAN

What did you want me to do, just be quiet and pretend it was all just some misunderstanding? You know that's not me.

VICKY

Couldn't you have just let it alone today of all days?

MORGAN

Everyone has to know. Robbing her bar. He didn't have to shoot her.

VICKY

I mean couldn't we all just grieve today? Come at the kid and his family tomorrow? Let our sister rest in peace?

MORGAN

Maybe. It just hurts to even think about it. What about that DA; what's his name?

VICKY

Goldman.

MORGAN

Yeah, Goldman. What has he said about the situation with the kid?

VICKY

He called to let me know what their approach is. Currently, as you know, the kid's in lockup. The District Attorney wants to try him as an adult since he believes it was not only the robbery that was premeditated but by bringing a weapon with him it implies preplanning and intent to use it. He's just shy of his eighteenth birthday so charging him with a capital crime seems a no-brainer. He said he'd keep us "apprised" as to the next step. I said he could contact me here over the next few days and gave him this number.

MORGAN

Throw the book at him. Vicky, I'm sorry about earlier. I've just been so angry and there's been such rage inside me over it.

VICKY

I understand. I just wanted to have a tribute to her and have the funeral be a step towards closure.

MORGAN

Maybe your right, but I'm hurting Vicky.

VICKY

Morgan, just because you're taking it so hard doesn't mean someone else isn't hurting in their own way.

MORGAN

Yeah, OK. I'm sorry sis. Say what did that ambulance chaser say to you yesterday?

VICKY

Oh, him. Said he was gonna look into suing the family. Get some money out of their insurance or something. He gave me his card. I didn't put much stock in it.

MORGAN

Me too. Don't think anything will come of it.

VICKY

Shit!! You want a drink?

MORGAN

Yeah, whisky.

VICKY

There's some vodka and some of your home made beer.

MORGAN

Gimme a beer.

VICKY

Here.

MORGAN

Thanks.

VICKY

It was a good service otherwise.

MORGAN

She had some good friends. Know some of 'em. Wish I'd known a few more. Glad to see so many could make it. How's her daughter holding up?

VICKY

She can be hard to read sometimes. I don't get to see her much except around the holidays, but she always acts kind of distant.

MORGAN

Here I am feeling like I want to cry at anything said about my sister and she just sits and stares like she's in some trance or something.

VICKY

Stuff comes out at weird times for people like her. I feel she's not ready to deal with all of it right now. She was so close to her mother and to lose her like that is a tragedy for anyone.

MORGAN

What's she going to do?

VICKY

She told me she's flying back home today; said we can stay here and wrap things up.

MORGAN

But it's her mother. She should be sad and crying and depressed and whatever else comes with it. Damn it she should be as angry as Hell about her mom being murdered.

VICKY

I'm sure when it's time she'll find her own way and openly grieve. For now she just needs to lock it up inside her. Anything to get her through or dull the pain. Morgan, how are YOU doing? Dealing with the funeral arrangements, the reception, contacting all of us, making sure we had places to stay has been so stressful; I know it must be the hardest on you.

MORGAN

Vic, it hurts so damn much I want to just scream. There is such a rage inside me. You want to know about pain. I can't stop crying. I'm angry and sad and hurting beyond words. And I've cried myself to sleep every night and break out at almost anything when awake.

VICKY

I have some idea of what you mean. Haven't felt like this inside since momma died.

MORGAN

Know what you mean by about 100 times that.

VICKY

I'm sorry Morg. I feel like crap, but, yeah, it's gotta be worse for you.

MORGAN

It should be obvious. Suz was not just my sister, she was my best friend and she knew me – Hell - we both knew each other better than anyone else in the world. We just loved each other so deeply. Enjoyed a lot of the same stuff; shared our own secrets with each other that nobody could understand.

VICKY

I was always a bit jealous that my little brother didn't look up to his big sister.

MORGAN

It was always special. We felt what was going on inside each other's souls. She and I never had to explain stuff to each other. She was so loving and giving we just knew and that was enough. Suz was always the kind one who had perspective. She'd look at a situation and have that calm, sensible approach. Me? I was the tough one who was always a bit impulsive.

VICKY

A bit?

MORGAN

Well, I could get angry. But when Suzanne was around she always had her special way of soothing me.

VICKY

Not to take away from the fact she also had a wicked sense of humor.

MORGAN

That she did. And she could be pretty sarcastic in the right situation, although she never purposefully tried to hurt anyone. I always wished I had her cool. And, man, did she ever know how to tell a dirty joke or story. She'd really get raunchy at times.

VICKY

Yeah.

MORGAN

Yeah.

VICKY

It's nice that we all had keys to her place here. We've had a lot of good memories here.

MORGAN

She did like to throw a party and she'd have a girlfriend stay over now and then. Good of her daughter to let us stay. Where you gonna sleep tonight?

VICKY

I'll take Suzanne's room. You can have the guest bedroom.

MORGAN

Girl in girl's room, boy in boy's room.

VICKY

Got a problem with that?

MORGAN

Nah, just giving you some shit, that's all.

VICKY

Like you could give me any. I've had experts try to give me shit. Sorry ass losers down at the club ALWAYS tried to make my work into something it wasn't.

MORGAN

So, being a stripper didn't imply something more?

VICKY

Hey, I may not be picky about who I get naked in front of, but I'm damn sure picky about who I fuck.

MORGAN

Then your work as an escort doesn't count.

VICKY

Tread carefully where you walk, mister. I meant it when I said “escort”. They could hire me for the evening to keep them company, entertained and have a good laugh with, but at the end of the night, I got to choose what went on afterwards.

MORGAN

And you are not anything if not picky.

VICKY

What’s that supposed to mean?

MORGAN

Hey, I’m not being judgmental. Live and let live I say. However, you did marry that weird fart with the dry cleaning chain. Made out pretty damn well in the divorce, too.

VICKY

Well, there was the fact he was into some pretty dark stuff.

MORGAN

Meaning him beating you up and all.

VICKY

At first it wasn’t much. He was the best lover I ever had up to that point. After we married, he didn’t really start in on me for a while and it wasn’t much at first.

MORGAN

Harold took it to extremes based on the injuries you got.

VICKY

There was no way to know he was a psycho-sadist. I mean even when he started slapping me, that wasn’t such a big deal. I’d had worse. Dad was rougher than Harold in the beginning.

MORGAN

I was surprised you didn’t let us know what was happening. We could have done something.

VICKY

To be honest I was a bit ashamed of being in such a situation, and if I’m to be truthful I was scared. I also thought it was my fault. For a time anyway.

MORGAN

All the more reason not to keep it a secret. We’re family and we gotta stick together.

VICKY

Yeah, I know. But I tell you, something like that will never, ever happen to me again.



MORGAN

Got him good with the settlement and all.

VICKY

Not to mention a year in prison for the last beating.

MORGAN

So, now that you've "retired" and do the hair for the girls at the club, do you miss being on the pole?

VICKY

I miss the tips, but I don't miss having to put up with a bunch of semi-drunk a-holes every day. It wasn't like they were real people to me. God knows, they usually didn't act like real men.

MORGAN

Bet it's a lot easier on the body as well.

VICKY

Actually, it wasn't so bad. I worked out and kept myself in shape. The club dues were tax deductible in addition to a lot of other stuff. Since most everything was cash, the IRS didn't need to know exactly how much I earned. Many a year I paid little or no taxes.

MORGAN

Done anything for yourself lately?

VICKY

Last year I had my implants taken out. It was time.

MORGAN

Couldn't help noticing a bit of weight loss there.

VICKY

Careful.

MORGAN

Just saying. When's Cass coming?

VICKY

She should be here any minute. Said she had to get some paperwork from home and cigs from the local pit stop. Said she was going to fill up the tank along with the smokes she was getting.

MORGAN

Speaking of which, mind if I light up a joint?

VICKY

Nah.

MORGAN

Thanks. Wanna toke?

VICKY

Not right now, maybe later.

MORGAN

This always helps mellow me out and in the mood I'm in I want to kick back a little. I'd really like to get my hands on that little shitass.

VICKY

Sadly, there's not much we can do legally. We just gotta let the courts do things as they will. So, Ok, what's been going on in your life lately?

MORGAN

Me and Wanda got away for a weekend about a month ago.

VICKY

Remind me who she is.

MORGAN

She's the bar girl down at my local do-drop-inn.

VICKY

A bar girl huh? Getting less picky are we?

MORGAN

Nope. We got to know each other a bit and one night she goes home with me and we smashed down a few; wake up the next morning figuring we'll keep doing what we kept doing.

VICKY

So how long's this been going on?

MORGAN

Almost six months now.

VICKY

Wow!! That's gotta be a new record.

MORGAN

Aw, come on Vicky. I've had longer.

VICKY

Do I get to mention the ex in there?

MORGAN

NO, if you know what's good for you.

VICKY

Kind of strange as you never let a chance go by to brag about who you bang.

MORGAN

Well, I'm a red blooded American male in the prime of my life so if you got it flaunt it.

VICKY

I've got to ask you something. I know it's been a year since I visited, but last time up your hair was brown. How did it get all white so suddenly?

MORGAN

Oh that. Well as it happened I wound up with a case of hepatitis. It really knocked me out for a while and in the process it caused my hair to rapidly turn white,

VICKY

My God, I didn't know. Are you OK now?

MORGAN

It took about six months to get over the worst, but I'm pretty well over it now.

VICKY

Any lingering effects?

MORGAN

Doc wanted to know about my lifestyle. He told me I'm gonna have to stay away from so much booze, wanted me to stop actually, and to have safe sex with new partners, but Hell, I feel fine now so I'll drink as much as I want and fuck as much as I want. And since I started smoking weed I don't feel much physical pain. By the way, thank your daughter for turning me on to . . .

CASS

(Enters.)

That damn raghead!

VICKY

What's up girl?

CASS

Clerk at the Pay & Save wouldn't make change. All I had was a Benjamin. Said he didn't keep that much change available. I told him I knew he was lying and to just do it.

VICKY

Did he?

CASS

No. Fucker just kept saying he couldn't break a hundred. Told me to use a credit card.

VICKY

So you did?

CASS

Yeah, but I wasn't happy about it. What's this country come to? You got towel heads running convenience stores; spics doing lawns and niggers robbing us every chance they get.

VICKY

Cass did you get the paperwork you mentioned yesterday?

CASS

Got it right here. It's Suzanne's will. She wanted me to keep it as I lived closest to her in case she needed it in a hurry or something. Here Morgan, you take this, I don't want it anymore.

MORGAN

I was surprised she had written a will. I don't have one.

CASS

Me neither. It's so unreal she isn't here.

VICKY

Would you like anything Cass?

CASS

I'm kinda hungry. Got any food around here?

VICKY

There's a bunch of stuff in the fridge. Help yourself.

CASS

Thanks Vic.

(Exits to kitchen.)

MORGAN

I just can't get over that shithead little fucker, killing Suz like that.

VICKY

All too common these days. You read about that kind of thing but never think it'll happen to you or someone you love.

MORGAN

I miss her so much. Being here in her condo I keep feeling like she'll come out of the bedroom and flash that radiant smile of hers and start spouting some funny story that she heard or saw at the bar.

(Begins reading will.)

VICKY

And she sure knew how to give a hug when any of us needed it. She really loved us all, but you especially Morg. She even loved most everyone she met at the bar as well. It was almost like her second family with all the regulars that hung out there.

MORGAN

No shit. That was one of the happiest places around.

CASS

(Enters.)

Nice little stock of food here. I did a quick grab, cold chicken legs and potato salad.

MORGAN

Save a piece for me, I'm getting some munchies on.

CASS

Sure.

MORGAN

Damn, ain't that a kick in the ass.

CASS

What?

MORGAN

I don't believe this and I don't think you will either.

CASS

What does it say?

MORGAN

Well the uninteresting stuff is Suz has left almost everything to me; no surprise there and there are things of hers she wants to have us deal with; but the second part states that she wants us to try to reconcile with Frank.

VICKY

You're kidding!!

MORGAN

Swear to it. She says she feels if it's at all possible that her last request is for us to come together as a family before it's too late.

VICKY

So she wants us to try and get back together with The Phantom Brother. What's it been, like, fourteen years and no word? He may be dead himself for all we know.

MORGAN

As it is written here, it says Suz hired a private dick to track him down and has kept his current address on file. She put all the contact info in the will.

VICKY

No fucking way.

MORGAN

She writes that, when she dies a friend of hers will contact Frank and inform him of the details and request he come to visit us. She's asking this as her dying request.

CASS

Why would she do that?

MORGAN

Well. She always had a soft spot for Frank. Would point out his good side when I started ragging on him in front of her. Say we had to love each other; be close. I think she may have admired him but didn't want to make an issue out of it to us. But the fact is that he was a 14 carat gold plated asshole.

VICKY

So she say anything else?

MORGAN

Nope, that's it.

CASS

Why didn't she say anything to us? Why didn't she try to contact him herself?

MORGAN

Sixty four dollar question. If you can dial long distance into the afterlife I'm sure you'd be able to ask her. Talk about a shit storm.

CASS

Maybe he won't come.

MORGAN

We can always hope. Who the Hell wants him after disappearing for so long? I'll be tied at the stake and burned alive before that happens.

VICKY

What a wonderful going away present Suzanne has given us. It just boggles my mind that she actually has the gall to ask us to try to get back together with him and make nicey-nice.

MORGAN

Watch it Vic. That's my sister and I don't like your tone.

VICKY

My sister too.

MORGAN

Well, just keep those opinions to yourself, OK?

VICKY

Geez, you don't have to make a federal case out of it.

CASS

Would that be so bad? Getting together with him I mean.

VICKY

Cass, look, there is just too damn much time and events between us. We hardly ever got along all that well, and he was never one to stay in contact anyway.

MORGAN

I remember he hated me when we were kids. Really hated dad as well. Never could say one damn nice thing about him.

CASS

Dad had his faults.

MORGAN

(Angry.)

He was a hardworking man who tried every day, as best he could, to keep food on our table and a roof over our heads. It wasn't his fault he had no education. That was just how it was in the Deep South when he was raised. You got out of school early and worked the farm. He learned jack-of-all-trades skills so he always had work. It just never paid well. I was too young to have learned much from him and his life was a mystery to me so I spoke to his brothers and sister and even grandma before she passed.

VICKY

You never told us you talked to anyone about him.

MORGAN

I didn't want to because it was personal to me. Although I was young I saw enough of him to know I wanted to know more.

CASS

You could have shared what you learned.

MORGAN

They gave me insight into a man who cared about family. He was a dirt farmer who always said he never owned the dirt in his hands. All that told me how great he was. He was a hero in my eyes.

CASS

Morgan, I'm sorry, you know I don't mean anything by . . .

MORGAN

No, you never do mean anything. You just don't talk about him and you rarely bring him up. What's with that?

VICKY

Morg lay off. It's OK, she apologized. Today is not a day to get into any fights. Suzanne wouldn't have wanted it. I don't want it, and I'm sure Cass doesn't either.

MORGAN

Fine. Alright Cass, let's just move on, OK?

VICKY

OK.

CASS

What do you think we should do about this? I mean, should we show some kinda respect, you know?

MORGAN

He can stay gone for all I care. He's an asshole who barely showed up for our mother's funeral and had little to do with us while he was here.

VICKY

Not to mention that Jew wife he brought with him.

CASS

She wasn't so bad.

VICKY

Now don't get me started on her. She was above us all and got all pissed when I started talking about the Jews and Hitler and Germany and all.



CASS

What do either of you think we should do?

VICKY

I don't really care much myself. Frank never seemed to care about us, and when he did he was sticking his nose in where it didn't belong.

MORGAN

Not to mention the fights with him, and I remember he never missed a chance to not be around.

CASS

It was tough on him as I remember. Being oldest dad put a lot on him.

MORGAN

Bullshit. He was spoiled and took advantage of that. Birthdays were always such a big deal for him, and he spent his allowance on comic books and shit.

VICKY

Most of what I remember was how different he was. He started listening to all different kinds of music.

CASS

It was a little strange to hear him in the basement playing that long haired music on the radio. And he got all upset about things happening outside the house, like with politics and stuff. I couldn't really follow much of it.

MORGAN

And if we said anything to him about any of it he'd get angry and yell at us; call is ignorant and stupid because we didn't "appreciate" that crap.

VICKY

Never heard one note of country music coming up.

CASS

Frank really liked all different kinds of music. He was crazy about the Beatles and all those bands from England.

VICKY

He was weird all right. It was like he was somebody else's kid or something.

MORGAN

Satan's maybe.

CASS

None of us had it very easy.

MORGAN

No excuse for being a jerk though.

CASS

He could be really nice and caring at times, and when we got into trouble he was almost always there to step in for us. I remember after dad died when those two guys kept coming around wanting to get into our pants the time mom worked the late shift. That one guy, Luke; he wasn't right in the head and would always try to come into the house. One night the two of them tried to pry open the front door. Frank picked up a baseball bat and tried to chase them away. Luke and that other guy started pounding on him. Some neighbor started yelling that they'd called the cops. So the two of them cut out. Frank was banged up and told the cops he wanted to press charges. That was a laugh; the judge let them go with a warning. So much for justice. But at least those guys left us alone after that.

VICKY

But Frank kept nosing around every time we wanted to hang out with some guys. Seems he had it in mind to protect out "honor". That was a laugh. It was so oblivious he didn't know when we were or weren't doing it. I was seeing this one guy, really cute. So Frank comes up to me and says the dude is bad news and he'd get what he wanted then drop me like a hot potato. I told Frank to fuck off, it was my life and I'd do what I damned well please. That guy could really take me over top of the rollercoaster when I'd cum.

CASS

Maybe we should stick to whether we want to see Frank.

MORGAN

Like I give a damn, but yeah, OK.

VICKY

So where are we with all this?

MORGAN

I see it as an open wound that needs a tourniquet; one I'd rather have around Frank's neck.

VICKY

Cute Morgan but tell us what you really think.

CASS

Can we be serious about this for more than thirty seconds?

MORGAN

Cass, I am serious. I kinda wish Suz's'd come back for just a little bit to be able to talk to her. I would ask her why in Hell she felt that we needed to make nice with Frank when it is painfully obvious he doesn't want to be in our lives. And my best friend in the world isn't here to help; in fact she is the center of everything right now.

CASS

Then let's not decide about Frank today, Morgan. We can sleep on it and come back to it. Suz'd understand. It should help to put a little space between it and deciding.

MORGAN

I'm with you Cass; we can grab that tiger's tail another day.

VICKY

That's reasonable. Tell you what Cass, why don't you sleep over tonight and we can all hash it out together tomorrow?

CASS

Good idea, thanks.

VICKY

Cass, there's an extra bed in the guest room if you don't mind sharing the room with Morgan.

CASS

That's OK with me. Morgan?

MORGAN

Fine.

VICKY

This condo sure is different from what we grew up in

MORGAN

Can say that again. I don't remember the early years but I remember we were always in some kind of low rent place.

VICKY

God knows I didn't want my kids to live the life we had. But I've been upfront about most of how I earned a living. I'm absolutely not ashamed of my life. I've done pretty well for myself considering. Three kids before I was twenty could have spelled disaster for most women, but I did OK even without a father there.

MORGAN

After dad died it all went to Hell pretty quickly. I remember we lived in that ghetto for a few months.

VICKY

It was actually close to a year but yeah, it didn't last long and we got a real education in how the blackies lived.

CASS

I didn't see much of it myself.

VICKY

Well, you know how it is. You can't trust them. They're gonna try and get you on drugs or pimp you out if you're a white girl looking to date one.

CASS

You really believe that?

VICKY

When it comes to men, especially niggers, there's very little I know they won't do.

CASS

Can't disagree. You know my life has had its ups and downs.

VICKY

Don't I know it. Hey, we've been around the block more times than I can count.

MORGAN

You going on welfare didn't hurt.

VICKY

Before that our whole family was on welfare after mom lost that last job and couldn't get another one. What were we to do, starve? After the heart attack and first cancer scare nobody would touch her.

CASS

Not to mention her being overweight.

VICKY

Times were different then. So what if I had to take welfare, food stamps and other things to get by, it kept a roof over our heads and food on the table, even if the food wasn't all that? Mom did it and we got by. I had to do it until I got a better route. Kind of a stroke of luck that my then old man at the time suggested I could make some under the table cash stripping.

CASS

It wasn't total stripping if I remember it correctly.

VICKY

Right. Topless dancing is what they called it.

CASS

You had the best genes in the family for that kind of thing.

VICKY

Don't kid yourself on that. It took a lot of hard work to get my body into shape. Rob got me aside and read me the riot act on taking care of my body; eat right, exercise, get rid of the tummy flab. Bought me a membership at the Y. Said I'd pay him back with my tips. Thank God I had mom to look after the kids while I did this.

CASS

And of course you paid her for her time.

VICKY

Why not? It wasn't her fault nobody wanted to hire her so a little extra cash wasn't such a bad thing. Boy did I learn my lesson. Asshole was getting some pussy from two sluts at the club and taking their money as well. When I found out, that was all she wrote for Rob.

CASS

You kind of got your education on the street, but you always seemed to come out on top. What else could possible go wrong?

VICKY

Well, it's not like the end of the world if . . .

(FRANK enters.)

FRANK

Well, this is unexpected.

VICKY/CASS

Frank?

FRANK

Cass? Vicky? Morgan?

MORGAN

What the fuck!

FRANK

Uh, hey bro.

CASS

Long time no fucking see brother.

FRANK

Yeah, it's been awhile.

CASS

Oh, not long, just a mere fourteen years.

VICKY

And to the inevitable question, what are you doing here?

FRANK

I came for Suzanne's funeral. A friend of hers contacted me and said Suz specifically wanted me at the funeral.

VICKY

What I meant was what are you doing HERE, in her condo?

FRANK

She sent me a key about a year ago. Wrote to keep it just in case. Uh, is it OK if I come in?

VICKY

Right, she sent you a key. Why not? You have the invite. You have a key. You're already here and Suzanne obviously wanted you here. Why not? Could events get any crazier? Sure, go ahead, come in, join the party.

FRANK

Thanks.

VICKY

(A la Ricky Ricardo.)

But Lucy you have some 'splainin to do.

FRANK

Yeah, I guess you're owed an explanation.

MORGAN

Why start now? Let's just pick up the pieces of where we left off, oh so many years ago. I sure as Hell don't want to.

CASS

As long as you're here come in and settle. Do you want anything to drink, eat?

MORGAN

Thanks, Cass, just offer him the kingdom, like he'd just stepped out for a minute; maybe some of that oh so delicious potato salad you were chomping down.

CASS

I'm just trying to be nice.

MORGAN

Well that makes one of us.

FRANK

Uh, no I'm good. I ate earlier.

VICKY

You may have eaten earlier, but I question whether you're good.

CASS

Frank, it's been so long. You just dropped off our radar. What happened to you?

FRANK

It's a long story, and it's been a tiring trip. I could use some coffee if you have any.

VICKY

Aren't they all? I admit I'm vaguely interested in why you went your own way, but in the same vein, I really don't give a good Goddamn. You decide, for whatever reason, that staying in touch with us doesn't mean squat. For years we worried about you; then we accepted that you were somehow gone for reasons unknown. Finally it was deciding you were dead. By then our emotions were pretty much played out and it was a blessing to move on.

FRANK

I didn't intend it to be like it turned out.

VICKY

Well that's how it turned out.

MORGAN

Gotta admit, you got balls to come in unannounced. Big friggin' surprise. Hello siblings, here I am back from the dead, and by the way, I'm crashing at Suzanne's place.

FRANK

Vicky, if I could take a little time after the funeral to sit with you all, I'll try to explain what happened.

VICKY

Well big surprise for you Frank, your timing is still perfect, you just missed the funeral, much like you've missed a lot of what went on in the rest of our lives. We laid Suz to rest earlier today.

FRANK

Oh, I didn't know. The friend who called said it might be a week before the funeral. I thought I'd have time to get ready to talk to you all, but I guess it took longer than I calculated.

MORGAN

Again, like a bowel movement, timing is everything and yours really sucks.

FRANK

I know my showing up like this is, to say the least, awkward. My goal was to get situated and call you guys to let you know I was in town. I didn't think anyone would be here.

VICKY

Got it half right. You didn't think.

FRANK

I wanted to get together outside in a neutral spot and talk first.

CASS

Why didn't you call as soon as you knew?

FRANK

Simply put, I was too nervous about facing you after so long.

VICKY

Right now I am so furious with you I can barely contain it. I'm pissed at my sister for keeping secret what she did. Yeah, family and all, but it's not like you were any real member of the family. You just cannot come back into our lives so suddenly and in such horrible circumstances.

FRANK

If you can give me the chance I'd like to explain what happened. It may not be enough, but at least it will be out in the open.

VICKY

This is just too much to deal with right now. I've got to get some air and have a little time with myself. I'm going out and maybe, just maybe, when I get back, I'll be in a mood to listen to you.

MORGAN

Wait up sis, I'll keep you company. The air in here stinks at the moment. Hopefully when we get back the smell will be gone.

FRANK

Well, that was less than perfect.

CASS

What did you really expect Frank, hearts and flowers?

FRANK

My hope was to at least be cordial.

CASS

Frank, be realistic, It's going to take time and you need to be committed if you mean to reconnect.



FRANK

That's part of the problem; I'm just not certain where I stand in renewing my relationship with you guys. For as long as I could remember I've felt like an outsider. I always seemed to say the wrong word or do the wrong thing when I was younger. I thought differently and experienced life in some sort of surreal landscape inside my head. And then there was our father.

CASS

I understand your feelings. He was mean to us and did things we never talked about. But Frank, we all came out of the same environment. What do you think made you so different that you had to run away?

FRANK

For starters, I hated our father with a passion beyond imagining. He was a lousy, no good, spiteful, hateful man. And Cass, I know what he did. I was able to recover memories of events from my childhood while in therapy.

CASS

There was no way I could ever talk about it. It was just so horrible.

FRANK

I know. He certainly did his share of abuse. There are so many skeletons in our collective closets, and we have just kept them locked up and hidden rather than dealing with them. The man was a monster. When I think back on him; on what he did to the family, I find it difficult not to wish him punishment in Hell.

CASS

I've never talked about any of it with my sisters. I don't even know if they're aware of the abuse.

FRANK

Cass, Suzanne knew. She wrote to me.

CASS

Seems she did a lot the rest of us were unaware of.

FRANK

Not writing was by my request. It made even more sense not to insert myself back into your lives after recovering those memories.

CASS

Another secret between us. Maybe it was a way for you to deal with all the shit in our family.

FRANK

You want to know just how crazy it was? I'll share something with you. I've never told another living soul this. You know how our parents fought, mostly verbally, every single day of their lives? Before I was born my father wanted to have sex with my mother. She was having her period at the time and she said no. They got into this huge argument at the peak of which my mother said, "Well, I hope I get pregnant and you can have all the sex you want for nine months." As the story goes, my father took a condom punched holes in it had sex with my mother. She got pregnant and I was the end result.

CASS

You're making that up.

FRANK

I swear Cass, I am not. They BOTH told me at different times. I had asked myself on more times than I can count why on Earth they would share such a story with me. Were they so angry at me at those times that they wanted to hurt me or were just so Goddamned ignorant that it never occurred to them how obscene recounting that was.

CASS

OH!! MY!! GOD!! NO!!

FRANK

Yeah, that's pretty fucking sad and weird. However, after some time I resolved to not let it get to me any longer. I'd say to myself, "Well, I was the strongest swimmer to get through that dam blocking me."

CASS

What a really disgusting thing to tell your kid.

FRANK

Any wonder I've been clinically depressed for the last four decades.

CASS

Sometimes I marvel that any of us got out of our childhood alive. Frank, you're here and although we didn't get along when we were growing up, there's the chance we might be friends now. I want to give you some respect if possible.

FRANK

Thanks Cass, I sincerely appreciate that. I know it wasn't easy for any of us, even if one or more of us sees it differently.

CASS

You mean Morgan.

FRANK

Yeah. And to a degree Vicky. She doesn't seem thrilled to see me. Morgan, though, has always seen our father as someone to look up to. Actually admires his memories. Thinks of him as some kind of macho dude. He's also always been pissed at me for how I treated him as a kid, something I'm not proud of.

CASS

Well he was only twelve when dad died.

FRANK

I'm just amazed that he has such selective memories of his own childhood. After all the cruelty that man put us through, I'll never forgive him. God knows I've tried.

CASS

I wish you'd cut Morgan a little slack Frank. Look at what he's become, not what he remembers. Of all of us he seems to have been the most stable and normal. He did OK for himself financially. Dad never made a lot of money so Morgan's been proud of the success he's made of himself.

FRANK

What about that wife he had?

CASS

How'd you know about her?

FRANK

It was mentioned in a letter Suz sent me.

CASS

He thought he loved her but it didn't work. Not like any of us got out of any marriage without our share of scars. Last I heard from you, you were on your second, that Jewish girl.

FRANK

Point taken.

CASS

How's that going?

FRANK

It isn't.

CASS

Divorced from her as well?

FRANK

Yeah.

CASS

Pot, kettle.

FRANK

One of the letters Suzanne sent me back in the day said Morgan had been arrested.

CASS

One time, Frank. Morgan was a lot younger, still growing up. He got in a bar fight, got arrested, pleaded guilty and did 30 days in the county lock-up. Hasn't had a problem since.

FRANK

Had a few anger management issues, did he?

CASS

What the Hell. You were always picking on him. He had a right to be upset.

FRANK

But what he did as a teen; starting fights all the time. He's always been full of rage.

CASS

Don't talk to me about anger. I've had my share dished out by him to me too.

FRANK

Cass, he was always stealing my stuff. Many times he sold it so he could buy his own stuff.

CASS

Right. Perspective, Frank. What was different? Your allowance.

FRANK

I earned my allowance. Morgan was wrong to steal any of my stuff. I pulled the groceries home. I had to do the dishes. I was told to make sure the four of you always got home from school OK. I ran all the errands. Morgan didn't do any of that.

CASS

You were the oldest, and he was a lot younger. You got all the special attention. The rest of us were ordered around by dad.

FRANK

I got my allowance because of what I did. I had to do more around the house than any of you. I had to be the responsible child and look after the rest of you. If Morgan wanted an allowance he should have done something to earn it.

CASS

Real cute avoiding the subject; just like you've been avoiding us for the last almost 14 years.

FRANK

What the Hell do you know about me avoiding you guys? It's not like any of you really cared about what went on.

CASS

That's always been an assumption on your part. So you beat up your little brother because he wanted to have a few of the things you did as well.

FRANK

First of all, we were talking about me. Somehow that got to be about Morgan.

CASS

Clue phone, guess who brought that up?

FRANK

Secondly, all we ever did was fight amongst ourselves.

CASS

Clue phone calling back. Those fights were always between you and the rest of us. You against the world. Against you own brother and sisters. You were a dick.

FRANK

(A beat. Taken aback.)

Okay, I was a dick.

CASS

And a few other things.

FRANK

Nobody's perfect. I've made my share of mistakes and a number of other people's as well.

CASS

We've all gotten older and hopefully grown up a bit. I don't wanna fight you, and I hate us continuing old shit. Can't we at least try to get past some of it and move on?

FRANK

Suz wrote me that you've had some issues that were pretty severe. Maybe we could start by sharing some stuff to give us a little, as you said, "perspective."

CASS

What I really would like to know is if you're here to stay or if this is just a mercy visit.

FRANK

When Suz tracked me down, my first thought was, why bother? She'd write letters to me and update me on how the family had been doing and some of the issues everyone had dealt with. When I was told Suzanne died, I started thinking, why not go to the funeral and try once more? Maybe something was there that could be salvaged. Of all of us, she had the best Karma about her. When we were last together at mom's funeral, she gave me a big, huge hug and whispered "stay in touch". Must have suspected it wasn't to be. Am I going to stay? Well I've got my life back home, but we can take it a baby step at a time.

CASS

Not like we rejected you.

FRANK

Not outright, anyway. But forget that for now. Vicky's told me you've dealt with some pretty heavy shit.

CASS

There've been times.

FRANK

Like what?

CASS

I was an addict. I'm a recovering addict.

FRANK

I'm sorry.

CASS

It's OK. For the longest time I didn't want help because it was the drugs that I wanted. Then it was what I needed. Then it was that I couldn't stop having it. It was all on me eventually to deal with it. It wasn't even that I wanted to stop; my head wasn't wrapped around that. Every day the dread came over me from the moment I woke up. It started when a doctor prescribed white crosses for my weight. Remember me being so fat as a kid?

FRANK

Yeah.

CASS

Well the pills worked, except that I kept taking them because I was hooked. The doctor saw that and cut me off. He didn't do anything to get me into rehab or anything; just blew me off and washed his hands of it, thank you very much Doctor Asshole. I'd gone from him prescribing white crosses to being turned out cold. It was agony. So I called a friend who called a friend who called a dealer. It was pretty simple at first. Just the white crosses. From there it wasn't much of a step to going to meth.

FRANK

Cass . . .

CASS

It was agony to even breathe. There was my girl asking me where daddy was, could we have some eggs or pancakes or chicken or any number of things I couldn't get for her. She asked why dad only came around to give us some groceries but wouldn't stay. Any money I got went to the meth.

FRANK

There must have been someone you could turn to.

CASS

Actually what happened is I started dealing to bring in money. It paid the bills and food and stuff plus I was able to keep my habit going.

FRANK

What about the family; Morgan or Vicky? Somebody.

CASS

Here's the thing, I kept it from them and because I started looking better and had money for the basics so they thought everything was OK. Of course it wasn't and the meth took over my life. It got so bad I just didn't want to live with it anymore and I was too ashamed then to come out to the family.

FRANK

Cass I'm so sorry.

CASS

That day. . . I got up, just numb. Whatever of me that was once there was gone. It wasn't even a coherent thought. I just wandered down the hall into the bathroom. Stood there. I saw my image in the mirror just fade out. I was nothing. Just some "thing" that wanted a fix. I opened the medicine chest without thinking, took out a razor and slit my throat from ear to ear.

FRANK

Fuck.

CASS

My daughter walked in just as I finished. She saw the blood and screamed and grabbed the phone and called nine eleven. She then grabbed a towel and pressed down to stop the bleeding. The cut missed both the places on each side of my neck that would've killed me. Just dumb ass luck. An ambulance came, the neighbors gathered. I was out for a while. CPS took my daughter. I was assigned a social worker who got me into rehab. It didn't go away then, but it got a little easier. Eventually I got the drugs out of my system and realized my daughter meant more to me than getting high. Only took a year and a half.

FRANK

Cassie, I am truly so very sorry for what you went through.

CASS

Not your fault, but I appreciate the thought.

FRANK

Would it have been any different if I had been here?

CASS

No, the demons were mine to deal with. Morgan, Suz and Vicky stepped up; helped. I went to groups, counseling and drug awareness.

FRANK

Seems like you've been able to come out on top from all that.

CASS

Getting the help, acknowledging my weakness. I'm an addict and I'll have to deal with those vices for the rest of my life but facing it and having a support system out there eases my mind.

(VICKY enters.)

FRANK

Hey Vicky.

VICKY

One question. Are you back in our lives to stay? What about it, you gonna shit or get off the pot?

FRANK

Vicky, more than any other thought I've had over the last few days has been what I would do once I got back here. My nervousness at the inevitable meeting of you all has laid heavily on me. I questioned if it was worthwhile. Eventually it was a decision that came out of the desire to make that journey one last time. To answer your question is difficult, but as best as I can – I'd like to spend a few days with everyone and see how things turn out.

VICKY

Nice of you to give a reunion any consideration. Family should mean something and by making the decision you did shows how you really felt about us which is pretty fucking shitty. On the other hand, there's the story in the Good Book about the Prodigal Son. Cass, Morgan, Suzanne and me, we've stayed together, even if some of us live in different states. Cass here has had her share of problems but family stuck together and helped her through. Where were you in all that? Nada, nothing, zilch. I am not going to exert much effort to be nice and open if my you'll make like Houdini and disappear again. Do you want to try or not? Enquiring minds and all that.



FRANK

Always been the one to be upfront and blunt. Let's say it is time for me to come back. Why do I want to have a relationship with you? Honestly, it was always easier to just let things slide. I'd wake up in the morning and say, just a little bit longer, have some patience, the right time will come. Suddenly it was years later and it was a simple matter of moving on. Memories became dulled by time. It was as if those years became a book one read and barely remembered. The bull roasts we'd go to out at that do-drop-inn in the country by that river my mom liked so much. That's where I saw my first blue jay. We were living in that filthy apartment over the hardware store. The only birds I recall seeing were pigeons and sparrows. There was a Sunday we were having an outing and I saw that bright blue bird perched in a tree. It was an astounding moment. The world suddenly became bigger and brighter. Next day I went to the school library and got out a book on birds. In that one moment, my life was never the same.

VICKY

No memories about our family?

FRANK

Whenever the family did stuff together I usually saw myself on the outs. Once in a while, though, a pleasant memory came back to me. One that comes to mind is all of us piling into that old car our father drove and us going to the drive in movie. We'd get out there and mom would buy us a big tub of popcorn; cheap food. We'd all go over to the playground that was right under the screen and play on all the equipment. You guys would ask me to spin you around on that little merry-go-round thing and you'd all scream in delight and laugh your asses off. Once it got dark I loved going alone on the swings as the movie played. When it got to be summer the fireflies would come out and we'd chase them all over the playground cup them in our hands and watch them turn their butts on and off. On the way home, four of us would scrunch together in the back seat and watch the lights go by outside. One of us always got to sit up front and mom was pretty fair about giving us each a time.

CASS

That was always a nice time. I can remember when we'd go to the concession stand; the smell of the popcorn was as close to heaven as I could get as a kid.

VICKY

So it wasn't all crappy?

FRANK

There were a few times, Yeah. I wish there could have been more.

(Morgan enters.)

MORGAN

What the Goddamned Hell are you still doing here? Vicky, why is he here? Even if Suzanne wanted him here there's no way he should be or stay. He's unwanted and, for us, uninvited. For all I care he can just turn around and go back to wherever the Hell he came from.

VICKY

Morgan, that's what we've been exploring. As you know Suz gave him a key and up he popped like a whack-a-mole.

MORGAN

You're not wanted here.

CASS

Morgan, give him a chance.

MORGAN

He had his years ago at mom's funeral.

FRANK

Morgan, I would really like to have the chance to offer an explanation. Tell you what. Give me a day to talk with you, let you know what has happened with me, learn some about what has happened with you; at the end if we don't feel it might work out, I'll leave and we'll all be done with it.

CASS

Morgan, what have we got to lose? Why don't we give him a chance?

VICKY

I may not like saying this, Morgan but let's try, OK?

MORGAN

This is with my protest, but if you two feel we should try, I'll try – reluctantly. But don't expect me to like it or put much effort into it.

VICKY

Frank, I'm also reluctant about this as well and it won't be easy, but we can try it. Before that though I want to go out to dinner and talk about this new development.

FRANK

Great, let's go.

VICKY

No Frank, you don't understand. I want some time with the rest of the family to sort out our feelings. It's been a rotten day and we need a little time to decompress. We're all still hurting. I want to go out to dinner and talk and then maybe hit a club to try and purge some of the depression from today's events.

FRANK

Very well, I'll just get settled in here and wait for you guys to come back. Where can I sack out?

VICKY

All the beds are taken as we came in before you. Suz's request aside, you can take the couch. There's extra bedding and pillows in her room. I suggest you don't wait up for us. We'll try to be quiet when we come back if you're asleep.

FRANK

Oh, ok. Couch is good. I can handle that.

VICKY

You might as well make yourself at home. Food in the fridge, drinks, etc.

MORGAN

I have some homemade brew in there if you can handle it. Bring a few out from the closet and put them the mini over there.

FRANK

Thanks, everyone. I'll not abuse this and I hope for some dialogue later.

CASS

It's nice to see you again Frank.

FRANK

You too, Cassie. Take care guys. See you later.

**End Scene 1**

**SCENE 2:** The next morning. Vicky enters.

VICKY

Well, what do you know? He didn't disappear in the night. Morning Frank.

FRANK

Hi Vicky.

VICKY

How was the couch?

FRANK

Adequate. I've had worse. How did you sleep?

VICKY

Not good. It was hard to sleep here. Being in Suzanne's place; near her stuff, her room, it was almost like she was still here; I'd come out and she'd have already made coffee for us. Like her spirit was nearby, not that I believe much of that shit anymore.

FRANK

Being reminded of someone we've lost is never easy. I've had years to distance my feelings from the family, but now I'd like to know a bit more. I'm not trying to be nosey, but would you be willing to share some of your memories of Suzanne? What's the main thing you're feeling and remembering right now?

VICKY

Really know how to ask a very stupid question. I'm really sad, obviously. Morgan feels he was closest to Suzanne, but I always loved my sister and really enjoyed being with her. There was so much zest in her; she loved life and the people around her. As our family goes she had a good head for business. Her finding what she wanted to do in the bar she ran was great and I admired what she had done. It may not have been the greatest job in the world, but she shared her love of it with us. She was always the one to happily see everybody out and close up. When we'd get together her humor and laughter made any room she was in brighter. Sorry, didn't mean to cry. It's those memories that just overwhelmed me. Her energy and humor just engulfed the bar and it was always filled with the locals having a good time.

FRANK

Sounds like she found her calling.

VICKY

She found something and worked hard to make it a success. What was different about her that's the opposite of Morgan, Cass and even me was her caring for others. Maybe it was part of what she had to do in running a place where you get so wrapped up in people talking to you and all, but it went deeper. Someone once said she had an aura around her. She just had this great love for everyone. That's part of how terrible her death was. That little fucker didn't know what kind of person he killed.

FRANK

What about Morgan? I assume he's taking it hardest.

VICKY

From all appearances, yes. Their bond was so deep and intimate that it just showed when they were together.

FRANK

How has his life been for him otherwise?

VICKY

He's had a series of girlfriends since his marriage ended, and he's currently seeing a bar girl from his local hangout.

FRANK

Bargirl, huh? Is it series?

VICKY

Not even close. It's primarily for sex, just like all the rest have been. I don't think he'll ever settle down, which is a bit odd as he talks about how our father was such a great man who kept the family together.

FRANK

Too bad considering what an ass wipe the old man was.

VICKY

Remember, he was younger than the rest of us so his memories are not as clear as ours, and he didn't go through some of the stuff the rest of us did.

FRANK

But for him to so hero worship that man just rubs me raw.

(MORGAN enters.)

MORGAN

Morning female; and the stranger. Beautiful morning. Anybody got some coffee?

VICKY

Nothing yet. Most of us just got started moving.

(CASS enters.)

CASS

Good morning everyone. Frank. Did someone mention coffee? Actually breakfast sounds really nice. I bet we could get a real meal going. What do you say?

VICKY

I think we can rustle up something. Cass, you're drafted to make meat and coffee. I'll do eggs, toast and some OJ.

(VICKY and CASS exit.)

MORGAN

(Gets beers. Hands FRANK a beer.)

Here, made it myself.

FRANK

Isn't it a little early to start on this?

MORGAN

Never too early. Besides, it's healthy, builds character and goes real good with breakfast.

FRANK

Morgan, I quit drinking a few years ago. I felt it was better to keep my head on straight and see the world as it is.

MORGAN

So you're gonna tell me that after fourteen years away you want to come back into the fold but won't have one beer to celebrate? Sounds a bit insulting to me.

FRANK

It's not that, I just like to be in control of my life.

MORGAN

Bro, you really want to be a part of this family again, I strongly suggest you see this as a peace offering and DRINK THE GODDAMN FUCKING BEER!!

FRANK

Guess it won't hurt once.

MORGAN.

Glad to see you're so open.

(Pause.)

You know I remember all those times you beat me up when we were kids.

FRANK

Are you going to whip my ass now?

MORGAN

It's crossed my mind . . . what you think should happen after all this?

FRANK

Morgan, I don't deny the past. Also can't ignore how it shows you worked the steel mill and the docks for the last 20 years. So, brother, you got height, body and attitude. Me? I have 20 years in a whole different lifestyle.

MORGAN

So, you scared?

FRANK

A bit.

MORGAN

Just a bit?

FRANK

More'ina bit.

MORGAN

Lotta fuckin' water backed up in my dam.

FRANK

You've got good floodgates holding that.

MORGAN.

Mostly just keeping it in real tight. Like the beer?

FRANK

Yeah.

MORGAN

My own special recipe. I always say if beer ain't thick enough to cut with a knife it ain't good enough to eat.

FRANK

Not bad. It's actually very good. Very, very good. Maybe the best beer I've ever had.

MORGAN

OK man, I'm just shittin' with you. You got a pass. For now. But it doesn't change what's happened in the past.

FRANK

So, I hear from Vicky you're a bit of a player?

MORGAN

I like the girls.

FRANK

But your hanging out with a bar girl?

MORGAN

So what do you care? She's fun, can hold her liquor mostly. I'm not real picky when it comes to tail and she fucks like an epileptic hooker.

FRANK

What about the ex?

MORGAN

Got tired of hearing "had five kids, 3 that lived" and how two died tragically and I couldn't understand.

FRANK

That's it?

MORGAN

(Gets another beer.)

Hell no, that's not it. She was fine, at first mostly. Would only mention the dead ones once in a while. No kids for us since I'd had the snip. She somehow got all obsessed at THAT cause she didn't know before we tied the knot. But it was eventually if we couldn't have kids we couldn't have sex. That got the bee going up my ass and I wasn't about to tolerate no mental cunt cutting me off. Finally I'd had enough and decided to take a walk.

FRANK

So that finally ended it?

MORGAN

Almost. One evening after a lousy day at work, I come home expecting to have supper waiting along with a cold beer. Woman's moping about the house. She starts ranting about the dead brats and how I can't give her more. She stares me down and claims I ain't any kind of man cause I can't get her knocked up. That set me off. I give her a good hard smack or two and tell her she'll never find a man as good as me ever again. I grabbed some of my stuff and up and walked out.

FRANK

Certainly can see how that would be an issue for you. From what I've heard you don't take any guff off of anyone.

MORGAN

It's a fucking hard world out there and nobody gives you anything you're not able to fight for. I've learned that the hard way more than once growing up; especially from you, seeing as how you were a right mean bastard to me as kids.



FRANK

Morgan, listen, I'm deeply sorry for what I did to you. It's no excuse, just an explanation, but I really didn't know any better.

MORGAN

Yeah, I've kind of gotten that impression.

FRANK

It took me more than a few years to acknowledge, like you said, I had been an SOB to more than a few people. However, I also learned that being truthful to one's self along with the power of forgiveness, while acknowledging your frailties, goes a long way towards healing.

MORGAN

How so? Don't know too many people that would forgive a person when they fucked up real bad. Down on the docks, if you can't pull your weight, you're out. And God help you if you offend the guy next to you.

FRANK

When I finally started becoming aware of how badly I treated people around me I felt overwhelming shame. That held back my own personal healing. Beating myself up was easier than letting someone else do it. I lost a very good wife due to my own manipulation of her emotions. I later lost another wife before my cowardice could admit to her I was the problem. By sheer good Karma I was referred to an excellent counselor that changed my life. In our very first session I was talking about a very, very bad thing I had done to someone. She stopped me and said, in essence, "What your experiencing is shame. You can feel guilt, but shame is a lie." In that moment my body became wracked in deep, heaving sobs that went on for most of the session. We spent the next three years doing the hard work of expunging my demons and constructing a better character.

MORGAN

Goddamn man, it sounds like maybe; just maybe, you've tried quit being an asshole.

FRANK

That's the short version.

MORGAN

Well, damn man, that calls for another beer for you and start talking about what we're gonna do if you're going to be around for a while.

FRANK

No thanks, the one I had was ...

MORGAN

You gonna turn down my hospitality?

FRANK

Uh no, another beer is fine.

(VICKY enters.)

VICKY

OK, we've got some food going here. Cass will bring out the bacon in a bit. And then the gang's all here. Or what's left of our family anyway.

MORGAN

Vicky, do you mind? That's my sister we laid to rest.

VICKY

You're right Morg. I am truly sorry. Sometimes my cynicism gets the better of me.

MORGAN

Just asking for some respect for her memory. Seeing as how we're all together here's something I scored at the club last night.

VICKY

What is it?

MORGAN

Some grade A super fine coke. We can snort down a little while we have breakfast. Makes the food a lot more enjoyable.

FRANK

I don't do drugs.

MORGAN

Yeah, yeah, I hear you.

(Does line.)

VICKY

Cool. I haven't done any in ages. And my stress level is super high. Give me a line.  
(Does line.)

(CASS enters.)

CASS

OK gang, nice crispy bacon just the way everyone likes it. Help yourself.

VICKY

So Frank, you still haven't explained why you disappeared.

FRANK

Really? You don't know?

CASS

I missed you for a while.

FRANK

You've crossed my mind on occasion.

CASS

Not the same thing and it's a whole lot different than keeping in touch. No contact, nothing. It hurt for sure. Finally we just assumed you died and we tried to move on.

FRANK

In many ways that was probably for the best, sis.

MORGAN

I never missed you and you could have stayed gone for all I cared or still care.

CASS

Why Frank? Do you hate us so very much that you would abandon us and just evaporate out of our lives?

FRANK

You have to understand, this isn't easy for me on any number of levels.

CASS

Frank, I'm trying not to be judgmental here. Just talk to me.

FRANK

Growing up wasn't easy for me.

VICKY

Is it ever easy for any kid?

FRANK

I don't mean the normal efforts of growing up and all the stuff that comes with it like puberty, junior high and bullies. I had all that, but there were deeper issues that I could never explain and things I heard and saw that scared me deeply. The easiest way to say this is also the most difficult to explain. From the earliest I could remember, I never fit in; I mean really, never was a part of the family.

CASS

You think we hated you?

FRANK

No. NO!! It was more like I was someone else's child. There was nothing about the family where I felt I was a part of. All of you, including our father and mom were just strangers I'd been plopped down into. The way my, our, parents thought and acted, the way our parents treated us was abhorrent to me.

CASS

We were all family. The rest of us got on well enough.

FRANK

But I was treated differently.

MORGAN

Yeah, I remember some of the differences. I remember you had a bike and none of us did. When you outgrew it mom made sure it was handed down to me despite you having beat it up so much.

FRANK

I'm not proud of that. If I could change that I would.

MORGAN

So you've said. How about the fact you got an allowance and we didn't?

FRANK

In my ignorance I said I didn't know that at the time. The truth is I just didn't notice.

MORGAN

Never occurred to you that you could buy records and stuff and we rarely had anything like that?

FRANK

In all honesty, no, and it wasn't that much of an allowance anyway.

MORGAN

Bullshit.

VICKY

Frank I just want to know some of what you went through. What about those deeper levels you mentioned?

FRANK

Every day was like I saw the world differently than you guys. Let's take something easy. You know what a redneck our father was. Do you remember how cruel he was?

MORGAN

I remember if we did something wrong we'd get spanked.

FRANK

If one of us did something wrong we'd ALL get it. Not just a spanking either. He'd pull out his belt from his pants, grab each one of us by an upper arm and, as he said, "whup the daylights out of us".

MORGAN

It did scare me when he did that, but it was always because we did something wrong.

FRANK

NO, IT WASN'T!! We didn't deserve to be treated like that.

MORGAN

He was a good man!!

FRANK

You can't seem to remember or choose not to. We were kids and even if we did do some unknown shit that he thought deserved punishment it shouldn't have been corporal punishment to each of us and never with such cruelty.

VICKY

All in all we were pretty normal.

FRANK

Normal? You gotta be fucking kidding me. Vicky, how the Hell can you think we were normal what with all the cruel shit and secrets in our family?

MORGAN

Seemed normal enough to me.

FRANK

(Finishes beer, gets another.)

Want an example? The last time he hit me, I couldn't have been more than fourteen. Lousy fucker had gotten pissed at some perceive infraction I supposedly committed. He did that upper arm grab with his belt in the other hand and started lashing away at me. I didn't have the tools to understand what I was going through; I just stood there and took it staring him straight in the eye. There was no fucking way in Hell I was going to let him know it hurt. I still don't remember where the strength came from to hold back the tears. After about a half dozen whacks he stopped, looked at me with disgust and told me to get lost. I walked away, near tears. After that, he never laid a hand on me again though he was cruel in other ways. What message does that send you? For me it was, don't show any emotion and you won't get hurt.

CASS

God.

FRANK

Another time I overheard him talking to mom. He was reminiscing about a time when, as a teen, he and a friend found a canvas bag full of baby kittens just a few days old in those Deep South woods while they were out game hunting of some sort. The kittens were obviously abandoned and left to die. He and his buddy took those poor helpless creatures and tossed them into the air and used them for target practice with their rifles.

VICKY

Shit.

CASS

That's just almost too incredible to believe.

MORGAN

I don't believe it either.

(Does line.)

FRANK

I swear to God every word is true.

VICKY

You make it sound like he was crueller than one could imagine. Most likely that was the attitude in the South at that time.

MORGAN

It's not like any of those creatures would have survived very long anyway.

FRANK

Don't you get it Morgan? It's not just the fact of his cruelty to animals; it was his attitude towards them. If you pay attention to that and the rest of how he treated those around him you get a pretty good idea of the kind of "real" man he was. There's a term for it; it's called sadism. He enjoyed inflicting pain on others whether it was helpless animals or children or adults.

MORGAN

Bull; you're picking selected memories out of thin air to support your view of him. You never liked him. You probably hated him.

VICKY

Hey Morg, you still have some of that pot? I'd like to toke up.

MORGAN

Yeah Vic, here you go. You know Frank I always knew you never loved the man, but you keep seeing him through shit colored glasses.

FRANK

Like any kid I wanted to be loved by my parents, my father included. But I realized early that it was impossible for him to love us; anyone in fact. You were the youngest and probably saw or remember less of it. You've already stated you thought the beatings he gave us weren't that big a deal and that we most likely "deserved" them. I'm trying to point out a pattern of behaviors I personally witnessed. Those memories affected me deeply and caused me to be depressed and reserved most of my life. They influenced me to fear almost any kind of authority and sometimes lash out in response. Did I hate him? As an adult, realizing what he was, I had nothing but hate for him. Finally, I learned to let go of the hate. I no longer hate him, but I have been unable to forgive him even though I know I should.

MORGAN

Hey gang, my brother is "almost" perfect. Let's celebrate his rise.

CASS

The way you're talking, the tone of your voice; Frank it sounds like you still have a great deal of anger at him.

FRANK

Cass, it's very difficult to purge so many abuses, not just on me but on my mother and all of you and his general attitude towards the world around him.

MORGAN

The strength of your emotions says differently, bro.

FRANK

Morgan, I am far from perfect, but I feel I am a better person than I used to be. There were dark days in my past. I was heading down a path similar to our father. I was so insecure that I started being cruel to others. Mostly it was verbal abuse, but it got to be physical on a couple of occasions.

MORGAN

Like when you beat me up.

FRANK

I knew I needed help. Fortunately I got the right kind of help and found a way out.

MORGAN

He couldn't have been as mean as you tell.

CASS

Morgan . . . he was.

MORGAN

What do you mean? Are you standing up for him?

CASS

Morgan, you know I don't talk about him much; just kind of go along with what's being said. I remember the whippings as terrifying. I dreaded them. Frank is right; he was a very mean man.

MORGAN

Maybe he might have been a bit over the edge if all that's true. But he was the man who worked his ass off to keep food on the table and a roof over our heads.

VICKY

This is all revealing, but, like I said, he was just who he was based on where he was from and how he was raised. I mean, he probably had to put up with all the blackies around him at work in the fields.

FRANK

Here we go again.

VICKY

You have no place in criticizing us. We have raised kids and led our lives pretty much without your interference.

FRANK

But all this bigotry

VICKY

You think it's just prejudice? I've got every reason to hate blacks. One of 'em murdered my sister.

FRANK

But you can't judge his action just on his skin color.

CASS

Why not? You know the crime rate with niggers is sky high. They're out there robbing stores, holding people up right on the street. They're pushing drugs and prostituting women. The crime rate in black areas isn't near what is done in our white neighborhoods.

FRANK

Those statistics don't show the whole picture. When any group is oppressed, not given the job and educational opportunities of others, that group will find ways to try to survive.

MORGAN

What makes you think they don't get a break? We got coloreds working on the docks.

FRANK

How many compared to the number of white workers.



MORGAN

I don't count 'em, a few.

FRANK

Twelve per cent? Eleven? Ten?

MORGAN

Niggers are dirty, dumb and mean. I'm not gonna argue this shit with you.  
(Does line.)

FRANK

Maybe you should.

VICKY

What's that supposed to mean?

FRANK

How can you approve of such a lifestyle? Your prejudice is indescribably horrid. I've not only seen it, but Suzanne wrote about some of it to me. I saw it in our parents growing up.

VICKY

I'm OK wanting to have only white boyfriends. We really don't need to mix it up with other races. That just makes my life a little easier not to go through all the crap a white woman gets from dating niggers.

FRANK

Will you PLEASE stop using that word? It offends me to hear it and it's an offense to all blacks.

VICKY

Yeah, OK, for now. It doesn't change what they are or how I feel about them.

FRANK

Well thank you so much for the little crust you've thrown me.

VICKY

I don't see what your problem is. Everyone I know says that word.

FRANK

Are you even remotely aware of how offensive it is?

VICKY

What's the issue? It's not like the blacks don't use it. I've heard it numerous times by black guys at the club.

FRANK

Whether they use it or not is not the issue. Its roots are in the history of the enslavement of Negroes since they were first kidnapped in Africa and brought as slaves for Southern plantation owners by Northern shippers.

VICKY

So you don't like us saying it. It's still a fact. And you don't have to say it.

FRANK

(Gets another beer.)

Thing is, this family is the most racist, bigoted group of people I've ever had the misfortune to be around. We heard it all the time from our parents. I can maybe understand their ignorant racism, but we should have become better. One time I'm visiting you in Florida, Vic. You and I went to a club one night. A black guy asked you to dance. Just dance. Right there in that crowd you went all World War III ballistic. You remember what you said?

VICKY

Sure, "No nigger is gonna touch me". I told him to take his black nigger ass outta my sight. How dare he even speak to me. I'm a white woman. Said, "Go ask one of your nigger whores to dance. Leave me the fuck alone".

FRANK

What the Hell got into you? I didn't ask you to repeat it, only if you remember. You rant like some freaking harpy on steroids. Jesus H. Christ, he just asked you to dance.

VICKY

You think I'd let a nigger or spic lay a hand on me? They're nothing but subhuman shit. Give me a white man now and forever.

FRANK

STOP!! JUST STOP!! You are wrong in so many ways, and I won't hear another word from you on this. Your racist shit is more repulsive than any image you have of a black person. Damn it, we're in the 20<sup>th</sup> century, we're supposed to be able to move past your insane hate. Where the Hell did you get to be such a bigot?

VICKY

Momma taught me good. She taught me to be proud of myself and have good morals and find nice white guys to be around. I'm not ashamed of what I believe. I'm not ashamed of my white blood either. I'm not a racist to believe that mixing white blood with other races corrupts my race. There's no exception in my book.

(Does line.)

FRANK

Maybe if you would open your eyes a bit you could see the world a bit better. I'd pity you if your ignorance, bigotry and hate weren't so disgusting. Can't you see your prejudice makes you an ugly a human being.

MORGAN

You've got some fucking nerve to be so judgmental of someone you've hardly know for so long.

(Phone rings).

VICKY

Hello? This is her. Yes? What? You're joking. Oh my God, what happened? When? What's that? What did it say? He did? You have? THEY have? OK, yes. I think I understand. Yes. Thank you.

CASS

Who was that and what's going on?

VICKY

That was District Attorney Goldman. He informed me that the kid they arrested for Suzanne's murder committed suicide in his jail cell earlier today.

**End Act I**

**Act II**

**AT RISE:** Immediately after.

MORGAN

Well fuck me.

CASS

What happened?

VICKY

The DA said he tied some sheets together and hung himself between checks.

CASS

Damn

VICKY

That's not all. He left a note. In it he admitted to killing Suzanne and expressed, as the DA said, "deepest remorse" and asked his family for forgiveness.

MORGAN

Asked his family for forgiveness? Not us?

VICKY

Not according to the DA.

MORGAN

Well fuck him in the ass all the way to Hell.

FRANK

Morgan that's cruel and harsh. He obviously felt deep remorse to decide to end his life.

MORGAN

Well it just saved the courts the cost of a trial. I say good riddance to the scum. As for you, fuck you and your opinion.

VICKY

That's not all the DA said.

MORGAN

Yeah, what?

VICKY

He said that as soon as the family learned of the kids death and the note, he said the family wanted to try to make things right.

CASS

How?

VICKY

He said a lawyer had contacted them earlier and now they want to work out some kind of settlement. They know it won't bring our sister back but it's the least they can so.

MORGAN

Goddamn. Well let's pump as much blood out of those niggers as we can.

FRANK

Morgan, that's enough. They're a family that's hurting double.

MORGAN

Don't care. Their black ass kid killed Suz and I for one want to try and make an example out of them. It's time we whites started standing up to them.

FRANK

I refuse to speak supporting racism or have anything to do with it, even if it does really piss you off. I just don't care. It only confirms my lost hope that there could be any reconciliation with you. I've wanted to think that there was a chance but not as long as you see the world the way you do. That's a line I won't cross.

CASS

Frank, we have our faults like anyone else. Everyone sees the world the way they have to.

FRANK

Racism has been handed down in our family. That old Deep South mentality our parents had was just a part of who they were, but it's no excuse.

CASS

It was probably impossible not to be influenced when our parents were so easily against other races. I know there are days when I look around and think the world is less and less white.

FRANK

News alert. Most of the world wasn't all or mostly white long before we were born and won't be long after we're gone.

CASS

But we all want to be with our own kind.

FRANK

So how do you explain me? Not only do I get along well with almost everyone I meet, race not being a factor, but my late wife, who was from the Caribbean, was as dark or darker than most black people, which by the way, had nothing to do with my loving her.

VICKY

I don't remember a black wife.

FRANK

That was a different wife.

CASS

Frank, I can't explain how you wound up different. I have a feeling if it existed and Suzanne came back, she'd tell us there's no "race" in the afterlife. Your late wife – did you love her very much? Where was she from?

FRANK

Trinidad-Tobago. She was of East Indian heritage, born and raised on the island though.

MORGAN

If I could feel sorry for your loss I'd say so, but I don't. Anyway, what the Hell got into you to marry some maybe blackie?

FRANK

Morgan, give me one good reason why I shouldn't hit you for that racist remark.

MORGAN

Come on dude; give it your best wimpy shot.

FRANK

Just explain to me why you hate so much.

MORGAN

(Gets beer.)

Have you looked at the world around you? Our country is becoming less white by the day. You've got all manners of spics jumping over our border down South. They rush in and start using up our resources. They get welfare, food stamps, free medical. They run down any neighborhood they move into, have dozens of kids and take jobs that should go to Americans. Out here in the real world there's nobody on your side. You wanna get me started on blacks? Well just look at their ghettos and their crime, shooting each other up, and their language and their clothing and their music. I can't see what any white guy would want a black woman except for her tail. I've had to scrape and push and work my ass off for every single little benefit or promotion I've gotten. They think I'm just a piece of garbage with no upbringing or smarts. Maybe I'm just a mutt, but I'm a damn proud mutt. So you wanna know why I hate all those others that are trying to push me aside and crawl over my dead white ass, well that's just the fucking way life is, poster boy.

FRANK

Morgan, I'm really trying to understand your point of view. I admit that this country has taken a turn to an arch conservative movement. It seems to be aimed at reducing any lift up for poor people, disenfranchised and even the Middle Class. But that doesn't change the fact that we have to keep pushing for what's right for everyone. We have to stand together to make change. Rise above what is pulling you down. Standing apart will only lead to defeat.

MORGAN

As I see it, and you are confirming it with your rant, it's really going to be every man for himself.

FRANK

No, and I pity that view as it will destroy any chance we have to turn things around. Look at where you've been and where you've come to. Morgan, despite your seething rage at most everything around you, you've successfully spent your entire working career for the same corporation and retired, comfortably, at full benefits. Vicky, whatever else about your lifestyle you've managed to do well as a single mom. Cass, as tough as your life has been and all the curves thrown you, you've raised a daughter who, Suz wrote, seem free from duress.

CASS

But everybody hates whites these days.

FRANK

With good reason. Whatever you may think of Blacks, Chicanos and Orientals, the white race has tried its damndest to eradicate every other race with which it has come into contact. We brought Orientals over as a half step up from slaves. Need I remind you that it was white men that brought blacks over from Africa and enslaved them and that the Civil War was fought, in part, to acknowledge that they were human beings just like you? Whites, tried to do genocide on the Native Americans. We almost succeeded.

CASS

That doesn't change the kind of people blacks are. Do you see the ghettos they live in?

FRANK

Do you see our nation giving them the chance to move up and out?

MORGAN

Hey, I've been around spics. They smell, they eat weird food that stinks; they start fights if you look cross-eyed at them. And they don't bother to learn English like the rest of us.

FRANK

So they're not entitled to their culture?

MORGAN

Dammit, this is America; speak English. You wanna speak Spanish, go back to Mexico.

FRANK

Do you mean the part of Mexico that is now Texas?

MORGAN

Why don't you just fuck off with your left wing Commie crap? We've been taking care of ourselves just fine without you butting in all the time. We didn't ask you here.

FRANK

Neither did the minorities that have been oppressed. Hell, even whites hate whites. Italian and Irish immigrants were treated like shit and had to find their own routes to a better life. Italians hate the Irish who hate the English who spent centuries oppressing everyone in sight. Germans look like the English but that didn't stop a couple of little disagreements called World Wars I and II.

VICKY

Morgan's right. We gotta look after number one.

FRANK

Seems so typical. Not only are you an unapologetic racist, you're a drug addict as well, and I have a pretty damn good idea why.

VICKY

What are you talking about?

FRANK

Come on Vicky, you need to have a wakeup call from anyone who can give it to you.

VICKY

Who the Hell are you to tell me how to live my life?

FRANK

So much of your life's a lie it's probably for the best reality should confront you.

VICKY

I don't know what you're talking about

FRANK

Why? What've you got to hide? Everybody else in the family knows about it.

MORGAN

What are you talking about?

VICKY

Stay out Morgan. Gonna start something you can't get out of will be a mess for you Frank. You talk about secrets. You had a Jew wife and now you have a blackie.



FRANK

Had. She died - of cancer. Vicky, face the truth.

VICKY

What truth? I know what I am better than most know about themselves. I've been a stripper. So fucking what? Yes. I've been a hooker. I took advantage of a horrible man to make life better for me. The alimony kept me comfortable enough and the "dancing" advanced into becoming an "escort." We're not perfect, but how dare you come back into our lives and spout your judgement on us.

FRANK

It's not just my judgement. Your whole professional life has revolved around sex. Even your private life has been dominated by aspects of sex. That's over and above the racist view of others. Sex has dominated every part of how you interacted with the world.

VICKY

Well look around you. Women are not treated with respect. They aren't given the opportunities any man has from the moment they're born.

FRANK

That is absolutely correct. Women have been subjugated for centuries. But it doesn't mean you or any other woman has to use their gender as a weapon.

VICKY

I'll do whatever it takes to protect myself and my family.

FRANK

Can't you see that you fall into a trap that our culture lays for women? It's nearly impossible for a woman to move high into any corporation. The Old Boy's network is too entrenched. The pressure to become subservient is always present on every female, but it doesn't mean a woman can't be successful in other ways.

VICKY

I consider myself to be successful. I've had money, nice clothes and ornaments. I've had a decent house over my head most of my life. So what if I used sex to make money. Do you think other women don't do the same? Look at the attractive women who marry rich men who are as ugly as a garbage dump and have the morals of the same.

FRANK

Other women make a good life for themselves without abusing their bodies.

VICKY

Just why do you believe you can waltz in here and pass judgement on us for the lives we've lived?

FRANK

Our family has been in denial for a long, long time. With Suzanne's death I finally became aware that all of you must purge the demons that have kept you in darkness for so long. I want to help you rid yourselves of that darkness and allow the light to be what is left before it's too late.

CASS

Why? Why bring all these memories and misery? We have our lives set and stable before you came. I see no reason to change just because you think we should.

FRANK

Because Suzanne wanted me here, and I can no longer lie. I know what our father did to you and Vicky. Cass, you should know what I'm about to say. I know you know. Suzanne wrote to me. Purging will go a long way to heal and Vicky needs to face it.

CASS

Frank, it may be you feel we should rid ourselves but, again, tell me, what good would it do?

FRANK

Cass, it took me a long time to come face-to-face with the sadism that monster perpetrated on us. Once I faced it, I recognized it as a burden that I had carried so long and finally understood how much weight had been laid upon me.

VICKY

So you decided to come back and screw with our lives.

FRANK

No, I'm here to help you.

VICKY

And just what the Hell could you possibly say that would help us?

FRANK

The fact that I know our father molested both of you, his own daughters.

(CASS slowly reaches over, picks up the cocaine and holds it to her nose.)

VICKY

He never did anything to me.

FRANK

Yes, he did. Your father abused you.

VICKY

No!

FRANK

Vicky, the truth must come out. I will NOT let you continue to see this sadistic monster as some great hero to look up to. I'm fed up with your continued denial of what he did to you. He was a vile, vicious creature who did not care for anyone around him. It's way past time you quit fucking around and admit the truth.

VICKY

Bullshit. Nothing happened. He never touched me.

FRANK

Vicky, listen. You've got to face this. Your father sexually molested two of his daughters; Cass and you. Look at me. Look at me!! Your life has been built on a lie. That monster traumatized you, and you suppressed the memories. But his influence was profound. It's why your life has revolved around sex.

(CASS does line.)

VICKY

I don't see where you're going with this.

(VICKY does line.)

FRANK

Think back. Think about why sex has been such an issue with you.

VICKY

It's what I know. It's what works for me.

FRANK

But why? What is it about it?

VICKY

Because the men are attracted to me. I'm pretty.

FRANK

What else?

VICKY

They pay to see my body.

FRANK

What does that do for you?

VICKY

I'm in control. I have power over how they feel.

FRANK  
So it's attraction, power, and money.

VICKY  
Yes.

FRANK  
And you enjoy it.

VICKY  
They're just things to manipulate. I enjoy my control of them.

FRANK  
But what do you feel?

VICKY  
I feel nothing for them. They're just things to take advantage of with my body.

FRANK  
So you manipulate them so they won't abuse you.

VICKY  
I won't let them.

FRANK  
You're just being cautious.

VICKY  
Yes, I'm careful.

FRANK  
Like you've always protected yourself.

VICKY  
Always.

FRANK  
Even when you were younger.

VICKY  
Of course.

FRANK  
To keep from being abused.

So what? VICKY

Look back; when did you first think this. FRANK

I've always thought it. VICKY

Even as a little girl. FRANK

Probably. VICKY

At night, when you were little, did you dream of men? FRANK

What's that got to do with anything? VICKY

Vicky, please, just answer me. FRANK

I, uh, I'd dreamt of men sometimes. VICKY

Of men or of one man. FRANK

What? What did you say? VICKY

Was it just one man? FRANK

I, it, I did dream of one man. VICKY

A man in control. FRANK

Yes. VICKY

FRANK  
Who was it?

VICKY  
It was, was a, a large man, in the dark; in shadows.

FRANK  
One that made you do things.

VICKY  
They were just dreams. Let it go.

FRANK  
You continue to deny it, but it's time to confront the truth.

VICKY  
What do you mean? There's no "truth".

FRANK  
The dreams. More than once then? How often?

VICKY  
Quit trying to get into my head. Leave me the fuck alone. It was so long ago.

FRANK  
Tell me.

MORGAN  
What the fuck is this all about.

CASS  
I think it's about the truth, Morg.

MORGAN  
OK, that's it. End this now.

CASS  
No, wait. Maybe this is important.

VICKY  
OK, OK . . . I couldn't make them go away.

FRANK

Open your mind. Face yourself. Cleanse your soul and set yourself free. There's no shame in acknowledging something you had no control over.

MORGAN

Leave it alone.

FRANK

Stay out Morg. Vicky, you've got to face up to what he did to you.

VICKY

He didn't do anything. It was just dreams Goddamnit.

FRANK

Suzanne wrote to me; in detail. She confirmed the memories I'd suppressed.

MORGAN

What the Hell is he talking about?

VICKY

A bunch of made up shit.

FRANK

No. Real. It happened to her. It happened to Cass.

CASS

Don't bring me into this.

FRANK

Both of you. It's the only way for you to be free.

CASS

Please don't include me in there.

FRANK

I have to until you all see the truth about his abuse and purge yourselves of the lies that it has held over you.

VICKY

Stop now you fucking piece of shit!!

FRANK

Why do you keep refusing to see what is in front of you? The lie will burn you up.

CASS

We seem to have been doing OK without you.

FRANK

I don't believe that. Suzanne would write me about your struggles. It led me to feel that your secrets were more harmful than facing the reality.

CASS

Do you really think this could possibly be good for us?

FRANK

With every fiber of my being.

VICKY

I always knew he hated me. He never even had a good thought about me.

CASS

Maybe it could cause some healing.

MORGAN

I've had enough of your piss ant lecturing. You were a terrible brother then and your high and mighty crap is not welcome here now.

VICKY

Why are you doing this?

FRANK

Because it's the only way to free you.

VICKY

I don't need to be free. I don't believe you.

FRANK

Something has to give. You're all so blinded by it. I just want you to be better than this. Vicky, think about what our father did to you.

VICKY

No!! Just a dream.

FRANK

Pull back the curtain. See the face of your abuser.

VICKY

A dream.

FRANK

The dream. Did it happen more than once?



I don't know, maybe . . . yes.

VICKY

Numerous times? Sexing you?

FRANK

What's the point of all this?

VICKY

Suzanne saw him on you.

FRANK

No.

VICKY

Possessing you; your body.

FRANK

I don't want this.

VICKY

You resisting, but he took you anyway.

FRANK

Shut the fuck up!!

VICKY

Cass, tell her.

FRANK

I told you; I don't want to rehash this. This is your party.  
(CASS does line.)

CASS

No!! It's a lie!!

VICKY

Vic, listen, remember. Growing up you had vaginal infections, fevers and cramps; you bled but weren't having your period yet. I remembered all this during therapy. Vicky, he raped you. He raped you!!

FRANK

Damnit, stop!!

MORGAN

FRANK

Shut up Morgan!!

MORGAN

I don't believe any of this. It couldn't have been anything like you've said or as bad.

CASS

No, Morgan.

FRANK

Cass...please?

CASS

Alright . . . Frank, you win. It's true Vicky. He did it to us girls; you included. He did horrible things to us. We were just – little – girls. He'd come to us in the middle of the night over and over. It seemed like it would never stop. We were so young, we couldn't fight. He warned us not to say anything or he'd hurt momma real bad. I thank God he died when he did because THEN it stopped.

FRANK

Vicky, remove the shell surrounding you. See who it was.

VICKY

No!!

FRANK

Every night, the same dream. Him coming to you in the dark.

VICKY

NO!!

FRANK

Whose face? Whose face?

VICKY

It's too dark!!

FRANK

Pull the dark away. What do you see?

VICKY

No, it can't be!!

FRANK

The face, see it! Whose face is it?

VICKY

Daddy!!

FRANK

YES!!

VICKY

No. No!! NO!! Get away. Get off me. The pain down there. He's hurting me. Can't tell momma. Put it away. Lock it up. Don't feel. Don't remember.

MORGAN

You're talking about child molesting.

FRANK

Yes. Your father sexually abusing his own flesh and blood.

VICKY

No. No, no, no, no, no. OH GOD NO!!

MORGAN

Stop!! Goddamnit, stop right now!! Stop it I say.

CASS

Out of respect for Vicky; respect for all of us, stop now.

VICKY

You bastard, you bastard. Why? Why? I didn't need this. I didn't want this. My life was fine until you came back in here.

FRANK

It's a cleansing of your soul. It is a way to face yourself and be free of the mental and emotional bondage that held you.

VICKY

It's more about you controlling us. You say you want to renew your relationship with us but all you've done is bring up hate and old hurts; calling us out for the way we live our lives. Judging us. Well congratulations, we're guilty of being human. Here's our flaws all laid out.

(VICKY does line. MORGAN takes cocaine from her and also does line of coke.)

So, what now? Messing with our lives hasn't ingrained us to you and it's obvious you don't fit in. You gonna walk out again?

FRANK

Yes, if that's what you want, I'll leave, but not before you all face your own truth.

MORGAN

You're a rotten excuse for a human. You wouldn't know about how a family loves one another if it hit you in the face.

FRANK

I know that a father having sex with his very young daughters is wrong, morally, legally, emotionally, psychologically and not living a fully open life, facing and dealing with the trauma, can only lead to it affecting the way one sees and interacts with the world. Confronting this abuse and purging it will, I believe, allow everyone to embrace real love within the family and can only lead to healing.

MORGAN

Thing is, you can come in here and decide what is right or wrong without knowing much else. But whatever opinion was formed in that oh so smart brain doesn't see the whole picture. We have loved each other, stood by each other, cared for each other while you were out living a life out of context to ours. You have no idea about loving family members.

FRANK

I know what your father did was wrong.

MORGAN

What makes you the one to pass judgement on us? You have little knowledge of what has or hasn't worked in our lives. We are stronger together and have better lives by being together. All you've done is flit in and out as you desire with no bonding to us.

FRANK

It may be that you have some kind of link to each other, but I believe it is born out of trauma and not true love.

MORGAN

True love my ass. We've had more love than you'll ever have.

FRANK

Not according to Suzanne. She wrote of all the problems that continued to plague this family.

MORGAN

Suzanne was the most loving, caring person I've ever known. Whatever she may have written must have come out of her loving heart for us.

FRANK

What could you have even known about what was in her heart? You all have so many secrets and have kept so many of them locked away; the hiding alone shows lack of bonding.

MORGAN

Our secrets are our own. We loved Suzanne. I loved Suzanne. Any opinion of yours is just garbage.

FRANK

All the hatred carried inside you. How can you say you loved Suzanne when you can't even love yourself?

MORGAN

You have no concept of how much I loved her.

FRANK

You couldn't have truly loved her. You can't even maintain a personal relationship with any woman.

MORGAN

I loved Suzanne more than anybody else in my life.

FRANK

Face it. You couldn't really love her. It's impossible.

MORGAN

I loved her.

FRANK

It's not in your nature.

MORGAN

I loved her.

FRANK

BULL!!

MORGAN

I loved her!! I loved her!!

FRANK

How could you?

MORGAN

Because we were lovers!!

CASS

. . . What did you say?

MORGAN

I . . . I . . . she and I were lovers.

FRANK

I can't believe I'm fucking hearing this. Have you any idea what you've done?

MORGAN

Fuck off.

VICKY

Morgan, tell me it's not true.

CASS

Please Morgan, say it's a lie.

FRANK

No. Look at him. It's true alright. His face tells it all.

CASS

Oh my God, no. I can't accept this.

VICKY

Suz and you. You did this. You kept this from us. This is so wrong.

MORGAN

No it wasn't wrong. She and I were aware of what was involved in our relationship. We loved each other in a way that nobody could ever understand. Suz and my eyes were wide open. Our hearts were the force in back of our love.

CASS

But she was our sister; your sister.

MORGAN

That was an accident of birth!! She loved me and I loved her back. We were both attracted to each other and became lovers by choice. One of the reason's I had the vasectomy was to make certain she wouldn't get pregnant.

VICKY

Fact is it answers why you two were so close. But Morg, don't you understand what this means.

MORGAN

It means the last secret is out in the open and I will make no apologies for it. Suz and I were adults and lovers and I will love her to the day I die.

CASS

Can't you see how this is just like your father abusing Vicky and me?

VICKY

After what Frank just put me through you've some Goddamned nerve to reveal this sordid shit.

MORGAN

Shut your face Vic. It is NOTHING like my father.

FRANK

Yes, it is. No matter how you want to rationalize this, it is exactly like him.

MORGAN

From what has been said, your father abused little girls who couldn't fight back and were threatened. Suz and I were in love and grown up. There's a whole world of difference there. So just keep your trap shut about this.

FRANK

I don't know what kind of warped view brought you to do what you did, but it is absolutely following a pattern set down by your father. It's incest either way.

MORGAN

Because Suz and me loved each other deeply. We loved each other past what anyone else would accept. She was the most caring, giving person I've ever known. No other woman has come close. We openly gave to each other.

FRANK

You had sex with her.

MORGAN

We made love with each other and I dare you to say anything against us.

CASS

Morgan, I didn't know.

MORGAN

You didn't need to know. What we had was between us and nobody else.

VICKY

But Morg, don't you understand what you did?

MORGAN

I did nothing more than what my father did except I did it with love and Suzanne returned it back to me.

CASS

Morgan, can't you understand?

MORGAN

I'm not a child molester.

CASS

I don't mean that. Frank is right. It's a pattern you probably got impressed on you as a very young child.

FRANK

It's called imprinting. On some level he knew what that man was doing and in his young mind it was part of his early learning.

MORGAN

Will you just SHUT UP!! We loved what we did. It was mutual. We enjoyed each other like nobody else we'd ever been with.

FRANK

You FUCKED your sister. There is no good explanation that allows this to be OK.

MORGAN

One more word.

VICKY

Stop it. Morgan, I just can't take this anymore.

FRANK

Just be glad it wasn't you who he stuck his cock in.

MORGAN

AHH! You mean muthafucka. I'll break you in half.

(They fight.)

MORGAN

Get up so I can knock you down again.

CASS

No, stop.

MORGAN

Out of my way Cass. I'm gonna beat the snot out of my, oh so bright brother, then I'm gonna ram the snot up his ass.

CASS

Enough!! Enough. You'll have to go through me first. There's been enough hate thrown around. Frank, get up. Frank, look at me. For whatever reasons you came back, this stops here.

FRANK

I can stop if you want, for Suzanne not Morgan or Vicky. I can even show some respect for you Cass, but there have been too many secrets for too long, and this last revelation only compounds the list of morally objectionable events that caused me to originally leave.

MORGAN

Some brother you've been. You hate us for living our lives as we want.



FRANK

Your own despicable and distorted world view is what repulses me.

CASS

Frank, get out. You've been insulting, abusive and vulgar in the one day you've been here. You've upset our lives while saying you were trying to make it better for us, but you've been nothing but destructive. You've manipulated our feelings from the get-go. You've opened up wounds and caused us to reveal secrets that were, I swear on Suzanne's grave, were better left buried. It's over. Now.

FRANK

It was never my intent to be destructive. There was the faint hope we might find some common ground. Suzanne saw hope, and I held out for it. Any destruction never came from me. The poison always flowed in your own veins. It seeped to the surface only from the slashes you've already made in your psyches. I'm not responsible for your secrets. I merely showed them to you; revealed them for you to exorcise.

CASS

All I see that you've done is mind fuck us into facing secrets that we didn't need to face. You were right all along to think you were different. In your own way you're as bad as our father was.

FRANK

I see in your eyes that's what I've always been and always will be. So be it. For that I fully accept my role. I've likened my journey to Diogenes searching for an honest man. There's been no honesty here and you've all failed to cleanse yourself of your sins. It's a sorrow to me that you couldn't break from your own shells, see the truth and be free.

VICKY

Pretty words but your still an asshole . . . and a liar. If not to us, still to yourself.

CASS

I don't know if we'll ever heal from this, but I do know we will try to do it together without you.

MORGAN

Bastard.

**The End.**