

Daughter Of The Moon
By
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Time: The present
Place: Nell's attic bedroom in a suburban home in Westchester County.

Cast:
Nell Sixteen years old, suffering from a variety of illnesses
Mom Nell's mother
Emory Nell's best girlfriend
Dan Nell's boyfriend
The Lawyer A young lawyer, Nell's "defense attorney."
Eli Emory's boyfriend

(At rise: A darkened girl's bedroom on a platform. Nell is asleep in a mess of a bed. There are stuffed animals all over the bed and on the floor. The light of a television flickers over her, but we can barely hear it. There is a steep stairway down from the bedroom to the stage floor. There is also a big window in the back of the bedroom which seems to be at ground level and through which her friends climb in. Through the window we see the moon bathing the room in white light. The set should have a dreamlike logic: the bedroom should feel like it's in the attic, isolated from the rest of the house even though people come in and out through the back window which is at ground level.)

MOM

(We hear a clock ticking. From the bottom of the stairs, Nell's Mom calls up to her.)

Nell? Are you up? Nell? Nell, honey. Are you up? It's time to get up, Nell.

NELL

(She rouses herself. She looks out the window at the moon.)

Mom, it is the middle of the night.

MOM

It is ten o'clock in the morning. Time to get it going, Nell. Nell? Are you up?

NELL

(She rouses herself. She looks out the window.)

Yeah I'm up. I've been up for hours.

MOM

Are you coming down?

NELL

Yeah, Mom. I'll be down in minute.

(Nell goes back to sleep. Mom exits. The clock ticks. The television "cheats out" to the audience. When the TV speaks we see a trippy pattern on the screen.)

TV

Hey that was your Mom.

NELL

So?

TV

So I don't know. Just saying.

NELL

I'm not getting up.

(TV goes back to profile.)

MOM

(From the bottom of the stairs.)

Nell? Are you up? Nell? Nell, honey. Are you up? It's almost noon, honey.

NELL

(She looks at the moon.)

What is she talking about?

MOM

I want you to get up and come downstairs. Come on, honey.

NELL

Ok, Mom. I'll be right down.

MOM

I'm making pancakes and bacon.

NELL

Yeah?

MOM

It's a beautiful day down here. Sun's out. Beautiful summer day. Doesn't get much better than this. Don't you want to see your friends today?

NELL

Yeah, Mom. I'll be down in minute.

(Nell goes back to sleep. Mom exits. The clock ticks. The television "cheats out" to the audience.)

TV

I'm looking at the guide here and I'm seeing, ok let's see, Degrassi High on Noggin. High School Musical on Disney,

NELL

High School Musical?

TV

Yeah it's just starting.

NELL

I love High School Musical.

TV

I know you do.

NELL

I gotta get up and watch that.
(Nell goes back to sleep.)

MOM

(From the bottom of the stairs again.)
Nell, it is 1:30.

NELL

(To herself.) It is not. It's the middle of the night.

MOM

I want you to get up and get out of that bed. That's it. Right now, Nell.

NELL

Ok, Mom. I'll be right down.

MOM

You damn well better be, that's all I can say.

NELL

Ok I heard you.
(Nell goes back to sleep. Mom exits. Clock ticks.)

TV

Nell. Pssst. Nell. How To Marry A Millionaire.

NELL

Marilyn Monroe?

TV

Yeah. And Lauren Bacall.

NELL

Ick. She's a man.

TV

And Betty Grable.

NELL

Ewww. She's a Lezzie.

TV

Is she really?

NELL

Oh yeah. Major Lezzie.

TV

Are you sure?

NELL

Uh yeah.

TV

I think you may be thinking of Jane Russell in *Gentlemen Prefer Blondes*.

NELL

Whatever. Would you please let me get some sleep here?

TV

Get some sleep? Are you serious? In the last eight weeks of the summer you have slept an average of 18 hours a day, girl. You are getting more sleep than Calvin Coolidge. Put together.

NELL

Very funny. Jean Hagen. Singin' In The Rain. (She imitates Lena Lamont.) "What am I, dumb or Something?" (As she falls back asleep.) "Of course I can talk. *Inybody* can talk. Next time right me out a speech or something. I could *mimorize* it"

MOM

(Mom re-enters at the bottom of the stairs.)

Ok. That does it. I am coming in there. Nell. I am coming in. It is four in the afternoon and you are sleeping away this glorious day. This godgiven beauty of a day. I will not have another day of this. Get up and get out of that bed before I come in there and drag you out with my two bare hands. NELL!!!!

(Mom enters, comes up the stairs and barges into Nell's room.)

Nell! This instant!

(Nell wakes up wheezing and gasping for air.)

NELL

Mom! Mommy!! Mommy I can't breathe.

MOM

Oh my god honey, why didn't you tell me. Here here here. Let me get the thing. Don't move. Stay there. Let me do this. You just sit. Stay calm! Stay calm! Oh holy jesus!

(Mom gets out a gruesome World War I gasmask and straps it over Nell's head. She hooks it up to a contraption full of tubes with a bicycle pump at the end of it and starts to pump. Gas flows through the tubes to Nell's gasmask.)

Oh honey. I'm so sorry. Did I scare you? Have you been up here all this time having an asthma attack? Oh my god. I never should have let you move your bedroom to the attic. I'm so glad I came up here. Why didn't you tell me?

(Nell is on her hands and knees breathing through the gasmask.)

NELL

(Barely audible through the gasmask.)

I was asleep.

MOM

What, honey?

NELL

I was asleep.

MOM

Honey I can't hear you inside that gasmask. You know that.

NELL

(Nell rips off the gasmask, panting and wild-eyed.)

I said I was asleep.

(Nell puts the gasmask back on and tries to breathe.)

MOM

I know that. I am perfectly aware of the fact. You have slept the summer away young lady. What happened to all those plans of yours? Pottery class? Dance class? That's what I would like to know.

NELL

(Barely audible.)

I haven't been feeling well.

MOM

What?

NELL

I haven't been feeling well.

MOM

Nell you sound like you are a million miles away.

NELL

(She rips off the gasmask again.)

I said I haven't been feeling well.

(She puts it back on.)

MOM

I can see that, honey. I'm not blind, you know. You seem to think I don't have an ounce of understanding in my head. Like there's nothing going on up there. It's not very nice.

NELL

(Barely audible.)

I'm sorry.

MOM

What?

NELL

I'm sorry.

MOM

What are you?

NELL

(Nell rips off the gasmask again.)

Mom I am goddamn dying in here. Would you please leave me alone for five seconds so I can not die of asphyxiation in my own bedroom at four in the afternoon on this glorious summer day!

(She puts the gasmask back on.)

MOM

Ok fine. That's just fine. I am so sorry for living. Excuse me for being alive. I am going downstairs to stick a knife in my chest.

(Mom throws down the bicycle pump and walks out.)

NELL

Mom? Mom? I need you, Mom. I'm sorry, Mom.

(Nell picks up the bicycle pump and pumps air into her own lungs.)

I mean this is ridiculous.

(Eventually she is so exhausted she collapses on the bed. She takes off the gasmask and lies still for a moment. Her breathing is easy. She gets up and wanders around the room in a loopy medicated haze.)

What would I do without modern medicine? I would be a mess.

TV

You wouldn't be for shit.

NELL

No I wouldn't. But fortunately for me, science has taken note of my plight and they have provided me with this technological miracle. I am one lucky little girl. Yes I am.

(She falls down.)

Ooopsy.

(Mom re-enters.)

MOM

Sorry. I'm sorry. I had a moment. Are you ok?

NELL

Hi. Mommy. Yeah, I'm super. Thumbs up.

MOM

Ok. I feel better.

NELL

I love you. Mommy. You are so beautiful.

MOM

Am I?

NELL

You are.

(Nell gives her mother a big hug.)

Oooh. I want to squeeze you so hard.

MOM

Oh sweetie. That's so nice.

NELL

Oooh. I could eat you up.

MOM

Ok. Ok. Don't overdo it.

NELL

Sorry but that stuff makes me feel so good. Oooh I could just squeeze you and squeeze you and hug you very hard.

MOM

A little bit of that goes a long long way.

NELL

I know I know.

MOM

So are you coming downstairs? Would you like me to make you something? Breakfast? Lunch? Dinner?

NELL

Mom, I had a really weird dream last night.

MOM

Tell me.

NELL

I dreamt I was asleep and you came in and woke me up and I had an asthma attack and you put a great big World War I kind of gasmask on my head.

MOM

That wasn't a dream. You silly. That really happened. I came in to wake you up and you were having an asthma attack so I had to give you a treatment.

NELL

Wait. That wasn't a dream?

MOM

No that really happened.

NELL

Then is this a dream?

MOM

No, honey, this is really happening too.

NELL

No. Mom. If you remember your dreams in waking life, then you remember your waking life in your dreams.

MOM

What?

NELL

So I must be dreaming this.

No that can't be right. MOM

Sure it is. NELL

Nell, honey, that's kind of crazy, isn't it? MOM

What? NELL

I mean that's kind of wacky. MOM

Mom, I am not crazy. NELL

No I know. MOM

Please don't tell me I'm crazy. NELL

I'm not honey I'm not. MOM

Wait this is really weird. I have had this dream before. NELL

Honey, you are not dreaming. MOM

Yes I am. This is a recurring dream. I have had this before. And now you are going to say: NELL

Nell, you are scaring me! BOTH

See. NELL

Oh my god. MOM

NELL

Oh shit I feel really weird.

MOM

Uh oh.

NELL

Mommy, I feel all weird again.

(Nell is getting frantic, pacing the room.)

Mommy, what's happening. I'm getting scared. Am I awake or am I dreaming this?

BOTH

You're awake, honey.

MOM

Oh my god.

NELL

See I knew you were going to say that. Oh shit. I'm getting dizzy and hot. Dizzy and hot. I hate this. I really hate this. What is happening to me? I want to wake up. Why can't I wake up?

MOM

You're having a panic attack, sweetie. That's all. Now sit down and take deep breaths.

NELL

I can't sit down. I think I'm dying. They say if you dream you're dying you can really die. Oh shit. My heart is racing. It feels like a sledgehammer in there. Oh shit. Oh fuck. (sorry.)

MOM

(That's ok.)

NELL

Mommy I need my medicine.

MOM

Now come on. We know what to do. We sit and we breathe. Come on sit and breathe. Come on.

NELL

No, Mom. I can't sit. Oh Jesus. I think I'm going to faint. Oh mommy I hate this.

I know. Ok let's get cracking. MOM

Why can't I wake the fuck up (sorry.) NELL

(That's ok.) MOM

I really think I need my meds. NELL

First the wind. And the music. And the candles. MOM
(Mom goes to work. She turns on a fan and aims it in Nell's face.)
First the wind.

(She turns on the CD player.)
And the music.
(Calming mystical hippie music plays. Wind chimes, a sitar, a soft drum beat. Very soothing. She lights incense candles.)
And the candles.
(She starts to chant.)

Om a hum padmani om. Om a hum padmani om. Come on, honey.
(She puts on finger cymbals and dances slowly as she chants.)

Om a hum padmani om. Om a hum padmani om. Come on, Nell.

NELL
(Nell recites (and possibly acts out).)
By the shores of Gitche Gumee,
By the shining Big-Sea-Water,
Stood the wigwam of Nokomis,
Daughter of the Moon, Nokomis.

Come on, get serious. MOM

NELL
Beat the clear and sunny water,
Beat the shining Big-Sea-Water.
Of the wigwam of Nokomis.
Daughter of the Moon, Nokomis.

MOM

What are you doing? You are supposed to be meditating and chanting. What on earth is that?

NELL

I am supposed to be calming myself down and this is how I do it. My shrink taught me this one.

There the wrinkled old Nokomis
Nursed the little Hiawatha.

MOM

That is not a mantra.

NELL

It's my mantra.

MOM

It's too long to be a mantra.

NELL

Stilled his fretful wail by saying,
"Hush! the Naked Bear will hear thee!"
Lulled him into slumber, singing,
"Ewa-yea! my little owlet!"

MOM

No this is not Buddhism.

NELL

Who is this, that lights the wigwam?
With her great eyes lights the wigwam?
Ewa-yea! my little owlet!"

MOM

Ok fine. I can see my services are not needed here. I am irrelevant. Don't mind me. I have no idea what I'm doing. Just a Masters in Yoga and PhD in Buddhism and a graduate fellowship in meditation. Fine. See ya later. Have a nice panic attack.

(She starts to go.)

NELL

No Mommy no don't leave. I need my meds. I think it's time now.

MOM

Hush baby hush I'm right here, right here, don't worry, only kidding only kidding.
Shhhh.

NELL

Mom what? I can't hear you.

MOM

I'm right here, honey.

NELL

You're so far away. I can hardly hear you.

MOM

I'm right here holding your hand sweetie.

NELL

Mom is that you? I can't make you out.

MOM

Yes it's me.

NELL

Hold me Mommy.

MOM

I am honey I'm holding you.

NELL

Harder Mommy I can't feel you.

MOM

I can't hold you any harder, Nell.

NELL

I can't feel you, Mom. I can't feel anything. I'm disappearing. I think I'm dying.
Touch me, Mom so I know you're here.

MOM

Now don't get hysterical. It's going to pass.

NELL

Mommy touch my face.

MOM

I am honey I'm touching your face.

NELL

I can't feel it Mommy. Touch my face.

(Mom touches Nell's face until she is slapping her.)

Touch me touch me please touch me.

(Mom whacks Nell so hard she falls down.)

Mommy somebody hit me real hard.

MOM

How's that? Is that a little better now?

NELL

MOM I REALLY THINK I NEED MY MEDS NOW.

MOM

Fine fine I'll get your meds. Don't get your panties in a twist.

(Mom reaches into her pocket, takes out an infinitesimal pill and pops it in Nells mouth. Nell calms down very quickly.)

NELL

Ahh. Ahhhh. Ahhhhhhhhh. Oh my. Oh my my my. Hmm hmmm hmmm.

MOM

Feeling better.

NELL

Are you kidding? Are you seriously kidding me? That's funny. Ha ha ha ha ha. You are very funny. Ha ha ha ha ha.

MOM

What did I say?

NELL

Ha ha ha ha ha. That's hilarious. That is really rich. Ha ha ha ha ha.

MOM

Now what?

NELL

Yeah right. "Now what?" Ha ha ha ha ha. Stop. Stop. I'm gonna have an asthma attack and then we'll have to start all over again. Ha ha ha ha ha.

MOM

Oh no I will not stand for that kind of nonsense.

NELL

Ha ha ha ha ha. You are killing me. Oh Jesus. My face hurts. Ha ha ha ha ha.

MOM

Nell....

NELL

Ok. I'll be good. I'll calm down. Hum de hum. Calming down. Om a hum padmani om. Ha ha ha. Sorry. I'll be good. Hmmmm. There. Ahhhhhh. Much better. Much much better. See? Ha ha ha. Oopsy.

MOM

I don't see why we have to pop a pill everytime you get upset. You know those pills have side effects.

NELL

I know I know. That is so true. Mommy you are so full of wisdom. I hope I can be like you someday and be a Mom with wisdom pouring out of her fingertips like you are. You make me feel so good, Mommy. Wow. You are like crack cocaine.

MOM

Well...it's nice to be appreciated I must say. A word of encouragement every now and then is that so much to ask.

NELL

No. No it isn't. It is exactly the right amount to ask in my humble opinion.

MOM

Well good then. Excellent. Mission accomplished.

NELL

Yeah really. Wow. Sometimes it feels so cozy up here in my room, like this is all I need in the whole world, this room and all my stuff that's in this room. It makes me very happy.

MOM

What about your friends, honey? Aren't you going to be seeing any of your friends today? Summer's almost over. You have to make hay while the sun shines.

NELL

Do you?

Of course you do. MOM

Or else what? NELL

Or else what what? MOM

Or else what happens to the hay? NELL

It rots. The hay rots. MOM

Oh. NELL

You're darn tootin'. MOM

That is so sad. NELL

What is? MOM

Hay rotting. That makes me sad. NELL

How sad? MOM

Just a smidge. NELL

You'll get over it? You won't go flipping out over it, will you? MOM

Nope. No worries, Moms. And you are good to go. You can return to your normal downstairs life and I will take care of things up here for awhile? Ok? NELL

Ok. Are you sure? MOM

Sure as shootin’.

NELL

Well ok then.

MOM

I love you, Mommy.

NELL

Mmm hmm.

MOM

(Mom exits down the stairs. Emory climbs through the window.)

Oh my god. You scared me..

NELL

Did I?

EMORY

You scared the living crap out of me.

NELL

Sorry.

EMORY

How did you do that?

NELL

I came in through the window.

EMORY

My bedroom is in the attic.

NELL

Your window isn’t.

EMORY

Oh. Right.

NELL

Hi.

EMORY

Hi.

NELL

EMORY

I snuck around the garage so the dog wouldn't be like all growling in my face.

NELL

Cool.

EMORY

Yeah.

NELL

I missed you. I missed you so much.

EMORY

I just got back. I didn't even unpack. I think they think I'm still upstairs.

NELL

I love it.

EMORY

Yeah.

NELL

I missed you so much.

EMORY

Oh my god I missed you so much too.

NELL

What was it like?

EMORY

It was like prison. It was a prison. Only they're like all touchy feely about it and they give you lots of meds.

NELL

Oh god I'm so glad you're back.

(Sirens in the distance. Emory goes to the window.)

EMORY

All I could think about was you. They wanted me to talk about my feelings.

NELL

Ewwww.

EMORY

Yeah they were like Emory just be all emo-screamo and I was like sorry I don't sing.

NELL

Yeah

EMORY

I didn't tell anybody anything.

(Sirens getting closer. Emory goes to the window.)

NELL

Sounds like a fire or something.

EMORY

Yeah I think there's a house on fire in the neighborhood. So have you got any weed?

NELL

No I was hoping you.

EMORY

No I just got home and then I came over here. They think I'm still upstairs.

(Sirens very close.)

Come on let's get out of here. Let's go somewhere.

NELL

Ok ok.

(They go to the window.)

Where should we go?

EMORY

Well not to my place.

NELL

Why not?

EMORY

I think it might be a house on my street that's on fire.

NELL

How come?

EMORY

I heard the cops talking when I was on my way over here.

NELL

Oh. So where?

EMORY

I don't care let's just go.

NELL

I have to know where I'm going first. I can't just climb out the window without knowing where I'm going.

EMORY

We'll go see Dan and Eli.

NELL

Ok. Ok. Ok. I can't.

EMORY

Come on we'll go see Dan and Eli and tell them we like them again.

NELL

Ok. Ok. Ok. I can't.

EMORY

Come on. Just take one step. Put one foot out.

NELL

One foot?

EMORY

Yeah just one foot. And see how it feels.

(Nell puts one foot out the window.)

NELL

They raped that girl in New York City. She was sixteen years old and she told her mom she was going to see Wicked with her friend only they went to a nightclub in Chelsea. And she got drunk and she was walking down the street in a short short skirt at 3 am and she got separated from her friend and some guy in a Camaro followed her down 16th Street all the way to the West Side Highway at 3am and made her get in the car and took her to a motel in New Jersey and raped her and killed her and threw her body in a ditch in Bayonne. And now she's dead and raped. She should have gone to see Wicked. Why didn't she go to see Wicked? It's good. Good songs. Good lines. Good characters. Happy ending. I don't want to die in a motel in New Jersey. I don't want to get dumped

into a ditch in Bayonne.

(She puts her foot back in the bedroom.)

EMORY

Well at least you tried.

NELL

I really did. I guess I'm not much fun today. Am I?

EMORY

It's ok. Maybe we could watch a movie and take a nap or something.

NELL

Let's watch Singin' In The Rain.

EMORY

We've watched it a million times.

NELL

I only watch it once a week now. It's too exhausting. You ever wonder what happens to movie characters after the movie ends. Like what do you think happens to Lena Lamont after the end of Singin in the Rain?

EMORY

I don't know.

NELL

Does she sue the studio and win?

EMORY

Does she?

NELL

I think she does. Lamont Studios Incorporated.

EMORY

Hey that's right..

NELL

And what happens to Don Lockwood and Cathy Seldon?

EMORY

What?

NELL

I think she retires and has babies and goes slowly crazy drinking gin fizzes until one day she crashes her car on Deadman's Curve on Sunset Boulevard and she bleeds to death on a millionaire's lawn. She was better off as a Hot Box girl.

EMORY

Yeah really.

NELL

And what about Cosmo Brown? He is obviously in love with Don Lockwood, but he doesn't realize it until Don gets married to Cathy.

EMORY

Oh no.

NELL

Then he discovers loneliness and heartache. I think he ends up with Errol Flynn (or maybe Franklin Pangborn, hmmm have to think about that) so he's happy enough, but Errol Flynn doesn't come to Hollywood for quite a few years, so Cosmo has some really hard times till then trying to meet guys in Hollywood.

EMORY

Yeah?

NELL

Rumors start. A whispering campaign. He can't get a job. Don tells him to stop coming around with toys for the kids because Cathy won't have it in the house. But every once in a while Cosmo sneaks over around midnight and he meets Don in the poolhouse and they have a thing.

EMORY

They do?

NELL

Yeah.

EMORY

Ewwww.

NELL

Cosmo ends up much sadder and much much wiser and he uses his newfound wisdom to write a jazz opera like George Gershwin only his is better because his jazz opera is about the Silent Film era and it's called Quiet On The Set. Ha ha ha. I just made that all up.

EMORY

That was better than a movie.

NELL

Maybe we could take a nap.

(Nell lies down. Emory lies down next to her. They snuggle together very innocently and naturally as they talk.)

EMORY

I really missed Eli while I was in the thing. I kept thinking about how much I wanted to be with him. What's up with you and Dan.

NELL

I don't know. Last time I saw him he was like all la de da and I was like oh yeah I'm sure.

EMORY

Yeah I know what you mean. I had so much trouble falling asleep when I was in the thing. That was almost the worst part. Do you ever have trouble falling asleep. Nell? Nell?

NELL

Huh? What?

EMORY

I said do you ever have trouble falling asleep? Nell? Nell?

NELL

I heard you. I was just thinking.

EMORY

What were you thinking?

NELL

I have this poem that my shrink gave me for when I get strung out. It makes me feel happy.

EMORY

A poem?

NELL

Yeah a poem. Is that weird?

EMORY

No it's not so weird. Do you know it by heart?

NELL

Yeah she made me memorize it just like in case like I was being held captive in a pitch black basement for days and days or if I got lost wandering in the woods and I couldn't get my hands on a copy of the poem.

EMORY

That's good thinking.

NELL

Yeah. You wanna hear it?

EMORY

Yes please.

NELL

Ok. Here goes. Let's see. Here's the best part:
Fare thee well Oh Hiawatha
Fare thee well oh mighty warrior
Westward, westward Hiawatha
Sail into the fiery sunset,
Sail into the purple vapors,
Sail into the dusk of evening
Never to return.

EMORY

Wow that's better than drugs. Would you teach it to me? Nell? Nellie, babe?

(They are asleep. Moon goes down. Lights go out. Lights up. The sun comes up. Nell is still asleep but Emory has been replaced by Dan. Dan wakes up.

DAN

Oh man. Hey Nell. Hey Nell. I gotta go. It's really late.

NELL

What time is it?

DAN

The middle of the night.

NELL

What are you talking about? It's bright as day outside.

DAN

It's 3 am.

NELL

Hey what are you doing here? I thought you were Emory.

DAN

That's ridiculous. You must have been dreaming.

NELL

I fell asleep with Emory. We took a nap.

DAN

You took a nap with Emory?

NELL

Yeah.

DAN

You guys are so gay.

NELL

We are not. We took a nap. How long have you been here?

DAN

Long enough.

NELL

Long enough for what?

DAN

You don't remember?

NELL

Remember what?

DAN

What happened.

NELL

What happenend?

DAN

We fell asleep.

NELL

Is that all?

DAN

What do you mean is that all?

What happened before that? NELL

Before that? Before that we were wide awake. DAN

And then we fell asleep? NELL

And then you said I love you. And I said I love you. And then we fell asleep. DAN

We said I love you? NELL

Yeah. DAN

Did we say it like we really meant it? NELL

Yeah. DAN

That's so great. NELL

Yeah. Only now it's the middle of the night and I gotta go. DAN

It is broad daylight. NELL

What are you talking about? Look out there. It's pitch black. DAN

Fine. Fine. My mistake. NELL

I'm leaving, Nell. DAN

Yeah you said. NELL

DAN

No I mean I'm leaving this crappy town. I'm getting out of here.

NELL

No you can't.

DAN

I can't take it here anymore. This place is driving me crazy. I'll end up at Silver Winds again. I don't think I can take that place again.

NELL

What are you talking about? That was Emory who went to Silver Winds.

DAN

Emory never went to Silver Winds. Why would Emory go to Silver Winds?

NELL

Because she cracked up. She was having panic attacks and abusing alcohol. So they sent her to Silver Winds.

DAN

No that was me. I was smoking ten joints a day. What is wrong with you tonight? Is something wrong with you? I was in there for two freaking weeks. Not even a cigarette! I nearly croaked in there. No windows, no iPod, couldn't touch each other, bad food, they talk to you like you're eight years old. Place made me want to kill

NELL

Was it really bad?

DAN

Are you kidding? They locked me up in the basement and they were going to give me a prefrontal lobotomy.

NELL

A lobotomy!?! They can't do that.

DAN

Oh yeah they can. Only I talked them into giving me insulin shock treatment instead and when I came out of it I could read everybody's mind and all the nurses were thinking evil thoughts about all the doctors and all the doctors were thinking evil thoughts about their patients and all the patients were thinking evil thoughts about each other it was like this huge crowd rioting in my head so I climbed up onto the roof of the big old mansion where they had us locked up and I jumped.

NELL

You jumped?

DAN

Yeah and I fell and broke my neck and I was paralyzed from the neck down so they had to let me come home.

NELL

Wait. What are you saying? You were paralyzed from the neck down?

DAN

Yeah

NELL

You're not paralyzed from the neck down.

DAN

Not anymore.

NELL

Why not?

DAN

I got over it. And I stopped hearing other people's thoughts too.

NELL

Dan, are you sure this really happened?

DAN

Now you sound like one of the doctors, Nell. I hate the way they do that. They make you feel like you're the problem, not them.

NELL

Sorry, I don't mean to sound like the doctors.

DAN

I can't go back there, Nell. That place is Death in Connecticut. I've got to get out of here for good.

NELL

What about me? You can't just leave me here. We said I love you. Doesn't that mean anything to you?

DAN

You want to come with me?

NELL

Yes take me with you. Where are we going?

(They are at the window.)

DAN

What difference does it make?

NELL

I have to know where I'm going. I can't just climb out the window if I don't know where I'm going.

DAN

Just put one foot out. One foot. One foot at a time. Just see how it feels.

NELL

(She puts one foot out the window.)

They found that boy in St. Louis living with that pervert, he held him prisoner for four years. His parents thought he was dead. The guy was strangling him with his bare hands and the kid begged him to stop and the guy said what will you do if I stop and he said I will live with you and be your slave so the guy didn't strangle him so he lived with him and he was his sex slave, cute little ten year old boy and now he's fourteen. They rescued him. I bet he'll be just fine. Don't you? Don't you?

(She puts her foot back in.)

I can't go with you, Dan even though we said I love you.

DAN

I gotta go.

NELL

Don't leave.

DAN

I've got to go somewhere where I can live my life and make my mark and the whole world will know who I am.

NELL

Like where Dan?

DAN

Like outerspace or rock n roll or politics or maybe be a billionaire.

NELL

Please don't leave me here. I don't know what I'll do.

DAN
I could stick around for a little while longer.

NELL
Should we say I love you again?

DAN
I don't know.

NELL
Why not? Don't you like to say I love you?

DAN
No it's not that.

NELL
Well what?

DAN
It's just that...

NELL
What is it, Dan?

DAN
I can't just say I love you all over again just like that. I'm not a machine you know.

NELL
No I know.

DAN
You have to understand.

NELL
I do I do. Maybe tomorrow.

DAN
Yeah maybe tomorrow.

NELL
Ok.

DAN
Ok bye.
(He starts to go. He comes back and kisses her. He starts to go again.)

I love you. NELL

Wow you're amazing. DAN

Girls are different. NELL

Yeah. (Very quietly, mumbled.) I love you too. DAN

What? NELL

You heard me. DAN

Did you say it? NELL

Yeah I said it. DAN

Oh okay. NELL

See it's not as good the second time, is it. DAN

No it was very very nice. I love you. NELL

Nell please stop. That's not fair. DAN

I'm sorry. Sorry. Bye. Good bye. NELL

(He goes out the window.)

I love you. I love you. (Silence.) I love him.

(Mom enters in her pajamas.)