

# ***Love, Laughter & Lucci***

A full-length play

By Cricket Daniel

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**Synopsis:** Love, Laughter & Lucci tells the engaging story about three generations of the Santoro family, all living together under one roof, in West Haven, CT. The result is this heartwarming comedy that will make you laugh, cry and cherish your family. Single mom Gloria lives with her elderly father Sal and her 18-year old daughter Maria. Recent high school graduate Maria has big dreams of moving to New York City and acting on All My Children with her idol Susan Lucci. Her devoted and loving grandfather Sal, becomes Maria's videographer, manager, agent and #1 supporter. Their unique attempts to get the attention of the producers of All My Children and meet Susan Lucci frustrates Gloria, who just wants Maria to fill out her college applications. Gloria is not happy at all that her father is encouraging Maria's unrealistic dreams. The audience will laugh along as Sal strolls down memory lane with his funny stories from his childhood and cry when other memories are unveiled. Dreams of the past are revealed as new ones are realized in this delightful and entertaining comedy about an Italian Catholic family who worships Jesus, pasta and Susan Lucci.

#### **Cast of Characters**

**SAL SANTORO**, Gloria's father and Maria's Grandfather. Widower, 70's, lives with Gloria and Maria. Uses a walker. Feisty, loving and fun.

**GLORIA**, 40 years old, single mom, Nurse.

**MARIA**, beautiful 18 year old. Dreams of acting on All My Children with her idol Susan Lucci.

**T.K.**, Maria's best friend since childhood.

**Stage/Set:**           Stage Left:       Living Room, Stairs  
                          Stage Right:      Kitchen

The play takes place in the Santoro household in West Haven, CT, 2008.

#### **ACT I:**

SC1-Morning

SC2-Later That Night

SC3-One Week Later. Late Afternoon

SC4-Later That Night

#### **INTERMISSION**

#### **ACT II:**

SC1-Same Night as ACT I SC4

SC2-Next Morning

SC3-Later That Day

SC4-Approx. Six Weeks Later. Mid-Afternoon

SC5-Christmas Time. Afternoon

The Player's Guild of the Festival Playhouse opened its 75th year of production with the World Premiere of ***Love, Laughter & Lucci*** on September 10, 2010 with the following cast:

Gloria

Sal Santoro

Maria

T.K.

Barbara Todor

Charles Joseph Ault

Linsay Griebler

Missy Seelig

The production was Directed and Produced by Charles J. Ault at the  
Historic Festival Playhouse in Old Town Arvada, Colorado.

ACT 1  
SCENE ONE

*At rise, Int. kitchen, morning, breakfast time. Gloria is wearing nursing work clothes. On the wall or fridge is a dry erase board that reads "Graduation Tonight 6pm!" Also on the wall are pictures of Sal's wife Maria, Jesus Christ and Susan Lucci. Gloria is in the kitchen preparing breakfast; Sal enters using a walker. Sal walks straight to the wall that has the pictures. He kisses his wife's picture, crosses himself in front of the picture of Jesus and then crosses both fingers on both hands in front of the picture of Susan Lucci).*

GLORIA

*(Gloria sees her dad's routine, sighs and rolls her eyes. Walks to her father and gives him a kiss on the cheek)* Good morning Dad. *(Gloria helps him to his seat)*

SAL

*(Startled by Gloria)* Oh, good morning Gloria. Where's Maria?

GLORIA

Not downstairs yet. Did you sleep okay?

SAL

Today? No honey, I don't have any plans today.

GLORIA

*(Raises her voice).* No Dad, did you sleep okay?

SAL

Keep away?

GLORIA

*(Frustrated goes over to Sal and reaches into his ear to turn up his hearing aide).* Now, can you hear me? *(Startles Sal)* Ooooh, I'm sorry.

SAL

Of course I can hear you. What do you think I am, deaf?

GLORIA

*(Handing over a small tray with Dad's pills).* Here are your pills. I want you to take all of them. I'm watching you. *(Rolls his eyes and sticks out his tongue as if gagging).* I see you. Here's some juice. Now start swallowing.

SAL

I don't see why I need to take so many pills. I'm not even sick.

GLORIA

You're not sick because you take your pills and vitamins.

SAL

Well, what are they all for?

GLORIA

Dad, we go over this every morning. *(Starts to pick them up one by one).* This one is for your blood pressure. This one is an aspirin for your heart.

SAL

I've got a heart of steel.

GLORIA

*(Pats his shoulder)* Yes, you do. This one is for your cholesterol. This one is for your thyroid.

SAL

I don't have a hemorrhoid. You're my pain in the ass.

GLORIA

Oh, good one. You know I said thyroid pills. These are water pills. This one is an iron supplement. One multi-vitamin and the Holy Grail of them all, *(holds up a very large pill)* the ole mighty stool softener. Just take them please.

SAL

Well, I still don't see why I need to take so many damn pills. I'm Sal Santoro...strong as an Ox.

GLORIA

Okay Sal Santoro, strong as an Ox, move your walker so I can bring you your breakfast. *(Sal moves his walker to the side as Gloria brings him a plate).* Are your teeth in?

SAL

Yes, my teeth are in. Are your teeth in?

GLORIA

We don't need another corn on the cob incident, now do we?

SAL

Will I ever live that one down?

GLORIA

It looked like you took a right hook right in the mouth.

SAL

You should have seen the other cob. *(Laughs)*

GLORIA

Ha Ha. You were black and blue for three weeks.

SAL

One week tops.

GLORIA

Although the shade of green it turned by week three was the inspiration behind the new bathroom color upstairs. So I do thank you for that!

SAL

Happy to help with your inspiration dear. *(Gives a big toothy smile)*. They're all in, see.

GLORIA

Great. *(Brings over a plate of food)* Then here's your breakfast. *(Sal clasps his hands together, nods his head to pray, Gloria does the same behind him, they both cross themselves)* And take your pills. *(Gets a big cue card that's up against the counter with writing on it and holds it up. It says in big black magic marker. "SLAP HER ACROSS THE FACE AND CALL HER A MAN-STEALING WHORE")* Dad, I found this underneath the couch in the living room. Any idea what it is?

SAL

*(Reaches for his glasses around his neck and puts them on and reads it)* Hmm...No. *(Goes back to eating his breakfast)*

GLORIA

You have no idea why a large poster board that reads "Slap her across the face and call her a man-stealing whore" was in our living room?

SAL

*(Concentrating on his breakfast)* Nope.

GLORIA

You're home all day long Dad.

SAL

Maybe it's yours and you just forgot. You know how bitter you still are after all these years.

GLORIA

What is that supposed to mean? I'm not bitter. Well, not anymore anyway.

SAL

Oh, okay.

GLORIA

Dad! I'm not bitter!

SAL

Not that anyone would blame you honey.

GLORIA

Well, I would hope not. My husband leaves me for some little tight skirt tramp and I'm left to raise our daughter all by myself! *(Sal is mouthing the words right along with Gloria, he has clearly heard it before)* Not to mention that I work overtime every single weekend for the extra money, because God forbid, he ever sends me a child support check, which is mandated by the courts, thank you very much. I take on extra shifts at work every week while Anthony, that two timing jerk, sits with that fat-ass homewrecker soaking up the California sun in their brand new condo.

SAL

*(pause)* You're right sweetheart, you're not bitter at all.

GLORIA

She was a man-stealing whore and I should have slapped her when I had the chance. *(Looks at the large poster board and realizes what she just said)* Jeez, maybe I did write this. *(Realizing*



*how ridiculous that sounds and gets back on topic*) What the Hell am I saying? Dad, where did this come from?

SAL

*(Crosses himself)* First off, you just said Hell, so watch your mouth in this house and secondly, if you had a chance to slap that homewrecking whore, you should have done it.

GLORIA

Well, you're right there.

SAL

Marrying into that Mancini family softened you up. A Santoro would have slapped that broad. I know people in Long Beach. I can have her roughed up, if you want.

GLORIA

Tempting I must admit.

SAL

If it were up to me, I would have had Anthony's fingers cut off just for touching another woman. You should have let me and Frank take care of this eight years ago.

GLORIA

I know Dad and I appreciate the offer to have Anthony's fingers cut off, but I foolishly thought he would need his fingers to write all those child support checks. But since he isn't doing that, maybe you should call your friends in Long Beach.

SAL

Done. *(Goes back to eating his breakfast)*

GLORIA

Dad, I was just kidding. *(Sal doesn't say anything, continues to eat)* Dad, don't call your friends. Do not have Anthony's fingers cut off. Promise me.

SAL

Whatever you say, honey.

GLORIA

I find it highly alarming that I even have to ask my Dad not to have someone's fingers cut off. Don't you?

SAL

Not really. But just say the word and I can make it happen. I can have more than his fingers cut off too, if you know what I mean.

GLORIA

Thanks Dad, maybe next time. But I wouldn't mind seeing your friends rough up that homewrecker.

SAL

Really? It'll never be traced back to you. Trust me.

GLORIA

Traced back to me? I thought they would just knock her organic grocery bags out of her hands or something. What's your idea of roughing her up?

SAL

You know. The usual.

GLORIA

No dad, I don't know. What's the usual?

SAL

You're my daughter and you don't know what the usual is?

GLORIA

No I don't and I'm afraid to ask. *(Sal shrugs his shoulders. Pause)* And you're gonna make me ask aren't you? Okay Dad, what's the usual?

SAL

Grab the homewrecking whore while she's walking down the street, throw her in a van, blindfold her, drive her out to the desert, rough her up and leave her out there. You know, the usual.

GLORIA

*(Starts to envision it in her mind)* Oh I must admit, I like the sound of that.

SAL

Now that's my daughter.

GLORIA

*(Realizing how wrong this all is)* What the heck are we talking about? Dad, no. Do not call your friends. I don't want her or Anthony touched. I've moved on. I'm okay. Now, for the last

time. *(Holding up the poster board)* What is this? Where did it come from and why is it in our living room?

SAL

*(Looking over Gloria's shoulder)* Ooooh, do I see fresh strawberries?

GLORIA

Oh, okay, I guess I'll just have to ask Maria about it since you "seem" to have no idea where it came from. *(Starts to yell up stairs to Maria. Sal puts a pill in his mouth and starts to choke on it. He is faking in attempt to change the subject)*

GLORIA

Oh my God, Dad are you choking? *(Puts down the cue card on the table and starts to give Sal the Heimleck. After 3 or 4 pumps to Sal's gut, he spits out a pill onto his plate)*

SAL

Whew, that was a close one. I just saw my life pass before my very eyes. I'm okay now.

GLORIA

*(Gloria, shaken by this, goes to get a wet rag to put on Sal's head)* Slow down when you take your pills. But I'm glad to see you taking them at least. Are you sure you're okay?

SAL

Yes, just a little scare. That's all. I'm fine. But when I saw a flash of white light, I thought for sure I was a goner.

GLORIA

You saw a white light? Really?

SAL

*(Realizes that Gloria is buying all of this)* Yeah!! But I think I just panicked when I couldn't breath. Assuming it was my time, I looked up to Heaven waiting for Jesus and your mother to receive me, but I think I really just stared into the kitchen light too long. I'm fine now. Oh my, look at the time. Isn't Maria going to be late?

GLORIA

*(Gloria glances at her watch).* Oh my goodness, it's already 7:30am. *(Gloria leans her head into the living room and yells upstairs, while she does this, Sal takes the cue card and slides it between the fridge and the counter, out of sight)* Maria,

honey, you're going to be late for your last day of school.  
(Turns back and walks back toward Sal) God Dad, don't scare me like that.

SAL

Can you believe it Gloria? Our little girl is graduating from high school?

GLORIA

No, I can't believe it. (Yells up the stairs again) Maria, hurry now sweetie, you're going for school!

SAL

I remember when she was crawling around this house. And now look at her, a high school graduate.

GLORIA

Gosh, where did the time go? It seems like just yesterday that I had to baby proof this house. (Goes over to the coffee table) Actually, it was yesterday. Dad, I had put corner protectors on the coffee table because you keep bumping into it when you walk by. With all those bruises all over your legs, it's just a matter of time that the neighbors start to talk and call protective services on me.

SAL

Our neighbors all love and adore me, you should be worried.

GLORIA

But I do love the shade of purple all your bruises are turning. I'm thinking about painting my bedroom that color.

SAL

I'm glad my bruised and beaten legs are helping you decide what color to paint your bedroom. Who knows, maybe I'll come down with jaundice and you'll be inspired to paint the kitchen yellow or better yet, maybe one day I'll just flatline and you'll decide white is better. I'm always happy to inspire you.

GLORIA

Very funny. If I thought for one second that I was going to inherit a fortune from you, flatlining would sound very appealing. But since I only stand to inherit about 150 old photo albums, your Dean Martin collection and that walker, I would just as soon keep you alive.

SAL

Well, that's sweet of you that you want me alive. I'm sure it's because you love me so much and you would be absolutely devastated if I died?

GLORIA

Oh sure, and that too. But more importantly, burglars tend to skip the house that has all the lights on and appears to be occupied. So you being here all day does have its benefits.

SAL

You do know that God and your mother are listening to all of this don't you? *(Crosses himself)* Please God, she knows not what she says.

GLORIA

Oh give me a break. *(Feeling slightly guilty, turns away quickly, looks to the heavens and crosses herself and yells upstairs)* Maria, you're going to be late!

*Enter Maria, tall, slender and very attractive.*

MARIA

I'm here Mom. *(Gives her mom a hug and then goes straight to her Grandpa and gives him a big hug and kiss)*

SAL

There's our girl. Maria, your Grandmother and I are so proud of you. *(Looks to picture of his late wife on the wall)* Aren't we Maria? *(Talking to the picture of his wife on the wall)* Today your namesake is graduating from High School. *(Takes out a handkerchief and dabs his eyes).* I wish your Grandmother could have been here to see this.

MARIA

I know Grandpa, me too.

SAL

*(Pinches Maria's cheeks and gives her big kiss).* Did you say good morning to her yet?

MARIA

*(Goes over to her Grandmother's picture, takes her finger to her mouth, kisses it and presses it to the picture).* Good morning Grandma.

SAL

And...

MARIA

*(Crosses herself in front of the Jesus Picture)*

SAL

And...

MARIA

*(Moves to picture of Susan Lucci and crosses both fingers on both hands).*

GLORIA

Oh good Lord. Do you two seriously have to do this every single day?

SAL

You should be ashamed of yourself that you don't, Gloria.

GLORIA

Okay you two, enough. Sit down.

SAL

*(Motions to Maria)* Yes, sit, sit. Let's get our girl a big breakfast for her last day of high school. You need protein.

GLORIA

I've got eggs, bacon, toast and strawberries. What's it gonna be? Shall I start you out with some eggs, Maria?

MARIA

Nothing for me Mom...I don't want to be late. All of us seniors are meeting in the quad this morning for a group picture. T.K. will be here any minute to pick me up.

SAL

What? No breakfast? Don't be ridiculous, you have to eat. Gloria, get your daughter some food. She's skin and bones.

GLORIA

Dad, if she doesn't want to eat she doesn't want to eat. I'm sure she will be fine.

SAL

And if I don't want to take my pills, then I don't want to take my pills. I'm sure I'll be fine.

GLORIA

Nice try. Dad, I don't want to argue with you every morning about this. You need to take your pills. Don't make me call your doctor, because I will.

*(Sal sticks out his tongue to Gloria)*

MARIA

I agree with Mom. You better take your pills Grandpa.

SAL

I thought you were on my side?

MARIA

I am Grandpa. But I want you to always be healthy. I want you to live here with us forever. I don't know what I would ever do without you.

SAL

Did you hear that Gloria? That is how you get me to take my pills. See, young Maria wants me alive.

GLORIA

Dad, I said I wanted you alive too. *(Heads to the table with her breakfast)* Remember, that whole burglar thing.

MARIA

What burglar thing? Did someone get robbed?

SAL

Don't listen to her. Maria, I love you so much. You are a such good girl. Of course I will be here forever. *(Turns towards Gloria)* I will be here forever and ever. I'm not going anywhere. *(Starts taking his pills)*. Now Maria, eat, eat.

MARIA

I'm not hungry Grandpa. And besides, I'm too anxious to eat. I'm graduating!!

SAL

*(Crosses himself again)*. Oh praise God, she's graduating.

MARIA

Oh Mom, don't forget. I need a check for \$25 today for my cap and gown.

GLORIA

It's on the counter.

SAL

We're going to whistle and scream when they call your name Maria, so listen for us. Oh Gloria, don't let me forget my teeth, I can't whistle without them.

MARIA

*(giggling)*. Okay Grandpa, but don't let mom scream and holler okay? She sounds like some sort of wild bird when she screams.

SAL

You're right. I'll make sure the bird zips it.

GLORIA

I do not sound like a bird.

MARIA

I still get teased about the time you guys went crazy when I was in the school production of Wizard of Oz in the 5<sup>th</sup> grade. They almost had the auditorium evacuated because they thought some wild bird was loose in there after mom kept screaming. *(Sal and Maria laughs)*

GLORIA

Oh, they did not.

MARIA

I swear, Mom, they did. Ronnie Alvarez said so and his dad was the principal then, so he would know. I just about died.

SAL

You gave a brilliant performance in that production. You were the best actor on stage.

MARIA

Grandpa, I was a flying monkey.

SAL

The best damn monkey I've ever seen.



GLORIA

We won't embarrass you tonight, Maria. I promise to keep my beak shut. But I can't speak for your Grandpa. Although I suppose I could hide his teeth while he is napping. *(Gloria and Maria both laugh)*

MARIA

Remember that time we couldn't find Grandpa's teeth before we went to American Steakhouse. We tore this house apart.

GLORIA

The thought of Dad not having steak was enough to send him into a frenzy. I never saw that walker move so fast. He wore out both tennis balls. We had to put two new ones on the next day.

SAL

What can I say, Sal Santoro loves a good ribeye.

GLORIA

Where did we end up finding Grandpa's teeth again?

MARIA

In the fishbowl Mom, remember? Grandpa wasn't wearing his glasses the night before when he went to bed. He thought he put them on the end table next to his chair. Jerry the fish swam in and out of them all night. Up until...well, you know.

GLORIA

Poor Jerry. He could have lived with Grandpa putting his teeth into the bowl, but it was the Polident that did him in I think.

SAL

I've never been able to forgive myself for that Maria. I killed Jerry the Fish.

MARIA

Oh that's alright Grandpa. When your number's up, your number's up. Jerry had a good life *(pause)* up until then. *(Knocking at the back door)* Oh, that must be T.K. *(Shouting)* Come on in T.K.

*(Enter T.K. cute bubbly girl).*

SAL

Good morning, Teresa Katherine.

GLORIA

Hi T.K. *(Gives her a big hug)* Oh, don't you look adorable.

T.K.

Good morning. *(T.K. goes up to the wall of photos, first Sal's wife's photo and blows a kiss, crosses herself in front of the Jesus picture and crosses her fingers in front of Susan Lucci).*

GLORIA

Oh no, you too T.K?

SAL

Sit down, eat something, you girls are too skinny.

T.K.

Oh, no thanks Mr. Santoro. *(Sits at the kitchen table)*

SAL

Why don't women eat anymore? You girls are Italian. You're supposed to eat! Eat! These girls today. They're skin and bones I say. Your Grandmother, now that was a woman. She was nice and round. Healthy. Plump. That's what a man wants. A man doesn't want to squeeze bones. Now look at Gloria. That's what a man wants.

GLORIA

Jeez, thanks Dad.

SAL

What? What did I say? So you have a little meat on your bones. You're healthy. You're Italian.

GLORIA

*(Sarcastic)* Oh yeah and I constantly have to beat the men off me with a stick.

SAL

Louie at the butcher shop asks about you every time I go in there.

GLORIA

Louie! You're kidding, right? I don't think so Dad.

SAL

What's wrong with Louie? Nice Italian boy, he has a good job and he comes from a nice family.

GLORIA

Yeah, if you can get past all the blood and the smell of raw meat.

MARIA

*(Teasing)* Oooh, mom. Louie! Mom and Louie sitting in a tree.

T.K.

*(singing)* K-I-S-S-I-N-G!

GLORIA

*(Cleaning up breakfast)* Okay, okay, don't you girls start, too.

T.K.

I heard he won \$10,000 on a scratcher.

GLORIA

Who Louie?

T.K.

Yep.

SAL

A lump sum. Nice. Sounds like a catch to me.

T.K.

I guess he bought some car called a Smokey Bandit with it. Or something like that.

GLORIA

That's Smokey and the Bandit and Louie is no Burt Reynolds, that's for sure.

SAL

Burt Reynolds! He's had work done. He looks like a wax figure these days. His eyes are where his ears used to be. And he wears a rug. At least Louie has a nice head of hair.

T.K.

What's a rug?

SAL

A toupee. A fake hair piece. *(The girls both go eeeww)* Exactly. *(Pulls his hair)* You'd never catch me wearing no rug. Vic Galdi wore a rug. We were all standing around one day outside of the Sons of Italy Lodge. And damn if the wind didn't whip up and there it went. Right there in front of all of us.

We were all freakin' horrified. We didn't even know Vic wore a rug. Vic threw down his cigarette and started sprinting for it. Up down, left right. The damn thing fluttered all around like a feather with Vic running right behind it.

MARIA

Did he catch it?

SAL

I'd like to say there was a happy ending but there wasn't. Vic's rug met an untimely death when it tangled with a city sanitation truck. It never stood a chance. Kind of like Jerry the fish and the Polident. Nothing stands a chance against a city sanitation truck, just ask Tommy Moratta. But that's another story for another day. Anyway, Vic scooped up his hairpiece and there it laid in the palm of his hands. It looked like a dead kitten. And that's how Vic got the nickname "Baldi Galdi".

GLORIA

*(The girls laugh)*. Alright, alright. Can we please change the subject? Are you sure you don't want any breakfast T.K., there's plenty?

T.K.

No, really I'm okay, I already ate. But thanks Mrs. Mancini. Sure smells good though. But even if I were hungry, now I have the image of a dead kitten in my head.

GLORIA

Yeah, me too. Thanks a lot, Dad.

SAL

I know how you all love my stories.

MARIA

We do love your stories, Grandpa. They're the best.

GLORIA

So T.K., excited about graduating tonight?

T.K.

Yeah. Super excited.

GLORIA

Tell your parents that we will save them some seats.

T.K.

I will thanks.

GLORIA

How many should I get?

T.K.

Um, my Mom, Dad, oh Mike, and little Frank.

SAL

So, Mikey's home for the summer from Notre Dame?

T.K.

Yeah. He'll be working down at the shop with my Dad all summer. Mom of course is thrilled to have him home. She thought for sure he would stay in South Bend.

SAL

Now, that Mike is a good boy. I always knew he would be smart. You know Maria, he wouldn't be a bad one for you to marry some day. Notre Dame. Italian. Good family. Still has his hair.

MARIA

Ooooh, gross. Grandpa. Mike is like my brother.

T.K.

I'm okay with you two getting married. Then we would be sisters.

MARIA

We used to all take baths together. That is just too weird.

GLORIA

I remember all of you kids playing together since you were babies. *(Walks over to couch and removes her slippers and starts to put on her work shoes)* You two girls have been best friends your whole lives.

SAL

*(Talking to T.K.)* Just like your Grandfather and me. It was always Sal Santoro and Frank Peppy *(crosses himself)*. May he rest in peace. We were just like you two, together all the time. Of course, we used to get in a bit more trouble than the two of you. Thank God, you two are good girls. *(Looks up to the Heavens)*. They are good girls Frank, thank God. *(Crosses himself)*.

T.K.

My favorite story about you and my Grandpa is the one about you two bringing whoopee cushions into confession at St. Francis. He said you guys were making the farting noises but it was the Father who kept saying "Excuse Me".

MARIA

The Father thought it was him farting? That's funny, Grandpa.

SAL

Yeah, Father Patrick was getting pretty old. He was pretty easy to do pranks on. Good times. Just harmless grade school hijinks. That's all.

GLORIA

Don't give those two any ideas, Dad.

T.K.

Just like our Grandpas, we're best friends. *(They do a little secret handshake)*

MARIA

That's right. Together forever.

T.K.

We're gonna spend all summer at the beach, right Maria?

MARIA

Yep.

GLORIA

So T.K., your parents aren't going to have you work at the flower shop?

T.K.

Nope. They said since I got good grades and since Mike will be there, that I can take the summer off. I'm super excited.

GLORIA

Well, don't forget, Maria, I will need you to help with Grandpa this summer so I can work more hours. We can use the extra money.

MARIA

I know Mom. Grandpa and I have big plans this summer too, right Grandpa?

SAL

That's right.

GLORIA

Well, you two just try to stay out of trouble, okay?

T.K.

Oh, we will Mrs. Mancini.

GLORIA

*(Gets up from couch and walks over toward Sal and Maria)*  
Actually T.K. I was talking about Maria and her Grandpa.

SAL

What kind of trouble could we possibly get into?

GLORIA

The last time I left you two alone for a weekend the West Haven Police Department called me. *(Starts to gather her things for work)*

SAL

You're gonna bring that up again, Gloria?

T.K.

Hey wait a minute, I didn't hear about this one.

MARIA

That was the best weekend of my life. I had never been in the back of a cop car before. It was awesome.

SAL

Oh, Gloria is making it into a bigger deal than it was.

T.K.

The backseat of a cop car! Sounds like a big deal to me Mr. Santoro. What happened?

SAL

I accidentally stole a car. No big deal.

T.K.

What? You stole a car? Cool.

GLORIA

No T.K., it wasn't cool. I was away at a nursing conference and I had to come home early to bail out my father and Maria from the County Jail!

T.K.

So what exactly happened? I mean, how do you accidentally steal a car, Mr. Santoro?

SAL

Maria and I had just left Silvio's Pizzeria and I got into the wrong car and drove it home.

T.K.

You drove the wrong car home?

MARIA

Yep. We didn't know it until we got pulled over. They even drew their guns. But in Grandpa's defense, that car was identical to his. Same year, same make, same color. And Grandpa's key actually started it too.

SAL

Thanks Maria. That tends to happen on the older makes.

T.K.

Oh my gosh, were you just so scared, Mr. Santoro? Having guns pointing in your face?

SAL

Nah, it wasn't the first time. But that's another story for another time.

GLORIA

We're just hoping it was the last time.

T.K.

Wow, that is so cool. I can't believe you never told me that story, Maria.

MARIA

Mom was so mad and she swore me to secrecy. Aren't you impressed Mom that I never told T.K.?

SAL

Of course you never told, you've got Santoro blood in you. Maria, don't you ever be a rat.



GLORIA

Anyway, I want the both of you to stay out of trouble this summer. And I mean you two. (*Pointing to Grandpa and Maria*)

T.K.

Speaking of trouble, hey Maria, do you have the ammo?

GLORIA

Ammo?

MARIA

(*Goes to the refrigerator and pulls out two cans of whip cream*).  
Yep, all ready.

GLORIA

Oh no, what are you girls up to? Maybe I should have been talking to the both of you.

T.K.

Right when the senior picture is going to be taken, we're gonna squirt whip cream all over the boys. (*Pretends to shoot the whip cream like guns*)

SAL

Well, that doesn't sound very nice, Maria.

MARIA

Grandpa, its payback for homecoming. They sprayed silly string all over us at the football game. It's just high school hijinks. Just like you and T.K.'s grandpa.

SAL

Oh, well then you girls go out with your cans a blazing. Maybe you two are more like me and Frank then I thought. Good, that's good. Frank would be proud.

GLORIA

Just make sure you don't get into any trouble on your last day of school. Oh, speaking of school, T.K., I hear from your mother that you're attending Conn. State in the fall. Congratulations.

T.K.

Thanks Mrs. Mancini. I'm super excited. I'll be leaving home at the end of August. I think that's why my parents let me off the

hook this summer from working at the shop. You know, my last summer at home and all. Sure wish Maria was going with me, but she is going to be famous in New York City.

GLORIA

Maria is going to be going to the local Junior College in the fall because she didn't get her applications off in time. Actually honey, here's the application for the Junior College. *(Waves it in the air)* I want you to start filling it out this weekend.

SAL

Gloria.

GLORIA

What Dad?

SAL

Come on, not now. The girls are excited about their last day of school. They have hijinks to get to and ammo. Now get going girls and make sure you get those boys right in the face!

MARIA

*(Hugs Sal)*. Thanks Grandpa. You're the best. *(Starts to gather up things and head out the door)*.

T.K.

Bye Mr. Santoro. Bye Mrs. Mancini. *(T.K. exits, leaves door open. Gloria and Sal both say goodbye)*.

MARIA

*(Very dramatic)* Say goodbye to Maria Mancini, Senior in High School. And get ready to say hello to Maria Mancini, High School Graduate!

GLORIA

Goodbye High School Graduate. *(Maria starts to exit, Gloria grabs the check from the counter)* Wait, don't' forget the check for your cap and gown.

MARIA

*(giggles)*. Thanks Mom. Bye Grandpa!

SAL

Bye Maria. *(Maria exits)* Those are good girls. Praise Lord.

GLORIA

Dad, I really wish you wouldn't undermine my parenting. It's hard enough being a single parent who works full time.

SAL

What did I do?

GLORIA

She needs to fill out her college application or she won't be attending school this fall.

SAL

Maria has other plans for the fall.

GLORIA

Dad, those plans aren't realistic. Here's the college application (*Pushes it across the table*). I want it filled out this weekend. And since she seems to only listen to you lately, I expect you to help her with them. Now I've got to get to work. And Dad, I don't want you filling her head with those plans of hers. She needs to go to college. Do you hear me?

SAL

Yes.

GLORIA

Don't encourage her.

SAL

I won't.

GLORIA

I'm serious, Dad. What Maria needs is a college education.

SAL

College education. Got it.

GLORIA

Thank you. I do know what's best for my daughter. (*Kisses her father on the head*). Okay, have a good day. Call if you need anything. (*raises voice in frustration*) And finish taking your pills, you still have at least five left! I love you.

SAL

Okay. You have a good day too, Gloria Love you. Bye.

*(Gloria exits and Sal gets up, stands at his walker. He grabs the rest of his pills and throws them down the sink. He then walks to the wall of pictures and speaks to his wife)*

Sweetheart, our Maria is going to be a big star. Just wait and see. And I'm going to help her. *(Sal walks out of the kitchen. Lights fade).*

FADE OUT  
END OF SCENE ONE

**Perusal  
Only  
NOT FOR  
PRODUCTION**

SCENE TWO

*(Int. Kitchen. Later that night. Gloria, Sal and Maria sitting at the dinner table eating graduation cake. Maria is still in her cap and gown)*

SAL

*(Taking pictures with the camera)* Okay Maria, hold up your diploma.

MARIA

Grandpa, you've already taken like ten pictures of me holding it up.

SAL

Not while eating graduation cake I haven't.

GLORIA

Dad, let her eat her cake.

MARIA

That's okay Mom, I don't mind. I should probably get used to having my picture taken all the time anyway.

SAL

Exactly. Now hold up your diploma and eat cake at the same time. *(Poses with her diploma and holds up a fork full of cake at the same time)*. Perfect. You're a natural.

MARIA

So, could you guys see me very well from the stands?

GLORIA

We sure could. Didn't you hear us scream after they announced your name?

MARIA

Yep. Thanks for toning it down Mom. You didn't sound like a bird at all. Oh, and I heard Grandpa's loud whistle too. T.K. said it sounded like a firework.

SAL

I've still got it.

MARIA

You sure do, Grandpa. *(Picks up diploma and looks at it)* Wow, I can't believe that I'm not in high school anymore.

GLORIA

Graduating from high school is bittersweet. As much as you will always love the memories of high school, it's exciting to think about what's next for you.

MARIA

I just can't believe T.K. won't be here every morning picking me up for school. I can't imagine not seeing all my friends and teachers. I feel kind of sad.

SAL

Sure you do, but now you will make new friends. And make new memories. The best is yet to come, sweetie.

MARIA

Yeah I guess you're right Grandpa. It's like I'm sad and excited all at once.

GLORIA

So, what time is the graduation party at school?

MARIA

8:00. What time is it now?

GLORIA

*(Glances at her watch)* Almost 7:30pm.

MARIA

I should probably go get ready.

SAL

Well, before you do, I have a little something for you Maria.

MARIA

You do? What is it Grandpa?

SAL

A graduation present. *(Sal takes a little material bag out of his pocket, he reaches in and pulls out a necklace and holds it up for Maria to see)*

MARIA

Oh Grandpa. It's beautiful. You shouldn't have, it looks very expensive.

SAL

I didn't buy it sweetie. This was your grandmothers. She never took it off.

MARIA

Oh yes, I recognize it now.

GLORIA

Dad, are you sure? I know what it means to you.

SAL

I'm positive. I gave this to your grandmother on our first wedding anniversary. It cost twelve bucks. And back then, that was my whole paycheck. You're supposed to give paper for your first wedding anniversary. So I thought of a paper rose. But when I saw this necklace with a simple rose on it, I knew that it was meant for my wife. Simple and elegant, that was my Maria. And now, once again, it is meant for my Maria and that's you.

MARIA

*(Gives her Grandpa a big hug)* Oh Grandpa, I love it. *(Spins around, holds up her hair so Grandpa can put it on)*. It's beautiful.

SAL

*(Grandpa attempts to put the necklace on Maria)* Just like your Grandmother. Gloria, can you help me? I can't see to do this.

GLORIA

Of course, Dad. *(Takes necklace from Sal and puts it on Maria)* Oh Maria, Mom would have loved seeing you wear this.

MARIA

I love you Grandpa. Thank you so much for giving this to me. I will never take it off. I miss Grandma so much. *(Grandpa and Maria hug)*

GLORIA

Well, I may as well give you my graduation gift too. Now, don't get too excited, it's not quite as sentimental as Grandpa's, but I do think it will be useful.

MARIA

I'll love it no matter what Mom. *(Hands Maria a card, Maria opens it and finds a check)* \$500!!!

GLORIA

I know you've been wanting your own computer.

MARIA

*(Jumps up and down and hugs her Mom)* Oh mom, thank you thank you thank you! I know exactly the computer I want. And I'll even have some money left over. Mom, are you sure we can afford this?

GLORIA

Don't you worry about that. Just make sure you buy a good computer that will last you.

MARIA

I will, I promise. Thank you both so much. Grandpa, I love my necklace. And Mom, I know this is a lot of money for us. Thank you so much.

GLORIA

You deserve it. Now go on, you better get ready for the graduation party.

MARIA

I can't wait to show T.K. my new necklace and tell her about all the money I got. *(Runs out of the kitchen)*

SAL

I don't know what I will do when that little girl moves away.

GLORIA

Me neither, Dad. Me neither.

FADE OUT

END OF SCENE TWO