

Whisk?

Written by

Jeannie Musick & Leni Hester

Additional Lines by

Matt Story

with Additional Input by

Zotis Bumgardner, David Huber, Anna Richardson, Caitlyn Sabrio,
Courtney Zimmerle, and Jake Loup

Whick?

Originally produced at Louisiana State University
on July 7-15, 2006

Original Cast

Paul Caleb..... David Huber
Rachel..... Caitlyn Sabrio
Layla “Lala” Anna Richardson
Aiden Matt Story
Sara, Woman Courtney Zimmerle

Directed by Jeannie Musick

Setting

Place: San Francisco, California

Time: The Present

Prologue – 4 years earlier

Scene 1 – Rachel’s Bedroom

Scene 2 – Caleb family’s living room, late summer afternoon

Scene 2 – Park, that evening

Scene 3 – Caleb family’s living room, two months later, late autumn

Scene 4 – Graveside funeral, same afternoon and early evening

Scene 5 – Caleb family’s kitchen, get-together after the funeral

Scene 6 – Outside of the theatre, same evening

Scene 7 – Outside of the theatre, same evening

Scene 8 – Caleb family’s living room, one month later, early winter evening

Scene 9 – Roller Rink, same evening

Scene 10 – Caleb family’s living room, three days later

Scene 11 – Park, Goth club, Layla & Rachel’s bedrooms, same night

Epilogue – Nowhere /Everywhere

Prologue

(Blackout with Music: “Hush, Little Baby”. Voice-overs begin and lights come up on Tableau then down. Repeat for each tableau. Voice-overs are continuous with slight pauses. Lights on tableaus DO NOT come up at the same exact moment but mid-thought. AIDEN is sitting in the audience watching.)

Voice-overs	Tableau – No motion during Tableaus
<p>MOTHER’S VOICE: Rachel. Rachel, honey! Layla’s crying. RACHEL: Okay, Mom. I’ll get her.</p>	During Blackout
<p>T1</p>	RACHEL rocking baby
<p>T2 RACHEL: Dad, don’t cry. Mom’ll be okay.</p> <p>FATHER: Will she? I just don’t know. I’m afraid I’m losing her and I’ll be left all alone. RACHEL: I’m here, Dad. I’m here for you.</p>	RACHEL kneeling in front of FATHER , handing baby to him.
<p>T3 RACHEL: Dad, please don’t cry! I love you and I’m here for you. Please don’t cry, dad, please!</p> <p>FATHER: Rachel, what would I do without you? I don’t think I ‘d survive. I need you so much.</p>	RACHEL behind FATHER , hugging him while he holds the baby.
<p>T4 FATHER: Rachel, you look so much like your mother.</p> <p>FATHER: I see her fading every day and it kills me. But then I see you...</p>	FATHER standing with Rachel facing him. He is gently holding her face in his hands.

Scene 1

(RACHEL'S Bedroom at night.)

(Sound of RACHEL sobbing inconsolably. RACHEL enters running and throws herself onto the bed, burying her face in her pillow to hide the sounds of her escalating crying. As the sobs begin to weaken, the lighting changes to dream lighting. AIDEN appears and crosses to the bed, crouches down beside RACHEL, and watches her intently for a moment with growing distress on his face. He slowly reaches out and starts to stroke her hair. RACHEL recoils and sits bolt upright as if she has been attacked. AIDEN doesn't move for several seconds but his face begins to harden and a mask of absolute hatred covers his features as he slowly turns his face towards the direction from where RACHEL entered (i.e. where the FATHER is). He stands and quickly moves toward that direction. RACHEL realizes what Aiden is planning and races to him to stop him. She reaches for his face and turns him back towards her. When she sees his face, she drops her head onto his chest and throws her arms around his waist. He closes his eyes and regains his composure, then strokes her hair, and finally circles his arms around her to protect her. After a moment he lifts her, and carries her back to her bed and lays her in the bed, covers her up, and watches her for a moment, before leaving the way he came as the lights return to normal and then fade to black.)

Scene 2

(LAYLA is sitting in the middle of the stage playing with the doll trying to put the barrette in the doll's hair. RACHEL enters carrying a dinner tray. Her relationship to the father is one of impatience but her relationship to Layla is sweet and patient.)

RACHEL: Dad! Dad! Dad! *(Checks out door.)* Lala, where's daddy?

LAYLA: Don't know.

(RACHEL sets the tray down and takes the barrette from Didi's hair.)

RACHEL: Oh, honey. That won't work in Didi's hair. That belongs in your hair.

LAYLA: No.

RACHEL: Yes! Let me help.

(RACHEL tries to put the barrette in LAYLA'S hair but LAYLA wiggles so she can't. LAYLA is giggling.)

RACHEL: Lala, it's not funny.

(LAYLA starts giggling again and RACHEL joins her.)

RACHEL: There. Beautiful, just like you.

LAYLA: Stay and play with me. *(LAYLA takes barrette out and puts it into RACHEL'S hair.)*

RACHEL: Oh, honey, I'd love to but I gotta find daddy now. *(RACHEL puts the barrette back into LAYLA'S hair.)*

LAYLA: Okay

(RACHEL kisses LAYLA'S forehead, picks up the tray, and goes to another aisle.)

RACHEL: Dad! *(Father enters.)* There you are, I've been looking for you.

FATHER: What is it honey? What do you need?

RACHEL: *(Pulls FATHER to the side so LAYLA can't hear. Father stops to stroke Layla's hair.)*
Dad! *(They continue the cross.)* Mom wants to see you.

FATHER: *(Very surprised and a little nervous.)* She does?

RACHEL: She's really sick. She wouldn't eat anything. *(FATHER stalls.)* Could you be a man for once!

(RACHEL exits to the mother's bedroom. FATHER nervously starts toward the bedroom, then turns back and glances at RACHEL who encourages him to go. As he turns back, he sees the barrette in LAYLA'S hair.)

FATHER: Lala what are you wearing? *(Grabs it out of her hair.)* What are you doing with this? This was my mother's. *(Grabs her arm and shakes her.)* I gave that to your mother when we got married. *(Throws her down on the ground.)*

FATHER: How could you take something from her when she's dying?

LAYLA: *(Crying)* I'm sorry... I'm sorry! Daddy, you're hurting me!

(FATHER is startled and lets go. LAYLA runs out of the house as RACHEL comes running in.)

RACHEL: Dad, what's going on? Where's Lala? *(Starts to head look for LAYLA.)*

FATHER: *(Grabbing RACHEL'S wrist.)* Why did you let Lala steal mom's barrette?

RACHEL: Steal it? She didn't. Mom gave it to her. What did you do? Where's Lala?

FATHER: How should I know?!

(RACHEL runs out to try to find LAYLA. FATHER buries his face in his hand.)

RACHEL: Lala! Lala!

(RACHEL returns.)

RACHEL: I don't see her anywhere. Hey, snap out of it. We need to go find her.

(RACHEL and FATHER leave house.)

Scene 3

(Park at night. LAYLA enters with early evening light, talking to doll.)

LAYLA: Member never cross the street alone. It's okay this time. I'm here. This is a grownup place so you need me with you. Daddy will be sorry he was mean. *(Looks around and sees the size of the park.)* It's so big!

(LAYLA begins playing hide and seek with the doll. Puts the doll center stage and covers doll's eyes. Giggling she runs and hides behind a tree and starts counting. Then she peeks at the doll, runs to another hiding places and starts random counting again. She repeats several times.)

LAYLA: One – two – three – four – five – six *(etc.)* I win!

(LAYLA notices that it is getting darker and crosses to the doll; lies down on her stomach on the grass and talks very softly to the doll.)

LAYLA: Do you member which way we came from? It's getting dark and I forgot... No don't be scared, I'll keep you safe.... It's okay, just be brave.

(LAYLA picks up doll and begins singing "Hush Little Baby" to comfort the doll. The words are adapted to the child's memory. AIDEN sees LAYLA through the window from his house and begins watching her. After a while he makes the decision to go and make sure she is safe. There is a dead woman lying across the bed. AIDEN looks at the woman, covers her up with a sheet or blanket, then leaves the house and crosses to stand among the trees but keeps his presence hidden.)

Hush, little baby, don't say a word.
Papa gonna buy you a talking bird

If that talking bird won't sing,
Papa gonna buy you a diamond ring

If that diamond ring turn... grass,
Papa gonna buy you a drinking glass

If that drinking glass get broke,
Papa gonna buy you a silly goat

If that silly goat fall down,
You'll be the sweetest baby in town

I know, let's play a game and then you'll feel better. I'll be the mama and you be the papa.

AIDEN: Aren't you brave, to be out so late all alone?

(LAYLA runs and hides behind a tree. AIDEN crouches down to her level center stage and continues talking to her.)

AIDEN: Oh, don't be scared.... I see you have a friend with you... She's very cute. What's her name?

LAYLA: *(Pause)* Didi.

AIDEN: Didi looks like she's a little afraid. Could I give Didi a hug?

(LAYLA thinks for a minute then nods "yes," moves from the audience to the floor, and kneeling next to AIDEN, reluctantly gives him the doll which he hugs and then returns to her)

My name is Aiden.

LAYLA: I've never heard that name before. It's silly. *(giggles)*

AIDEN: I guess it is a little. What's your name?

LAYLA: Lala.

AIDEN: Lala. What a pretty name. *(Moves to sit next to LAYLA.)* Why are you out so late?

LAYLA: Why are you?

AIDEN: Well, I live across the street?

LAYLA: Where?

AIDEN: Do you see that house right over there? That's where I live.

LAYLA: Which one?

AIDEN: The blue one. Where do you and Didi live?

LAYLA: I don't remember. *(Whispers confidentially.)* We're lost.

AIDEN: Ah, I see. *(Whispers back confidentially.)* How did you get lost?

LAYLA: Don know.

AIDEN: *(Pause.)* How old is Didi?

LAYLA: Don know. Never thought about it.

AIDEN: *(Laughing)* You never thought about it?

LAYLA: How old are you?

AIDEN: *(Short pause)* Oh very old. How old are you?

LAYLA: *(Holds up four fingers)* I'm four.

AIDEN:

(RACHEL enters running, sees AIDEN and LAYLA, and runs to them screaming at AIDEN.)

RACHEL: Get away from her! *(Pushes AIDEN away. He moves to a tree, giving them some space.)* Lala are you okay? *(Holding and hugging her and stroking her hair)* Did he hurt you?

LAYLA: No, he was nice.

RACHEL: *(Moves to AIDEN.)* You freak, stay away from my little sister.

AIDEN: I was only trying to help.

RACHEL: *(Very upset)* Did he touch you?

LAYLA: *(Starting to get frightened)* No.

RACHEL: *(Realizing she is upsetting LAYLA and trying to calm her down)* It's okay Lala. Go jump in the car. Daddy's waiting for you.

LAYLA: *(Panicked)* No! Daddy's mad at me.

RACHEL: No Lala, he's not. Not anymore. Layla, look at me. Look at me. He's very sorry. Ok?

LAYLA: Ok.

RACHEL: Now go on.

LAYLA: Are you coming?

RACHEL: I'll be right there. I won't leave you alone.

(LAYLA slowly heads toward the car.)

LAYLA: Bye Aiden.

AIDEN: *(Moves toward LAYLA.)* Bye Lala. Bye-bye Didi – take care of her.

RACHEL: *(Waits until LAYLA leaves, then turns to AIDEN)* What do you think you're doing? Don't you touch my little sister, you freak! *(Starts to turn away.)*

AIDEN: I didn't hurt her. I never touched her.

(RACHEL attacks AIDEN hitting him on the chest as he grabs her hands to protect himself. Both freeze and we move into RACHEL'S mind. RACHEL gently pulls away from AIDEN and steps back. Her breathing becomes louder as her imagination takes over. She moves forward and touches her hand to AIDEN'S face. AIDEN comes out of the freeze and takes her hand and kisses it. He moves around her and caresses her shoulders and kisses her throat. He continues around her and pulls her in, kissing her on the lips. He takes her hands and kisses them, returning to the original position and freezes.)

AIDEN: *(Gently but breaking the spell)* How old are you anyway? You're trying so hard to be an adult, to protect Lala, but you're still a teen-ager. What are you 14? 15?

RACHEL: *(Trying to regain her composure and control – a little out of breath, she gently pulls her hand away from him.)* None of your business.

(AIDEN lets go of her hands. He is very aware of the effect he has had on her and a little bemused. RACHEL starts to leave.)

AIDEN: Would you rather I didn't care and she ran into someone that would hurt her? Is that what you wanted?

RACHEL: Yes... no. Please... just stay away from us. *(Exits completely confused)*

(Blackout)

Scene 4

(LAYLA is onstage reading a book upside down. Argument between FATHER and RACHEL begins offstage and then moves onstage. LAYLA tries not to react to the argument but cringes as it gets louder.)

FATHER: End of argument! We need you here tonight. I need you here tonight. *(Rachel tightens up and sends looks to kill at her father.)* Look, people are coming over after the funeral. You have a responsibility.

RACHEL: I've always had that responsibility haven't I?

FATHER: Your mother would be so upset. She wouldn't run out on you like this.

RACHEL: *(Sarcastic)* That's the whole point: You keep forgetting that I'm not mother and I'm not taking her place, anymore.

FATHER: I'm sorry. I didn't mean that. We just need to be together tonight.

RACHEL: No. I'll go to the funeral but that is it. I've been planning on seeing Phantom for months. Tonight is the last night. You said I could go. All I need from you are the tickets.

FATHER: I'm sorry, Rachel, but you can't have them. It's more important that you be here for your mother.

RACHEL: She's gone – dead. She doesn't care, and you only care about appearances!

(FATHER slaps RACHEL and immediately regrets it. LAYLA runs to RACHEL and clings to her slapping at FATHER and crying.)

LAYLA: No. Don't hurt Rachel.

FATHER: I'm sorry. *(Trying to calm LAYLA down.)* I'm sorry... I'm sorry... I'm sorry. I didn't mean that. I'm just upset. Please, Rachel, we really need you here tonight. We need the support of the family. Look you're upsetting Lala.

RACHEL: You're the one upsetting her.

FATHER: *(Crosses to RACHEL.)* Please honey, please. I need you to be here tonight.

RACHEL: You know what I need? I need to get away from this. I need to get away from death and dying and responsibility and... *(She is about to say "sex" but doesn't)* and I need to go.

FATHER: What about Lala?

RACHEL: She'll be surrounded by tons of people who are going to be caring and worrying about her. Everybody is going to worry about Lala. She'll have lots of people to rely on. She doesn't need me as well. I don't have anybody. No, I'm the strong one - the one that holds everybody else up. We'll I'm tired of that. I quit.

(LAYLA is crying pathetically. RACHEL softens and kneels down to speak to LAYLA. She hugs LAYLA who clings to her desperately. RACHEL wipes away LAYLA'S tears and tries to be cheerful.)

RACHEL: Lala, everything is okay. I'm here. You need to get ready cause we're going to say goodbye to mommy and we have to look pretty for that.

LAYLA: Where is mommy goin'?

RACHEL: Remember, mommy went to heaven.

LAYLA: Oh yea. Are we goin to heaven to see her?

RACHEL: Not yet honey. We're going to the church to see her now. Someday we'll get to see her in heaven. *(Under her breath to FATHER)* At least some of us.

FATHER: Lala, let's go to your bedroom and I'll help you finish getting ready.

RACHEL: Don't bother. I'll take care of her. Just give me the tickets.

FATHER: *(Pause)* No.

(RACHEL leaves with LAYLA. FATHER collapses into a chair. RACHEL sneaks back in and finds his wallet and takes the tickets out, then sneaks back offstage. RACHEL and LAYLA return a few seconds later.)

RACHEL: We're ready. Let's go.

FATHER: Rachel...

RACHEL: I said let's go.

Scene 5

(FATHER stands up and the three move to chairs set up for funeral. LAYLA sits between FATHER and RACHEL creating a mother, father, daughter scenario. The funeral is gibberish as we are watching the reactions of the three instead of listening to the words. LAYLA has her head in RACHEL'S lap and RACHEL is stroking her hair. FATHER looks desolate. Sara is standing to the side.)

FATHER: *(Whispered)* Rachel, can I have a tissue?

RACHEL: Oh, Dad. Get a grip.

FATHER: How can you be so cold? Your mother is gone!

RACHEL: She wasn't here when she was here. You made me replace her a long time ago, remember? Why should I pretend it was any different?

FATHER: Rachel! Shut up!

(Pause during which we hear the gibberish.)

LAYLA: *(Looking up at Rachel.)* When will mommy come back from Heaven?

RACHEL: Oh I don't know honey. I think she has to stay there. But someday we can go see her, remember.

LAYLA: When? Tomorrow?

RACHEL: Not right away, but someday.

(FATHER breaks down crying and LAYLA turns to him to comfort him.)

LAYLA: It's okay daddy, don't cry. It's okay. I'll be here for you. I love you, Daddy. Please don't cry.

(LAYLA throws her arms around FATHER who nearly crushes her to his chest.)

FATHER: Lala, what would I do without you? I don't think I 'd survive. I need you so much. *(Pulls Layla away slightly to look at her.)* You look so much like your mother. I see you....

(RACHEL freaks and pulls LAYLA to her a little roughly startling both LAYLA and FATHER. Then she gently comforts LAYLA.)

RACHEL: Don't worry. Daddy'll be fine.

(Funeral continues and slowly the FATHER puts his hand on LAYLA'S shoulder. She looks up into his face and smiles at him. Then LAYLA moves her head to FATHER'S lap. RACHEL is upset but restrains herself in public. She glares at FATHER and he stares back in a showdown between the two. Angelic music begins and the three stand up. FATHER moves LAYLA to stand in front of him. SARA passes by and hugs each one.)

SARA: I'm so sorry, Mr. Caleb. Lala. *(SARA moves to hug RACHEL, and FATHER and LAYLA move to the grave and lower their heads. SARA speaks quietly to RACHEL.)* Did you get the tickets?

RACHEL: *(Whispering)* Yeah. Here. Hide them. Pick me up at 6:30 at the corner. Don't come to the door. Okay?

SARA: Okay. I'll wait at the corner.

(SARA hugs RACHEL again, then moves to the grave. She crosses herself then exits.)

FATHER: *(FATHER indicates for RACHEL to head out.)* We're coming.

(RACHEL is upset but exits. FATHER takes LAYLA by the hand and starts to follow RACHEL. Then he stops, sits, and starts looking intently at LAYLA.)

LAYLA: Daddy, what's the matter?

FATHER: Nothing honey, I was just thinking how much you're growing up.

LAYLA: Am I a big girl now?

FATHER: Yes, I think you are.

LAYLA: I don't think so.

FATHER: Why not?

LAYLA: *(Whispers to him confidentially.)* Because I'm scared.

FATHER: Of what?

LAYLA: It's getting dark.

FATHER: Aw. But I'm with you so you don't need to be afraid. I'll protect you. (*FATHER sits down on the grass.*) Come sit on my lap. (*LAYLA sits.*) See there is nothing to be afraid of.

(*FATHER is hugging and rocking LAYLA. His eyes are closed. He starts stroking her arm. AIDEN enters and stands watching the FATHER. His mood and manner change to indicate that he is sensing more than just consolation on FATHER'S part.*)

AIDEN: Hello Lala.

(*FATHER starts and LAYLA jumps up and runs to AIDEN.*)

LAYLA: Aiden. Hi. What're you doing here?

AIDEN: I was visiting a friend who's buried here. Why are you here?

FATHER: (*Resentful.*) We just buried my wife. Who are you?

LAYLA: He's the nice man from the park. You know!

FATHER: Oh. You're the one Rachel mentioned. Layla, go catch up with Rachel. I'll be right there.

LAYLA: (*Running after RACHEL.*) Bye, bye Aiden. Rachel!

FATHER: (*FATHER moves closer to AIDEN.*) You stay away from my daughters or I'll call the police. (*Starts to exit.*)

AIDEN: You're the one they need protection from.

FATHER: What?

AIDEN: I was watching. Lala may not know what you're doing, but I do. I've seen it in the past. I'm fond of them both so it stops here. Touch Lala again, and I'll rip your throat out... (*Starts to walk past FATHER.*) Literally.

(*AIDEN turns and exits. FATHER remains frozen for a moment, obviously shaken, then exits.*)

Scene 6

(RACHEL is onstage getting ready to sneak out She is sitting on the kitchen table putting on her makeup. There are sandwiches on a plate with a knife on the table. The kitchen has a refrigerator with lemonade inside. We heard FATHER'S voice off-stage.)

FATHER: Thank you for coming... Yes. It will be very hard. We're all going to miss her... It's so kind of you to come... Thank you... She was never the same after the accident. I think she always blamed herself... She was sick for so long, I guess her body just gave out. That still doesn't make it easier... I don't know what I'd do without the girls. Rachel has single-handedly run the house and raised Layla. Even at five, Layla is trying to help as much as she can. They've both been such a big help... *(Yelling to RACHEL.)* Rachel!

(RACHEL quickly jumps off the table and turns her back so FATHER won't see her makeup. She hides her makeup and starts cutting the crust off the sandwiches.)

FATHER: *(Still yelling from offstage)* Rachel! *(Poking his head in)* Honey, we need more drinks.

RACHEL: There is another pitcher of lemonade in the fridge.

FATHER: *(Goes to the refrigerator and gets the lemonade.)* I'm really sorry to make you miss the play but I appreciate how much you've been helping. I'm gonna make it up to you.

RACHEL: I'm sure you will.

(FATHER starts to leave with the lemonade but stops and watches RACHEL for a moment. He goes over and puts the lemonade down on the table. He puts his hands on her shoulders in an intimate manner and starts to stroke her back.)

RACHEL: Better hurry with the lemonade. I'll bring some sandwiches out in a few minutes.

FATHER: Thanks, honey. *(Kisses her shoulder and then exits. We hear his voice off-stage again.)* Please have some more lemonade... It was a lovely funeral. I was amazed at how many people were there. My wife hasn't been out of bed in five years and yet so many people came to say goodbye... It was so nice of you to come... I already miss her so much. I can't bear it... Yes, Rachel is the spitting image of her mother. That is probably my biggest comfort... Mike, it's good to see you. I just wish it were under different circumstances... Thank you for coming... How did you know my wife?... Thanks, that's very kind of you...

(During the previous speech, RACHEL exits and returns with her dress, puts it on, starts out of the kitchen, remembers her purse, runs back to get it and sneaks out the back door. FATHER returns to the kitchen.)

FATHER: Rachel...

(FATHER hits the wall and leaves. Lights go down on the kitchen as the table is removed and the bench is placed.)

Scene 7

(SARA AND RACHEL enter from the theatre, excited.)

RACHEL: Dance with me!

SARA: There's no music.

RACHEL: Then you sing!

(RACHEL pushes SARA up onto the bench and SARA begins singing in a phony, dramatic voice.)

SARA: Slowly, gently night unfurls its splendor.

(RACHEL reacts to the singing and pulls SARA back down from the bench.)

RACHEL: Okay. Come on.

SARA: (continuing)

Grasp it, sense it - tremulous and tender
Turn your face away
from the garish light of day,
turn your thoughts away
from cold, unfeeling light -
and listen to the music of the night ...

SARA: Close your eyes and surrender
to your darkest dreams!

RACHEL: The music makes me want to soar!
(RACHEL collapses on the bench.)

SARA: *(Crosses behind bench.)* It's so romantic – two men passionately in love with her – one willing to die for her *(RACHEL dramatically dies and falls off bench)* – the other willing to kill for her! *(SARA dramatically stabs RACHEL in the back. RACHEL drags herself a couple of paces then dies gloriously. SARA removes the dagger.)*

RACHEL: Thank you.

SARA: Where were we?

RACHEL: *(Singing)*

Turn your face away
from the garish light of day...

(RACHEL quits dancing and loses all the joy.)

RACHEL: I'm sorry.

SARA: What's wrong?

RACHEL: I was just thinking.

SARA: Oh, about your mom? I'm sorry. I shouldn't have pushed you to come.

RACHEL: What?

SARA: I mean with it being your mom's funeral and all. But I thought it would help.

RACHEL: Oh, no. I wasn't even thinking about her.

SARA: What then?

RACHEL: Nothing.

SARA: Oh come on Rach... give.

RACHEL: It's all just a fantasy – another lie. Night only hides the lies, it doesn't get rid of them.

SARA: Meaning?

RACHEL: *(Building in passion)* Meaning he wanted her to join him in his world of night; he wanted her to believe that it would be beautiful – but it just hid the ugliness. People pretend in daylight. They put on a show – a pretty show – but at night, they reveal themselves in all their horror.

SARA: Whoa – what just happened?

RACHEL: Nothing. Just a reality check. Oh shoot! I left my sweater inside. Be right back.

SARA: I'll go get the car and meet you back here.

RACHEL: K.

Scene 8

(SARA exits and RACHEL turns back to the theatre but bumps into AIDEN [off-stage].)

AIDEN: (Off-stage) Excuse me! *(She crosses the stage to leave an opposite direction.)* Don't leave... Hi.

RACHEL: Are you following me?

AIDEN: No... but it's a good idea.

RACHEL: I forgot my sweater. I've got to get back before it disappears.

AIDEN: They've already locked the doors. You can call them tomorrow and they'll find it for you. Here, you're cold. *(Puts his coat on her, gently touching her face. She notices how cold he is. Don't rush it.)*

RACHEL: But now you're cold.

AIDEN: Actually, I never get cold. What are you doing out here all alone?

RACHEL: I gotta go. My friend is on her way with the car.

(Pause as she tries to leave but only gets a few steps and finally turns back to him. Starts to say something but nothing comes out.)

AIDEN: What did you think of it?

RACHEL: Of what?

AIDEN: The play.

RACHEL: Oh, well, I've wanted to see Phantom for ages. I finally got to see the movie but it's not the same thing.

AIDEN: Was it worth the wait?

RACHEL: Well the plot isn't much, you know: boy loves girl, boy loses girl to monster, boy finds girl. But the music is incredible. The words of the music are so deep. There is so much meaning that people don't get. It's all about the nature of love and seduction and darkness, not just romance. The Phantom doesn't really love Christine until he lets her go. He doesn't want to hurt her anymore so he frees her.

AIDEN: So I take it you liked it.

RACHEL: Yea, as sad as it is, it... resonates. I understand the confusion and the pain.

AIDEN: I'm sorry.

RACHEL: No, I didn't mean that. I just meant it was beautifully done. But it's just a story. In my experience, love isn't like that.

AIDEN: Isn't it? *(Pause)* The play is also about loneliness. Almost everyone is capable of understanding the pain of loneliness. It's just that many don't even try or won't admit to it. I think we're all a little lonely, even sometimes when we're in a crowd.

RACHEL: I'm not.

AIDEN: No? *(Almost to himself.)* I am. And that's okay. It's the nature of life.

RACHEL: What do you even mean?

AIDEN: Life is a dance... *(music starts)* – an endless stream of steps moving toward and drawing away from each other, interweaving an intricate human relationship. Some moments our dance crosses and we come together, almost as one, and then we pull apart and, even when we're still connected, we're alone. But without that movement, relationships are fragile and easily destroyed – they become boring and worn out. With the movement, they are ever-changing, ever-interesting patterns that grow stronger with time.

RACHEL: *(Quietly, almost under her breath)* Wow...

AIDEN: I could promise our "dance" would never be boring...

(AIDEN draws close behind RACHEL and, with his arm around her, he gently pulls her toward him. Their eyes close and he smells her gently. He kisses her neck. Suddenly a car horn blows breaking the spell.)

RACHEL: *(Out of breath.)* Oh, that's my friend the car... friend with the car... with the car not.... I have to run. *(Starts to exit.)* What was your name anyway?

AIDEN: Aiden, and you're Rachel.

RACHEL: Yeah. *(Starts to leave. Remembers that she has his coat. Starts to return it to him. He takes it and puts it back on her shoulders.)* Thank you. *(She curtsies and he returns the bow. She runs out flustered bumping into things.)*

AIDEN: You're welcome.

(AIDEN is amused but frustrated and expresses that frustration by crouching down [animalistic] and physically as he searches for a victim. A lone woman enters from the play. She is nervous when she sees him and fingers her keys, putting them between her fingers to use as a weapon. She keeps eye contact warning him off. As she gets closer, he stands, frightening her more and she speeds up her cross and exits. Aiden watches her, wanting food. He fights then accepts the impulse and follows the woman off-stage.)

Scene 9

(LAYLA is playing on the floor with her doll. FATHER stands and watches her for a moment. He notices the barrette in her hair, crosses to her, and touches the barrette. LAYLA jerks back thinking FATHER is angry with her.)

LAYLA: Sorry daddy. I'll take it out.

FATHER: No honey, that's okay. It's beautiful. You are my beautiful big girl. *(FATHER sits down in chair.)* You like mommy's barrette, don't you?

LAYLA: Yes. *(Takes barrette out of hair and looks at it.)* It's pretty.

FATHER: Yes it is... just like you. Come here and let daddy put it back in your hair. *(LAYLA runs to FATHER and sits in front of him, facing outward.)* It makes you look so pretty! I want you to keep it. Now, what do you say?

LAYLA: Thank you!

FATHER: *(Pretending to be sad.)* But where is daddy's kiss?

(LAYLA gives daddy a kiss. RACHEL enters in time to see LAYLA'S kiss.)

RACHEL: Lala honey, let's go to your room and read a story.

LAYLA: I wanna stay with Daddy.

FATHER: Leave her alone. You don't have time, anyway. I never see you anymore. Remember you're meeting Sara at the Roller Rink and since you're going to go whether or not I agree, you might as well leave.

RACHEL: I'll cancel.

FATHER: Like you did the last time? Nonsense. Layla and I will be fine, won't we darling.

(FATHER tickles LAYLA and she starts giggling.)

LAYLA: Yes. We'll be fine!

FATHER: Go on, Sara's waiting.

*(**RACHEL** glares a warning at **FATHER** who turns and lowers his head so he can't see her face anymore. **RACHEL** exits.)*

Scene 10

(Scene: Roller rink. Music is typical rink music. Lighting includes a disco ball. RACHEL enters quickly on rollerblades. She is having a major problem and grabs at a wall, freezing in position. SARA enters on rollerblades and does a complete circle around her. SARA then tries to pull RACHEL away from the wall.)

SARA: Come on you slacker! Move those feet.

(SARA gets Rachel away from the post and pushes her out onto the floor.)

SARA: Come on slowpoke. *(Skates offstage)*

(RACHEL loses her balance and falls. AIDEN comes out quickly from the audience and catches her. RACHEL looks up and realizes it is AIDEN. He helps her to stand and she pulls away from him, self-consciously.)

RACHEL: So are you stalking me... *(AIDEN begins moving toward her and seducing her. He nuzzles her ear. RACHEL is overwhelmed and turns away slightly)* or Layla?

AIDEN: That's... obscene. *(AIDEN is upset and turns to exit.)*

RACHEL: *(Trying to stop him from leaving.)* It happens.

AIDEN: Not with me.

RACHEL: You didn't answer my question.

AIDEN: *(Leans casually against the post and apprises her.)* What if I said it's you?

(RACHEL tries to get away from AIDEN and falls. AIDEN tries to catch her but she screams at him.)

RACHEL: Don't touch me!

AIDEN: *(Lets her calm down for a second.)* This is honestly the first time I bumped into you on purpose. You looked like you needed help and it seemed the perfect opportunity.

RACHEL: How did you know I'd be here?

AIDEN: Would it upset you if I said I've been watching you since I saw you at the play the other night?

RACHEL: *(She tries to get up but keeps falling.)* Look, there are people everywhere. You try anything and I'll scream my lungs out.

AIDEN: I'm not going to hurt you.

(AIDEN tries to help her up.)

RACHEL: I got it!

(AIDEN backs up and watches as RACHEL tries to get up on her own. Finally, she collapses back on her bottom.)

AIDEN: Are you enjoying yourself or would you prefer a more comfortable seat?

(RACHEL continues trying to get up but fails. AIDEN puts his hand out to her again. RACHEL finally takes his hand and he helps her up. She sits down on the bench. Aiden pauses slightly and then cautiously sits down hoping not to frighten Rachel. She moves farther away on the bench as he sits down.)

AIDEN: Not many women your age...

RACHEL: Women?

AIDEN: You're going to tell me you're actually a man?

RACHEL: No, it's just nobody else seems to notice.

AIDEN: I did.... You're what... 16? *(She reacts insulted.)* 17? *(She nods yes.)* Okay so seventeen is still a child but the more I've watched you, the more I realize you're not...*(RACHEL reacts quizzically)* a child. You were a lioness when you thought I was hurting Lala. You were ready to rip me apart.

RACHEL: So I fascinate you because I protect my sister? Right.

AIDEN: That was just one thing. *(AIDEN moves a little closer but relaxes more.)* It really was an accident when I bumped into you at the play. You were so enthralled with it - Not just the romance but also the beauty of the dance and music. Not many your age would understand it.

(There is an uncomfortable moment of silence.)

AIDEN: So you're 17 and Lala is 5.

RACHEL: Her name's Layla. Only family calls her Lala, well and close friends.

AIDEN: Layla... okay, so you're 17 and Layla is 5. That's 12 years between you – that's a big break.

RACHEL: *(Long pause. Finally.)* I had a little brother but he died.

AIDEN: I'm sorry.

RACHEL: Dad couldn't leave it alone. Mom was barely out of the hospital from the accident – she couldn't even walk yet – and he was panting all over her to have another baby. Like they could replace Tommy by having another kid. Someone didn't tell him that kids aren't interchangeable. *(Angry.)* She'd already killed one kid. You'd think that would be enough!

(RACHEL starts taking off skates and putting shoes back on - very angry. AIDEN tries to think of something to say – to ask the question, but falls silent.)

RACHEL: She was driving the car. The accident was her fault. She was thinking about some dumb thing and she killed Tommy. They should have been mourning but no – instead they got disgusting and made another baby. Mom got so sick after Layla was born that she couldn't do anything. Guess who had to become Mom...

AIDEN: But you really care about Layla, don't you?

RACHEL: She's mine. Mom may have carried her but I'm her mother.

AIDEN: It's hard isn't it, to have to be an adult at what...12?

RACHEL: Someone had to protect her. Mom couldn't. *(Angrily getting ready to go, she stands up.)* Mom couldn't protect anyone.

AIDEN: I didn't mean to upset you.

RACHEL: Then don't ask personal questions.

AIDEN: ...I didn't.

RACHEL: What about you? You have to be some kind of freak to stalk people. Can't get a girl to look at you any other way?

(AIDEN starts laughing.)

RACHEL: What?

AIDEN: That's actually kind of funny.

RACHEL: Why?

(AIDEN stands and crossed to Rachel. He slowly brings his finger to her chin while maintaining constant eye-contact. RACHEL never moves. He slowly reaches down and kisses her. RACHEL appears to be in a half- trance.)

AIDEN: Getting a girl's not really a problem. *(He gently releases her chin.)* Finding someone who interests me is a different matter.

(AIDEN exits while RACHEL remains frozen and confused. SARA comes skating back in.)

SARA: Quitting already? *(No answer from RACHEL.)* Rachel... Earth to Rachel, are you all right?

(RACHEL starts to follow Aiden.)

SARA: Rachel! *(Grabs RACHEL'S arm.)*

(Blackout)

Scene 11

LAYLA: Daddy, please read me a story.

FATHER: Okay honey. *(Takes the book from LAYLA. LAYLA lies down on the floor on her stomach facing FATHER.)* Honey come sit on daddy's lap. *(Pause)* That way you can see the pictures.

LAYLA: *(A little reticent)* Okay Daddy. *(Gets up and sits on his lap.)*

FATHER: Once upon a time, there was a little fairy princess, just like you, and her name was Princess Beauty, because she was the most beautiful girl in the kingdom.

LAYLA: No, her name was Sleeping Beauty.

FATHER: Oh, of course. Anyway there was a wicked witch who was jealous of Princess Beauty.

LAYLA: Sleeping Beauty?

FATHER: Yes, of Princess Sleeping Beauty. She pretended to love the King and Sleeping Beauty but she was only trying to separate them. So the wicked witch cast a spell on the princess and turned her into a frog.

LAYLA: Silly Daddy. That's not the story.

FATHER: Sure it is. See there is the frog and there is the witch.

LAYLA: No silly, that's the prince. The witch always turns the prince into the frog, not the princess.

FATHER: Oh, my mistake. Her father, the king, loved her very, very much and decided he had to rescue her from the wicked witch. So he got on his horse...

LAYLA: No daddy, the prince saves her.

FATHER: Not in this story. Anyway, the king got on his horse and rode to the castle of the wicked witch. After fighting a dragon, he found his beautiful daughter and saved her and they lived happily ever after.

LAYLA: DADDY! That's not the way the story happens.

FATHER: Sure it is. See there is the princess and that is her father, the king, kissing her.

LAYLA: No, that's her boyfriend, the prince.

FATHER: No, if the prince were kissing her it would be like... *(kisses her on the cheek)* but since it is her father the king, he kisses her like this. *(Kisses her on the mouth).*

LAYLA: *(Giggling)* No daddy, it's the other way. A boyfriend kisses on the mouth. A daddy kisses on the face.

FATHER: Let's see, I'm your daddy, right?

LAYLA: Yep.

FATHER: Okay, let's see how I kiss you. *(Kisses her on the mouth again)* See, I'm the daddy and I kissed you like this... *(Kisses her more gently on the mouth then moves his hand toward her thigh.)*

LAYLA: *(Jumps off his lap.)* No daddy.

RACHEL'S VOICE: *(Offstage)* Dad, weren't you going to take Lala to the park.

LAYLA: Yeah, daddy, let's go to the park, please.

FATHER: *(A little frustrated)* We can go later. We're reading a story right now.

LAYLA: No, please let's go to the park.

RACHEL'S VOICE: *(Trying to get them out of the house.)* It'll get dark before long. Then you won't be able to go, so if you are going, you better go now.

LAYLA: Please, daddy. Please.

FATHER: Okay, run get a sweater.

(LAYLA runs off-stage and re-enters with a sweater. Meanwhile FATHER shows stress and is fighting the impulses.)

LAYLA: Let's go daddy. *(Starts off with FATHER, then runs back)* Wait I forgot Didi! *(Picks up her doll, kisses it on the mouth, then runs to catch up to FATHER.)*

(They exit then enter the playground from the other side.)

Scene 12

(FATHER is sitting in the park by LAYLA, who is playing with her doll and humming “Hush Little Baby.” FATHER watches her lovingly for a short while then stands up.)

(RACHEL is sitting on her bed putting on Goth makeup, getting ready to go out to a club. She is also humming “Hush Little Baby.” She is trying to get away before FATHER gets home.)

FATHER: Come on Layla, it’s time to go home.

(FATHER puts his hand out to her. LAYLA is reticent to take it at first but finally does. LAYLA gets up and they walk toward home. RACHEL sees FATHER coming back and rushes out back door then watches from behind a tree for a moment to make sure he can’t see her leave. FATHER and LAYLA enter the house. He takes her to her bed and removes her clothes and tucks her into bed. FATHER starts reading a bedtime story.)

FATHER: Once upon a time... *(continue the story in mime.)*

(RACHEL enters club and starts dancing. She goes up to an audience member and tries to pull him to the floor. Dances for a few moments and then pushes him back into his seat. RACHEL sees AIDEN and tries to get him to dance. AIDEN appears a little embarrassed. RACHEL starts dancing and seducing him and eventually pulls him up to dance floor. As he begins dancing with her, he is tempted more and more. Music changes to slow, romantic music that is in her mind and lighting indicates location transformation into her bedroom. They begin slow dancing; then he pulls her in close and whispers in her ear.)

AIDEN: Have you ever read Shakespeare’s sonnets?

RACHEL: A couple, in class.

AIDEN: Shakespeare understood life and death and youth.

(AIDEN turns RACHEL around to face him.)

AIDEN:

As fast as thou shalt wane, so fast thou growest
In one of thine, from that which thou departest;
And that fresh blood which youngly thou bestowest
Thou mayst call thine when thou from youth convertest.
Herein lies wisdom, beauty and increase;
Without this, folly, age and cold decay:
Let those whom Nature hath not made for store,
Harsh featureless and rude, barrenly perish.
She carved thee for her seal, and meant thereby
Thou shouldst print more, not let that copy die.”¹

(AIDEN bites RACHEL’S neck and RACHEL reacts with surprise yet passion. RACHEL swoons and AIDEN lays her down on bed and sits on bed next to her.)

[Following directions are performed by both FATHER and AIDEN mirrored.]

(Looks at her for a few seconds with pained look of desire. Looks up to heaven then down to side. Caresses her hair. Reaches over and kisses her on forehead. Then takes hand and kisses it. Pulls her up into arms. She reacts waking up. Pulls her in and kisses her on lips.)

LAYLA: Please daddy, no. *(Continuing)*

(LAYLA fights him weakly and starts crying. FATHER tries to lie on top of her, telling her he loves her.)

FATHER: Sssh honey. It’s okay. I love you darling. Sssh-sssh.

(AIDEN hears LAYLA and heads to her bedroom. AIDEN sees FATHER on LAYLA. He grabs him and throws him across room; then goes after him fangs barred. AIDEN pulls him up from the floor and then knocks him down again. LAYLA is screaming. RACHEL rushes in to LAYLA and clings to her; then sees AIDEN attacking FATHER. RACHEL rushes over and tries to pull AIDEN away from FATHER by jumping on AIDEN’S back. AIDEN shakes her off and she hits the floor and loses consciousness. AIDEN returns to FATHER and began beating him.)

¹ Shakespeare, Sonnet XI.

FATHER: *(Laughing and crying hysterically and speaking at top speed)* I didn't hurt her. Please, please, I love her. What are you? Our Father which art in Heaven.... I love her, I'd never hurt her... Hallowed be thy name.... She's mine, you can't take her... Give us this day.... Day why isn't it day... you can't come out in the day... it should be day... Give us this day our daily bread, our bread, bread, we're not bread, not your bread.... Give us this day, no.... forgive us, forgive me, I didn't mean it, don't kill me.... forgive us our trespasses as we forgive.... forgive... I love her.... forgive... and lead us not into temptation... you see it's not my fault, god made me... he led me... into temptation... but deliver us from you... what are you... deliver us... deliver me... deliver me.... don't kill me.... their mother is dead... don't kill me. Please.

(A desperate prayer.) Oh god, deliver me from this monster...

(AIDEN is struck by the word "monster" from RACHEL and backs up silently. LAYLA and RACHEL cross to FATHER and lay over him to protect him.)

RACHEL: He's sick! Leave him alone.

(All noise stops. AIDEN is perplexed and silently looks from one person to the next. The silence grows deeper and longer. Stillness takes over as AIDEN looks inward to try to understand. He crouches down to eye level with LAYLA, pauses, then turns attention to the father.)

AIDEN: Men have an all but incurable propensity to prejudge all the great questions which interest them by stamping their prejudices upon their language. Crimes are acts we commit. *(To RACHEL)* Diseases are biological processes that happen to our bodies. Mixing these two concepts by defining behaviors we disapprove of as diseases, is a bottomless source of confusion and

(LAYLA runs to RACHEL and tries to wake her up. She begins yelling at AIDEN.)

LAYLA: Aiden! Rachel!

AIDEN: What did I say about touching her?

LAYLA: Don't hurt my daddy! Rachel, wake up, wake up. Please don't hurt daddy. Rachel.

RACHEL: *(Wakes up and starts screaming)* Leave him alone, you monster!

corruption.² (To **FATHER**) What you are is a monster, just like me. Except that, not even I would destroy the innocence of a child.

(AIDEN sees the doll on the bed. Quietly walks over and picks up the doll and looks at the last innocent thing. Starts to hand the doll to LAYLA who clings closer to FATHER. He starts to put the doll back on the bed and sees the string on the doll and pulls it. Doll plays “Thank Heavens for Little Girls.” AIDEN drops doll in horror and disgust, tries to take in all the horror, closes eyes in pain, and then leaves the room. Everyone freezes as AIDEN nears the exit.)

² Szasz, Thomas. “Sins of the Fathers.” Reason Vol. 34, Issue 4.

Epilogue

(Lights go down and spot comes up on AIDEN.)

AIDEN: They say I'm a monster. But what do they know? The human species is as vile a creature as I could ever be. I've seen war, poverty, greed, lust, deceit and the exchange of world power throughout my time. I've seen women sell their bodies for substances; men kill each other for pennies or shoes. I've seen children lose innocence before they could even spell it, and I've seen the human monsters who have taken that innocence.

If I'm a monster, then so are they. I'm only a reflection of their violent nature. I bring death of the body, but they kill the heart, the mind, and the soul.

Rachel called me a monster... Yes, I wanted her. *(Making an excuse.)* But she had suffered so much as a human being, I wanted to give her a new life where she was no longer a victim. *(Pause. He realizes his own needs were the motivation.)* I wanted to give myself a new life where I was not alone.

(Spot goes down on AIDEN and comes up on FATHER.)

FATHER: I am not a monster! I love my daughters and they love me. I would never hurt them. Rachel understood that love and gave it back to me. If anything, she seduced me, just like Layla has begun to do.

I learned love at an early age, not from my parents. They didn't understand. No, I learned from an older cousin. He taught me about love and then I taught my little sister. Now I've taught my girls about love.

Don't judge me! I haven't hurt anyone! It's not like I'm a child molester who picks up kids at the park and rapes and murders little boys or girls. I haven't done anything wrong. I've just loved my daughters.

(Spot goes down on FATHER and comes up on SARA.)

SARA: Rachel's my best friend and I'm really worried about her. When we were young, we had so much fun. She had a great imagination and we had "adventures" all the time. When her little brother died, it really upset her. She quit talking as much and got really quiet and sad. She'll still do things with me and we really enjoy ourselves. But when it's time to go home, it's like she shuts down. Things aren't right at home, I know that, but she won't talk about it so I'm kinda in the dark. I try to help her and be there for her, but she just keeps getting more and more depressed.

(Spot goes down on SARA and comes up on RACHEL.)

RACHEL: I've never told anyone before – I couldn't. If I don't say it out loud, it won't exist. *(Deep breath.)* My dad took an innocent 12-year-old girl and stole everything of value from me. Playing, dances, boyfriends, corsages, love and trust are lost forever.

Today was the day when everything came out in the open. Today was the day that I was waiting for my entire life. I fantasized that today would be the day that would liberate me from all my demons. I was sexually molested for five years; forced to grow up at the age of twelve; forced to be an adult when I was still a child. I fell in love at seventeen but he just turned out to be a different kind of monster –he wanted me to live another kind of nightmare.

But my father...why did I stop Aiden? I *wanted* Aiden to tear him apart for what he did to me; for what he tried to do to Lala. Why did I protect him? What part of me is so broken that I chose to protect my rapist? Why didn't I let Aiden kill him?

(Spot goes down on RACHEL and comes up on LAYLA.)

LAYLA: Rachel's mad at daddy. I think it's because he hurts her sometimes. I saw it but daddy doesn't know. I try to be good so daddy won't hurt me. I musta been bad though cause daddy tried to hurt me an I don even know what I did? Why do you wanna hurt me, daddy?

The End