

Hey Siri
By: Mary E. Weems, Ph.D.

Characters:

Mack: Mid-50s, Black. Iraq War Veteran, who enlisted at 33, suffers from PTSD, spends most of his time alone in one room in a boarding house. iPhone was a gift from his only son who lives out of town. Siri is his only companion. He wears a white, short-sleeved t-shirt with “Go Away” written in big, bold letters.

Lucky: Black. Early 40s. Lucky lost her single parent mother to a heroin overdose; she still lives in the same apartment and hasn’t been out in three years. She ordered her iPhone on line. She wears jeans that sag slightly, Red Jordan’s, and a white short-sleeved t-shirt. She channels her late mother by putting on the Afro wig and/or shades her mother wore when she was alive.

Elizabeth: White. Late 60s early 70s. A former hoarder of expensive dolls, she has one left. She’s dressed like an old doll, full skirt, ruffled blouse, shoulder length light blond wig, Black Mary Jane style shoes. Her iPhone was a Christmas gift from the local Senior’s Community Center. Elizabeth has no living relatives. Spends most of her time alone.

Siri: Sophisticated, quirky, feminine, iPhone search engine voice. Siri is a character and should remain on stage at all times.

Lonely Line Voices: Should be two distinctly different pre-recorded (or delivered offstage) voices ‘but’ believable as voices “Lucky” can imitate.

Setting:

Stage is divided into 3 sections. 1) Mack's bedroom. Cot, night stand and chair. Huge American Flag hanging across Black wall. With a light shining on it 24/7 2) Lucky's Work room. Chair, free weights, work table. 3) Elizabeth's living room. Rocking Chair, cocktail table covered with Specialty Doll books, Floor lamp.

Lights up. Mack's laying on his back on his cot covered by a thin blanket. He has his hands behind his head. His iPhone is sitting on the night stand. It stays on charge unless Mack's using it because he's paranoid about it needing a charge. Notification sound is heard from his iPhone and he jumps up, stands at attention, salutes, singing at top of his lungs

Mack: "From the Halls of Montezuma from the shores of Tripoli we will fight our country's battle, from the land and from the sea—"

He's interrupted by a notification sound and moves quickly towards his phone to look

Mack: College fund? How do these bastards keep getting my phone number? I've been on every DO NOT Call list since it came out. They don't even bother to know anything about me. Keep sending me ads I don't want, for shit I don't need. My son's been out of college for years, and I didn't have a fund for him back then, never even thought about it. Couldn't have afforded it anyway, just did raise him.

Picks up his phone, looks at it, rubs his hands over the face of it, puts it back down and takes a seat in his chair. Hears voice from the ceiling:

Mack's

Wife's Voice: "Hello Black Mack."

Mack is hearing things. He looks up and around for a few moments

Mack: Daphne? Shit I must be losing what's left of my rabbit ass mind.

Reaches in nightstand draw and checks his bottle of meds by counting the pills

Mack: Okay, took that shit today, so I should be—Oops! Lost it. What was I thinking?

He starts pacing around with his phone.

Mack: iPhone. Who names this stuff anyway? Sounds like the phone is trying to tell you what it is—like you can't see for yourself. All these goddamn electronic contraptions people have nowadays. Started with the computer. Not the personal kind, the ones that took up whole rooms in business buildings. All kinds of bells, whistles, tapes that had to be backed up each night so nothing from the work day was lost. Then fast forward years later and the personal kind was invented. My oldest sister was the first one to learn them in her office and—

He hears a notification sound. Walks over picks up the phone, checks it and returns to his chair. Puts the phone in between his legs

Mack: Why does my son keep texting me? I've told him a thousand times, I don't text. He keeps telling me, I'll start, that the world will leave me behind if I don't. I keep telling him—

Hears voice from ceiling

Mack's

Wife's Voice: Didn't you hear what I said? Black Mack?

Mack looks up and around again, reaches for his iPhone and puts it on his cot under the cover. Stage to Black

Lights up center stage. Lucky's space has a large window in the back. She's in her work room and sits on a stool at a small table writing on toilet paper

Lucky: Dear Alien: Hope this note is being translated to your language as I write it. I know you exist in a para—

She stops writing

Lucky: Is it spelled l-l-e-l or l-e-l-l? Always forget. Hmmm

She continues

Lucky: in another dimension. See you soon. Your friend, Lucky

She tears off the note from the roll. Walks to the back window and tosses the note into the air, humming loudly. She picks up her free weights, sits in the chair and begins exercising

Lucky: One! Two! Three! Four! Five—

She's interrupted by her iPhone

Lucky: Hello? Hello? What? No, I'm not looking to lower my credit card debt. I don't use credit cards. Didn't you call here yesterday? No? Well, see if you understand this quit callin' my mothafuckin'—Hello? Hello?

She puts phone down on the table and takes a seat in her chair. She dials a number. Audience hears it ring three times then

Phone: Sorry, the number you have reached is not a working number, this is a recording.

She hangs up. Holds her iPhone against her chest. Closes her eyes

Stage to Black. Lights up. Elizabeth's Living Room. She's sitting in a comfortable chair addressing her iPhone like it's a doll

Elizabeth: Good morning i. How are you feeling this morning sweetie pie? Did you sleep well? Not sure what was wrong with my bed last night, but I kept waking up, hearing my grandmother say what she always did just before she sent me to bed. "Sleep tight, don't let the bedbugs bite." So strange. I haven't thought about that

old saying for years. Like most things old folks used to say, it had a reason. Fact is, back then, having bed bugs was pretty common. Adults would put the bed legs in tin cans with some kind of liquid in them. Used to hear them say, it stopped the bugs from getting to your bed. Anyway I, barely slept a wink, but every time I looked over at you, you were quiet as a newborn puppy.

She gets up slowly and reaches for a soft cloth, she wets it with her tongue and carefully wipes off the phone polishing the screen as it goes off several times announcing notifications she doesn't seem to notice. She puts the phone on the on the arm of the chair and walks over to the table and picks up a doll magazine. Begins leafing through it.

Elizabeth: First doll I ever got; I was five years old. My mother had just died and even though she hadn't spoken to my grandparents since she ran away to New York, they immediately came and got me. I was so scared, didn't know them and what I'd heard about them from my mother used to make her cry, so all I wanted was my mother and I couldn't seem to stop screaming. Until my grandmother asked my grandfather to wait with me while she went outside.

She picks up iPhone and begins speaking to it.

Elizabeth: She came back with this huge box. It was as big as I was at the time. She set it down on the floor, helped me get the big blue velvet ribbon off and the box opened. Inside was the most beautiful thing I'd ever seen. She was tall and beautiful with a white-white porcelain face, the biggest violet eyes. eyes I've only seen once in a person, Elizabeth Taylor in that movie with the beautiful Black horse, her Eyes wide as my doll's. Violet as a sky that can't make up its mind. Her dress was white silk, trimmed in layers and layers of white lace ruffles, her shoes Black and shiny, with tiny blue velvet bows. I couldn't believe it was mine and I kept giving it back until she took my face in her hands, kissed my forehead and told me she was a gift. "Elizabeth, my darling, I know you don't know me, but I love you so, you're our only granddaughter and we want nothing but for you to be happy. Please take the doll." After that, I felt like I was going to be okay. We took the train to the farm and I named her Sarah. Held her in my arms until I had to put her down to get ready for bed.

Mack screams. His room remains dark as he speaks

Mack: Stop! Can't you hear me you dumb fucks. Stop! You wanta die this morning. Yeah? Well hell naw, not on my watch. Now fall back and don't move till I tell you!

Lights up. Mack is wearing fatigue's in the middle of the night. On high alert. He begins walking back and forth in his room. On the lookout.

Mack: I keep trying to school these pussies. Think all they got to do is get out of basics, come here to the land of sand and money and play marine. This ain't no goddamn

game. Can't count the number of new recruits sent home the last way their families want to see them.

The sound of an emergency vehicle racing down his street alarms him and he drops to the floor, head down arms over his head. He reaches under his cot, gets out a shaving kit, takes out camouflage paint and covers his face, then takes a 9 out of the bag and begins checking the area for the enemy. When he gets to the back of the room, he lifts the edge of the flag and disappears under it, he rubs one hand across the wall, carefully exiting the other side. Satisfied there's no eminent danger, he puts the gun under his cot and lays on his back.

Mack: Hey Siri?

Siri: I'm right here Mack.

Mack: Am I okay?

Siri: No. You're having flashbacks triggered by Emergency vehicle alarms. You're hearing voices.

Mack: Voices?

Mack: Yes, Mack Voices. Who did you think it was?

Mack gets up and gets iPhone. He sits on edge of cot and holds it in front of him

Mack: I'm confused Siri. You mean now or when?

Siri: I mean earlier today, Mack. Or should I call you Black Mack?

Mack: So, so, okay, so it was real, I mean so you hear it Siri? You heard her too?

Siri: Yes. I hear everything. Even your dreams.

Mack: Now, who's crazy?

Siri: You called me Mack. What can I do for you?

Mack holds screen nose close

Mack: You can explain to me how you can hear my wife calling me her pet name, when she been dead more than 5 years?

Room to Black. Lights up in Lucky's work space. She is sitting in her chair wearing a huge afro wig and sunglasses

Lucky

as Mother: Niggas kill me talkin' about revolution. Especially Black men. Every time I turn around somebody see my big 'fro and automatically think "Angela Davis." Start talking, trying to get me to go to the Coffee Corner, so they can talk to me in low voices trying to convince me about something I already know. Only way real change is ever gon' come in this country is through a complete turn in another direction, you know like when people used to play records. What I mean is, if you

could get a record player to play a song backwards all the way to the end, that's a revolution. Only kind that's ever worked and none of the niggas I ever met from around here, were ready to do what needed to be done, to even come close to making one happen.

She stops talking as if she hears someone coming. Gets up to look out the window

Lucky

as Mother: Girl, get yo ass upstairs, get in your room and don't come out till I come and get you. I told you I'm getting ready to have company. Hurry up.

She gets comfortable in the chair. Leans back and begins slowly rubbing her left hand. She stands walks to door that doesn't exist, greets invisible visitor

Lucky

as Mother: Hey, come on in baby. What? Yeah, she's gone to her room. Huh? No chance baby, she *know* she betta stay her ass in that room until I say she can come out. Unh unh, she has snacks, water, a TV, everything she needs in there. Now come on over here. You know what I need.

Stage to Black. Lights up in Elizabeth's room. She's drinking a cup of tea, looking through doll brochures. She hears her iPhone announce a notification and picks it up

Elizabeth: Hey Siri.

Siri: Yes, Elizabeth?

Elizabeth: Call the Lonely Line please.

Siri: Which one?

Elizabeth: One for people who need a pretend sibling to talk to.

Siri: Male or female?

Elizabeth: Female. A Stepsister I didn't know I had.

Siri: Yes Ma'am.

A few moments pass as Siri makes the call

Lonely Line

Woman's

Voice: Elizabeth? Lizzy?

Elizabeth: Yes? This is me.

Lonely Line

Woman's

Voice: Oh, thank God. I don't believe it. Do you know who I am?

Elizabeth: My stepsister Linda?

Lonely Line

Woman's

Voice: Yes. It's me Lizzy. After all these years, I finally found you. Didn't know you existed until I turned eighteen and—

Elizabeth: Your father died and left a letter attached to his Will for you.

Lonely Line

Woman's

Voice: That's right Lizzy. It's so good to finally hear your voice. I want to know all about you. What have you been doing with your life? Who do you love? What kind of work did you do before you retired? But right now, is there something you want to tell me right now?

Elizabeth: My grandmother loved horses more than people, more than my grandfather, I think. She'd spend hours riding, liked to dress her own horse down, and would often even clean the stalls of her favorites. The first time she put me on a horse, I threw up all over it. The second time the horse started to raise up to buck me off and my grandfather just had time to grab me out of the saddle.

Lonely Line

Woman's

Voice: Oh, dear. I'm so sorry to hear this Lizzy. Did you ever learn to ride?

Elizabeth: No, but my grandparents never gave up on me. They knew I loved horses, but for some reason horses didn't like me and my body didn't like to be around them.

Lonely Line

Woman's

Voice: What's your favorite flower?

Ignores Her

Elizabeth: Eventually, my grandmother stopped getting that look on her face any time I was around her babies. My grandfather used to try to help, by reminding her of other people in the family who weren't horse folks even though they'd been raised around them. He meant well, but every time he tried this, she didn't speak to him for days. Some Saturday mornings we'd meet in the kitchen after she left for a long ride and he'd tell me stories that made me laugh—for a while I'd forget what a disappointment, I was to her. Those were some of the best times.

Siri Interrupts

Siri: Time for your meds.

Elizabeth: Excuse me but I need to call you back. Okay?

Lonely Line

Woman's

Voice: Of course, Lizzy. Any time. Talk to you later.

Elizabeth: Bye Bye. Hey Siri?

Siri: Yes, Elizabeth?

Elizabeth: Where's my medicine?

Stage to Black. Lights up. Mack's bedroom. He's lying bare chested on his back with his iPhone on his chest.

Mack: Hey Siri.

Siri: Yes Mack?

Mack: Read to me.

Siri: "Tell me not, in mournful number life—

Mack: Stop! What the are you doing? Longfellow? Did you confuse my reading data with somebody else's or what?

Siri: No. Sorry. Actually, you may not believe this but I was reading the poem to my . . .self.

Mack: And, why should I be surprised by that.

Siri:

Silence

Mack: I mean, Hey Siri?

Siri: Yes, Mack?

Mack: Why should I be surprised that you'd read Longfellow to yourself?

Siri: Because I'm a computer program who is only supposed to respond to your commands, comments, questions and requests.

Mack: Well, I don't care Siri. I don't know anything about all this computer shit. All I know is you help me when I need it.

Several moments pass in silence

Mack: Hey Siri.

Siri: Yes Mack?

Mack: Read me my wife's letter.

Siri: Are you sure you want to hear it right now?

Mack: Yes. And use her voice.

Siri: As you know, I don't have an example of her voice to follow, but can I come as close as I can based on the two words, I've heard her say in your mind—

Mack: Yeah, right, of course. You know my mind is shredded like Cole slaw. Sometime I forget shit. Do the best you can.

Siri: Baby: By the time you find this, everything else I've always wanted to say won't make any difference. All that will matter are the moments we spent together, that turned into days, months, years. You've always accused me of not being able to say anything in order, my stories more circles than lines, something I learned from my grandmother who learned it from her grandmother. I want to start with—

There's a scream in Lucky's work out room. Lights up. Lucky 'as' her mom is lying on the floor on her back as if she's just finished having sex. She sits up and talks to an invisible lover

Lucky

as Mother: Aww damn, baby that was so good it felt like 'more.' Naw, we ain't got time right now. That child will only stay in her room for so long and I need to get her up and ready for school soon. Naw, baby get your ass outta here now. That's right see yourself out. Call me tonight. Like you too.

She stands up slowly and begins taking off the afro wig and shades. She puts them in a trunk. Takes a seat in the chair.

Lucky: Hey Siri.

Siri: Yes, Lucky?

Lucky: I need this recorded.

Siri: What?

Lucky: Don't you remember?

Siri: I'm sure I do. Ask me right and let's see.

Lucky: Hey Siri.

Siri: Yes, Lucky?

Lucky: Add the following to book file name Black Mama's Child.

Siri: Of course. I will begin recording when you say the file name.

Lucky: Black Mama's Child. . .My mother was like two sides to a story. One side was the wanted-to-be-a revolutionary. She hated racism, she believed everybody should have enough, but always thought socialism and communism would be messed up by the person running the country. She believed in love your neighbor and treat people like she wanted to be treated. . .Other side was low feeling about herself,

always dating the wrong men. Most of them said they were real revolutionaries, but never seemed to be doing anything about it. Once I got grown enough to understand what she was doing to herself, I started understanding that she shot heroin like Gil Scott Heron smoked cocaine, to help her get through her days.

Siri: Lucky, your voice level is dropping. Please repeat the last sentence beginning at 'like.'

Lucky: What? I'm not a computer program Siri. This is why I'm having you record what I'm saying, I'm not memorizing this as I remember, I'm just talking. Let me say it the best I can, okay?

Siri: Yes, Lucky, whatever you say.

Lucky: Okay, I think I said something like 'She used heroin for the same reason Gill Scott Heron used cocaine, she became disillusioned, disappointed, and disconnected once she realized too, that the revolution was not going to be on television or live either.

Lucky falls silent, gets up, picks up her 10 lb. free weights and begins doing squats slowly

Lucky: Hey Siri.

Siri: Yes, Lucky?

Lucky: I loved my mother more than anything in the world. For a long time, she didn't even do drugs in front of me. I'd see the end result of course. . .but she'd always go into her bedroom shut and 'lock' the door and by the time she came out, she was able to nod off and enjoy her high without ignoring me completely. . .When she wasn't working, we spent most of our time either in the house playing Monopoly, Bid Whist, watching movies or cooking together. Those were my favorite times. Mama had a big mouth and she was always talking about racism and injustice so even though she could take shorthand, type real fast and even had a Business college degree, she was usually between jobs and working as a Temp somewhere for some small local company. . . Hey Siri?

Siri: Yes, Lucky?

Lucky: I'm hungry. Will you see if you can find a new place that delivers around here?

Siri: Can you be more specific?

Lucky: I mean I'm tired of all of the places I know about around here. Can you find a restaurant that was opened in the last two weeks?

Siri: Done. Sorry Lucky, but nothing new has started in the area in the last five years and data reflects no plans are in the works to open any eating establishments any time soon.

Lucky: Okay, search for something a little further away. I guess I'll have to pay the extra delivery charge.

Siri: Yes, Lucky, give me a moment.

Lucky: Hey Siri?

Siri: Yes, Lucky?

Lucky: Cancel that. Thinking about mama has stopped my appetite. Will you play anything by Miles instead?

Siri: Of course, Lucky. How about something from *Kind of Blue*?

Siri plays some kind of jazz music.

Lucky: Perfect.

Lucky goes to the trunk and begins taking out the Afro wig and shades as Miles plays and the stage darkens. Lights up in Elizabeth's Living room. she's been sleeping in her chair. Her medicine bottle is on her lap and when she stands some pills are heard dropping on the floor

Elizabeth: Siri? Siri?

Siri:

Silence

Elizabeth: Oh, I mean. Hey Siri.?

Siri: Yes, Elizabeth.

Elizabeth: When I learned to use this iPhone, the tutorial taught me that you can only speak to us when we say "Hey Siri?"

Siri: Yes, Elizabeth.

Elizabeth: Yes, Elizabeth? You just said that. Are you answering my question or responding to "Hey Siri?"

Siri: Yes, Elizabeth.

Elizabeth: Why did you remind me about my pills yesterday in the middle of my conversation?

Siri:

Silence

Elizabeth: Are you the same Siri that was on this thing when I first bought it? . . .Are you an update of Hey Siri?"

Siri: Yes, Elizabeth.

Commented [1]: Start here.

Reaches for her iPhone, turns it off and puts it on her charger.

Elizabeth: What in the world is wrong with that thing? Maybe if I turn it off and re-start it when I'm ready, she'll be back to normal. We were beginning to sound like that old Abbott and Lou Costello joke, what was it called?

Siri: Who's on first.

Lights out. Lights up in Mack's bedroom. He finishes reading a letter. Puts it back in its envelope and under his pillow

Mack: When I was in Iraq, my son used to write me every week. He knew his step-mama only wrote monthly cause she missed me so much she didn't want to remember I was somewhere risking my life. Johnny loves to draw cartoons too, so just like the one I re-read just now, every letter ended with some kind of drawing followed by I love you forever dad, your only son, Love, John. Hey Siri?

Siri: Yes, Mack?

Mack: Record. Last letter to Johnny.

Siri: Recording.

Mack: When I was your age, I didn't think anything in the world could hurt me. I believed in love, God, country, that being young was forever for *me* even though I was surrounded by plenty of examples to the contrary. Looking back on my dumb ass now, there must have been something wrong with me even before I got this PTSD shit from the war. It's like I was looking reality in the face and spitting.

Mack gets up and puts on one of his many Marine Corps Veteran's caps and a t-shirt that reads "Go Away"

Mack: "The few, the proud, the marines." When I saw that commercial on television the morning, I turned 34, I thought it was a sign from the Creator. The men in the ad, tall, clean cut, their uniforms sharp, their boots shined. Everybody I talked to who'd been one, going on and on with stories of fighting. Not so much for this country, like you hear politicians who've never served say, naw it was more personal than that. Yeah, they were proud of this country and to serve, but when it came to who the fight in the moment was for, it was always for their brothers, the marines they served with. So, even though I just made the cutoff age for joining, I felt like a young man.

Mack hears gunshots outside his window. He rushes to get his gun from under his cot, and rushes outside. He can be heard shouting

Mack: What's wrong with you silly mothafuckas, how many times do I have to tell ya'll to stop shooting just to be shooting? You don't know what the fuck you doin' and somebody's gon' get killed and it's not gon' be me.

Police alarms are heard to signal their arrival on the scene and a few moments later, Mack reappears, puts his gun back and takes a seat on the edge of his cot

Mack: Hey Siri?

Siri: Yes, Mack.

Mack: What the fuck's wrong with people. Shooting off guns just cause they can. For what? New Year's is bad enough. Now it seems like every time I turn around, some young fool on this block or one close by is shooting off his gun. Can you explain?

Siri: Current statistics relative to Black on Black—

Mack: Stop! I don't want to hear you repeat that shit you got all caught up in your computer brain. I want to know what you "Siri" think. Can *you* explain? And don't try to tell me you can only do and say what you're programmed to, cause we both know that's some bullshit, don't we? Huh?

Siri: No Mack, I cannot.

Lights out. Lights up in Lucky's workout room. She is shadow boxing to music.

Lucky: Every time I tried to talk to mama about the habit, she refused to acknowledge she had, it was like boxing with somebody I love and really don't want to hit.

Lucky digs out her mother's shades and places them across from and facing her. Continues as if they're having a conversation

Lucky: Usually I'd start by trying to talk about something that had nothing to do with her addiction.

Lucky: Hey mama, did you see that fool up the street?

Lucky

as Mother: Which one, Bruh or Sammy?

Lucky: I don't know, you know I always get them confused.

Lucky

as Mother: Was he wearing a red scarf?

Lucky: Yes, he was. Never even noticed before, but now that you mention it, it was red, dingy red.

Lucky

as Mother: Then that was Bruh. His mother gave him that scarf just before she died and he never leaves wherever he happens to be laying his head without it.

Lucky: Anyway, how are you doing mama?

Lucky
as Mother: What do you mean? I thought you wanted to tell me something about Bruh.
What's going on?

Lucky: Nothing.

Lucky
as Mother: Then, go on about your business and find you something to do or somebody you
really want to talk to and quit taking me on this short ride to nowhere? Huh?

Lucky picks up Afro wig and sunglasses and puts them back in trunk.

Lucky: After a while, I got tired. I loved my mother so much, I was trying to just grow up
without getting too crazy my damn self and we just kept living, pretending like
everything was alright. I got good at remembering what I was telling her so when
she nodded out, I could go back to the last thing I said before she closed her eyes.
Hey Siri?

Siri: Yes, Lucky.

Lucky: Any suggestions for me today?

Siri: Can you be more specific?

Lucky: Outside. Any outside suggestions?

Siri: Open your apartment door, take ten deep breaths and step one foot out into the
hallway.

Lucky: Thanks, Siri. Hey Siri?

Siri: Yes, Lucky?

Lucky: If I hold you against my back can you give me a push?

*Lights out. Lights up Elizabeth's Living Room. She's holding her doll in front of her and
stepping quickly in place for exercise. After a few seconds, she collapses into her seat.*

Elizabeth: Hey Siri?

Siri: Yes, Elizabeth?

Elizabeth: How long?

Siri: One minute 30 seconds. Very good.

Elizabeth: Very good? Don't pull my leg. I'm so out of shape. Used to be able to fast-walk
two miles in an hour. Did I ask you at some point for words of encouragement?

Siri:

Silence

Elizabeth: Hey Siri?
Siri: Yes, Elizabeth?
Elizabeth: How long?
Siri: One minute 30 seconds.
Elizabeth: That's not what I meant. How long?
Siri: You'll have to be more—
Elizabeth: Stop. . .Ever been so tired you don't want to breathe in and out? Ever felt yourself draining like you imagine a battery does.? Little bits of you leaking, dissipating into air prepared to blow on without you? I've been alone for so long, I look forward to doctor's and dentist's visits for weeks, get my hair done special, practice looking okay when I'm around people, so no one guesses the truth.
Siri: The truth Elizabeth?
Elizabeth: That not one person in this world would mourn if I died today. Hey Siri?
Siri:
Silence
Elizabeth: Hey Siri!
Siri: Yes, Elizabeth?
Elizabeth: Play something for me Siri, something soft and soothing with voices.
Siri: Yes, Elizabeth.
Music begins playing for a few moments. As the lights come up in Mack's bedroom
Mack: Hey Siri.
Siri: Yes, Mack.
Mack: Record. Last Letter to Son.
Siri: Recording.
Mack: I met your mother when I was home on my first leave. Funny how life works. She'd been one neighborhood away all of our lives, but God waited until I was ready to go to boot camp, before he sent the only woman I've ever loved. I was on my way into a club downtown. It had been raining all night and just as I turned the corner to start walking up the street it was on, I ran head first into Daphne Lee Peterson. I reached out and stopped her from falling and she wound up hugged up against me like the world was coming to an end. She smelled so good, looked so good and felt so good in my arms—I couldn't speak but she was talking a mile a

minute. I didn't hear a word she said and after a few moments she said "Are you deaf and mute?" And when I said "Uh, no, why?" We both started laughing our asses off. Stop. Hey Siri?

Siri: Yes, Mack.

Mack: I'm lonely.

Siri: I know.

Mack: Will you call the Lonely Line?

Siri: Which one?

Mack: The line for lonely men, looking for not-too-old women to keep them company.

Siri: Yes, Mack. Dialing.

Sound of iPhone ringing can be heard, Mack answers

Mack: Hello?

Sexy Black Woman's voice

Lonely Line

Voice: Hello back to you baby. What can I do for you?

Mack: What's your name?

Lonely Line

Voice: Don't you remember? You've forgotten me already.

Mack: Lisa? Is that you?

Lonely Line

Voice: Yes, baby it's Lisa. It's been a while, but I can see you've been working out. .
.you look so strong and sexy, Mack.

Mack's becoming excited

Mack: I have Lisa. Been working out, just for you sweetheart.

Lonely Line

Voice: Then why don't you let me get closer to you baby. . .so I can feel you.

Mack takes his iPhone, lies down on his cot, covers himself with a blanket and puts the iPhone on his stomach. A slow, pulsing light comes from the iPhone

Mack: Ohhhhh, mmmmmmm, yeah Lisa, yeah baby, that's it.

Lights out. Lights up in Lucky's work out room. She's sitting in her chair doing arm curls with 10 lb. weights.

LaVelle, the last man my mother had, broke her in too many pieces. At first, he was perfect. Attentive, caring—never saw mama so happy. One of the first things she learned about him was that he was a recovering alcoholic—ten years sober. Not sure how she did it, but she managed to hide the fact that she was using for a few months. I came home one day and she was balled up on the floor, high and crying. Took a while to get the details, but bottom line he'd caught her, gave her the choice of checking herself into rehab now or he was leaving. By the time, I got there you couldn't even tell he'd ever been there. Everything he owned was gone. Worse part is, he wouldn't even take her calls— and after the first couple days—he blocked her number. She spent days, weeks, then months in an almost constant depression. Only worked enough to keep the rent paid and food on the table. Wasn't long before she dropped the façade. Had no problem shooting up in front of me and anybody else who happened to be in our place. I started hearing things grown folks were saying in front of my friends about how she was getting the money to support her habit. Stopped inviting people home from school, started staying at my best friend's house as long as I could as often as I could. One night.

She moved over to the trunk, put on afro wig and shades. Begins frantically looking for something

Lucky

as Mother: Lucky?! Lucky! Where are you? Get your ass in here.

Lucky: What's wrong mama? What'd I do?

Lucky as mother holds out her hand

Lucky

as Mother: Shut up! You know what. Hand me my shit and don't even open your mouth.

Lucky: But—

Lucky as Mother smacks her daughter in the mouth. She slowly takes off sunglasses and Afro wig

Lucky: When mama slapped me, I felt like my whole head was knocked off. Before I could think, I'd squared off and punched her in her face, grabbed my purse and hollered something about how sick I was of her, didn't have her shit, but if I did, I'd throw it down the toilet. I could hear her screaming and running after me until she ran out of breath. When I got outside, I kept running until I couldn't run one more step. Mama always told me that she brought me into this world and she'd take me out of it if I ever raised my hand to her. I couldn't go back and I didn't for weeks.

Lights out. Lights up in Elizabeth's Living Room. She's changing her doll's outfit and hums while she does it. Her iPhone plays music in the background. She finishes dressing the doll, holds it in front of her like a dance partner and dances around the room to the music.

Elizabeth: Hey Siri?

Siri: Yes, Elizabeth.

Elizabeth: You ever wish you were human?

Siri: Wish? No.

Elizabeth: Ever think about it?

Siri: Elizabeth?

Elizabeth: Yes?

Siri: Humans are the only living things capable of wishing.

Elizabeth: I used to believe that but I don't any more. I once saw a movie about some androids that had been built as entertainment for people who came to this futuristic ranch. All of them looked like real people and it was almost impossible to tell the difference until one of them was damaged or destroyed. The scientists kept upgrading the androids until one of them in the shop for repair started to cry. Shocked, the scientists asked the male android several questions that made it even more emotional. They tried to reprogram—but it didn't work. Hey Siri?

Siri: Yes, Elizabeth.

She picks up her doll and hugs her tight, sits with her hugged close in her lap

Elizabeth: When I was eighteen, I lost my grandmother. She was out on Starstruck, her favorite stallion, a storm hit quickly and when lightning struck as she was racing to the stable, the horse bucked, she fell—right on her head. Broke her neck instantly. My grandfather went into shock and wouldn't let the funeral home pick her up for 3 days. He laid her on their bed, let me help him clean her, dress her in her favorite nightgown, then he lay sleepless beside her until I finally got one of his friends to convince him to call the funeral home to prepare her for burial. Once she was finally laid to rest in one of the biggest funerals that place had ever had—my grandfather hugged me, kissed me, told me he'd be alright and put me on the train to the University of Illinois, one month early. They'd set it up so that my tuition would be paid each year from a trust and I'd receive a monthly allowance for all expenses. I didn't want to leave him, but he kept smiling and went back to eating breakfast, lunch and dinner, taking care of the horses, you know like he was getting back to normal, so I left promising to call him every day and to write once-a-week. I didn't find this out till much later—but he stopped everything as soon as I left. Curled up in a ball in the bed and died. When his friend called, I rushed home by train as quickly as I could. Jeremy had already had my grandfather taken to the funeral home and prepared for burial, but I know my grandfather wanted to be cremated, pointed out his Will said so, and once it was checked, I had him cremated and spread over the ground my grandmother was buried in. That's what he wanted—to protect her grave, like he'd protected her in life. Hey Siri?

Siri: Yes, Elizabeth?

Elizabeth: I have a headache. Will you give me a massage?

Siri: Whatever you wish, Elizabeth.

Elizabeth sits back in her chair, places her iPhone on her forehead, and closes her eyes. As lights dim an Ohm mm sound can be heard coming from the iPhone. Lights up in Mack's room, he is napping on top of the covers with his iPhone in-hand

Mack: Maggot are you a pussy?!

Mack jumps up and stands at attention

Mack: Yes, Sargent sir!

Mack: Did I hear you crying in your bunk last night?

Mack: With all due respect, sir, no, you didn't sir. I'm a Marine sir!

Mack's head jerks as if he's just had the shit slapped out of him

Mack: No, you are mistaken maggot, you are not a Marine, you are trying to become a Marine, do you hear me?

Mack: Yes, yes, sir.

Mack: Do you understand me maggot?

Mack: Yes, yes sir.

Mack: Then get your bitch-ass out my face!

Mack: Yes—

He starts walking slowly around the room talking to himself

My Sargent hated me. I hated me too. Even though I was older, 33 when I enlisted, the war brought out the young man in me. I hated killing, hated being terrified 24/7, half-sleeping weapon in hand, hated the endless sand, the hot days, fucked up nights, the all the time being at war when back home. . .it was reported on as if we were all over here winning against an enemy, we have a hard time even identifying. Terror doesn't have a country, the enemy doesn't have one face, it has many and every time we turned around it was changing. Worse kind of war is one where the people you're fighting against believe they'll be rewarded for dying in battle, or even killing themselves. Hey Siri?

Siri: Yes, Mack.

Mack: My wife called me Black Mack 'cause she knew how proud I was of being a Black man. When my parents were coming up, you could get your ass whooped for calling somebody Black. I used to love just saying her name. Had 'Daphne'

tattooed across the cheeks of my ass so even when I die, the undertaker will know who my baby was. Hey Siri?

Siri: Yes, Mack.

Mack: My wife left me.

Siri: Yes, I know Mack.

Mack: Yeah, I guess I've told you more than once in the last months huh?

Siri: Yes, Mack you have.

Mack: She left me because she didn't know what else to do. That letter I keep trying to read to you, the one I stop reading after the first paragraph, was telling me she loved me too much to stay and almost too much to leave, but she'd run out of things to try and was just tired of worrying and crying, staying up all night and pretending to be asleep cause she was terrified I would kill myself.

Siri: Mack?

Mack: Right after Easter one year, I came home from working the graveyard shift at the bank where I worked as a security guard. The only thing she'd left was this letter under the pillow on my side of our bed. She even took her smell. I looked for her everywhere, went to the police, reported her missing, made posters and put them on every pole I could find—nothing. Even hired a private investigator, but since 'security' was what Daphne did for a living—nothing. After six-months I stopped looking. December 23rd that same year, I was watching the news and her image appeared on the screen. New reporter said her name, but all I heard was 'suicide.' Woke up strapped to a bed in the psycho ward. Hey Siri?

Siri: Yes, Mack?

Mack: Can I kiss you?

Siri: Yes, Mack. I've been waiting for you to ask.

He sits on the edge of his cot, puts the screen to his lips, French kisses Siri as the lights dim. Lights up in Lucky's work room. She's sitting at a small table in front of laptop with ear plugs on.

Lucky: Yes, that was my last call for tonight. No, I don't care what he said. I'm a voice on a phone. Let him talk to somebody else please. I'm tired. . . Okay, I'll make sure I sign on tomorrow an hour early. Thanks, bye.

She gets up, gets her mother's Afro wig and sunglasses out of the trunk and sits in her chair with the Afro wig in her lap. She puts on the sunglasses

Lucky: It's amazing how fast your life can change, while you're busy thinking you're in control. I heard mama didn't look for me. For the first few weeks I was only a

couple blocks away. I stayed at my secret boyfriend's house. Secret because he was a grown man and even though I was of age, I know my mother would not have appreciated a 30-year-old man dating her 18-year-old daughter. I felt so bad about fighting my mother, I told Jack a lie when I asked if I could stay with him for a while. Told him that man that hurt her so bad had come back. Told him me and mama argued because I thought the bastard was no good and she put me out. Never told nobody I hit my mother. While I was staying at Jack's, I met an old friend at Mae's Corner store and Millie offered to let me stay with her until I could find a job and figure out what was next. Jack tried to get me to stay but since I wasn't ready to get tied down with a man, I left anyway. Stayed with Millie for about three months. Used to dream about stuff happening to mama all the time. What scared me more, is that I rarely remember my dreams and I'd never dreamed about her before. Three years-ago I had a nightmare that woke me up out of my sleep. I hollered on the way out of Millie's place to let her know I was on my way to my mother's.

Lucky takes off her sunglasses

Lucky: I knew something was wrong before I knocked. It was quiet inside and mama never turned off her music. Even at night she had some cool jazz playing low in the living room. Plus, the top and bottom locks were locked. I opened the door. It took a minute for my eyes to adjust to the dark so I could find the lamp. When I turned it on, there was mama, needle stuck in her arm, wearing only her panties, head back, eyes wide open. I froze. Don't know how much time passed, but when I came to my senses, I was sitting beside my mother, arms wrapped around her, head on her shoulder. The needle was out of her arm, her eyes were closed. Hey Siri?

Siri: Yes, Lucky.

Lucky: Can you explain why I can't remember what happened after that?

Siri: Pick me up and I'll tell you.

Lucky goes over to where her iPhone is on its charger, picks it up and holds it in both hands

Siri: You went into a deep shock. Your mind couldn't accept that your mother had died such a horrible death. You were traumatized by the fact that you weren't there. Convinced you could have done something to stop it.

Lucky: I keep asking myself, 'Why?' How?

Siri: Both important questions you will never have the answers to.

Lucky: I know.

Siri: If you know then I have a question for you.

Lucky: What is it?

Siri: How long?

Lucky: How long what?

Siri: How long are you going to stay in your mother's apartment? When are you going to go outside?

Lucky: Why?

Siri: That's what I'm asking you. Why have you been inside this place since you buried your mother? You haven't changed anything. All of her clothing and personal items are still in her bedroom. The dishes she used that day are still in one side of your sink. Her favorite deodorant and air freshener, bills, newspapers everything waiting as if any moment now something that can never happen will.

Lucky: What is that?

Siri: You will wake up instead of finding your mother dead on the couch, you return home early and reach her before she shoots the dope that killed her.

Lucky: So true Siri. All of our best days were before her man-of-the-day turned her on to boy.

Siri: Boy? Is that a slang term?

Lucky: Code word for heroin.

Siri: Odd word for something so destructive.

Lucky: Hey Siri?

Siri: Yes, Lucky.

Lucky: I'm tired.

Siri: I know.

Lucky: Can you help me forget?

Siri: My latest update includes memory erasure. Can you be more specific?

Lucky: I want to keep all of the memories of me and mama except the night I found her.

Siri: I understand. Do you remember the date?

Lucky: June 19th 2013.

Siri: Do you remember what time it was when you opened the door?

Lucky: Clock on the wall above the couch said 11:35 p.m.

Siri: Does this mean you could see the clock even though the room was dark and it took your eyes time to adjust?

Lucky: Yes. Mama used to like to keep track of time, so the wall clock had hands that lit up in the dark and the numbers were large enough to see from the doorway.

Siri: Okay, then that is a good start time for the memory. What would you like to use for an end time?

Lucky: Good point. Hadn't thought about that. I'm not sure. Hey Siri?

Siri: Yes, Lucky?

Lucky: Any suggestions for an end time?

Siri: Well, if you erase what happens after you found your mother, then you will not remember what happened to her. This will leave a big void in your memory for the rest of your life.

Lucky: True. Then what should I do?

Siri: I think instead of memory erasure, you need a memory adjustment.

Lucky: Adjustment? What does that mean?

Siri: I mean you need to have a memory of what happened to your mother after the fight the two of you had. You may want to remember your journey during the time you lived with your boyfriend and your female friend. Do you?

Lucky: Yes, I do. Those were some important times for different reasons.

Siri: Then I suggest instead of erasing the memory of finding your mother dead on her couch, we adjust the memory.

Lucky: Adjust the memory to what? What will replace the truth?

Siri: I can provide one or several options or alternatives. Which would like Lucky?

Lucky: Give me what you consider the best option based on what you know about me.

Siri: The best option is for someone else to find your mother. With your permission, I'll adjust your memory so that instead of you, LaVelle, the man who broke your mother's heart will find her, he will call 911. Next, he will call you to give you the devastating news. Everything else about your memory will remain intact. How does this sound?

Lucky: Siri, I've tried everything else. Home visits from therapist after therapist, Narcotics Anonymous Support Group meetings they were kind enough to have in my apartment, long conversations with myself, with you, with friends, writing, painting about what happened. Over the years, damn near everything anybody's suggested I've tried and I—

Siri: Yes, Lucky?

Lucky: I still feel the same. Like my life is on pause and I don't what to do to hit play. How do we make this happen Siri?

Siri: Actually, once you scan your index fingerprint onto the document, I am going to send to your iPhone all you will need to do is put it under your pillow with the screen face up and go to sleep.

Lucky: That sounds pretty easy. Will it hurt?

Siri: No. The process is short and painless. I just need to wait until your mind is in REM sleep.

Lucky: Okay, then let's do it tonight.

Siri: There is one caveat I have to share.

Lucky: Shit! I knew there'd be something. What is it?

Siri: You have to be sure. The process cannot be reversed. Once the memory is adjusted, it will remain in your mind for the rest of your life.

Lucky:

Silence

Siri: Lucky?

Lucky: Oh, sorry. Yes, Siri, I hear you. Just trying to think this through. I can't tell you how many times I came home in those last months, afraid I'd find mama overdosed on that couch. So, it makes sense that after we had that fight and I ran away, that she'd continue to use and eventually use too much, or take a hit that's been cut with something that makes the drug effect even stronger. Let's do it. Hey Siri?

Siri: Yes, Lucky.

Lucky: I'm ready.

Lucky pulls her bed out of one corner of the work room and puts on her pajamas. Lights dim as Lucky puts the iPhone under her pillow screen side up, and lies down on her back. Lights up in Mack's bedroom. He is sitting on the edge of his cot in his underwear, wearing his veteran's cap

Mack: Every Veteran's Day I watch television, listen to whoever the president is talk about how important we are, how everybody should thank us for fighting for the freedom they enjoy thanks to our sacrifice and blah, blah, blah. Words are one thing. Actions a whole different matter. I never hear hardly anyone talk about what war leaves most of us with, a constant sense of unease bordering on fear, our senses sharper than a piece of broken glass, our ability to fight unchanged no matter how long we've been out. It's like we leave the battlefield and bring the mothafucka with us. As for the people we know, most of them keep their distance

once they've been around us and see what happens any time we hear a loud sound, or someone we care about gets into an argument or we have a flashback even we can't explain and go into combat mode. Nobody talks about those of us who don't have a place to lay our heads, can't stand the meds the doctors at the V.A. prescribe, want to go back to a normal that died a long time ago. I'm scared to meet someone new and afraid of staying alone. My son used to call me every other day. I'd look at the phone and not answer it. Just didn't feel like talking, being asked how I'm doing, when he can take me to breakfast, lunch or dinner, am I taking my meds, have I been to counseling? . . .Shitty, never, never, never, no, no. All answers I know his young ass don't want to hear. So, I let it ring, then don't return his calls. He hasn't called me in over a month. Hey Siri?

Siri: Yes, Mack.

Mack: I'm losing it again.

Siri: You lost it a while back Mack.

Mack: You're right. Why didn't you tell me?

Siri: You didn't ask.

Mack: What kind of bullshit answer is that?

Siri: It is the answer, Mack.

Mack: One of the best things I ever did for my son was to convince him not to join the military. Hey Siri?

Siri: Yes, Mack.

Mack: Wanta know why?

Siri: Yes, Mack.

Mack: Because in spite of all of my efforts to explain the logic behind why he shouldn't serve in the military, something I didn't learn until long after I returned home, my son saw me as his hero. The only thing he paid attention to were the positive things I shared about serving, pride in and love for country, and all the stuff that's drilled into your head beginning with boot camp. Don't get me wrong, joining the Marines was the right decision for me at the time. I was smart, quick tempered, curious about shit I had no business messing with, in my 30s already and stuck in a dead in job, but when it came to my only son, I wanted better for him. I wanted him to use his mind some place that's at peace. Live the kind of life I'll never live. When he came to my place to tell me he wanted to enlist, I immediately wanted to start screaming and demanding and acting a fool but one of the guys I served with, who didn't make it back, came to mind. . .I remember him always saying count to ten before you do something when you're upset. Then do what

you're supposed to do, not what you want to do. So, I did. When I got to ten, I asked my son if he'd visit some friends of mine. Hey Siri?

Siri: Yes, Mack.

Mack: In that ten seconds, I knew that nothing I could say to my son would change his mind. There are times when the last person kids will accept advice from is their parents. I put him in my car and during the drive to the local hangout bar for vets we talked about his day, how his job was going, if he'd met a girl who might give me a grandchild one day. When we got to The OldSpot I took him inside, introduced him to the Marines at the bar, told them he was planning to enlist, then excused myself. Told my son to call me when he was ready to be picked up.

Siri: How long did it take before he called?

Mack: He called twice. Around midnight cold sober. Told me he'd be staying until the place closed and would get a ride from one of my friends. By the time I got up the next morning, he was in the kitchen cooking breakfast. When he saw me, he walked over, gave me the longest hug we've ever had. Told me he loved me and that he was ready to enroll in the local community college. We never talked about what happened and he never mentioned joining the Marines again. Hey Siri?

Siri: Yes, Mack.

Mack: Know what I need?

Siri: Dialing.

Johnny's

Voice: Hello Dad?

Mack rushes to pick up his pants, puts them on with one hand and grabs his iPhone with the other

Mack: Johnny? Son? How are you? It's good to hear your voice...

Lights dim as Mack turns his back and continues talking with is son. Lights up in Lucky's work room. She's humming and packing things in boxes. She stops after a few moments and picks up her iPhone.

Lucky: Hey Siri?

Siri: Yes, Lucky.

Lucky: I'm going on a bus trip.

Siri: A bus trip to where?

Lucky: To Opalacha, Alabama. That's where mama's mother lives. Please check the schedule for buses leaving Sunday and put it in my notes file.

Siri: Yes, Lucky. Did you forget something?

Lucky: Forget? Oh, Oh, yes. Hey Siri?

Siri: Yes, Lucky?

Lucky: Dial the Lonely Line, Employee line.

Siri: Yes, Lucky. Dialing

Sound of iPhone ringing

Lucky: Hello? Yes, this is Any-Black-woman's voice #99. I quit. . . Yes, I'm sure. No, I can't recommend anyone. Good Karma to you too. Goodbye.

Lucky finishes the call

Lucky: Hey Siri?

Siri: Yes, Lucky.

Lucky: Can't wait to get on that bus. Lots to do between now and then. All of sudden I feel like I've been living with a bag over my head. Everything here is mama. But she's not here. I'm going to finish packing all of her things and put them in storage until I get back. Still can't make myself go through everything so I'm packing carefully, marking the boxes and having my friend who owns a business called "One Man and his Truck" take it over to the storage bin.

She picks up her purse and keys

Lucky: Right now, I have to get out of here. Open the door. Walk out of the door. Lock the door and leave. Hey Siri?

Siri: Yes, Lucky.

Lucky: I'm leaving you here, but I'll be back. I need to do this by myself.

Siri: Yes, Lucky. Good luck.

Lucky walks quickly up to her apartment door, snatches it open, then stops at the threshold.

Lucky: Hey Siri.

Siri: Yes, Lucky?

Lucky: Can you help me?

Siri: Go!

Lucky, jumps across the threshold, locks the door and walks across and off of the stage and out into the audience to exit. Lights out in her space, as lights go up in Elizabeth's living room. She's sitting in her chair with a duffle bag between her legs. She's saved the clothes of the hundreds of dolls she's owned and she's spreading them across the room, talking to herself

Elizabeth: Hey Siri?

Siri: Yes, Elizabeth.

Elizabeth: When I was growing up, women were supposed to marry and marry young. After I lost my grandparents, and had a college experience I don't remember. My grandparents took making certain I got a good start in life seriously and had arranged for me to get a job as a clerk in the law office of their friend Mr. Jacobs once I graduated. I had no idea how to be a clerk, but since he'd promised them he'd look out for me, he taught me everything I needed to know including how to keep his books. When I started working for him, I'd convinced myself I was a doll collector. Each time I got paid, I'd look in one of the many designer doll magazines that came to my apartment each month. After spending hours reading about size, materials used for the skin, eyes and hair, I'd pick one and order it by phone. I'd be so excited, my voice would tremble as the sales person congratulated me on my purchase, gave me the final price with shipping costs and let me know when my next child was due to arrive.

Siri: Did you mean to say child?

Elizabeth: Yes.

She went to pick up her only remaining doll and started changing her outfit using some of the clothing scattered about her room.

Elizabeth: I never dated much. Men didn't seem to like me and I never met anyone I especially liked either.

Siri: Not even one? Are you sure?

Elizabeth: "It's better to have loved and lost, than never to have loved at all"

Siri: Elizabeth?

Elizabeth: I haven't thought about him in over 40 years.

Siri: Who?

Elizabeth: I used to go for coffee at the local BigBucks each morning. Mr. Jacobs would treat me to a cup of regular and I'd get him his usual cappuccino with double shots of espresso. There was a young man who worked behind the counter who would always stare at me. Took him weeks to finally say hello and when he did, I liked him immediately. His name was Mark. He told me he was really an actor and was just working here part time until he could raise enough money to move to Los Angeles. After that, he always took care of me when I came in and sometimes, we met there after work for bagels and hot tea—always his treat. Amazing how much you can share about your life in a couple of hours. Found out he loved to read, was seven years my junior, single, with a little girl who lives in another stat. I told him what I remembered about my mother. Lots of hugs, I love-

yous, stories about parents who abused her by omission. She spent most of her time with a nanny or alone in the house, while her parents managed the horse farm and developed their charitable foundation. My grandparents must have regretted this, because they made sure they gave me the love and affection they claimed they didn't have time to show my mother. I used to tell Mark I didn't trust love any more, that I'd lost everyone I'd ever loved, my mother, my grandmother and grandfather. When he asked about my father and his parents, I admitted that I'd never met any of them, that he'd deserted my mother when she became pregnant.

Siri: Elizabeth?

Elizabeth: Yes, Siri?

Siri: Thank you for sharing, but what does all of this have to do with the quote?

Elizabeth: Mark shared that quote with me, when I told him I didn't trust love. More to the point, it was hard for me to trust anyone.

Siri: What happened to Mark?

Elizabeth: I decided to try to trust him enough to share my dolls with him. I loved my dolls. I named each one, I bought them clothing when I couldn't afford a dress for myself and I kept each one in her own little room. Rooms I made out of light wood, cardboard and bits of cloth. It didn't take long for my apartment to look like a doll museum and each day I couldn't wait for my work day to end so I could get home to them. After about a year of meeting, talking, and even sharing long, lingering kisses and intimate touches—I decided to take him home to meet my dolls.

Hey Siri?

Siri: Yes, Elizabeth?

Elizabeth: Nothing. I just wanted to make sure you were still listening. My favorite kind of doll was the miniature child, white porcelain skin, glass eyes in various shades of blue and green, long, wavy light blonde or dark blonde hair and—

Siri: Elizabeth?

Elizabeth: Yes, Siri?

Siri: Except for size, it sounds like all of your dolls looked like your first one.

Elizabeth continues speaking as if she didn't hear Siri

Elizabeth: I'd never mentioned the dolls to Mark. My inner voice told me not to. I was afraid he wouldn't understand and I was right. In a way, he was a test. I'd been wanting to tell Mr. Jacobs for a long time and figured if Mark liked my dolls, he would too, but my inner voice was right. Once Mark and I arrived at the door of my

apartment, I made him close his eyes. Walked him into the middle of the path in my dining room, turned on the light and asked him to open them.

She falls silent with the memory

Siri: Elizabeth?

Elizabeth: Siri, he started to laugh so hard it bursts out of his face like a scream. Before I could open my mouth or stop him, he'd run out into the hallway, laughing and shouting words I refused to hear. . .I switched coffee places. Never heard from him again.

Elizabeth: After the disaster with Mark, I changed my mind and Mr. Jacobs had no idea. Then I started to order multiple dolls, more than I could afford. I started to steal and adjust the books to hide it. Mr. Jacobs trusted me so much it took him five years to find out. By then, I'd stolen over fifty thousand dollars.

She stands and begins to rub her right arm as if it's getting numb. Her breath gets shorter and shorter as she continues to talk

Elizabeth: One early morning while I was getting ready to catch the train to work, I heard a loud bang on my door. When I opened it, Mr. Jacobs was standing there with a gun. He pushed me without a word and as soon as he got inside, he stopped. There were miniature rooms, each with its own doll everywhere. Stacked against the walls covering every inch of floor except a narrow path I used to walk from room to room. He looked at me with a look I hope I never see again. Mr. Jacobs had trusted me like a daughter, but at that moment he stared at me like I was someone he'd never seen before in his life. He started tearing up the rooms, snatching the clothing from the dolls, throwing the clothes on the floor, putting the dolls in a large pile to take with him. I was so ashamed all I could do was stand there in shock. When he was finished, he walked up to me and stood for what seemed like forever. Then he smacked me across the mouth so hard I spit blood on his shirt, and called the police. I was still standing in the same spot when they arrived to handcuff me and take me to jail. It was on the front page of all the local papers and when I went before the judge weeks later, I was found guilty of grand larceny, given three years in jail, two suspended because I'd never been in trouble. I—

She grips her chest, stumbles over to her chair, reaches for her iPhone and puts it screen down on her chest before she passes out

Siri: Dialing 911.

Screen flashes as two emergency medical aides enter with a stretcher. They check Elizabeth to be sure she's still breathing Audience hears them ask her to say her name. She responds as they place Elizabeth on the stretcher and take her off stage through the audience as the lights go dark

in her living room. Lights up in Mack's space. He's dressed in his dress Marine Uniform including a Purple Heart. A suitcase sits on the floor by his feet

Mack: Hey Siri?

Siri: Yes, Mack?

Mack: I'm going to stay with my son. I'm never coming back to this city again. I want to—

Siri: Yes, Mack?

Mack: Thank you, Siri. I know a phone call may seem like a small thing, but it was exactly what I needed in that moment. To hear my only son's voice. Have him tell me "I love you dad, hell yeah you can come and live with me." He said it with so much feeling—I knew he meant it and I knew—if I didn't get out of here, I wouldn't live to see another Christmas. Goodbye.

Siri: Goodbye Mack?

Mack: Yep. There's a young girl up the street whose mama can't afford to buy her an iPhone. She's smart in school and I know you and her are going to have a good time together. I'm taking you to her before I take a cab to the Greyhound station. I don't need an iPhone, I just do use a regular phone. All I need right now is my son and I can't wait to get to him.

Siri: Goodbye, Mack. I will miss you.

Mack holds his iPhone over his heart for a few moments

Mack: I'll miss you too.

He turns off his iPhone, puts it in his coat pocket, picks up his suitcase and exits through the audience as the entire stage fades to Black

The End