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*The play is dedicated to “Lanie” for changing my corner of the world.  
Proof that one person can truly make a difference.*

## **Cast of Characters**

*New York, February 1963-December 24, 1963:*

LANIE (ELANA), female, age 11—12, outgoing; daughter of Holocaust survivors. This has shaped her life and she is always smarter than you think

DORRIE (DOROTHY), female, age 11-12, shy, gangly, sometimes a little adult and always uncomfortable being a child

*New York, September 2001:*

DJ VOICE, male or female, doubled or recorded

GINA, female, age 15, motherly older sister of Letia.

LETIA, female, age 13, lost and needs protecting

AARON, male, age 18, high school student, witness to 9/11 and determined to act as such

ERIKA, female, age 18, frustrated with no blueprint for coping with 9/11

PAUL, male, age 17, copes with 9/11 as if it is a movie; thinks visually

*Minnesota, 2001:*

DJ VOICE, male or female, doubled or recorded

ADULT DORRIE, female, late 40s, mother of Sam and Sara.

SAM, male, age 15, assured young man whose world is shaken by 9/11

SARA, female, age 13, young girl who copes with 9/11 by ignoring it

## **Setting**

A set of levels that denote the different time periods and homes are all that is needed. You could also use a slide projector and use different slides to designate specific sites and times. The stories are important—not the set (sorry, designers). Simple acting areas can also be used with a minimum of furniture. For the computer scenes—all you need are keyboards.

## **Acknowledgments**

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# BY CANDLELIGHT

by Claudia Haas

## Scene 1

*(When the lights come up, ADULT DORRIE enters. She has a shopping bag containing chocolate molds and candy-lined boxes. These are not mentioned until later.)*

*(It is September 15, 2001.)*

**ADULT DORRIE.** Events—they cast you back in time—to loved ones—to places—to feelings. It’s been four days since the attacks. Four days of looking for answers when I haven’t figured out the questions. I can answer, “Where were you when the lights when out?” “Where were you when you heard of President Kennedy’s assassination?” I was with Lanie. I was always with Lanie. I lived in books, in daydreams, inside my head. I was a child disconnected from the world until Elana Feur entered my life. I was waiting. Waiting faithfully for an invitation that would come by mail announcing my entrance into the real world. “Dear Dorrie,” it would say. “Here is an invitation to the world. You may now join us.” What I didn’t know was that my invitation would not come in the mail—it would come through a person. Memories are tricky but of this I am sure: it was February. I was 11 years old and had just moved to be closer to my grandmother. I was enrolled in a new school in Queens, New York. The school was horribly old-fashioned. Dark with desks and chairs bolted to the floor. I felt swept away to “the olden days”—I mean *really*—my *mother* went to this school! I would never be happy again. And then this girl—with an extravagant smile—just came over to me—and invited me to lunch. I was saved! And later—this girl—Lanie—this girl with an impossibly high ponytail—asked me to her home. And to her world.

*(LANIE and DORRIE enter and take off winter coats. They are in skirts and blouses as was the public dress code of the time. DORRIE deposits her coat on the floor. LANIE picks it up and carefully puts it on a bed or a chair.)*

*(It is February 20, 1963.)*

**DORRIE.** This sure is nice, Lanie. Everything's in its place. I don't think I've ever been in a room with everything where it's supposed to be. Of course, my house is still in boxes.

**LANIE.** It's just a room, Dorrie. I have to share it—with the creepy-cretin.

**DORRIE.** Who?

**LANIE.** Alex. My brother. He is the terror of all times. I am sure he was switched at birth and my nice brother is with the wrong family.

**DORRIE.** I don't have a brother—always thought it would be nice. I have a sister.

**LANIE.** A sister would be better.

**DORRIE.** She whines a lot. Where is Alex?

**LANIE.** If we're lucky—he's at a friend's house. If we're really lucky—you won't get to meet him.

**DORRIE.** I have a cousin Alex. I like him.

**LANIE.** Your cousin is probably my real brother. Was he named after an uncle or something? My brother was named after my father's brother. He's dead.

**DORRIE.** Oh!

**LANIE.** I was named after some aunt. She's dead also.

**DORRIE.** Is that a "thing" with your family? Naming kids after dead people?

**LANIE.** It's a Jewish thing. It's supposed to keep their memory alive. I don't know. But I'll tell you this—when you're named after dead people you wind up with these horrible names. I mean—Elana. Yuck!

**DORRIE.** Tell me about it—Dorothy! How yucky is that?

**LANIE.** Were you named after anyone?

**DORRIE.** Some actress—Dorothy McGuire. She was on Broadway and was one of the stars in *A Tree Grows in Brooklyn*.

**LANIE.** Never heard of her. But being named after an actress is neat. Do you get a lot of *Wizard of Oz* jokes!

**DORRIE.** How'd you know? Every time the show airs, I have a week of "Hey, Dorothy—seen the Wicked Witch lately?" That's why I have everyone call me Dorrie. But it doesn't fool anyone.

**LANIE.** Well, we sure have a lot in common. Terrible names. Pain-in-the-neck brother and sister.

**DORRIE.** Lanie—thanks for inviting me over today. It's hard being new. You were like—my savior!

**LANIE.** Don't get too dramatic on me. I know I wouldn't like being the new kid. Hey! Do you like music?

**DORRIE.** Well, yeah.

**LANIE.** Who do you listen to?

**DORRIE.** Johnny Mathis—

**LANIE.** Johnny Mathis! Sheesh! Who is he?

**DORRIE.** Some singer my parents listen to...

**LANIE.** Don't you have your own records?

**DORRIE.** Well—sure. I have a Shirley Temple album and a whole bunch of Broadway musicals.

**LANIE.** Shirley Temple? Musicals?

**DORRIE.** Yeah—I sing to them. I'm going to be an actress one day and sing on Broadway.

**LANIE.** Really? I never met anyone who knew what they were going to do.

**DORRIE.** Don't you know what you want to be when you grow up?

**LANIE.** No. I'll probably get married and have children. It's expected. I didn't think you needed to choose your career—until—high school or something. Listen, don't you know the Beach Boys?

**DORRIE.** Sort of. I mean—I've heard of them. I think.

**LANIE.** Come on, I've got their latest—"Surfin' USA." They are so neat. And I have some Lesley Gore here, too. Do you like to dance? Do you watch American Bandstand? That's where I learn all the dance steps.

*(LANIE does an impromptu "twist.")*

**DORRIE.** Well, yeah... I think I like to dance... I want to learn to tap dance!

*(LANIE stops frozen in a twist position!)*

**LANIE.** Tap dance?

**DORRIE.** Like Shirley Temple.

**LANIE.** Sheesh, Dorrie—we have to get you with the times. There's a lot I can teach you!

*(The lights fade and we hear radio alarm clocks blaring the time and the weather.)*

*(It is September 11, 2001.)*

## Scene 2

**NEW YORK DJ.** Good morning, New York! It's 7 a.m.—

**MINNESOTA DJ.** We're coming up on 6 a.m. Minnesota!

**NEW YORK DJ.** The skies are clear this morning—

**MINNESOTA DJ.** Summer continues in Minnesota—

**NEW YORK DJ.** —it's Tuesday, September 11th—

**MINNESOTA DJ.** And it looks to be a beautiful day.

*(SAM and SARA are in Minnesota. SARA is catatonic—wrapped in a blanket. SAM is dressed, packing his backpack and ready for the day.)*

**SAM.** Sara! Get moving! You're going to miss the bus!

**SARA.** Bus?

**SAM.** You still need to have breakfast!

**SARA.** I don't eat breakfast.

**SAM.** You do today.

**SARA.** Last I looked, I already had a mom.

**SAM.** And she's on the phone with Dad and told me to get you up!

**SARA.** You're not the boss of me, Sam!

**SAM.** I am today. So GET UP!

*(The lights come up on GINA and LETIA. GINA is checking her purse for "supplies" as LETIA frantically packs a backpack. They are getting ready for school in their apartment in Greenwich Village in Manhattan.)*

**GINA.** Make-up...hair...breakfast bar...homework—

**LETIA.** Gina! Where's my field trip notice?

**GINA.** I don't know, Letia. You're old enough to find your own stuff.

**LETIA.** I put it on the fridge for Mom. Yesterday—

**GINA.** How can there be a field trip? School just started!

**LETIA.** Do I look like the "field trip police"? I can't go to school without it! Help me!

**GINA.** Mom usually leaves stuff on the kitchen table. Look!

**NEW YORK DJ.** Traffic's piling up on the Grand Central Parkway, so get out there now before your commute becomes a road trip. It's 7:15. Weather in a moment.

**GINA.** Grab something to eat while you're in there.

**LETIA.** Found it! I'm out of here!

**GINA.** Breakfast?

**LETIA.** I'll pick up a chocolate bar on the way.

**GINA.** I hope you have your keys! I have dance right after school!

*(AARON, ERIKA, and PAUL are outside their high school in downtown New York City. ERIKA's arms are filled with books.*

PAUL *has a few books and AARON has next to nothing—but he does have a camera. ERIKA has sunglasses.*)

**ERIKA.** It's so early. Why are NHS meetings so early?

**PAUL.** The only time teenagers are free is at dawn. Erika, why are you carrying so much stuff?

**ERIKA.** They're all for French—we have to devise a French fairy tale and I want to show him some examples—does he want these austere “morality” ones or does he prefer the “uses of enchantment” —

**AARON.** Why don't you just do what interests you?

**ERIKA.** I like to know what's expected. Did you ever notice you get a better grade if the teacher agrees with your point of view? Where are all of your books, Aaron? It's a little early in the school year for senior-itis.

**AARON.** I stayed at school until 8 p.m. with the newspaper. We were supposed to have a meeting to go through my photos but Mr. Schwartz was running late so—I did my homework. Done in less than two hours.

**ERIKA.** Sometimes I hate you. Do you guys have your college apps?

**AARON.** School just started.

**ERIKA.** But we were supposed to bring them in this week. I have mine filled out—early admission to Yale.

**PAUL.** We have till Friday. And I don't know where I want to go.

**ERIKA.** NYU?

**PAUL.** —for film school. But I'm still thinking about Molecular Biology and then Cornell is better.

**AARON.** I like Columbia. Then, I don't have to leave the city.

**ERIKA.** We're going to be late.

**PAUL.** Now, we plunge ourselves into “the dark side.” The art room will be dark till after school. It’s probably the only art room in the world that has no sunlight.

**ERIKA.** This is the last year we can complain about the Trade Center blocking the sun. Remember the first time—when we entered the classroom and looked around. No light anywhere. How weird. Of course, you guys had the wrong supplies and had to come to me—and then I was on the one who get the “B”—

**AARON.** Don’t start on the “B” again Erika. That’s all we’ve heard for the past three years.

**ERIKA.** It’s my only “B”! I should have taken music!

**PAUL.** Enough with the “B”! Let’s go in before she goes over her freshman art project with us...again.

**ERIKA.** Okay—cell phones off—Mrs. Jensen gets livid when a cell goes off during meetings. How did people connect with each other before cell phones?

**PAUL.** That’s what the phones on the street are for.

**ERIKA.** Those dinosaurs? None of them work. I’ll text you later if I can go to the Faraway Deli for lunch.

**AARON.** I’ll check after 3rd period. Better go. You won’t need your sunglasses inside.

*(As ERIKA takes off her glasses, the trio exit into school. The lights dim and a radio is heard in Minnesota and New York.)*

**MINNESOTA DJ.** It’s 6:15, Minnesota. You’re going to miss the school bus.

**ADULT DORRIE.** The bus is around the corner! Sam! Go stop it!

**SAM.** What do you want me to do? Lay down in the street?

**ADULT DORRIE.** Just make a nuisance of yourself so the bus stops. SHEESH! SARA! Get out now!

**SARA.** What?

**ADULT DORRIE.** Sam! You were supposed to get her going! Oh well—I guess I'm driving. Sara! Move it!

**SAM.** What'd Dad have to say?

**ADULT DORRIE.** He has some time to kill. He leaves LAX at 9 a.m. California time. With luck, he'll be home after lunch. And I hope you two will be at school!

**MINNESOTA DJ.** It's a perfect Minnesota—

**NEW YORK DJ.** New York—

**MINNESOTA DJ and NEW YORK DJ.** —morning.

*(The lights change and we are in Lanie's room in 1963.)*

**LANIE.** Sorry to be kicking you out of here. If I'm not practicing the piano when my mom walks in the door, she throws a fit.

**DORRIE.** That's fine. It's getting dark and when I'm late—my mom calls the police.

**LANIE.** Thanks for coming over. Hope we can do it again.

**DORRIE.** Sure. We can go to my house—when it's unpacked.

**LANIE.** I'd love to!

**DORRIE.** I'm going to write all of this down as soon as I get home. This day turned out a lot better than I thought it would.

**LANIE.** Write it down?

**DORRIE.** In my diary. I have been writing in my diary ever since I lived in California.

**LANIE.** You lived in California? Sheesh, Dorrie—you've had an exciting life.

**DORRIE.** No, Lanie—I haven't. I just want to remember stuff. Like today.

**LANIE.** Well, that's neat you have a diary—like Anne Frank.

**DORRIE.** I guess.

**LANIE.** Have you read her diary?

**DORRIE.** No. But I read the Broadway play!

**LANIE.** You simply have to! It's a good thing you moved here, Dorrie. You need me. I'm going to change your world.

*(LANIE goes inside to practice as DORRIE stands by the door.)*

**ADULT DORRIE.** I stood by the door for a few minutes and listened to the beginning of *Rhapsody in Blue* by Gershwin. I had never heard it before. In my adult life, that music would bring me back to Lanie—and to New York.

*(There could be some strains of Rhapsody in Blue or some sound cues reminiscent of New York—traffic sounds, crowds—and quite suddenly the lights could dim and sound is silent as we segue into Scene 3.)*

### Scene 3

*(It is September 11, 2001, 3 p.m.)*

**LETIA.** *(Entering her home:)* HELLO! Hello? Anybody home? Mom? GINA!

*(LETIA holds her cell phone high trying to get a signal. Let this go on for a few moments.)*

You're useless! You're supposed to help me. Today is an emergency! I need to connect!

*(LETIA grabs a "ground-phone" and dials.)*

Oh man! Busy. Busy and useless.

*(LETIA hangs up and goes to the computer.)*

Come on...come on...connect already!

*(LETIA frantically types an instant message.)*

Give me my buddy list! Is anyone online?

*(As LETIA types, PAUL, ERIKA, and AARON enter. They are in another part of the city and they now have no books. AARON has a camera and is taking pictures. ERIKA and PAUL are holding their cell phones in the air. They cannot get a signal. ERIKA has a burned*

*scrap of paper that she stashes in her jeans. The radio tower is down and the lack of the cell phone signal is our clue that the attacks have happened.)*

**LETIA.** I'm all alone. I can't get a hold of my mom... Jessie? Sammi? Is anyone there?

*(GINA enters and rushes to LETIA.)*

**GINA.** Letia!

**LETIA.** Nobody's here. Nobody's anywhere. Where's Mom?

**GINA.** She's safe at work. I called her from a street phone. It's okay, Letia. I'm here.

**LETIA.** There's smoke downtown. You can see the smoke...

**GINA.** I know. We'll stay inside. Where it's safe.

**LETIA.** I want to see what's happening on TV.

**GINA.** Mom doesn't want us to. Come on—let's see if there's something to eat in the kitchen. It'll be okay. Really. We're okay.

*(GINA and LETIA exit as we return to ERIKA, PAUL, and AARON in the park. They have given up on their cell phones. AARON snaps a picture. We may hear street noises.)*

**ERIKA.** Let's stay here. In Abingdon Square. It's empty and you can't see anything.

**PAUL.** I can see the smoke.

*(AARON snaps a picture.)*

**ERIKA.** What are you taking a picture of now? There's nothing there!

**AARON.** That's what I want. The nothing that is there.

**PAUL.** It's surreal. When we were evacuating, all I could think of was—we must be in a movie—with amazing special effects. Because nothing this horrible could be real.

*(We may hear a truck noise but it is not necessary.)*

**ERIKA.** What was that?

PAUL. It's just a truck—I think. From the highway.

ERIKA. I thought—

PAUL. Yeah—me, too.

AARON. Paul—I got a picture of your mother.

PAUL. Did you see her? I couldn't believe it. She ran from her office and found me. My mother ran an entire mile! My mother is not a believer in aerobics! She couldn't even talk—

AARON. She did seem a wee bit out of shape—

PAUL. Watch it—that's my mother we're talking about—

AARON. I'll be careful.

PAUL. I'm so glad she had to pick up my brother. I thought she'd never let go of me.

AARON. She was pretty clingy. Got some good photos of you two.

PAUL. I wouldn't mind a copy.

AARON. Remind me—later. I'd sort of like to go back to Union Square. Everyone's gathering there.

ERIKA. No—away—we have to get away—

AARON. They're coming together Erika.

ERIKA. But if we go there—it's still happening. *What* are those noises?

PAUL. Just—traffic—I think.

ERIKA. Are you sure there's nothing in the air?

PAUL. Skies are clear.

ERIKA. I have to get home. I told my Mom I'd be home in an hour—that was two hours ago! She was rushing home from work. I don't want to call her again. I can't stand in line at another street phone.

PAUL. Those antique phones came in handy.

**ERIKA.** They're horrible. A city with millions of cell phones that don't work. On those pay phones—you hear everything—people asking who hasn't called—who hasn't been found...these things should not be overheard. I—

**PAUL.** Erika?

**ERIKA.** Nobody told me what to do if there was a terrorist attack outside my school! Besides, if I cave in now—

*(PAUL goes to hug ERIKA who stiffens but accepts the hug. AARON tries to take a picture. ERIKA shoos him away. She does not want a picture of the hug! It embarrasses her.)*

**ERIKA.** Aaron—don't—I don't want a memory of this.

**AARON.** You have no choice.

*(ERIKA, PAUL, and AARON exit as ADULT DORRIE comes forward.)*

**ADULT DORRIE.** I was at work. Which stopped. I rushed home, found my address book and started dialing. I had family in New York and D.C. I got through to D.C. easily. Everyone was fine. I took a deep breath and dialed New York. The lines were busy. I was going out of my mind so I sorted through my New York box. I found old photos from college—where I watched the Trade Centers being built. I had hated the towers. They were monstrosities with none of the charms of the buildings over which they loomed. But in time, they became a presence—it was how I gave directions when I lived in the Village. “Come up out of the subway at 14th Street, look at the Towers and follow them downtown two blocks. Then take a right and you are at my building.” They were supposed to always be there. Eventually, I reached my cousin Pati. “Are you okay? What about Peter? Grace? Pati, I *know* people in those buildings!” She said, “Dorrie, *everyone* knows someone in those buildings.” Later, as I went through the box, I found my diary from my grade school years. And the circle pin. A gift from Lanie. I heard the opening strains of Gershwin's *Rhapsody in Blue*. It brought me back to a time I would never forget.

*(We return to 1963. It is June and we are in Lanie's house.)*

**DORRIE.** Forget you? I won't forget you—you'll forget *me!* You'll be so busy at summer camp you won't think of me for five minutes!

**LANIE.** Just—take it, okay? You can wear it and think of me.

**DORRIE.** But—it's gold. I'll lose it. You know I lose everything.

**LANIE.** It's a pin, Dorrie! Pin it on and you won't lose it!

**DORRIE.** It'll fall off or I'll forget about it and throw it in the wash and it will be ruined.

**LANIE. DORRIE!**

*(LANIE pins the pin on DORRIE.)*

**DORRIE.** You're my best friend. I can't believe you'll be gone all summer. You should not abandon your best friend! You'll be in the mountains and I'm stuck here in Queens with nothing to do but sweat.

**LANIE.** You know my parents work and there's no one to watch us in the summer.

**DORRIE.** I'll miss you.

**LANIE.** That's why we need to give each other our most cherished possession—so when we miss each other—we can hold it and feel better.

**DORRIE.** I don't have anything to give you.

**LANIE.** A picture! We'll each bring a picture of ourselves—

**DORRIE.** —and every evening when the moon first comes out—we'll go outside with our picture and look at the moon and we'll be together because we are both looking at the same moon at the same time!

**LANIE.** Wow, Dorrie. Very dramatic! Let's do it.

*(LANIE gets up and hands DORRIE a copy of The Diary of a Young Girl.)*

**LANIE.** Remember I told you I wanted you to read Anne Frank's diary?

**DORRIE.** I've been meaning to read it. And I keep a diary.

**LANIE.** I know. And you should—because you never know.

**DORRIE.** Never know what?

**LANIE.** Just read it. I need to warn you—it has the “H” word in it.

**DORRIE.** The “H” word?

**LANIE.** Yeah. I'm not allowed to say it.

**DORRIE.** Oh! *That* “H” word! I'm not supposed to say it either.

**LANIE.** Really?

**DORRIE.** I swear.

**LANIE.** I'm not allowed to swear.

**DORRIE.** Me neither. I just mean—well—you can't say everything. Thanks for the book. I'll take good care of it.

**LANIE.** I know you will. And write in your diary every night. It's important to remember stuff. Remembering keeps people near you.

**ADULT DORRIE.** I took Lanie's picture everywhere. And had the most miserable summer waiting to be “Lanie-and-Dorrie” again. One word. Waiting for things to become normal.

*(In Minnesota, SAM and SARA come bursting into the house.)*

**SAM.** Today isn't normal!

**SARA.** Forget it, Sam. I get the computer first. It's still my day.

**SAM.** I just want to read what people are saying online. It'll only take a minute.

**SARA.** I'll never get you off! MOM!

*(SARA sees her mother with her memory box.)*

**SARA.** Oh, I didn't see you. What are you doing?

**ADULT DORRIE.** Going through stuff.

**SARA.** Did you hear from Dad? He's all right, isn't he?

**ADULT DORRIE.** He's fine. Grounded in L.A. But safe. I wish he was here. On a day like today—you want everyone close. I'll talk to him later.

*(Pleased with that pronouncement, SARA settles in at the computer.)*

**SAM.** And everyone else? Did you call Washington and New York?

**ADULT DORRIE.** I did and everyone seems to be okay. It was hard to connect to New York City. Even here in Minnesota—the lines are jammed. I did reach Pati on Long Island and she called everyone for me. They're all fine.

**SAM.** What about Peter? Doesn't he take the trains under the Trade Center?

**ADULT DORRIE.** Peter was out before the first plane struck. Really, Pati checked on everyone who was downtown.

**SAM.** And the cousins and all your other friends?

**ADULT DORRIE.** They're fine, Sam! Give it a rest!

**SAM.** Sorry. I'm just asking.

**ADULT DORRIE.** The others are in Queens and Long Island—I know they're okay. I'll check with them later—when things calm down.

**SARA.** What're you reading?

**ADULT DORRIE.** My diary from the sixties.

**SAM.** I'd like to read that!

**ADULT DORRIE.** It would bore you to tears!

**SAM.** I'm surprised you're not watching everything on TV. They had it on at school.

**SARA.** Not at my school.

**SAM.** That's because you're still in middle school. Can't trust little kids with the news.

*(SAM and SARA make a face at each other.)*

**ADULT DORRIE.** Enough you two. Today has been enough to cope with. I can't deal with the TV. Not yet.

**SAM.** Do you mind if I do? Since I can't get on the computer.

**ADULT DORRIE.** All right—but just a little bit and then homework. I'll have dinner at the usual time. We're supposed to be doing everything like it was a "normal day."

*(The lights change and we are back in New York City—September 12, 2001.)*

*(ERIKA has some homework in front of her. PAUL and AARON are looking up things about the attack on Paul's laptop.)*

**ERIKA.** Normal! All I hear is "go about your day as if it were normal." Is this "normal"? Pieces of paper floating from the sky? I HATE THIS "NORMAL" STUFF!

**AARON.** Wow Erika. Yesterday, you were in denial and now you're furious.

**ERIKA.** I'm following the twelve steps of the grieving process.

**AARON.** It's five steps. Twelve steps is for alcoholism.

**PAUL.** Where did you find these steps?

**ERIKA.** On the internet. I looked it up.

**PAUL.** Our city was attacked and you're looking up the grieving process?

**ERIKA.** It helps me to know what's expected. And I looked up other things. I really want answers but I don't think I'm going to get any.

*(GINA and LETIA come into their apartment.)*

**LETIA.** Why does Mom need to show I.D. to come home from work? Is that normal?

**GINA.** Everyone below 14th Street needs to show identification. It keeps the gawkers away.

**LETIA.** We can't go anywhere anymore. Does that make sense? Mom won't even let me go two blocks away to the bakery and get

my favorite turtle-chocolate brownie. Everyone I know can go out except us.

**GINA.** You're worried about getting some brownie?

**LETIA.** I know that sounds selfish. But that's what I would be doing if things were really "normal."

**GINA.** We're supposed to be doing homework. That's horribly normal.

**LETIA.** I don't have any.

**GINA.** Neither do I. Don't tell Mom.

*(GINA and LETIA exit and we return to ERIKA, PAUL, and AARON.)*

**ERIKA.** What do we do now? Just hang out and make believe nothing is different? Hello! It's different! When we look outside our classroom window we will know it's different! What's the answer?

**PAUL.** Acting normal isn't it.

**AARON.** *(Looking at his camera:)* Hate. Maybe that's the new "normal."

*(The lights change and we return to ADULT DORRIE.)*

**ADULT DORRIE.** The summer without Lanie slowly passed. I read *The Diary of a Young Girl* and learned about a time in history—that was consumed with hate. I grew taller and I grew in other ways I did not understand. I didn't like my height or my new knowledge.

*(The lights change and we are in Lanie's room. DORRIE and LANIE are each sitting holding a present. They are a bit more grown up now. DORRIE is wearing the circle pin that LANIE gave her.)*

**LANIE.** You look older, Dorrie. Do you think I do?

**DORRIE.** Your new haircut's neat.

**LANIE.** No more ponytails! Well—open it! You're going to love it. We danced to it at camp all summer.

**DORRIE.** This is so perfect—a real rock 'n roll album. Lesley Gore! Thank you! I adore her! Every time I play it, I'll think of you. Your turn. Open!

**LANIE.** It's—interesting—

**DORRIE.** It's an album of Shakespeare's music. They used it in the production at Williamstown. I have one also. The play was *Happy Birthday Shakespeare* and it had scenes from *Romeo and Juliet* and *As You Like It*...

**LANIE.** It is just so—"you," Dorrie. Thanks. It's perfect.

**DORRIE.** It's so quiet today. Where is everyone?

**LANIE.** They're all next door at some end-of-summer barbecue. I sort of planned this. I need to tell you things. Show you things.

**DORRIE.** Okay.

*(LANIE brings out a picture.)*

**LANIE.** This is my family—or some of it. My father's family. Some distant cousin from Hungary sent this to my Dad after the war. There are no pictures of my mother's family.

**DORRIE.** So, you *do* have tons of family—like I do.

**LANIE.** No. I don't. No grandmother or grandfather. No aunts, no uncles. My parents are all that's left of their families.

**DORRIE.** What happened?

**LANIE.** World War II. You read *The Diary*, right?

**DORRIE.** Omigosh. OMIGOSH! Hitler?

*(For LANIE, the name "Hitler" is a desecration of her home.)*

**LANIE.** *Dorrie!* I told you the "H" word was never, *ever* to be said in this house.

**DORRIE.** I'm sorry. Lanie, I thought the "H" word was—

*(DORRIE can barely say this word—it may be a huge whisper. She's never said the word aloud in her life.)*

**DORRIE.** —hell.

**LANIE.** Hell? No—I can say “hell.” Don’t Catholics believe in hell? How can you believe in something that no one can say?

**DORRIE.** I don’t know. Maybe I’m not a good Catholic.

**LANIE.** Well, I’m a good Jewish girl. You need to know that. You know how you’re going to be an actress when you grow up? Well, I know I’m going to marry a Jewish boy and have lots of Jewish children. To make up for all my relatives that can never have families.

**DORRIE.** Geez.

**LANIE.** I wanted you to read the diary—because my mother was in one of those places—you know—the camps. And my father. And because—my parents say it isn’t enough to know that six million Jewish people were killed. My father says each one had a name. A family. A dream. Those dreams were murdered, too.

**DORRIE.** Lanie? How did your parents survive?

**LANIE.** *That* we don’t talk about. We talk about how they met and came to America. You know—mainly happy things. But sometimes, when my father talks about the past—he says that *that* stuff can happen here.

**DORRIE.** In America? I don’t think so, Lanie. Things like that don’t happen here. We are the “land of the free and the brave”!

*(We move forward to Minnesota and New York City. It is September 13, 2001. SAM is hovering over SARA who is working on the computer.)*

**SAM.** We are not the “land of the free”! We’re under siege. Where have you been for two days? Don’t you listen to the news?

**SARA.** Stop reading my report. The Bill of Rights guarantees we will always be “free.” Social Studies is my best subject and I want this to be good.

**SAM.** I also need to do my homework! Go watch TV or something.

**SARA.** There’s nothing on TV anymore. I look forward to the History Channel and what do I get? Ground Zero! Two days of Ground Zero! What happened to history?

**SAM.** Ground Zero is history. You are living through history.

**SARA.** Well, I don't want to "live" history. I want to watch it! Anyway, I'm sick of TV. That's *all* we've been doing—watching stuff about the attacks. Listening to how all these people hate us! I'm thirteen and somewhere there are grown-ups who wouldn't mind killing me. Yeah, I'm done with TV until things go back to normal.

**SAM.** Don't you get it? This is normal, now.

*(The lights change and come up on GINA and LETIA. GINA is on the computer.)*

**LETIA.** It's not normal to be stuck at home. I mean, it's been two days already! I have no life! Mom goes out! If she can keep busy by feeding the workers, why can't we?

**GINA.** Mom says the air is really bad. We can't ruin our lungs until we're eighteen.

**LETIA.** Well, this is just great! We can't go anywhere or do anything. Maybe I should go stay with Dad for awhile. Maybe things are normal in Illinois.

**GINA.** You can't leave New York now! It's your home! It would be like leaving a family member who's sick. Look at this! There all these people from around the country who want to be with us and *you* want to leave!

**LETIA.** What are you talking about?

**GINA.** This website. "Kids Helping Kids." It's postings from all over. These kids are posting stuff about raising money to help. Look at this one—she's from Nebraska and she said kids were lined up at the local Red Cross donating their piggy banks! There's even a posting about chocolate.

**LETIA.** Chocolate? Someone's posting about chocolate on a 9/11 site? I just got interested.

**GINA.** See? She's from Iowa and says her family is baking hundreds of chocolate chip cookies to give away to emergency workers.

**LETIA.** I wish someone would bake me a chocolate chip cookie! I haven't had a brownie forever! I'm getting desperate. I'm even

ready to empty my bank account and buy one of those really expensive dark chocolate truffles they sell down the block.

**GINA.** Truffles?

**LETIA.** From the new chocolate shop. There are heavenly—but you know expensive. Like five dollars apiece.

**GINA.** Truffles. They're pretty special.

**LETIA.** They should be! They cost enough.

**GINA.** No, listen. We could do truffles. As long as we're locked up in here—we could make truffles and give them away to the workers right here in the City. It would solve all of our problems—we'd be busy, you'd be happy with chocolate and wouldn't talk about moving to Illinois—

**LETIA.** I don't know—we'd have to go out—

**GINA.** It's a great idea! I'm going to post it on the site. Maybe we can get lots of kids to do it—a sort of "Operation Chocolate Truffles." We can make them ourselves and we can arrange a delivery time—and kids from all over the country can go out and deliver them at the same time! It'll connect a whole bunch of us and help the workers at the same time!

**LETIA.** We'd need a recipe—

**GINA.** I'll look online. And we'll need to taste some. So we know what we're shooting for. Get your money and let's buy us a whole mess of chocolate truffles!

**LETIA.** Oh, no. I can't. I mean—I want to—

**GINA.** LETIA! You're right—Mom can't keep us inside forever. Let's go! Are we going to let a little thing like terrorism stop our lives?

**LETIA.** Do you think I'm afraid of the terrorists? Gina—it's Mom. If we get caught leaving home, she's gonna kill us!

*(The lights change to ERIKA, PAUL, and AARON on a rooftop. It is still September 13, 2001. ERIKA is waving her piece of paper, PAUL is on his laptop and AARON is snapping pictures.)*

**ERIKA.** All right Osama! Come get me! I'm here on top of my building! WHAT'S THE MATTER? AFRAID OF A TEENAGER? STILL HIDING IN YOUR CAVE?

*(AARON snaps a picture of ERIKA yelling.)*

**ERIKA.** Stop doing that! It's annoying! You've done nothing but snap pictures of all us for two days!

**AARON.** I want it all—I want a photo history—come on, Erika! Yell some more.

**ERIKA.** You do not need a close-up of me with my mouth wide open screaming! How unattractive is that?

**PAUL.** How many pictures have you taken anyway?

**AARON.** I don't know—hundreds.

**PAUL.** I wouldn't mind seeing them.

**AARON.** I haven't been able to look at them yet. I just snap them, put them on disk and leave them—for later.

**ERIKA.** I hate this “later.” I want to figure things out and no one at home wants to talk about it. They're more stressed out than I am!

**PAUL.** Hard to believe.

**ERIKA.** Mom's at home cooking which she never does. Dad's mapping out bus routes for me because he doesn't want me on the subway.

**AARON.** My dad's talking about moving us upstate.

**ERIKA.** You can't move!

**AARON.** I know.

**ERIKA.** The whole world is out of its mind!

*(ERIKA gestures with the scrap of paper.)*

**AARON.** What is that? You've been holding on to that since the attacks.

**ERIKA.** It came to me. During the evacuation.

**AARON.** Cantor Fitzgerald. Wasn't that where—

**ERIKA.** Yes. They were all “lost.” I just thought—someone was holding this a few minutes before it floated down to me and I grabbed it. I take it everywhere. I don't know why.

*(ERIKA goes back to the edge of the rooftop and resumes yelling.)*

**ERIKA.** JUST SO YOU KNOW, I AM MAD! MAD AT EVERYONE WHO DID THIS!

**PAUL.** Yeah—well screaming off of a rooftop isn't going to solve anything.

**ERIKA.** Do you have a better idea? Look at you, Paul—just sitting there with your computer. You haven't shown an ounce of emotion since all this started. At least what I'm doing is therapeutic. I'm not in avoidance numbing my mind with computer games.

**PAUL.** I'm not playing computer games. I found this site—geared for us—high school kids mostly—all talking about 9/11.

**ERIKA.** Really? It's nice to know someone else is discussing this—they sure aren't in my house. *(Reading:)* “Kids Helping Kids.” “On 9/11, I instantly knew that the world I lived in was over. Three days ago all I thought about was soccer. That's not important anymore. I live in San Francisco and we're all thinking of you on the east coast.”

**AARON.** They're from all over the country. “I live in Montana but I feel like I'm in New York, D.C. and Pennsylvania 'cause I spend all my time watching you on TV. I'm tired of getting everything from the news. They just say the same thing over and over.”

**PAUL.** Still think I'm wasting my time?

*(Lights switch to DORRIE and LANIE. It is early September 1963.)*

**DORRIE.** We're going to have the best time! I can't believe your mom agreed to it!

**LANIE.** I didn't know how she'd feel about me going to a Catholic church but she said it was a great idea. So, Saturday you'll go to services with me and on Sunday I'll go to services—

**DORRIE.** —mass—

**LANIE.** —mass with you.

**DORRIE.** It seems right. We just started school and now we're starting our own school—a “getting-to-know-each-other's-religion-school”!

**LANIE.** You do tend to go overboard, Dorrie.

**DORRIE.** I know. Of course, I won't understand one word of Hebrew.

**LANIE.** That's okay—I'll explain it to you.

**DORRIE.** Do I have to know anything special? I don't want to make a fool of myself.

**LANIE.** Just follow what everybody else does.

**DORRIE.** That's what I do in church!

**LANIE.** We're kind of like sisters, aren't we?

**DORRIE.** In the real world, sisters fight a lot.

**LANIE.** I think we should do something—something special to show we will always love and respect each other and our beliefs—even if they are different.

**DORRIE.** Okay. What do we have in common? We pray.

**LANIE.** Yeah...but different prayers. In different languages.

**DORRIE.** We use incense.

**LANIE.** We don't use incense.

**DORRIE.** We light candles sometimes—to pray for people or to remember the dead.

**LANIE.** Candles?

**DORRIE.** Yeah—just like you do on the Sabbath.

**LANIE.** That's it. Candles. We'll devise our own ceremony. Our own—what?

**DORRIE.** Religion?

**LANIE.** No. The world has enough religions. Our own—pledge. We'll write a pledge and vow to always, always understand each other and the world and—I don't know. I need to think.

**DORRIE.** I'll write down some ideas and you can go through them and we'll make it so beautiful and meaningful—it will be like we are really, truly sisters. Sisters in spirit!

**LANIE.** You're getting dramatic again.

**DORRIE.** But don't you think it could be absolutely wonderful? To be spirit-sisters?

**LANIE.** You should have seen my mother—when I asked if we could visit each other's religion. You wouldn't believe it.

**DORRIE.** What?

**LANIE.** She had tears. She never has tears. It's like all the tears were cried out of her a long time ago. She said, "Oh, Lanie—imagine if everyone visited other religious services. There wouldn't be so much hate."

**DORRIE.** Wow.

**LANIE.** Yeah. Double wow.

*(We return to Minnesota. It is September 13, 2001. Two days of newspapers from Minnesota and New York are piled up. E-mails about the attacks are everywhere. SAM and SARA are doing homework.)*

**SARA.** Wow, Mom! What are you going to do with all this stuff? Make a scrapbook?

**ADULT DORRIE.** No. I'm going to put them away. I think we should have them for all the stories that are inside. There's a lot of stuff you're going to wonder about—later.

**SARA.** When's Dad coming home from California? It's been two days!

**ADULT DORRIE.** He finally rented a car. He should be home tomorrow night. The radio says everyone is supposed to put a candle outside their door in memory of the victims. I'm going to do that.

**SARA.** It's pouring out!

**ADULT DORRIE.** I'll just stand outside with the votive and hold it for a little bit.

*(ADULT DORRIE exits.)*

**SARA.** I hate this. I want Dad home and Mom should calm down. She has to stop being so emotional.

**SAM.** You ever hear of compassion? Does that word ever push through your very little brain?

**SARA.** Shut up! We're lucky. With all the people we know in New York and D.C.—no one was even injured.

**SAM.** Doesn't what happened make any difference to you?

**SARA.** Of course it does! It's just that being glued to the news is not going to change anything. It happened! It's in these papers, the candles—everywhere! I hate it! And I NEED TO GET ON THE COMPUTER!

**SAM.** I was here first!

**SARA.** You are not the king in this house! What's taking you so long?

*(SARA goes over to the computer and looks over SAM's shoulder.)*

**SARA.** Oh, not you, too! You're as bad as Mom! You're not even doing homework. It's another 9/11 site.

**SAM.** Just take a look. See? It's all written by kids. We're all telling our own story of how we feel. I'm there—that's my posting. I talked about our family and how they're okay. And here's a brand new one—a posting about making chocolate truffles for Sunday and delivering them to firemen. See—you are interested.

**SARA.** I'm just looking to see if anyone else feels the same as I do.

**SAM.** Here you go.

**SARA.** I really have to do homework.

**SAM.** Sure you do.

---

*(The lights come up on LETIA typing on her computer. ADULT DORRIE is seen with a votive candle. SAM joins her. When LETIA is done, she shall join a vigil.)*

**LETIA.** Hi all. I live on 12th Street. I can't go home from school without showing my ID. How weird is that? And there are these planes overhead. They're supposed to be protecting us—but sometimes—when I hear them—I think—are we being attacked again? I'm thinking of staying with my Dad for a while. He lives in Illinois. Anyone out there from Illinois? I'm not allowed out of the apartment. The only time I do go out is when we all attend a vigil. But today my sister and I sneaked out to get ingredients for Operation Chocolate Truffle. In “normal” times, I was just a regular 8th grader who needs her daily chocolate.

**SARA.** I'm Sara. I live in Minnesota and I'm in the 8th grade. And I love chocolate, too. I know I feel—there's too much of everything. Is that horrible? There are vigils in Minnesota. But mostly they ask us to light a candle outside our doorway. My Mom's doing that right now. It seems sort of—useless. I am thinking of being part of Operation Chocolate Truffle. I think my mom would like that.

**PAUL.** I'm a high school senior in Manhattan who wants to be a filmmaker. Or maybe a molecular biologist. I think this is a great site because I am curious how people feel—especially those not from the East Coast. When you watch the news, do you think of it as real or do you feel like you're watching a movie?

**ERIKA.** Hello from New York. I'm a senior in high school and well—we saw a lot of stuff. Things I'm trying—

*(ERIKA stops for a moment and collects her thoughts.)*

**ERIKA.** It's nice to know you're all—

*(ERIKA stops and turns off the computer. She steps away.)*

**AARON.** I'm Aaron and a high school student in New York. I've been—taking pictures. For days. I think everyone reading this should go out and take pictures of the coming together so you remember that that is what you do in hard times—you come together.

*(AARON and PAUL join a vigil while ERIKA remains on the sidelines. Similarly, SARA is also not participating. DORRIE and LANIE enter. It is mid-September 1963. They have a large candle and two smaller ones.)*

**LANIE and DORRIE.** “Thousands of candles can be lit from a single candle and the life of that candle will not be shortened.”

*(DORRIE lights the large candle.)*

**LANIE.** Dorrie, this is beautiful.

**DORRIE.** Shhh. We have to respect the ceremony.

**LANIE.** But where did you get that quote?

**DORRIE.** From the library. I researched.

**LANIE.** Who said that?

**DORRIE.** Lanie! Stop interrupting! You do not interrupt important ceremonies!

**LANIE.** I want to know!

**DORRIE.** Buddha said it. I thought we should use some other religions in our ceremony. So we wouldn't get confused. Okay—my speech first. I'm reading all of Shakespeare's plays and I found this in my fave-rave, *Romeo and Juliet*.

**LANIE.** You're reading all of Shakespeare's plays?

**DORRIE.** You're interrupting again.

**LANIE.** Sorry.

**DORRIE.** My quote is short. When Romeo goes to a ball given by the Capulets—and you know Romeo shouldn't be there because his family is the enemy—

**LANIE.** *Dorrie!* Now who's getting off track?

**DORRIE.** Sorry! Romeo says, “I'll be a candleholder.” And I thought—you're my candleholder, Lanie. You light my way.

**LANIE.** I like that! Thank you!

**DORRIE.** Your turn.

**LANIE.** Okay—this is from—you know—The Diary. “How wonderful it is that nobody need wait a single moment before starting to improve the world.” That’s kind of what we’re doing. We’re improving each other’s world.

**DORRIE.** That’s so beautiful! Now, we each light our own candle from the large one. To show we will always help each other light our way.

*(They do so and look at each other.)*

**LANIE.** Now, blow it out! My Mom will tear me to pieces if she finds out I was lighting candles in the house when she was gone.

*(They quickly blow out the candles.)*

Dorrie—you know what this means, don’t you?

**DORRIE.** We’re spirit-sisters.

**LANIE.** So, if anything ever happens to one of us, we have to be there for each other. And if we disappear, we have to look for each other, okay?

**DORRIE.** What are you talking about? We’re not going to disappear.

**LANIE.** Just promise.

**DORRIE.** Of course, Lanie. I promise. *Now, who’s being dramatic?*

*(ALL exit with their candles as ADULT DORRIE steps forward with her votive.)*

**ADULT DORRIE.** I got up early and listened to the radio for what to do with my day. If a deejay told me to go outside my home at 5 p.m. with a candle—I did it. When they said to drive around with your headlights on at 6 p.m.—I drove around with my headlights on. I rushed home from work and was on the computer reading e-mails about 9/11. I printed everything. The mounds of paper grew. I couldn’t go to New York, so I brought New York to me. I’d been away for 18 years. It had been four—maybe five years since I took Sam and Sara to the city. We were there for the “dog days” in August. I took pictures of them on Ellis Island with the Twin Towers in the background. We were supposed to go to the top of the Trade

Center next. The kids had had enough. And I thought—next time we're here, I'll get them to the top. Next time.

#### Scene 4

*(September 14, 2001. ERIKA is wrapped up in some old homework and AARON and PAUL are checking the laptop.)*

**ERIKA.** I can't concentrate on the "Chick Project" for biology anymore. My eyes are glazing over!

**PAUL.** What?

**ERIKA.** The first draft is due Monday—that's the 17th. It's the 14th already and I'm not ready. I can't concentrate on anything!

**AARON.** Enough with the anger stage of grief. Move on to the next stage. It's the bargaining stage. I'll bet you can make a bargain with your teachers about the due date. They don't really expect that we're at home working on school projects.

**ERIKA.** But don't you see—I don't care about the stupid Chick Project! I just don't care!

**PAUL.** She's reached the "I don't care" stage.

**ERIKA.** I'm tired—I don't sleep. I hear—things.

**PAUL.** Are you reading the website I showed you?

**ERIKA.** When I read the posts—I keep thinking, "We're all just talking." I already do that. I write letters. To everyone. To our teachers, to politicians—

**AARON.** Really? Do they reply back?

**ERIKA.** I don't send them. They're sort of like a diary—where I can tell them what's on my mind. I can say anything because I know I won't send them. It's what Anne Frank said about writing about her mother. She wrote, "Better for hard words to be on paper than mummy should carry them in her heart."

**PAUL.** Deep, Erika.

**ERIKA.** Shut up, Paul.

**AARON.** I'd like to read some of your letters.

**ERIKA.** I'd like to see some of your photos.

**AARON.** When I'm ready.

**ERIKA.** Me too. I can't work on this anymore. I have to get out!

**AARON.** Got my camera. Where're we going?

**ERIKA.** I don't know...somewhere...anywhere...fire departments. What about fire departments?

**PAUL.** What about them?

**ERIKA.** Maybe I'll go around thanking firemen! And later, I'll go to the police departments.

**PAUL.** This could be interesting. Watching you thank total strangers.

**ERIKA.** Don't do me any favors.

**PAUL.** No. I like this. And I'm getting hungry. We can pick up a slice of pizza down the block.

*(The lights switch to SARA and LETIA on their computers. It is still September 14, 2001. LETIA is sitting with an almost empty box of chocolates. She could be smacking her lips, licking her fingers—she is definitely enjoying this.)*

**SARA.** Hi all. Sara from Minnesota here. I'm posting one of the billion chocolate recipes I found. Looks pretty easy. Try it out and see if it works for you. It's great to have so many people from around the country onboard.

**LETIA.** *(Mindlessly eating chocolate:)* Hey Sara. It's your friendly "chained-to-the-apartment-prisoner from New York." I've been doing research for Operation Chocolate Truffle which means I've been eating chocolate all day. I'll try out the recipe and get back to all of you. What's the worst that could happen? If anything goes wrong, we get to eat our mistakes and start all over again! *I'm loving this!*

*(LETIA writes the recipe on the back of her hand.)*

**GINA.** Doing homework?

**LETIA.** Research.

**GINA.** *You got more chocolate!*

**LETIA.** Yep. This is the best idea you ever had. Have a piece!

**GINA.** *(Looks at the box:)* Letia!

**LETIA.** What?

**GINA.** It's empty. You ate the whole box!

**LETIA.** No, I couldn't have—

**GINA.** You ate the chocolate-covered cherries! You hate chocolate covered cherries!

**LETIA.** I know.

**GINA.** Did you even taste any of it?

**LETIA.** I don't remember.

*(LETIA shows GINA the recipe on her hand.)*

**LETIA.** Doesn't this look tasty? Triple chocolate! Come on, Gina! Operation Chocolate Truffles is underway!

*(GINA and LETIA exit as DORRIE and LANIE are seen walking with some fallen branches in their hands. It is October 1963.)*

**DORRIE.** So why don't you have to go to school? Didn't you already take off a bunch of days? We've been in school a whole month and you get days off every week!

**LANIE.** It's Sukkot. I told you! We are not allowed to work the first two days of the holiday. School is considered work. So I can't go! Ha!

**DORRIE.** Weren't you just off for Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur? You get off all of my holidays plus you get to take off for all of your holidays!

**LANIE.** The advantages of being Jewish in a country that isn't Jewish! So, you're going with me to the synagogue to help build the shelter, aren't you?

**DORRIE.** After we come back from celebrating in Little Italy. Lots of good food. Zeppoles and sausage and peppers.

**LANIE.** Sausage isn't kosher.

**DORRIE.** So, have the zeppoles! They're like Italian doughnuts.

**LANIE.** Oh! I'd like that! What's your holiday about? Why don't you get off from school?

**DORRIE.** It's not really a holiday. It's a feast day. We eat. Now, tell me why you're building a shelter!

**LANIE.** You're changing the subject!

**DORRIE.** I know!

**LANIE.** We build them to remember the forty years the Israelites spent in the desert—living in temporary shelters. Most of our holidays are celebrations of hard times.

**DORRIE.** You celebrate hard times?

**LANIE.** No, silly. We celebrate that they're over.

*(DORRIE and LANIE walk off as ADULT DORRIE enters.)*

**ADULT DORRIE.** "Celebrate everything." Lanie's mother said that at least once a week. And we did. An "excellent" on a report card, every holiday, snowfalls—the end of hard times. Would there be an end to this hard time? I didn't see one. I wanted to be a part of the healing process—to wrap myself around Manhattan. At work, I was "on automatic." I managed to get the kids to school and make dinner. I thought I was doing just fine. Everything was so horribly normal in Minnesota. If you tried, you could ignore 9/11. I wasn't going to let that happen.

*(SARA enters with a tray of oversized, lumpy truffles as SAM sneaks by and grabs one. She carries a wooden spoon dripping chocolate.)*

**SARA.** What did you say about my truffles? Go on—say it again—I dare you!

**SAM.** Well, it does sort of look like—you know—a cow pie? Hey! I'm being nice here!

**ADULT DORRIE.** Do not throw chocolate in here!

**SARA.** Who's throwing chocolate? You just got lucky. Saved by your mother!

**ADULT DORRIE.** What is that stuff?

**SAM.** They're supposed to be chocolate truffles. You know—the stuff tastes pretty good. Too bad they're disgusting to look at.

**SARA.** If they taste good, it means I got the recipe right. Now, I just need to learn how to make them presentable. And Sam shouldn't be touching them. They're for—other people.

**SAM.** I'm other people.

**ADULT DORRIE.** They're not very appetizing. I would—throw them out.

**SARA.** They're thank you presents! For the emergency workers in our area.

**SAM.** Well, they're some of the more disgusting looking thank you presents I have ever seen.

*(SAM takes another one and exits.)*

**SARA.** Sam!

**ADULT DORRIE.** He's right, you know. I wouldn't give those away. If I were you, I would use molds.

**SARA.** Molds?

**ADULT DORRIE.** Chocolate forms—so the truffles don't spread. It doesn't really matter though. I don't see how a few truffles can make a difference.

**SARA.** I thought you'd like that I was doing this.

**ADULT DORRIE.** I just don't see what good they will do.

*(SARA leaves—the wind taken out of her sails. ADULT DORRIE returns to her “stuff.”)*

*(ERIKA, PAUL, and AARON enter. It is later that afternoon.)*

**ERIKA.** Did you see that firefighter with the paper chain? Who would think a paper chain made by second-graders could move a big guy like that to tears?

**PAUL.** It was sort of cool. I guess you never know what things make a difference.

**ERIKA.** If second-graders can do something, so can we.

**AARON.** What? You're going to make paper chains?

**ERIKA.** I don't think so. But something—maybe for our school.

**AARON.** I sneaked into school this morning to interview the workers for the paper.

**ERIKA.** Why didn't you tell us? I would've gone.

**AARON.** I thought only one of us should get arrested for breaking and entering. The school's used as a base for the emergency workers at Ground Zero.

**ERIKA.** I heard that.

**AARON.** There're cots everywhere. Crates piled up in corners. Everything's covered with dust.

**ERIKA.** The custodians will have a fit.

**PAUL.** The custodians are helping the effort!

**AARON.** I went to the art room and it was weird, you know? Sun everywhere.

**PAUL.** Really?

**AARON.** Yeah. And remember the view? Of the towers? Empty. There's just space.

**ERIKA.** What'd the workers say? Get anything good?

**AARON.** They were too busy to talk. I left pretty quickly. I was spooked.

**PAUL.** Go back to the part about the space—nothing but empty space. What about doing what Erika said? Something for the school?

**AARON.** Keep talking.

**PAUL.** We could fill the space. With something—huge—like murals. Two murals that represent the towers. They can be displayed—outside the school.

**AARON.** This is sounding good. Let's think of a design—

**PAUL.** No! I want to. Let me. We can all work on them but let me do the design.

**ERIKA.** All right. When do we do this?

**AARON.** This weekend. Before we go back to school. We need to do this before we all get busy.

**ERIKA.** Today's Friday. There won't be enough time to get everyone together. And we still have to get materials.

**AARON.** So, let's start. One of us will contact the school and we'll e-mail the students...and the teachers... Isn't this what you wanted? A project? No busy work. No TV.

*(As they exit, LANIE and DORRIE enter. They are going for a walk. It is November 23, 1963.)*

**LANIE.** No more TV! It feels so good to be outside!

**DORRIE.** No school. It's strange. Don't get me wrong—I'm happy to be free—but—not like this.

**LANIE.** President Johnson. I'll have to get used to saying that.

**DORRIE.** We're always going to remember this, aren't we? We'll always remember being called to the auditorium and told that President Kennedy was shot. I wrote it down in my diary yesterday. But I didn't write anything else.

**LANIE.** There was nothing else to write.

**DORRIE.** How does Mrs. Kennedy go on? How do her kids?

**LANIE.** I think you just do.

**DORRIE.** Lanie—how did your parents go on?

**LANIE.** What else could they do? They chose life. And now they have me and my brother. Hard to believe that Alex was part of the plan—but they love him.

**DORRIE.** Not everyone is given a choice though. President Kennedy wasn't.

**LANIE.** No, you're right. I'm always told to enjoy every minute of every day because you never know. Mom always says I shouldn't wish my life away. But I do. I look forward to—later. When I'm grown-up and can do what I want.

**DORRIE.** My mom says the same thing. They must have learned that in "Mom-School" or something. I'm always waiting for something—Christmas—or my birthday—or when I'm finally an actress!

**LANIE.** Maybe you'll be famous and you'll know all of the Beach Boys and you can introduce me!

**DORRIE.** I don't think Broadway actresses know rock 'n roll singers. But maybe I'll meet Ethel Merman.

**LANIE.** It's not the same.

**DORRIE.** You're right. Let's go to the park. No more thinking!

**LANIE.** Race you!

*(LANIE races off.)*

**DORRIE.** LANIE!

*(DORRIE follows. There is a light change as ADULT DORRIE is seen with SARA and SAM. It is the morning of September 15, 2001.)*

**ADULT DORRIE.** Dad should be home today. Nice that it's Saturday and everyone's home to see him. I want to talk to all of you and Dad. I'm thinking—maybe right after Christmas I might go to New York.

**SAM.** Really? You're not afraid?

**ADULT DORRIE.** I need to connect with family and friends.

**SAM.** I'd like to see the cousins.

**ADULT DORRIE.** I might just go alone.

**SARA.** Will all this stuff be put away before you go?

**ADULT DORRIE.** I guess I should clean up some. Before Dad gets home.

**SAM.** (*Looking at the picture of LANIE and his mother.*) That's Lanie, right?

**ADULT DORRIE.** Yes. Under my Christmas tree. Side-by-side with a picture of us from Hanukkah. She's one of the people I need to contact when things calm down.

**SAM.** Why haven't you called her yet?

**ADULT DORRIE.** It's—awkward. We haven't been in touch—since you two were little. She became the quintessential “Kool-Aid Cookie Mom.” She got out of Queens and settled on Long Island to raise her children. Four of them. A large, Jewish family in which she planned to celebrate everything. She got her dream.

**SAM.** You know it would be kind of cool if you took another picture of you two when you went to New York. Sort of complete the circle?

**ADULT DORRIE.** I was thinking it might be helpful—to visit my childhood again.

**SAM.** So, call her. Now.

**ADULT DORRIE.** Her number changed. I know it's unlisted—I don't know where I stashed it. I could write a letter. I have her address.

**SAM.** A letter! That would take years. This is the age of the internet. There are ways of finding people.

**ADULT DORRIE.** Once we promised we would call each other every New Year's no matter what. I'll see if I can locate a number for her. She lives in Manhasset.

**SARA.** She was real important to you, wasn't she?

**ADULT DORRIE.** Very.

**SARA.** I'd like to meet her.

**ADULT DORRIE.** You know—you should. Maybe I will take all of you. Enough with “later!” I should know her children and she should know you two. I'm going to get her on the phone and we're going to visit. There's dinner on the stove. Help yourself. I'm on a mission. I should have done this years ago.

*(SAM and SARA exit. ADULT DORRIE takes the picture and goes to the computer. As the lights change, ERIKA is on the phone, PAUL is designing a mural and AARON is on the computer. It is September 15, 2001.)*

**ERIKA.** That's great! All of it?... I don't know how to thank you. Yes, see you Sunday.

*(She hangs up the phone.)*

**ERIKA.** You're not going to believe this! All the painting supplies are being donated by parents.

**PAUL.** All the supplies? Because these murals are going to be enormous.

**AARON.** That's it! The last of the invites are out. I sent out an e-mail to the entire school body. And Principal Teichman is inviting some other schools. Someone should show up.

**PAUL.** Want to see the design? It's sort of rough—but I'm liking it.

**ERIKA.** A fountain—of healing. Like the Auden poem. “In the deserts of the heart let the healing fountain start.”

**PAUL.** ...and it will be placed in the rubble...and all these small trees will be nourished from the fountain. We'll put a phrase in all different languages. All these different cultures nourished by one fountain.

**AARON.** Not bad. What about the other mural?

**PAUL.** I don't know—I was thinking of being spontaneous... let's see what the others want to do.

**ERIKA.** This is going to happen! This is really happening! I feel so alive! Like I'm just waking up. It's our answer to the attacks and it will work!

*(The lights switch to LANIE and DORRIE. It is Christmas Eve, 1963. Silent Night may be heard in the background.)*

**DORRIE.** I can't believe you gave up a week in Florida to stay with me.

**LANIE.** When else am I going to be able to celebrate Christmas? It's a wonderful holiday.

**DORRIE.** I know. It's my favorite.

**LANIE.** And the mass—with all the candles—it was the best.

**DORRIE.** Yeah. One of the few times I don't mind church.

**LANIE.** Next week will be the New Year. What do you wish for?

**DORRIE.** That tonight will never go away. That every night could be Christmas Eve.

**LANIE.** Then it wouldn't be as special.

**DORRIE.** Do you know that tonight all of the angels sing in the heavens? Do you believe in angels?

**LANIE.** Well, we don't believe in them the same way you do—but yes, I believe in angels.

**DORRIE.** My grandma says that everyone has a guardian angel. A special angel to help guide you through life.

**LANIE.** Really? Do you have a guardian angel?

**DORRIE.** I do. You're my guardian angel.

**LANIE.** Sometimes you are so dramatic.

**DORRIE.** I know. So when the New Year comes, what will you wish for?

**LANIE.** I don't know. There will be so many New Year's. Let's promise to call each other every New Year's when we're old and tell each other about our life. You'll tell me what play you're in and I'll tell you about my children. Deal?

**DORRIE.** Deal.

**LANIE.** Here. I want you to open this tonight. While we're all alone in the quiet.

**DORRIE.** Lanie! I didn't expect to open—

**LANIE.** OPEN IT!

**DORRIE.** All right. Boy, you sure can be pushy.

*(Opening a framed picture of themselves:)*

**DORRIE.** It's us—from Hanukkah!

**LANIE.** I know! I have one also. And then we can develop the Christmas pictures and put them next to each other! Merry Christmas, Dorrie.

**DORRIE.** Merry Christmas, Lanie.

**LANIE.** Come on! Let's go look at the tree! I love Christmas trees!

*(DORRIE and LANIE run off. The lights come up on ADULT DORRIE at the computer. It is late afternoon, September 15, 2001. SAM and SARA enter.)*

**SARA.** Mom! Have you been on the computer all day? Don't you want to clean up for Dad?

**ADULT DORRIE.** I'm finding things. See—here. Elana Feur—graduate of NYU, 1973. That's her. Right name. Right time. I know she went to NYU. And graduated. But no record of her working. I told you—she's a housewife on Long Island. No street address. No phone number.

**SAM.** Maybe she volunteered or something. Everything's on the internet. Expand your search.

**ADULT DORRIE.** Okay. She probably belongs to a local synagogue. I can look some up. Wait. There's an Elana Feur Strasbourg—that's her married name—Strasbourg.

**SAM.** What does it say?

**ADULT DORRIE.** It says she's a graduate of Columbia Law School—so if it is her—she went to law school. A few years ago. She's a lawyer!

**SAM.** Click on that link. What's that say?

**ADULT DORRIE.** Something about "Lawyers for Children's Rights." I could see her being an advocate for children's rights. "Click below for further information..." Okay! Look! Sam! Sara! It's her. Older. But still beautiful. This is wonderful. I have to talk to her! I just have to!

**SAM.** Type "Elana Strasbourg." Leave out her maiden name.

**ADULT DORRIE.** All right. There's a lot here. This is wonderful—look—there's a list—

*(There is a silent pause as ADULT DORRIE stares at the computer.)*

**SARA.** Mom?

**ADULT DORRIE.** *(ADULT DORRIE is mesmerized by the list.)* It's—a listing—there are a lot of lists—excuse me—

*(ADULT DORRIE rushes out.)*

**SARA.** Mom!

*(SAM moves to the computer.)*

**SARA.** What's it say?

**SAM.** Elana Strasbourg, counsel for Cantor Fitzgerald...102nd floor of the World Trade Center...missing...

*(Fade to black.)*

*(ADULT DORRIE appears. She has a paper sack and her purse. She is carrying what she had in the opening monologue.)*

**ADULT DORRIE.** I couldn't sort out my thoughts at home. Waves of my childhood kept knocking me down. Lanie was—missing. I knew she was gone. And I understood the basis for my obsession with the attacks. I was looking for her. Running through my head were quotes from Anne Frank: "How wonderful it is that nobody need wait a single moment before starting to improve the world." I ran out to the store and bought gobs of gold tissue, candy boxes, ingredients and chocolate molds. Trivial? Perhaps. Suddenly, I needed Sam and Sara to be part of Operation Chocolate Truffle.

And Sara needed me to approve of her actions. I just thought—if my children could change a small corner of someone’s world—Lanie would like that. And I bought candles. After participating in so many candlelight vigils, I wanted to devise one just for Lanie.

### Scene 5

*(At rise there is a large mural unfolded depicting the “Fountain of Healing.” ERIKA, AARON, and PAUL are just finishing the clean-up. Paint cans and brushes are strewn about. The kids are in painting clothes. GINA and LETIA are over to the side with their chocolates. It is dusk, Sunday, September 16, 2001.)*

**ERIKA.** This is beautiful, Paul. Just stunning.

**PAUL.** Glad I’m good for something.

**AARON.** There were over four hundred people here! I can’t believe the turn-out. And Mr. Teichman says these can hang on the side of the school when we return.

**ERIKA.** Painting for peace. We made it happen. With six schools! When we go back, we’ll be able to look at these and remember today. Not just the attacks. It’s a start—maybe Phase 1 of the healing process.

*(GINA and LETIA enter.)*

**GINA.** Mom’s meeting us.

**LETIA.** Are you sure? She’s not too busy? We can actually walk around the streets of New York?

**GINA.** I talked to her, Letia. She’ll be here. She doesn’t want you to move to Illinois.

**LETIA.** I was thinking—maybe just a visit. We’ll talk about it.

*(Showing her the truffles.)*

**LETIA.** What do you think?

**GINA.** They look pretty good.

## **THIS PLAY IS NOT OVER!**

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