Abstract

The act of writing a play is different for every writer. All writers learn something from every new play they write. I wrote a play in order to build on what I have learned so far as a writer, and to gain more insight into how I write. As plays are constantly evolving, I plan on working on this play after I’ve graduated and taking the insight I’ve made of my writing style and abilities with me. A brief synopsis of the play is as follows: When Addison’s adoptive parents get a divorce, she attempts to seek solace in her birth mother, but what follows causes Addison and those around her to face the choices they’ve made and what could have been.

Acknowledgements

I would like to thank Jennifer Blackmer, who is not only a tremendous mentor and professor, but also a brilliant artist and human being.
Process Analysis

As a student of the Ball State Department of Theatre and Dance, I've tried my hand at a variety of concentrations, but I found my niche in playwriting. I've always considered myself to be somewhat of a storyteller. That's what drew me to theatre in the first place. I wanted to write a play for my thesis to gain more of an insight into how I work as a writer. Whether the play is good or not, I feel that I still gained insight into how I work as a writer. This is information I can take with me as I go out and try to tell more stories. The process of writing a play can be amorphous and difficult to describe. Nevertheless, I will attempt to walk through the process of writing my thesis play, paying particularly close attention to the patterns I see in how I write.

The Idea

In my experience, inspiration can come from a variety of different sources in a variety of ways. Sometimes, I think a particularly person or situation would be an interesting subject, or sometimes it's as simple as asking “what if?” In this case of my thesis play, I came up with a theme before anything else. I was inspired to write this play while I was in a theatre design class last semester. The assignment we were working on was a collage. Is wasn’t my particular collage that I found intriguing, but rather the idea of a collage itself. I thought the idea that completely different objects can be crammed together and create something completely new and completely beautiful would make for a great play.

The title came next. I find that I like coming up with titles before writing. It seems easier to me to write around a title than to try and assign a title to a large piece of work like a play. If I
ever feel lost while writing, I can turn to the title and remind myself what I set out to write in the first place. The title Still Life in Pieces just appeared in my head and never left. I thought it was a clever nod to the collage motif and could also serve to hint at a character’s inner turmoil.

I had a theme and a title, but no idea about plot, setting, or characters. This was a new phenomenon for me. If I had had a character, or a place, or a story in mind, I could’ve started writing. Since I had a theme and nothing concrete, though, it felt as if I was trying to build bricks out of air. When I’m in the early stages of writing, I don’t necessarily like trying to force ideas. I usually let ideas come naturally.

I can’t remember exactly when I thought of the adoption storyline or what is was that inspired it, but it all just clicked after that. I thought that the choice to make the main character an adopted child would tie in perfectly to the theme I had established. From there, the ideas formed more naturally. I was able to think about who would be a part of this child’s life, what events might occur, and what catalysts might motivate these events to happen.

The Execution

The playwriting process is different for every playwright. Some prefer to outline their work before writing. Some like to just write and see what sticks. I’ve written plays using both methods, and I’ve found that different plays call for different methods. If I were to write a play that was heavy on plot, like a farce, then I would write an outline to keep track of what is going on, entrances and exits, . In a character-driven play, such as Still Life in Pieces, I find that I’m much more successful just writing. I put two characters in a room together and give them something to talk about. Even if this does not make it into the final script, I am still able to get a feeling for who these characters are and what drives them. In Still Life in Pieces, I started with Addison, a teenager who feels resentment
toward her adoptive parents, who are in the process of getting a divorce. I wanted Claire, Addison's adoptive mother, to be struggling to try and keep things together for Addison when

"Just writing" is probably the hardest part for me as writer. If you asked a group of writers how to be a better writer, they would tell you to write every day. As I try to write more plays, and in the process of writing *Still Life in Pieces*, I find that to be painfully true. There were periods when I didn't write anything for a very long time. I got caught up in school and other aspects of my life, and put the play out of my mind. When I came back to it, it felt like I was starting over. I had to reacquaint myself with the characters, how they spoke, and how they reacted to the events of the play.

I find that, as a writer, I thrive on deadlines. Something that made this thesis play particularly difficult was that it sometimes felt like there was so much time left to finish it. This meant that there were times when I struggled to really buckle down and focus on it. I sincerely believe I would've benefited from stricter adherence to more frequent deadlines. This is a technique I think I will definitely try to get in the habit of after school. Keeping a regular schedule is difficult when you have school or work, but it's that discipline that makes for a better writer.

Overall, I think that the script included in this thesis is a good foundation for an interesting play. My adviser, Jennifer Blackmer, will tell you that a play is never truly finished until it's performed, and I believe I've only scratched the surface on this play. This draft is likely the beginning of a long writing process, but I feel that I've gained insight into my writing process that I feel I hadn't gauged before. It isn't often that I write about my own writing, but I feel that this self-reflection has allowed me the opportunity to take a step back and take a look at myself as a writer instead of just at words that I have written.
Still Life in Pieces

By

Daniel Gibson
Cast of Characters

CLAIRE: 40s; Addison’s adoptive mother

ADDISON: 17; Young and angry

JULIE: late 30s; Addison’s birth mother

SASHA: 17; Addison’s friend
Scene 1

ADDISON’S bedroom. The room is filled with art. It’s mediocre and angry. Music blares. Addison sits on her bed, flipping through a Playboy magazine, tearing out select pages as she goes. There’s a knock at the door. ADDISON doesn’t hear it. There’s another knock.

CLAIRE

(offstage)

Addison?

ADDISON still doesn’t hear. The door opens and CLAIRE enters. ADDISON sees this and hides the magazine.

Jesus, mom!

CLAIRE

Can you turn the music down?

What?

CLAIRE motions "turn the music down, please." ADDISON does.

Would it kill you to knock?

I did knock.

ADDISON

Usually when people knock on a door, they wait for people to answer.

Alright, I’m sorry.

Pause.

CLAIRE

And I’m sorry if I...interrupted something.

ADDISON

Oh my god mom, I wasn’t masturbating.

(CONTINUED)
What were you doing?

Working.

On a new piece?

What do you want?

I was hoping we could talk.

Did your shrink put you up to this?

Dr. Fulton did suggest that I--that we should--

Okay, listen. Can you just keep me out of your whole...thing you got going on? I don't care if you're seeking psychiatric help. Let's face it, you probably need it. Just...leave me out.

You're welcome to join us if you'd like.

(feigned enthusiasm)

Oh, boy! You mean I'd get to sit on a couch with my adoptive mom and talk about the abandonment issues I must have having parents leave me for the second time? Yeah, no, therapy's not my scene.

Pause. CLAIRE looks around the room and notices the art.

You've been busy. I haven't seen these ones yet.

Mom--

I like the colors.

Can you leave?
CONTINUED:

CLAIRE
I could get you some frames. Hang them up.

ADDISON
I’m not a kindergartner.

CLAIRE
It’s good art.

ADDISON
Just stop, okay?

CLAIRE
Stop what?

ADDISON
This stealth bonding shit you’re always trying to do.

CLAIRE
Addison, I want you to know that I’m still here. I’ll always be here.

ADDISON
I know. That’s the problem.

Pause.

ADDISON
And don’t call me an artist. That’s not what it is.

CLAIRE
What is it?

ADDISON
I don’t know. Art is supposed to say something. This obviously doesn’t.

Pause.

ADDISON (cont’d)

Did you see it coming?

CLAIRE
See what?

ADDISON
What do you think?

CLAIRE
Honestly? I think I could feel it. But then when it happened, it still felt like it came out of nowhere.

(CONTINUED)
CONTINUED:

CLAIRE spots the crate of Playboy magazines at the foot of ADDISON’s bed.

Where did you get these?

I found them.

CLLAIRE (cont’d)

ADDISON

Why were you going through my things?

These aren’t yours.

CLLAIRE

They aren’t yours.

ADDISON

If they belong to no-one, I’m able to use them.

CLLAIRE

Use them for what?

ADDISON

I think I’ll put them in my next project. You know what? I even give you permission to get a frame and hang it up in the kitchen, and everyday when you go downstairs to have your cereal and orange juice, you can look at all the women he wished he was fucking.

A pause. ADDISON flops back on her bed and continue to go through the magazine. There’s complete silence except for the occasional ripping noise as ADDISON tears out pages.

ADDISON (cont’d)

What do you even talk about? At therapy.

CLAIRE

Me. You. The parts of me I feel like I need to work on.

ADDISON

Do you ever just feel like smashing something?

CLAIRE

Every day.

Pause.

(CONTINUED)
CONTINUED:

ADDISON
I was looking for the pictures you took down. When I found these?Where did those go?

CLAIRE
I was thinking that we need to take a step back and-

ADDISON
You can’t just get rid of him.

CLAIRE
That’s not what I’m trying to do. We need to take a while and process this without distractions.

ADDISON
How’s that working out for you?

CLAIRE
I know you’re angry. At both of us. And I get that you’re trying to work this out. But it’s okay to ask for help.

ADDISON
I’m going to Sasha’s tomorrow.

Fine.

ADDISON
Can I take your car?

CLAIRE
Yes, just don’t...yeah, that’s fine.

ADDISON
Cool.

A pause. CLAIRE decides that the conversation has ended. She leaves. ADDISON turns her music back up and gets out her phone. She dials and puts it to her ear.

ADDISON (cont’d)

Hi, Julie?

Scene 2

JULIE’s home. A modest, tasteful apartment. Music plays in another room. There’s a knock at the door. The music stops. JULIE enters and opens the door, revealing ADDISON.

(_CONTINUED)
Addison.
Hi.
Come in, please.
Thanks.
Did you find the place okay?
Yeah, it was fine.
Do you want anything to drink or eat?
I’m fine, thanks.
Do you mind if I go and get my coffee really quick?
No, go ahead.

JULIE leaves, giving ADDISON a moment to look around the apartment. JULIE returns with her coffee. She sits across from ADDISON.

I’m glad you called.

Yeah, I figured that we’d talked long enough to know you weren’t a serial killer or anything.

That’s always a good first step.

That kinda came out wrong.

Don’t worry about it. It’s good that you were being careful.
CONTINUED:

ADDISON
I never knew that you lived so close.

JULIE
It’s amazing, isn’t it? All this time and we were a short drive away.

ADDISON
You have some neat stuff.

JULIE
I work from home. Gives me time to travel.

ADDISON
Have you lived here long?

JULIE
Almost all my life.

Pause.

ADDISON
This is weird, right? Like, how normal this is?

JULIE
What do you mean?

ADDISON
I feel like I should be more nervous than I am. Like at a doctor’s office, and you’re waiting for them to tell you whether or not you’re dying, or something.

Pause.

ADDISON (cont’d)
Oh my god, I sound insane, don’t I?

JULIE
It’s alright. This is big. It’s not everyday you meet your birth mother.

The phrase makes ADDISON uncomfortable. JULIE notices.

ADDISON
Uh-huh.

JULIE
Oh, if you don’t want me to use that term—

ADDISON
It’s fine. It’s just when you say it like that, it’s sounds...I don’t know...bigger than it really is.

(CONTINUED)
Bigger in what way?  

ADDISON

Sure, we might share some of the same DNA, but I hardly know you.

JULIE

That’s why we decided to meet, isn’t it? To get to know each other?

ADDISON

Yeah. I guess what I don’t get is what you want out of this.

JULIE

I want to get to know you.

ADDISON

I get that, but...

JULIE

If you’re not comfortable with this, we can always wait a bit.

ADDISON

You know what? Forget I said anything. I’m here. We might as well talk.

JULIE

Sure.

Pause.

ADDISON

I’m not even sure what to talk about.

JULIE

How about you tell me about yourself? You’re in school.

ADDISON

Yeah, like most seventeen year olds, I am in school.

You like your classes?

JULIE

Some of them. Sometimes.

ADDISON

Which ones do you like?

JULIE

ADDISON thinks.
ADDISON
I like Art. I know it’s kind of lame and everyone takes it because it’s easy, but it’s nice to just sit down and make something.

JULIE
That’s great. Are you an artist?

ADDISON
Not really. I mean, I make stuff sometimes, but I wouldn’t say I’m an artist.

JULIE
Sounds like something an artist might say.

ADDISON
I swear it’s not that good.

JULIE
I’d love to see something of yours sometime.

ADDISON
I don’t know...maybe.

JULIE
Think about it.

ADDISON
Okay.

JULIE
Pause. It’s not uncomfortable.

ADDISON (cont’d)
Can I ask you a question. Is that okay?

JULIE
Of course. I’m here for you.

ADDISON
Do you...live alone?

JULIE
If you’re asking what I think you’re asking, no, your birth father doesn’t live here.

ADDISON
Oh.

JULIE
We split up a long time ago. I don’t know where he is.

(CONTINUED)
ADDISON
Have you tried to find him online?

JULIE
I’m not sure he’s worth the trouble. I can give you his name if you want to try and find him.

ADDISON
No. That’s alright. If I’m being honest, I wasn’t even sure I wanted to meet you. No offense or anything.

JULIE
Don’t worry about it. It’s a difficult decision. Though now I’m curious. Why was it that you decided to meet me?

ADDISON
I’m honestly not sure.

JULIE
Would your parents approve of you meeting me?

ADDISON
I really don’t care what they think right now.

A quick pause. ADDISON changes the subject.

ADDISON (cont’d)
How long have you known about me? I mean, obviously you’ve known about me forever, but how long have you know where I was?

JULIE
The day I found out your new name, I reached out to you.

My new name?

ADDISON

JULIE
Well...when you were born, when I had you, I had given you a different name.

Oh.

ADDISON

JULIE
You must’ve been given the name when you were taken in. I named you Rose.

Pause as the news hits ADDISON.

(CONTINUED)
CONTINUED:

11.

JULIE (cont’d)

Does your mother know you’re here?

ADDISON

I told her I was going to a friend’s house. She doesn’t need to know. At least for right now.

I understand.

ADDISON

Thanks.

JULIE

You know, you’re not at all what I expected.

Neither are you.

Scene 3

Addison’s room. Music blares. Addison sits on her bed, cutting up bits from magazines. There is paper everywhere. She glues the paper bits to a small posterboard. There’s a knock. Beat. Addison gets up, turns down her music, and answers the door, revealing SASHA.

Okay, what the hell?

ADDISON

Um, hi?

SASHA

Hi. So, What the hell?

ADDISON

What do you mean, "what the hell"?

You’re serious?

SASHA

Yeah.

ADDISON

Not responding to any of my texts—

(CONTINUED)
I've been busy-

ADDISON

So I have no idea what to tell your mom-

SASHA

Shh, keep it down-

ADDISON

Who's grilling me about some group project I've never heard of-

SASHA

Alright, just...

ADDISON

ADDISON pulls her in and shuts the door.

What did you tell her?

ADDISON (cont'd)

I told her what I knew.

SASHA

Meaning...

ADDISON

You were at my house last night to work on a project for History.

SASHA

Good. Thanks.

ADDISON

You owe me.

SASHA

Sure.

ADDISON

Big time.

SASHA

Yeah, fine, whatever.

ADDISON

I told her we were writing a rap about Grover Cleveland, so don't be surprised if she asks about that.
CONTINUED:

ADDISON
Great, that doesn't sound completely made up.

SASHA
Sorry, I panicked.

ADDISON
So, what's up?

SASHA
I wanted to see if you were okay-

SASHA looks around the room.

SASHA
Which clearly you're not.

ADDISON
I'm fine.

SASHA
This is not the room of an okay person! I'm getting major stalker slash serial killer vibes.

ADDISON
If you're here just to make fun of me-

SASHA
No, no, I'm sorry. I'm sorry, I just... what the hell is all this?

ADDISON
Therapy.

In response to SASHA's quizzical look, ADDISON shows her the posterboard.

SASHA
Woah. Flashback to kindergarten.

ADDISON
It's a collage, you dweeb.

SASHA
Call it what you want, it looks like giving up.

ADDISON
Pablo Picasso did collage. He perfected it.

SASHA
May I ask what's with all the naked women?
They were my dad's magazines.

Oh.

Pause.

You want to talk about it?

Not really.

Okay. But I looked up a list of a bunch of famous people who came from broken homes. I thought that would make you feel better.

Oh god, please don’t.

Selena Gomez, Justin Timberlake, Jennifer Aniston-

Uh-uh, nope, I'm shutting it down.

I was just trying to help.

Well don’t do it ever again.

Let’s go see a movie.

I’m working.

But it’s the weekend and I’m bored and there’s nothing to do in this suck-ass town.

Sorry.

Okay, compromise: We order a pizza, watch movies, and actually hang out instead of lying about it.
CONTINUED:

ADDISON thinks about it.

Ugh. Fine.

SASHA

Awesome! But we are not listening to this.

SASHA plugs in her phone and her music begins playing.

I got the pizza.

Right on.

SASHA

ADDISON grabs her laptop and begins ordering online. SASHA begins bopping along with the music.

Here, use my card.

SASHA (cont’d)

SASHA hands her debit card to ADDISON and continues dancing.

Toppings?

ADDISON

It’s all you.

SASHA

Mushrooms?

ADDISON

Ew, no.

SASHA

ADDISON finishes ordering the pizza.

On its way.

ADDISON

What kind did you get?

SASHA

ADDISON Extra mushroom.

(Continued)
CONTINUED:

You did not.

ADDISON

Relax, I went with pepperoni.

SASHA

Where were you, by the way? Yesterday? It’s okay if you don’t want to tell me, but not really ’cause I’m not into being complicit to potentially illegal activity.

ADDISON

I was visiting someone.

SASHA

Boyfriend?

ADDISON

No.

SASHA

Girlfriend?

ADDISON

No.

SASHA

Okay, I give up.

ADDISON

This isn’t a guessing game.

SASHA

Oh, come on!

ADDISON

Alright, but you take this to your grave. Promise?

SASHA

Ooh, sounds juicy. Promise.

ADDISON navigates on her laptop.

ADDISON

This lady messaged me on Facebook a few weeks ago.

SASHA

Like just out of the blue?

ADDISON

Yeah, just read.

(CONTINUED)
CONTINUED:

She hands the laptop to SASHA, who reads. A few moments later, SHE GASPS.

SASHA

Oh my god, shut up...

ADDISON

Yeah.

SASHA

And this is legit, this isn’t a joke?

ADDISON

Nope.

SASHA

Oh my god, your birth mother?

ADDISON

Shh! I went to go meet her yesterday.

SASHA

And?

ADDISON

I don’t know, it was alright I guess.

SASHA

Did she live up to expectation?

ADDISON

I hadn’t really thought about it before.

SASHA

About your birth mother?

ADDISON

I never really cared.

SASHA

You’re so lucky! I wished I had two sets of parents.

ADDISON

Is that what you really think this is? Sash, this woman gave me up. She didn’t want me. Forgive me for being skeptical.

SASHA

(looking at the laptop)

Who even is this lady?

(CONTINUED)
ADDISON
Dunno. Profile's pretty blank.

SASHA
Does your mom know?

ADDISON
No. And you swore you'd keep it a secret.

SASHA
I will! Jeez, trust me this one time, will you?

ADDISON falls back on her bed in despair.

ADDISON
My life is fucked.

SASHA
Can't argue with that.

ADDISON
Distract me.

SASHA
With what?

ADDISON
Anything.

SASHA (continuing her list)
Justin Bieber, Harry Styles, Jamie Lee Curtis-

ADDISON
That's not helping!

SASHA
Here, get up.

ADDISON
What?

SASHA
Get up!

She pulls ADDISON off the bed.

SASHA (cont'd)

Now dance.
CONTINUED:

I’m not dancing. ADDISON

You asked me to distract you. I’m distracting you.

ADDISON

I’m such a shitty dancer. SASHA

Then let’s worry about your shitty dancing instead of your shitty life. Now move it!

ADDISON

Okay, okay! Jesus. SASHA

ADDISON sways, extremely self-conscious.

SASHA

Don’t worry about moving, let the music do it for you.

ADDISON begins to get into it. SASHA turns the music up. The two begin dancing, getting more and more wild. The song ends and the next one begins. ADDISON stops. She sits on her bed, panting and laughing. Her breaths become more labored as she begins to hyperventilate.

SASHA (cont’d)

Addi?

ADDISON waves SASHA away and tries to calm herself down. She pounds her fists on her bed and screams into her pillow.

ADDISON

FUCK!

Scene 4

Julie’s apartment. JULIE holds one of ADDISON’s works of art. She examines it thoughtfully. ADDISON sits across from her, trying not to look like she cares too much about what JULIE thinks.
This is great

You think so?

It's really impactful. What was the inspiration?

They're all kind of based on how I feel at the time, as cheesy as it sounds.

What were you feeling when you made this?

Angry.

Does it have a title?

Not really...I think titles kind of ruin art. I don’t get how people can sum up a piece of art in a couple of words. It takes away the viewer's ability to just look at a piece for what it is.

I'd never thought of that.

I guess I could call it something like "the time I got an F in History" or "The time I found out my parents are getting a divorce," but that feels kinda...

Self-indulgent?

Whiny.

Are you angry at your parents for getting a divorce?

ADDISON bristles. She hasn’t talked about his with JULIE yet.

Who else am I going to be angry at?

(CONTINUED)
JULIE
Your mother loves you very much, Addison. You know that, right?

ADDISON
Of course I know. It’s just...I’m not stupid, I know that this happens. It happens a lot, but when it happens to you...

JULIE
Do you talk to your father much?

ADDISON
No. And I really wouldn’t care if I never did.

JULIE
Divorce is a complicated matter. You have to remind yourself that they have their own reasons for doing it.

ADDISON
Okay, but like, what do you know? Sorry, but your husband or boyfriend or whatever left you when you were still young. You didn’t have to grow up and watch everything you know just fall to shit.

JULIE
Maybe not, but I knew full well what it was like to give up something because I knew that it would only end in disaster. Addison, I can’t say I made a mistake when I gave you up because I knew I wouldn’t be able to give you a life that any child deserved.

ADDISON
You thought I would be better off in the foster care system?

JULIE
But you were adopted by two people who loved you so very much.

ADDISON
Yeah, because I was lucky. If I were still in the system, would you have still tried to contact me?

Of course.

ADDISON
Really? Because I’m not so sure.

JULIE
We can talk about "what ifs" all day. What matters is that we’re here. I found you. After all this time, we’re together again.

(CONTINUED)
ADDISON
But why now? After all this time, why now?

JULIE
I couldn’t live with myself if I didn’t know you were okay.

ADDISON
And now that you know?

JULIE
What do you mean?

ADDISON
What’s the endgame? Do you think I can just squeeze you into my life and pretend that this isn’t weird? This is weird!

JULIE
What’s weird about it. I want to be a part of my daughter’s life.

ADDISON
It’s weird because I’m not your daughter. You’re essentially a complete stranger to me. No matter how much we talk about our lives or school or hobbies, that’s not going to change.

JULIE
These things take time. We just need to keep seeing each other-

ADDISON
It’s not your decision anymore. You gave that up when you gave me up.

JULIE
Then I ask for your forgiveness.

ADDISON
It’s not your fault. People leave. That’s just what people do. And they try and come back and they see that everything’s changed. It’s gone on without them. They don’t realize that leaving changes everything.

JULIE
It doesn’t have to.

ADDISON
It doesn’t have to, but it does.

Pause.

I think I should go.

ADDISON (cont’d)
CONTINUED:

JULIE
Here, I found this. I thought you might want it.

JULIE digs out a piece of paper and hands it to ADDISON.

What is it?

ADDISON

JULIE
Your birth certificate.

ADDISON looks at the certificate.

(reading)
"Rose Margaret Winslow".

ADDISON

JULIE
Look at you. My baby girl. I'm so sorry.

ADDISON
(hand ing the certificate back)

I can't take this.

JULIE

ADDISON
It belongs to someone else.

JULIE
It belongs to my daughter.

ADDISON hesitates. She has no idea what to do or say. She folds the certificate and puts it in her pocket. She goes for the door.

Can I see you again?

ADDISON

JULIE (cont'd)

We'll see.

ADDISON

JULIE
Addison, your mother loves you very much. Please remember that.

ADDISON looks back one more time, then leaves.
Scene 5

Addison’s room. Addison sits on her bed, doing homework. A knock at the door.

Come in.

ADDISON

CLAIRE enters. She carries a picture in a frame.

CLAIRE

Here. The rest are in my room. You can have them if you want. Hang them up. Do whatever you want.

ADDISON

You don’t have to do this.

CLAIRE

I know. But I figured if we’re going to have to get through this, we might as well be truthful about it. Full disclosure.

ADDISON doesn’t know how to respond to this.

CLAIRE (cont’d)

It’s fine if you’re not ready to talk about it. But I’m here when you are. Feel free to ask me anything.

Thanks.

ADDISON

CLAIRE goes to leave.

Mom?

ADDISON (cont’d)

Yeah.

CLAIRE

I’m sorry.

ADDISON

I know.

CLAIRE

I think I might need to go to therapy or something.

(Continued)
CLAIRE
And there’s nothing wrong with that.

ADDISON
And if you still need some time without the pictures, I get it.

CLAIRE
(with a faint smile)
I actually hid them because of you.
(off of ADDISON’s look)
You were so angry. And I wanted to help you so badly. But I was so afraid. Afraid the you would hurt yourself or break something. I wasn’t hiding these for me. I was hiding them from you. I knew what you would’ve done to them. It’s not your fault, it’s just how you’ve learned to deal with things. You destroy things and put them back together in a way that you can understand. But you also have such fearlessness and I wish that was something I could’ve learned from you.

ADDISON
I don’t feel too fearless nowadays.

CLAIRE
That’s okay. That’s what I’m here for. I love you so much.

I love you too.

They embrace. ADDISON gets an idea. She grabs some of her art and throws it on the bed.

Here.

ADDISON (cont’d)
ADDISON gives CLAIRE one of her art pieces.

What’s this for?

CLAIRE

ADDISON

As a demonstration, ADDISON picks up another artwork and tears it to shreds.

Oh no, don’t do that!

(CONTINUED)
CONTINUED:

If you won’t, I will.

ADDISON

She tears another one.

It’s all trash anyways.

ADDISON (cont’d)

CLAIRE looks at the art in her hands. Something clicks. She rips it up.

That felt pretty good.

CLAIRE

Sometimes you just need to destroy something, right?

ADDISON

She hands her mother another piece. They rip up the angry artwork and throw the pieces in the air. Caught up in the action, CLAIRE picks up the framed picture and hurls it against the wall, destroying it. They both freeze, completely startled.

Mom?

CLAIRE

It’s fine. Watch your feet.

CLAIRE begins picking up pieces of glass.

Here, let me help.

ADDISON

It’s alright, I’ve got it. Here, take this.

CLAIRE hands ADDISON the photograph that was in the frame. ADDISON takes it and sits on the bed.

ADDISON

(looking at the photo)

It’s almost creepy how happy we look.

CLAIRE

It’s always easy to judge the past based on what we know now. But I think we were happy back then.

(CONTINUED)
ADDISON
Did you two know back then?

CLAIRE
There might've been little hints here and there. But we kept on smiling.

ADDISON
Are you two like mortal enemies now?

CLAIRE
No, I wouldn't say that. We had waited so long that we got impatient, forgot that we wanted it to be amicable.

ADDISON
Why did you wait so long? It was me, wasn't it?

CLAIRE
It wasn't you.

ADDISON
It was totally me.

CLAIRE
It was partially you. But mostly it was the fear that once we ended it, we'd have to start over. And then I saw that I was starting to lose you too and I panicked.

ADDISON
Well I'm back.

CLAIRE
Glad to hear it.

ADDISON
Pause as ADDISON debates whether to share this or not.

CLAIRE
Mom, there's something I really need to tell you. Like really badly.

ADDISON
What is it? Is everything alright?

CLAIRE
I'm not sure.

ADDISON
ADDISON takes out the folded birth certificate and hands it to CLAIRE.

CLAIRE
What's this?

(CONTINUED)
Full disclosure.

Scene 6

Night. Julie's apartment. There's a knock on the door. JULIE enters in a robe and answers the door, revealing CLAIRE.

She told me everything.

Maybe you should come in.

CLAIRE enters and JULIE closes the door behind her. She turns to face CLAIRE without saying a word.

Are you going to say something?

Please, have a seat.

How long have you been talking to her?

About two months. Do you want some wine? I want some wine.

CLAIRE

Julie, please, just talk to me.

If you're trying to get me to admit to a mistake, I'm not going to. You had no right keeping her away from me.

We agreed that contact would be made when she was ready.

She was ready! She wanted to meet. I didn't force her to do anything she didn't want to.

It wasn't the right time. She wasn't ready.

That's why I reached out the way I did.
Julia Winslow? CLAIRE

It was my married name. JULIE

I thought you weren’t married. CLAIRE

Not long enough to matter. JULIE

Dr. Fulton— CLAIRE

Just call me Julie. We’re way past a healthy doctor patient relationship. JULIE

If she were to find out that we knew about each other— CLAIRE

I acted alone. The onus is on me. Isn’t that what you wanted? JULIE

Of course not. CLAIRE

She’s an amazing woman, Claire. JULIE

I know. CLAIRE

I would give anything to talk to her again. JULIE

We’ll see. CLAIRE

That’s exactly what she said. JULIE

Why did you do it? CLAIRE

I’d waited so long. I just wanted her to know that I was here, that I hadn’t forgotten about her?
CLAIRE
Would it have been so bad to let her believe that you had?

JULIE
I wouldn’t be able to live with that guilt.

CLAIRE
This isn’t about you, Julie. Then you should have just kept your distance.

JULIE
And just what was I supposed to think when you showed up at my door-

CLAIRE
That wasn’t an invitation-

JULIE
Needing someone you could talk to-

CLAIRE
It was strictly professional, I needed help-

JULIE
Professional? The woman raising my daughter needs my help-

CLAIRE
You gave her up! We all have to live with our choices, good and bad. DNA doesn’t make up for accountability.

JULIE
I’m different than I was, I’d be able to care for her.

CLAIRE
She doesn’t need a caretaker. She needs someone who she knows will be there when she needs it.

JULIE
Bring her to therapy. It would be strictly professional.

CLAIRE
We’ve crossed a line we can’t uncross, Julie. We have to take a step back and reassess. That’s what you’re always telling me, isn’t it?

JULIE
You think we could ever get back to-

CLAIRE
It’ll take time.

(CONTINUED)
I know.

It's all up to Addison.

Of course. And you'll tell her about us?

Eventually. For now, you need to keep your distance.

I really am sorry, Claire.

I know. And you're going to have to live with that.

Pause.

Where do we go from here?

I don't know.

They sit in silence for a few moments.

I think I'd like that wine now.

Scene 7

A park. ADDISON and SASHA lie in the grass looking up at the sky.

Anything?

Not yet.

They continue looking in silence.

Hey, do you think we-

ADDISON (cont’d)

Shh. No talk, only look.

ADDISON rolls her eyes and continues looking. SASHA suddenly points up into the sky.

(CONTINUED)
CONTINUED:

There!

ADDISON

Where?

ADDISON cranes her neck to look.

SASHA

To the left.

ADDISON

My left or your left?

SASHA

My left!

ADDISON

I don’t see it.

SASHA

Look, it’s like an upside-down ice cream cone. Seriously, have you never seen a dick before?

ADDISON

There it is, I see it!

SASHA

Ten points to me!

They go back to watching.

ADDISON

(pointing to the sky)

Oh, vagina cloud!

SASHA

Nice! Fifty points!

ADDISON

So what’s the score again?

SASHA

I don’t know, I haven’t been keeping track. Let’s call it a draw.

ADDISON laughs.

ADDISON

Sure.

Pause.

(CONTINUED)
CONTINUED:

SASHA
So, I know we aren't talking about "you-know who"...

ADDISON
No, we are not.

SASHA
But say, hypothetically, someone were to ask about "you-know-who"...

ADDISON
Uh-huh...

SASHA
What would you say...in the hypothetical situation?

ADDISON
Hypothetically, I'd say that it's none of your hypothetical business.

SASHA
Fair. That's fair.

ADDISON
Life goes on.

SASHA
But do you ever catch yourself thinking about what your life may have been like if like one major thing changed?

ADDISON
Why, do you?

SASHA
Sometimes. Like if my parents decided to move to California when I was little, I'd probably know how to surf, or like sushi.

ADDISON
Umm, okay.

SASHA
That was a lame example, you get my point.

ADDISON
Yeah, I do.

SASHA
So what do you think about?

ADDISON
I think about what it would've been like if my parents didn't divorce. We probably would've been miserable.

(CONTINUED)
SASHA
You think?

ADDISON
For sure. I think about what might've happened if I never met "you-know-who".

SASHA
Do you ever think about what if she never-

ADDISON
No, I don't. At least I try not to.

SASHA
Why not?

ADDISON
It doesn't matter.

Pause.

SASHA
God, the sun feels so good.

Yeah.

ADDISON
I just want to lie here forever.

Wait, do you smell that?

What?

ADDISON
It smells like dog poo.

SASHA freaks out and jumps up.

SASHA
Oh my god, eww! No no no please oh god where is it?!

ADDISON is beside herself in laughter.

SASHA (cont’d)
Oh my god, I can't believe you just did that! You freaking asshole!
CONTINUED:

Sorry, couldn’t resist.  ADDISON

When did you get a sense of humor?  

No idea. Do you like it?  ADDISON

Not if it’s going to be like that all the time!  SASHA

Only sometimes, I promise.  ADDISON

God, I need to stretch my legs. You wanna take a walk?  SASHA

Go ahead. I’ll catch up.  ADDISON

SASHA exits. ADDISON takes a photo out of her pocket. It’s the photo her mother gave her. She looks at it. It’s a beautiful day. She almost looks happy.

END OF PLAY