

Act II

Scene 3

Magic shop, 3 months later.

They are seated facing one another. Jane is holding up flash cards.

It's obvious they've been at this for a while...

JANE:

C'mon, Bernie!

Bernie shakes his head "no."

BERNIE:

Mad... I know... call Mom, "too sick" today...

Jane cannot help but laugh.

JANE:

How is it that you can remember that, but you can't remember how to say "tree"?

BERNIE:

(almost pounding on his chest)
Heart broken.

Jane looks away. She gets up walks around the shop, picking things up.

Bernie stands, somewhat shakily.

Bernie goes behind the counter. He gets 3 metal cups and places them on the counter.

BERNIE:

Jane.

He taps one of the cups on the counter.

Jane approaches the counter.

JANE:

You're gonna do a trick?

BERNIE:

No. You... pick!

Jane picks up a cup, there's nothing underneath.

Bernie holds out his hand to take it from her.

She gives it to him.

BERNIE:

Pick!

They go through the same motions, again, nothing there.

Jane looks at Bernie. He plays the innocent.

BERNIE:

Pick!

JANE:

So many options!

BERNIE:

PICK!

She picks up the metal cup, and of course, there's nothing there.

BERNIE:

Show me...

JANE:

What? What am I gonna show you, Bernie? Nothing — there's nothing there...

Bernie shakes his head "no."

JANE:

Nothing — I don't have anything to "show" you!

Bernie shakes his head "no" again and forcefully puts the metal cups on the counter.

Jane looks at him, astonished.

BERNIE:

Will.

JANE:

Will?

BERNIE:

You will...

JANE:

What, the shop? Bernie... I don't wanna talk about it... We took care 'a your will a long time ago... Now's not the time to talk about — (*uncomfortable, starts looking for something, some way out of this conversation*) — Flash cards? You wanna do the flash cards again?

BERNIE:

“Too sick” today...

JANE:

Just get off it, Bernie... I'm not gonna have this conversation with you — not today, not any day.

(forcibly calming herself down)

You're already getting better... The doctors even said — please, Bernie... just...

Bernie, frustrated, tries to get the words out correctly.

BERNIE:

Y-A-W-R.

Jane looks at him.

BERNIE:

Your... your will —

JANE:

I don't have one, and I don't have anybody to leave anything to...

BERNIE:

Your choice.

Bernie shakes his head “no” and lets out a sigh of frustration.

BERNIE:

Start from nothing, then make it — (*suddenly pulls out a rainbow scarf from his right sleeve*) Magic!

Jane starts laughing. She goes to Bernie. He starts laughing.

She hugs him, and as she does, she begins to cry — softly at first, it turns into a deep sob.

Bernie touches her hair softly, trying to calm her. He rubs her back, the rainbow scarf still in his hand.

Fadeout.

Scene 4

Nine months later.

The stage is dark.

BERNIE: (*v.o.*)

Save the best for last — big finish, big, big finish — then your exit!

(*pause*)

The trick is, you leave ‘em wantin’ more — ya’ always leave ‘em wantin’ more...

Pin spot on Jane wearing the cape she wore in the prologue. Stage remains dark behind her.

JANE:

He had three strokes in a row, one right after the other. He died after the last one.

They say Houdini never felt pain. People lined up to punch him in the stomach as hard as they could, and he never felt a thing.

You can see pain — you see it in a person’s eyes.

Blow after blow, in Houdini’s eyes, ya’ never saw a thing.

(*sits on a chair at the fringe of the stage*)

It was in the hospital when I really started to notice.

I kinda noticed it a little before then... I was bumping into things — I thought Bernie was starting to rub off on me or something...

Things seemed blurry, like really blurry, but kinda dark... and then they just started to fade, almost disappear.

I knew that hospital, I knew it like the back of my hand, and I could still see out of the sides...

It was when the doctors started giving me papers — papers to read, papers to sign...the words were all broken — the letters weren’t whole.

JANE (cont.):

I felt like I was signing Bernie's life away...

Blood vessels were popping, breaking, leaking in my eyes, leaving scars they said would never heal.

They said it's called macular degeneration...

Lights dim slowly until they fade out on her last words.

I could still see the lines by his eyes crinkle when he smiled, but none of us were smiling in that hospital.

Blackout.

Scene 5

Magic shop, one year later.

The shop has been turned upside down. Almost all of the merchandise is in piles scattered about.

A twin bed, unmade, is jammed in a far corner.

JANE: (off)

Rosie? (waits for answer) Roooooosie? (waits for answer) C'mon, girl, don't you wanna help me? (pause) Rose?

Jane enters. She trips over some wooden planks set in a pile by the back door.

She seems haggard, tired — much older than her 22 years.

She is holding a hammer and has a box of nails in her pocket.

She bends to retrieve the wooden planks. She sets them down. Feeling where one ends, she finds another to attach to it.

Her total reliance on her sense of touch reveals that she has indeed lost her vision completely.

She continues lining up the planks until she assembles a large board.

She begins hammering nails into the planks; she alternates between hammering and feeling how deep the nail has gone through the board.

When she completes the job, attaching all the boards, she gets up to admire her handiwork.

She then kneels down to retrieve it and strains to drag it across the shop to the display window, propping it up as best she can in the window.

Her barricade.

She then walks a few steps and bends, searching for a pile. She stumbles on one and begins bringing items to the barricade site and depositing them there.

Her stockpile of tricks.

After she has cleared most of 3 piles, she moves just beyond the front window to the far wall, where the coffin/box is.

JANE:

You're not in here, are you, Rosie?

She tries desperately to pull her hand out, but cannot help herself. She lingers for a few long moments, tracing the outline she once knew so well.

At first, she seems happy, but she quickly becomes angry.

Jane kneels down on the floor, on all fours. She crawls, desperately searching for another pile. She soon finds one, and proceeds to pick things up and bring them to the coffin/box. She fills it until it is overflowing, then lowers the lid.

Jane begins kicking the wall near the coffin until she hears a clanging noise. One sword falls right on her feet.

She bends over and picks it up. She then proceeds to the front door and slides it through the handle of the door, blocking the doorjamb, momentarily revealing her natural grace.

Light change.