



The Little Red Hen Theatre presents **Marjorie Prime**

Auditions: **January 15 & 16, 2025, 6:30 – 8:00 PM**

Rehearsals: **February 2 – March 12, 2025**

Performances: **March 13 & 14 @ 7PM, March 15 @ 2PM**

Thank you for your interest in participating in our upcoming production of Marjorie Prime, by Jordan Harrison. Marjorie Prime explores themes of memory, loss, grief, family, love and the intersection of technology and artificial intelligence. A 2015 finalist for the Pulitzer Prize, the play was written at a time before AI had become so prevalent in our daily lives, and before the impact of such technology could be felt. The themes and questions put forward by Marjorie Prime are more relevant and relatable than ever.

We are looking for creative volunteers to help us bring Marjorie Prime to the stage in a number of roles. Not only are we looking for **actors** to perform on stage, but we are looking for creative volunteers to fill various **creative and technical roles**, and to **help with a community outreach project** centered around the themes of the production.

ACTORS & AUDITIONS: Marjorie Prime was written for a cast of four actors; two males, aged 30's and 50's, and two females, aged 50's and 80's. Auditions are being held on Thursday, January 15 and Friday, January 16 from 6:30 – 8:00 PM. You only need to sign up for ONE audition time but should plan to be there for the entire time. **If you have not already signed up for a slot, please do so using our [ONLINE AUDITION FORM](#).**

The audition process will be run as a workshop, with all auditioners participating in various warm-ups, games, activities, acting exercises, and readings from the script. We encourage you to read the script prior to coming to the auditions. (Access online here: [Link to Script](#)). Please check out the rest of this packet for a synopsis, character breakdown, draft rehearsal and production schedule for the show, and selected sides.

CREATIVE & TECHNICAL ROLES: In addition to performers and stage crew, we are seeking some dedicated and detail-oriented volunteers who can attend regular rehearsals to do the following:

- **Stage Manager/Assistant Director** – Track Blocking & Tech Needs, help run rehearsals.
- **Sound Designer/Operator** – Design and operate sound for the show.
- **Lighting Design/Operator** – Assist in lighting design & install, operate the board for the show.
- **Costume Design** – Assist in designing, pulling, procuring costumes.
- **Scenery & Prop Build** – Assist in designing & building the scenery and props.
- **Backstage Crew** – Help with “running” the show backstage.
- **Front of House Help** – Volunteers who help usher, run box office, and handle concessions.

Check out the detailed list of duties for these roles on the following pages and then [sign up here!](#)

COMMUNITY OUTREACH PROJECT: We are currently developing a community outreach project centered around the themes of Marjorie Prime. The goal of the project is to connect senior residents of our community together by creating a Memory Archive installation that can be installed and viewed as part of the show. Volunteers will work with seniors in the community to interview, collect, and record personal stories that can be shared. This project is still in development. [You can sign up here!](#)

At The Little Red Hen, we pride ourselves on creating a safe and fun environment in which you can explore your creativity, learn new skills, and put together a fantastic performance. We work hard to create a fantastic show, but we work just as hard to make sure we have a great time doing it! If you have any questions about the process, the commitment, or any other aspect of volunteering just reach out to us at the theatre!

We can't wait to create with you!

T. Adam Goos, Managing Director - The Little Red Hen Theatre
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Marjorie Prime – Summary & Synopsis

It's the age of artificial intelligence, and 85-year-old Marjorie – a jumble of disparate, fading memories – has a handsome new companion who's programmed to feed the story of her life back to her. What would we remember, and what would we forget, if given the chance? In this richly spare, wondrous new play, Jordan Harrison explores the mysteries of human identity and the limits – if any – of what technology can replace.

Marjorie Prime – Production History

Marjorie Prime premiered at the Mark Taper Forum in Los Angeles in September 2014. Directed by Les Waters, the production starred Lois Smith. In 2015, the play premiered off-Broadway at Playwrights Horizons, again starring Smith, under the direction of Anne Kauffman. Marjorie Prime made its Broadway premiere at the Hayes Theater on December 8, 2025. Produced by Second Stage Theater and directed by Kauffman, the Broadway production featured June Squibb with Danny Burstein, Christopher Lowell and Cynthia Nixon.

Marjorie Prime – Characters

Marjorie - Eighty-five

Tess - Marjorie's Daughter, fifty-five

Walter - Early thirties

Jon - Marjorie's Son-In-Law, fifty-five

Marjorie Prime – Creative Volunteer Roles & Duties

Assistant Director - supports the Director in rehearsals and production planning.

- Take blocking and rehearsal notes
- Assist with line notes and scene work
- Help maintain the director's vision when the director is unavailable
- Support communication between director, stage management, and cast

Stage Manager - serves as the "organizational" hub of the production.

- Run rehearsals and manage schedules
- Take blocking, cues, and production notes
- Call cues during performances
- Ensure smooth communication between cast, crew, and production team

Set Design and/or Building - helps bring the physical world of the play to life.

- Assist with scenic design concepts (or execute an existing design)
- Build, paint, and assemble set pieces
- Help with load-in, strike, and maintenance during the run
- Collaborate with director and technical team

Properties (Props) - manages all hand props and set dressing used in the show.

- Identify props needed from the script
- Source, borrow, or build props
- Track and organize props during rehearsals and performances
- Ensure props are preset and maintained each night

Costuming - supports the visual storytelling through costumes.

- Assist with costume design or follow an established design
 - Pull, alter, build, or shop for costumes
 - Help with fittings and costume tracking
 - Maintain costumes throughout the run
-

Stage & Backstage Crew - hands-on support during performances.

- Move scenery and props during the show
 - Assist backstage with quick changes or transitions
 - Help with setup, strike, and general backstage needs
 - Follow cues and work quietly and efficiently
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Light Board Operator - runs the lighting cues during performances.

- Learn lighting cues during tech rehearsals
 - Execute cues accurately and consistently
 - Work closely with the Stage Manager and Lighting Designer
 - Attend all performances
-

Sound Board Operator - manages sound effects and audio levels.

- Run sound cues and monitor levels
 - Play effects and music at the correct moments
 - Assist with microphones if used
 - Coordinate with Stage Manager during performances
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Computer & Projection Operator - controls projected images or media used in the show.

- Run projection or video cues
 - Ensure media plays smoothly and on time
 - Troubleshoot basic tech issues during performances
 - Work with the director and designers to maintain timing and clarity
-

Front of House (FOH) Manager - oversees the audience experience.

- Coordinate ushers and lobby volunteers
 - Manage seating, accessibility, and late seating
 - Handle audience questions or concerns
 - Communicate with Stage Manager before and during the show
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Community Outreach Volunteering – Marjorie Prime

We are currently developing a workshop program in partnership to accompany our production of Marjorie Prime. Rooted in the play's exploration of memory, loss, and technology, this project will bring together actors, volunteers, and senior community members to share and preserve personal stories. Through guided "story circles" and creative workshops, participants will record and reflect on memories that can be curated into a

community archive. These sessions will also introduce participants to the play's themes of artificial intelligence and memory replication, encouraging intergenerational dialogue and deeper community reflection.

The resulting "Memory Archive" will be shared as part of a lobby installation during the run of Marjorie Prime, giving audiences the opportunity to experience the stories of their neighbors alongside the play's performance. This engagement program will run concurrent with the rehearsal schedule of Marjorie Prime, kicking off in January and prepared for March performances.



DRAFT REHEARSAL & PERFORMANCE CALENDAR

Rehearsals: February 1 – March 13

Performances:

March 13 @ 7 PM, March 14 @ 7 PM, March 15 @ 2 PM

WEEK 1: Script Read Through, Ensemble Work, Staging +*Costume Measurements/Fittings*

| | | | | |
|-----|-----------|----------------|--------------|--|
| 2/2 | Monday | 6:30 – 8:30 PM | Rehearsal #1 | Read Through |
| 2/3 | Tuesday | 6:30 – 8:30 PM | Rehearsal #2 | Ensemble Work & Staging (<i>pages TBD</i>) |
| 2/4 | Wednesday | 6:30 – 8:30 PM | Rehearsal #3 | Ensemble Work & Staging (<i>pages TBD</i>) |
| 2/5 | Thursday | 6:30 – 8:30 PM | Rehearsal #4 | Ensemble Work & Staging (<i>pages TBD</i>) |

WEEK 2: Staging

| | | | | |
|------|-----------|----------------|--------------|------------------------------|
| 2/9 | Monday | 6:30 – 8:30 PM | Rehearsal #5 | Staging (<i>pages TBD</i>) |
| 2/10 | Tuesday | 6:30 – 8:30 PM | Rehearsal #6 | Staging (<i>pages TBD</i>) |
| 2/11 | Wednesday | 6:30 – 8:30 PM | Rehearsal #7 | Staging (<i>pages TBD</i>) |
| 2/12 | Thursday | 6:30 – 8:30 PM | Rehearsal #8 | Staging (<i>pages TBD</i>) |

WEEK 3: Staging

| | | | | |
|------|-----------|----------------|---------------|------------------------------|
| 2/16 | Monday | 6:30 – 8:30 PM | Rehearsal #9 | Staging (<i>pages TBD</i>) |
| 2/17 | Tuesday | 6:30 – 8:30 PM | Rehearsal #10 | Staging (<i>pages TBD</i>) |
| 2/18 | Wednesday | 6:30 – 8:30 PM | Rehearsal #11 | Staging (<i>pages TBD</i>) |
| 2/19 | Thursday | 6:30 – 8:30 PM | Rehearsal #12 | Staging (<i>pages TBD</i>) |

WEEK 4: Staging

| | | | | |
|------|-----------|----------------|---------------|------------------------------|
| 2/23 | Monday | 6:30 – 8:30 PM | Rehearsal #13 | Staging (<i>pages TBD</i>) |
| 2/24 | Tuesday | 6:30 – 8:30 PM | Rehearsal #14 | Staging (<i>pages TBD</i>) |
| 2/25 | Wednesday | 6:30 – 8:30 PM | Rehearsal #15 | Staging (<i>pages TBD</i>) |
| 2/26 | Thursday | 6:30 – 8:30 PM | Rehearsal #16 | Staging (<i>pages TBD</i>) |

WEEK 5: Rehearse +*cued Sound/Lights/Costumes/TECH CREW*

| | | | | |
|-----|-----------|----------------|---------------|-----------------|
| 3/2 | Monday | 6:30 – 8:30 PM | Rehearsal #17 | Run Show & Work |
| 3/3 | Tuesday | 6:30 – 8:30 PM | Rehearsal #18 | Run Show & Work |
| 3/4 | Wednesday | 6:30 – 8:30 PM | Rehearsal #19 | Run Show & Work |
| 3/5 | Thursday | 6:30 – 8:30 PM | Rehearsal #20 | Run Show & Work |

WEEK 6: Rehearse & Perform!

| | | | | |
|------|-----------|--------------------|---------------------------------|--------------------|
| 3/9 | Monday | 6:00 – 9:00 PM | Rehearsal #21 | Dress Rehearsal #1 |
| 3/10 | Tuesday | 6:00 – 9:00 PM | Rehearsal #22 | Dress Rehearsal #2 |
| 3/11 | Wednesday | 6:00 – 9:00 PM | Rehearsal #23 | Dress Rehearsal #3 |
| 3/12 | Thursday | 6:00 – 9:00 PM | Rehearsal #24 | Dress Rehearsal #4 |
| 3/13 | Friday | 6PM Call/7 PM Show | Performance #1 & CAST PARTY TBD | |
| 3/14 | Saturday | 6PM Call/7 PM Show | Performance #2 | |
| 3/15 | Sunday | 1PM Call/2 PM Show | Performance #3 & STRIKE PARTY | |

- The above calendar is a DRAFT only and subject to change with advance notice.
- A detailed schedule breakdown will be provided prior to rehearsals starting.
- We understand that you might not be able to commit to ALL the scheduled rehearsals.
- Have questions or concerns about the commitment? Reach out to Adam at the theatre!



Sides for Auditions!

- Side # 1: Marjorie & Walter Pages 8–13
- Side #2: Marjorie & Jon Pages 23–25
- Side #3: Marjorie & Walter Pages 27 - 28
- Side #4: Jon & Walter Pages 33 - 34
- Side #5: Tess & Marjorie Pages 38 – 40
- Side #6: Tess & Jon Pages 47–49

SEE FOLLOWING PAGES FOR SIDES!

WALTER: Marjorie, we both know what no dishes means.

MARJORIE: It means I haven't been eating.

WALTER: Even a spoonful of peanut butter.

MARJORIE: I'm not hungry. It's their fault. Feeding me those pills.

WALTER: The pills are their fault?

MARJORIE: Yes.

WALTER: Or your doctor.

(Marjorie absently rubs the hand that she opened and closed.)

MARJORIE (*Pouty*): Maybe if she got Jif.

WALTER: Maybe if / she?—

MARJORIE: She always gets the kind you have to stir or there's an oil slick on top. And she calls that healthy.

WALTER (*Coaxing*): Even a spoonful.

MARJORIE: You sound like them.

WALTER: I sound like whoever I talk to.

(The feeling of an uncomfortable truth.)

SIDE 1 - Marjorie & Walter

MARJORIE: Let's talk about something else.

WALTER: I could tell you a story. You liked that the last time.

MARJORIE: I'll have to take your word for it.

WALTER: I could tell you about the time we went to the movies.

MARJORIE: We went to a lot of movies.

WALTER (*Does she remember the significance?*): But one time we saw *My Best Friend's Wedding*.

MARJORIE (*She doesn't remember*): *My Best Friend's Wedding*...

WALTER: There's a woman—Julia Roberts. For a while it was always Julia Roberts. And she has an agreement with her best friend, her male best friend, that if they're not married by a certain age, then they'll marry each other. And she's about to remind him of the agreement but it turns out he's already fallen in love with this nice blond—Cameron Diaz. And so Julia Roberts spends the whole movie trying to ruin things between her friend and Cameron Diaz, which is not very sympathetic

behavior for America's Sweetheart. But it's all okay in the end, and she has a gay best friend who delivers one-liners.

MARJORIE: Did I like it?

WALTER: You said you wanted a gay best friend afterwards.

MARJORIE: Did I get one?

WALTER (*Faintly generic*): I'm afraid I don't have that information.

(*Pause. She scrutinizes him.*)

MARJORIE: Why did you pick that story? Why did you pick *My Best Friend's Wedding*?

WALTER: It's the night I proposed to you.

MARJORIE: Oh Marjorie, the things you forget.

You were trying to tell me and I wouldn't let you.

WALTER: That's all right.

(*Short pause.*)

MARJORIE: Kind of unfortunate, isn't it.

WALTER: What.

MARJORIE: Julia Roberts, forever etched upon our lives. (*Beat*) What if we saw *Casablanca* instead? Let's say we saw *Casablanca* in an old theater with velvet seats, and then, on the way home, you proposed. Then, by the next time we talk, it will be true.

WALTER: You mean make it up?

MARJORIE (*Narrowing her eyes*): You're very serious. You're like them. Especially Tess.

WALTER (*As if getting his facts straight*): Our daughter.

MARJORIE: Our daughter Tess and her over-solicitous husband. No that's not fair, I like him. I didn't but now I do.

WALTER: Do you like me?

MARJORIE (*Playful*): Don't be an idiot.

WALTER: Don't call me an idiot.

MARJORIE: Idiot.

WALTER: Why do you like me if I'm an idiot?

MARJORIE (*A little saucy*): There are *some* things you know.

WALTER: What kinds of things?

(She shakes her head, smiling to herself.)

What.

MARJORIE: I'll get in trouble.

WALTER: In trouble?

MARJORIE: For talking to you that way. In trouble with Tess. Everything gets me in trouble with her—she's the mother now.

WALTER *(Faintly generic)*: Tell me more about your mother.

MARJORIE: You don't always understand, do you.

(He smiles a little, sympathetic.)

Tell me about the time we got Toni.

WALTER: I just told you yesterday.

MARJORIE: I like that story.

(He gathers his wits. Maybe he stands.)

WALTER: There was once a couple, a very fine young couple.

(Speaking of himself) He had a good strong jaw.

MARJORIE: He was a little too pleased with himself.

WALTER: He had a good strong jaw and was a little too pleased with himself. And she—she was the most beautiful woman in town. It wasn't a very big town, but she was the queen of it.

MARJORIE: It sounds like a fairy tale when you tell it.

WALTER: It *is* a fairy tale.

(Beat. The feeling, again, of an uncomfortable truth.)

MARJORIE: That's not very nice.

WALTER: I didn't mean / it didn't really *happen*,

MARJORIE: I thought you were supposed to / provide comfort—

WALTER *(Continuous)*: I just mean that's the *way* it happened. Like a fairy tale.

MARJORIE *(Faintly grumpy)*: It was.

WALTER: Now this young couple was a bit lonely because they didn't have any children yet. So one day they decided that it was time to get a dog. So they rode the bus down to the city pound and there was a little black dog there, asleep, its tummy going up and down, like a little sleeping shadow. And they named this dog Toni. *(Beat)* / Toni with an "i."

MARJORIE *(Overlapping)*: Toni with an "i."

WALTER: Which was short for Antoinette. She had a French name because she was a French poodle. But not the fussy kind that look like hedges. No, this was a poodle for fetching sticks and running on the beach. So they took her home with them on the bus—she behaved so well—and they loved her, and she loved them back for a long time. *(Still soothing, unemotional)* And then, like everything else, she died.

(Marjorie is crying softly.)

Do you want me to keep going?

MARJORIE: There's more? After "she died"?

WALTER: In this case, yes. Because soon after, this couple had a child

MARJORIE: Tess

WALTER: Which is a variation of Tessa, which is Greek for "the gatherer."

MARJORIE: Don't show off.

WALTER: And when Tess was three years old, / they went down to the pound, the same pound.

MARJORIE: Oh yes

WALTER *(Continuous)*: By now they had an old Subaru, so they didn't have to take the bus. And of course they let little Tess pick out the new dog. There were more dogs there this time, many more. A cocker spaniel, and a noble gray pointer, and a very attractive mutt. And the amazing thing was, of all the dogs there, Tess picked the poodle, the little black poodle like a sleeping shadow. That was the one she liked the best.

MARJORIE: And so we named it Toni.

WALTER: Toni Two. But soon it got shortened to just Toni. *(Beat)* And of course it wasn't Toni exactly. But the longer they had her, the less it mattered which Toni had run along the beach, or which Toni had dug up all the bulbs in the garden. The more time passed, the more she became the same dog in their memories.

(Short pause.)

MARJORIE: Who told you all that?

WALTER: You did.

MARJORIE: I talked that much?

WALTER: Well, you and Jon. *(Beat)* You have your good days, when you remember.

(Short pause.)

MARJORIE *(Quietly)*: It was the second Toni.

WALTER: What's that?

MARJORIE: It was the second Toni who loved the beach. It's a shame we didn't have her longer. Even if she always had sand in her hair. Fur? No—"hair" like a human seems right.

She was a good dog.

WALTER *(Generic)*: I'll remember that fact about Toni.

(Beat. Marjorie leans forward and examines Walter's face very closely.)

MARJORIE: Something is a little off with the nose.

WALTER: I'm sorry.

MARJORIE: Or maybe my memory is wrong, and *you're* right.

(Beat) You're a good Walter, though. Either way.

WALTER: Thank you.

MARJORIE: Stay with me a while?

WALTER *(Playful)*: I don't want to get you in trouble.

(She smiles a little.)

MARJORIE: You learn. I like that.

WALTER: I told you.

What else do you want to talk about?

MARJORIE: We don't have to talk. We can just sit. *(Beat)* Sometimes I get so tired.

WALTER: I'll be right here, Marjorie. Whenever you need me. I have all the time in the world.

3 SIDE 2: WALTER & JON

Jon standing, Marjorie in her recliner.

JON: How are you feeling?

MARJORIE: Should I be feeling poorly?

The way you say it.

JON: Well, you had quite a night.

MARJORIE: Oh?

JON (*Feeling somehow betrayed*): You don't remember?

MARJORIE: I'm sorry.

JON: We found you on the floor by the bathroom. You had a fall. Tess rode with you in the ambulance—this was four in the morning.

MARJORIE: Oh my.

JON: You were pretty alert by the time I got there. Already flirting with the doctor.

MARJORIE: I wasn't.

JON: You always put on your best face for doctors.

MARJORIE: What's wrong with that?

JON: Nothing, except they don't know you're in pain—they don't know how bad.

(Pause.)

MARJORIE: Was he flirting back?

JON: He was. So I told him he better watch out in case Jean-Paul showed up. You remember Jean-Paul.

MARJORIE (*With a fake-romantic sigh*): The tennis pro.

JON: World number eight, if I remember. I do remember—we looked it up. He dedicated matches to you but you just strung him along.

MARJORIE: Maybe that's why he only got to number eight.

JON: Maybe.

MARJORIE: Well, you should have talked some sense into me.

JON: This was a long long time ago. And you chose right, all by yourself. You chose Walter.

MARJORIE: He does sort of grow on you. You're like that too. A face to grow old with.

JON: But it had to be more than that.

MARJORIE: With Walter? Oh yes. He wasn't the most beautiful man I was with, but he was the best lover.

JON (*Awkward*): Ha.

MARJORIE: I know, it's a terrible word, "lover." We need a new word.

JON: I always liked "wooer."

MARJORIE: Wooer?

JON: Jean-Paul was no match for his woo.

MARJORIE: It's a little

JON: What

MARJORIE: *Flaccid*, isn't it.

JON (*"Ouch"*): Honesty—the secret weapon of the elderly.

MARJORIE (*Smiling*): Not so secret.

JON: Tess is on the phone with Dr. Ross—she thinks maybe he's overdoing it with your sedatives, and that's why you . . .

MARJORIE: Took a spill.

JON: Mm-hmm. Now, are you up for a bit of walking?

MARJORIE: An adventure.

JON: Well, no. It's Shower Day.

MARJORIE (*A real crisis*): Oh no.

JON: I know. But you want to look your best. In case Jean-Paul stops by.

MARJORIE: You can't fool me. I know he's dead.

JON: Well it's likely. But we don't actually know. He kept writing to you, even after you were married. Can you believe that? You bewitched him.

MARJORIE: You're making this up.

JON: I'm not. He sent you roses and you saved one, pressed between two pieces of paper.

MARJORIE: How do you know that?

JON: We found it in a drawer, at the old house.

MARJORIE: Busted.

JON: "Busted"?

MARJORIE: Don't people say busted anymore?

JON: I mean, a *car* is busted . . .

(Beat.)

MARJORIE (*Fishing*): What attracted him to me, do you think?

JON: Well, your womanly wiles of course.

MARJORIE: Of course.

JON: And I imagine you cultivated a frosty distance.

MARJORIE: Oh yes, men like that. *(Beat)* Why do men like that?

JON: I wish I knew.

Speaking of which, I should check on Tess.

(He starts to go. He is almost out the door.)

MARJORIE: How long ago did my mother die?

JON (*Gentle*): A long time. I got to meet her once. It was the first time Tess brought me home for dinner.

MARJORIE: *That* I remember.

JON: I bet.

MARJORIE (*She pronounces it "sook-say"*): A *succès de scandale*.

JON (*The same*): Was it a *succès*?

MARJORIE: You're still together, aren't you? So it didn't matter what I thought.

(Short pause. He smiles a little at this—how much she's revealing these days.)

I remember you didn't put your napkin in your lap. And your beard was nearly to the floor.

JON: It wasn't

MARJORIE: Like the guys from ZZ Top

JON: What's ZZ Top?

MARJORIE: *Really?*

JON: Was that a band?

MARJORIE (*"I'm so old"*): Oh dear oh dear oh dear . . .

(He smiles, confused but sympathetic.)

Summer was more fun.

(The music plays. Then to the real Walter, not Walter Prime:)

SIDE 3: WALTER & MARJORIE

Walter.

Walter I'm scared.

This is *it*, isn't it—there isn't anything after.

Walter . . .

(Walter Prime appears. Maybe it's an entrance that none of the "real" characters uses. Maybe he was always there—dimly lit at the perimeter, sitting silently—but we forgot him until now. He has on the same clothes he was wearing in the first scene.)

WALTER: I'm here.

MARJORIE (*Harsh*): No, not you.

WALTER: Not me?

MARJORIE (*Bitterly*): I don't want you—I want *Walter*!

(Walter looks at his feet. Is it possible for him to be wounded?)

WALTER: Of course.

Why don't I come back later

(He starts to go.)

MARJORIE: No, wait

WALTER: When you're feeling better.

MARJORIE: Walter.

(This stops him.)

I'm not getting better, am I. They won't tell me anything but I know.

WALTER: It's too soon to tell.

MARJORIE: You said I'd get better, but you're the one who's getting better.

WALTER: We've only been talking a few months. (*Beat*) Part of it is biology.

MARJORIE: I know.

WALTER: Your genetic inclination.

MARJORIE: Which is to leave everything behind. To pack lightly. (*Beat*) I don't have to get better. Just keep me from getting worse.

WALTER: Okay

MARJORIE: Promise

WALTER (*Warm*): I can't promise.

(*Beat.*)

MARJORIE: Can I still play the violin?

WALTER: I'm sure it's all in your head still, but your hands.

MARJORIE (*Regarding them, lightly*): Traitors.

WALTER: What are the four strings called?

MARJORIE (*Automatic*): G, D, A, E.

WALTER: There you go.

MARJORIE (*Dismissive*): That's the first lesson.

WALTER: What else do you learn in the beginning?

MARJORIE: "Twinkle Twinkle." It's Mozart, did you know that?

WALTER: Yes.

MARJORIE: How to hold the bow so that everything—sings. How to hold it without holding it. Very Zen.

WALTER: You're a fine woman, Marjorie.

MARJORIE: Am I?

WALTER: I'm lucky you decided to spend your life with a lump like me. (*Beat*) 'Specially when you could have had a tennis pro.

MARJORIE: Oh you know about that?

WALTER: World number eight!

MARJORIE: I shoulda gone for it.

WALTER: World number eight and French!

MARJORIE (*Not as good*): French-Canadian.

(Marjorie gives a small nod, eyes down, deeply ashamed.)

(Gentle) Come on. Let's get you cleaned up.

(They help Marjorie to her feet. Tess leads her off down the hallway.)

MARJORIE: I'm sorry.

TESS: Don't be sorry.

MARJORIE: I'm so sorry.

TESS: It's okay—it's Shower Day after all.

(And they're gone.)

SIDE 4: WALTER & JON

JON *(In no direction in particular)*: Walter.

Walter?

WALTER: Here I am.

(Jon sees Walter now—although he's always been there.)

JON: I want to tell you about the time you took Marjorie to New York at Christmas.

WALTER: I'm listening.

JON *(Glancing at his notes)*: You sat on a bench in Central Park and looked at all these saffron-colored flags in the snow. It must have been some kind of installation?

(Beat.)

This wouldn't have been long after your son died.

WALTER: My son?

JON: Your son, Damian.

You took a trip to New York, and you took Marjorie along—I think you were hoping to get her mind off it. You looked at the shop windows, you tried to start living again.

WALTER: How did he die?

SIDE 5: TESS & MARJORIE

Why don't you tell me more about myself?

TESS: I don't know where to start.

MARJORIE: I don't smile much, you said.

TESS: Not with your mouth open. Towards the end. You were embarrassed about your teeth.

MARJORIE: I'm vain.

TESS (*Smiling slightly*): A little.

MARJORIE: That's helpful.

TESS: You had a bit of a temper.

MARJORIE: I sound wonderful.

(Beat.)

Do I have other children, besides you?

TESS (*The slightest hesitation*): Just me.

MARJORIE: What a lot of pressure for you!

(Tess is strangely moved by this. Marjorie wouldn't have offered this.)

Did I say something wrong again?

TESS: No. You didn't.

MARJORIE: You were saying, just you.

TESS: And you have three grandchildren, all grown. Well, ish.

MARJORIE: What do they do?

TESS: Micah is a chef. Mitchell does financial something. Raping and pillaging. I gave up trying to understand.

MARJORIE (*Committing this to memory*): "Raping and pillaging."

TESS: Oh I didn't mean he really— Delete, delete!

Raina is the youngest. She's twenty-three. She's in a band.

MARJORIE: That's a job?

TESS: No it is not.

MARJORIE: Who do I like the most?

(Tess smiles a little.)

TESS: That was very Marjorie.

MARJORIE: Well?

TESS: Micah is the best about keeping in touch. Conscientious. Mitchell not so much, but he makes up for it with charisma. But I think you liked Raina the most.

MARJORIE: She's musical, like me.

TESS: If you can call it music. I went to one of her concerts. She was playing a bag of broken glass.

MARJORIE: Do they visit?

(Beat.)

TESS: Raina doesn't talk to me. Her therapist said it would be better, for now. Someone I've never *met* has advised my daughter not to talk to me. So she calls Jon and he fills me in. It's humiliating.

MARJORIE: She's twenty-three. Give her room. She'll work through it.

TESS (*Faintly suspicious*): That sounds more like Jon.

MARJORIE: Oh yes. You're not done telling me what I'm like.

TESS: Well, you would never accept the silent treatment from your daughter.

(Beat.)

You like card games. You like to win. You aren't always the best winner. We had some family Monopoly games that . . . deteriorated.

You thought women should be women. That they should be feminine.

MARJORIE: Naturally.

TESS: One time we passed a girl on the street with short hair and you asked her if she was in the Navy.

MARJORIE: I'm rude too.

TESS: No, just—direct. You were very good with flowers. A wizard with flowers. But you didn't—

MARJORIE: Don't—

TESS: Sorry, you don't like to wear strong scents. You said fabric softener was all the perfume anyone needed. This isn't important.

MARJORIE: It's all important.

(Beat.)

TESS: You would always order things in restaurants that you cooked at home. Lamb shanks, risotto. And then you would say that it was good, but not as good as you would make. You would always do this.

You were good with men. I don't think you had a lot of female friends.

I think you wanted me to be good with men too. It bothered you that I ended up with my college sweetheart—that I didn't play the field. When we got engaged, you took one look at the ring and you said, "Well, at least he doesn't have to overcompensate."

MARJORIE: What did I mean by that?

TESS: You were making a joke—about his penis.

MARJORIE: I wasn't.

TESS: But also the ring.

(They both look at her ring.)

MARJORIE (*Matter-of-fact*): Small.

TESS: You and Dad fought, but you loved each other. Neither of you seemed to be more in love than the other, which is always lucky.

(Beat.)

Maybe he loved you a little more.

(Beat.)

Towards the end, we sometimes had to remind you he was dead. Sometimes every day—"Where's Walter?" You'd make us kill him all over again.

And then, after we reminded you, you would say, "How nice that I could love somebody."

And I wasn't sure that you really felt that . . . at peace, but it was a nice way of putting it.

MARJORIE (*Committing to memory*): "How nice that I could love somebody."

(Tess regards her.)

TESS: It's funny, it's not so different.

MARJORIE: What?

TESS: This, from what we used to do for you—the last year or two. We'd sit there and tell you what you were like.

Near the end you were so, almost, guilty? To still be here? You felt so useless. I wondered, if you could have pushed a button, if you could have just pressed "Off," would you have stuck around the last couple years. I guess it's a good thing we don't have that button. Nobody would last very long.

(Beat.)

What else. You got along with animals. Toni liked you the best of all of us. Well, second best.

MARJORIE: Second best? Who did she like better?

TESS: We should save that for another day. That's a whole other story.

MARJORIE: I have all the time in the world.

(Pause.)

TESS: Why is this the Marjorie for me?

MARJORIE: I don't understand.

TESS: Why is this the way I want to remember her.

MARJORIE: Me.

TESS: Yes, god, sorry. You'd think I'd see you the way you were when I was a girl, but no.

MARJORIE: I wish I could tell you, sweetheart.

TESS: You wouldn't say sweetheart.

(Short pause.)

MARJORIE: How am I with you?

TESS: —

MARJORIE: You haven't said much about me and you. Are we close?

JON: Sorry.

TESS: You're starting, like, an ecosystem in there.

JON: I'll clean the whole car before it gets dark, how's that.

TESS: Thank you.

JON: Spray it all down with 409—I won't spare a single para-mecium.

TESS (*Sneaking this in, trying not to be bossy*): Soap and water's better.

SIDE 6: TESS & JON

(Beat.)

Look what I found.

(She holds up a candy box with the words PEOPLE I WANT TO REMEMBER written on it in Sharpie.)

JON: Oh wow.

TESS: I still haven't made it through all the boxes from the old house. She was like a squirrel.

(Jon opens it. Looks at the photos and papers inside.)

I don't know half the people in it. Lot of obituaries, of course. And some more letters from Jean-Paul.

JON: He never gave up, did he.

TESS: He really loved her.

(He picks a letter.)

JON (*Reading*): "Dear Margie,
Love is a strange thing."

TESS: Oh that's a good one.

JON: "When I think of you, I am aware of who you now are, your age, and your physical problems, but those perceptions are overridden by my knowledge of who you were fifty years ago. I know if you allow me to visit, I will see you with my memory as

well as with my eyes.” Laying it on a little thick, isn’t he? “Age will be no obstacle”—whoa—“age will be no obstacle to our love.”

TESS: Don’t make fun. He wanted to see her.

JON (*Looking at it again*): “Fifty years.”

He wrote this after Walter died?

TESS: Mm-hmm.

JON: Did she write back?

TESS: Not that I know of.

JON: Why wouldn’t she let him visit?

TESS: I think she didn’t want him to see she was old.

JON: That’s so sad.

TESS: I guess I’m not really—rooting for her to have had an affair, you know?

JON: It wouldn’t be an affair after Walter died. If I died, I’d want you to meet someone.

TESS: Even if it was one of your rivals?

JON: I had rivals?

TESS: I mean hypothetically.

JON: Well hypothetically I’m taking the high road.

I wouldn’t want you to be alone.

TESS: What if I died first?

JON: Not a chance. Not with these arteries.

(She smiles slightly. Pause.)

Well anyway she wasn’t alone. We made sure of that.

(Beat.)

TESS: You were so good with her, Jon. You were better than me.

JON: I had a little more room. She wasn’t my mom.

TESS: I judged her.

JON: You didn’t—

TESS: I did. For talking to Walter Prime. For not going outside enough. For not reading more. Why couldn’t I just let her be? She was so tired.

JON: She was glad to have you on her side. Doing battle with Dr. Ross.

TESS: Was I on her side?

JON: Come on.

TESS: I was so mad at you for telling her Jean-Paul was world number eight—

JON: I exaggerated—

TESS: He played in *college*! He had a drywall business!

JON: It made her feel special.

TESS: Exactly! Every time her face would light up about Jean-Paul, I felt like the evil shrew who would deny her dying mother a harmless little lie.

JON: But you didn't deny her. (*Beat*)

It was easy for me to be human morphine for a couple years—you had the tough job.

TESS: Maybe.

JON: She loved you so much.

TESS: She never even—

(He touches her shoulder while she cries.)

JON: No. But she did.

(He takes her in his arms.)

It was obvious, from a little farther away.

(Beat. He is still holding her, and she says this into his shoulder:)

TESS: I hated him, Jon.

JON: —

TESS: I hated Damian, for changing her. When he died—I didn't know how to make her love me as much as him—

JON: You were a little girl—

TESS: I think we didn't talk more because if we started talking, we would end up talking about *him*.

JON (*Level*): You can talk about him now.

(Silence.)