

DAVID: Don't go. What's life? What's it cost?

GILLIAN: *(Softly)* Ten cents.

DAVID: That's cheap.

*(The lights fade around GILLIAN as she exits. RACHEL enters.)*

RACHEL: That's life.

DAVID: What's life? Don't answer that question.

RACHEL: What are you doing out here, Daddy?

DAVID: Just catching up on the stars, kiddo. Virgo's rising and . . .

RACHEL: We have company.

DAVID: I know.

RACHEL: Who are you talking to?

DAVID: Come on now, kiddo, let's not have any eavesdropping. You know that sometimes I get a bit preoccupied.

RACHEL: You talk to Mommy, don't you? You come out here every night and talk to Mommy. And I'm not supposed to say anything, am I? It's like we've had this secret for a whole year. Daddy, some nights you are out here for hours. What am I supposed to think? That's why I had to go away this summer. I didn't want to have this secret. I don't want to keep hearing you and pretend that I don't. *(Pause)*

DAVID: I was pretty bad to you today, kiddo. I'm sorry.

RACHEL: Did you hear me, Daddy?

DAVID: Yes. I heard you, Rachel. Would you like to spend more time with Esther and Paul?

RACHEL: Do you want me to go back with them?

DAVID: I want you to be happy.

RACHEL: Daddy, please don't blame yourself for what happened on the boat.

DAVID: I'm trying, kiddo.

RACHEL: Daddy, I'd change things if I could, but I don't know how. If I could make it me who fell instead of Mommy . . .

DAVID: Now you stop that! You don't think that, ever, ever. You promise me that, right now.

RACHEL: I promise.

DAVID: You're my best girl, always and forever. I just want you to have what's best for you.

RACHEL: That might mean me going back with Paul and Esther. *(Pause)*

DAVID: I don't know. Maybe . . . *(Pause)*

RACHEL: You go walk. I know you have regular habits.

DAVID: *(Kissing her.)* Don't get cold.

RACHEL: I won't.

*(DAVID exits. After a beat, GILLIAN enters and moves slowly toward RACHEL, stopping when she is standing directly behind her. GILLIAN lifts her hand and points a finger skyward. A star falls, a sliver of light across the stage. GILLIAN points again, another star falls. GILLIAN's arms reach down over RACHEL. RACHEL's hands slowly reach up over her head. Slowly, the heads and hands of both become tightly wrapped, but not touching. RACHEL looks skyward. She is crying.)*

RACHEL: Happy birthday, Mommy.

*(Lights fade to black.)*

(End of Act One)