

When Angels Weep

Even In Death There Is Life.

By: Laura Wright

Cast:

The Narrator: The Narrator is never seen. The voice is female, and sounds in her mid-twenties. While often emotional, there is no outburst or indication she is overwhelmed or too upset to speak.

Maggie Chamberlain: An attractive, middle-aged woman. Maggie is graceful and kind, she is very neat in appearance. She wears short salt-and-pepper hair with glasses.

Everett Chamberlain: Everett is a large man who is tall and stocky. He has a ruddy complexion and a comb-over at the beginning of the play. It thins and disappears as the play progresses, consistently with his treatment. During the course of the play, his body changes. His body begins to retain fluid. By the play's end, he has gained 50 lbs from fluid retention due to the medication.

Lisa: The eldest daughter. Lisa is in her late twenties with dark hair and eyes. She is the matriarch of the sisters and behaves more like a mother to her younger siblings.

Melissa: The middle daughter. Melissa is tall and has light brown hair with blue eyes. She is more alert and seems to sense what Elizabeth is feeling, more so than the other two women.

Elizabeth: The child. Elizabeth looks much like Melissa and is the “baby.” She is very fragile although tries to keep it hidden throughout the course of the play. She is as tall as Lisa, but never seems to stand up straight.

Dr. Eugene Fields: Dr. Fields is a younger doctor who only recently became a neurologist. This is his first patient with such a deadly and debilitating disease and while always behaving professionally, is visibly shaken and involved with the family.

The Angel: This mysterious figure has no set appearance. He appears in dim lighting and the most noticeable quality is his attire. He has dark hair, but a pale complexion. His voice is commanding, while still low and gentle. He doesn't show emotion.

Narrator:

Her voice initially suggests sadness and emptiness. Her words are carefully chosen:

“It was my thirteenth year... when my father died. In all of those previous years, I never imagined the fate that lay ahead for my family. For seven months, he wasted away, running and desperate, and at the end peaceful and loving. Dylan Thomas captured it best:

‘Do not go gentle into that good night,
Old age should burn and rave at close of day;
Rage, rage against the dying of the light.’”

“When it first happened, I wondered why my father did not rage. Why didn’t he fight just a little harder? Why were the adults surrounding me so willing to accept what had to be a lie? He wouldn’t leave. He couldn’t leave. How dare they all force me into that hateful possibility?”

Voice grows stronger and angrier.

“I would not go gentle. I would burn and rave. It was impossible. My father was not sick, he was never ill in any way. How could I accept it? How could I tolerate such a foreign concept?”

ACT I

March 1988, Bristol Memorial Hospital.

Scene opens in emergency room diagnostic room. Stainless steel shelves and a hospital bed decorate the stark room. A long, steel strip crosses the middle of the wall behind the bed with outlets for monitoring machines and oxygen supply. Doctor sits on small stool while an older couple watch him. Their faces are anxious and frightened. The woman is wearing a cotton shirt with matching pants while the man is in the bed.

The doctor is struggling with the news he has to give.

Dr. Fields:

“I’m sorry to tell you this. I’m afraid it’s terminal, the cancer is in both your brain and lung

tissues. I can't tell you how sorry I am...."

Flips through a few papers on the clipboard. Seems to be searching for any spark of hope inside the notes and results. Clears his throat as if to suppress his own anxiety.

"I can't begin to understand what you are facing, but I will do all I can."

Maggie:

"Are you sure? Could you be wrong? Could the test results have an error? Is there hope?"

Maggie looks steadfastly at the doctor. Her stare is obviously uncomfortable for him. Everett is pale and silent, his complexion is sickly and drawn. He reaches a hand out to her and she takes it. Both husband and wife are numbed and can't breakdown.

He keeps his strength for her, she forces herself to ignore her breaking heart. She barely sheds a tear while the doctor speaks. Her resolution is keen and unwavering.

Dr. Fields:

"Of course, there's always hope. We will try radium, chemotherapy, and every other cure known to man. We will treat this aggressively. Before you give up any hope, realize we might beat this. There's always a chance of remission and no guarantee that this will spread further with treatment. I will try my best, I promise you. I haven't lost a patient, yet. I don't intend on losing you."

The doctor looks at the man on the bed. Strangely, the middle-aged gentleman smiles. Maggie wipes her eyes with a few of the tissues from the table beside her husband.

Mr. Everette Chamberlain:

"I just don't believe it. Maggie, I've never been sick a day in my life. Well, discuss this when we get home. I need to see you all are taken care of, if it's true."

Everette raises his bed with the controls. He is weak and exhausted. He looks as though he will break down, yet is not inclined to be emotional. His character holds some suspicion that the doctor is wrong, that the results are incorrect.

Maggie:

“Don’t talk like that, Everette. The doctor just said we might beat this. You heard him.
There’s no need to talk like that.”

Her voice tells exactly what she is thinking. She can take anything, but his departure. She can deal with any suffering, as long as she doesn’t do it alone. While she is crushed by his hopelessness, she builds her strength mentally.

Everette:

“Please, Maggie. Let me do this right.”

Maggie:

“You aren’t going anywhere, Everette. You’ll be right here with us. Doctor, what about surgery? Could he have the tumor removed?”

Dr. Fields:

He looks unsure of how to respond. When he replies, he speaks slowly.

“Well, Ms. Chamberlain, I’m afraid that isn’t an option. You see, the tumor on his brain... It has ‘roots,’ if you will. The extensions go deep within the brain. I’m sorry... It’s inoperable. But, we have so many other treatments available.”

Couple fall silent. Maggie’s cries whisper through the dimming room. Everette resumes his stare at the ceiling while the doctor studies the notes further.

Everette falls asleep and Dr. Fields looks at Maggie:

Dr. Fields:

“Will you be okay, Mrs. Chamberlain? I need to go to the front. He should be waking in a few hours. The sedative we gave him is not long-lasting, but it is very strong short-term.”

Maggie:

“Thank you, doctor. But, I’m fine. I’ll sit here with him for a few minutes longer.”

Dr. Fields:

“Call if you need anything. I’ll be back soon.”

She thanks him again and he leaves the room. She watches Everette for a moment in silence. She softly whispers to him:

Maggie:

“Everette? Everette?”

There is no answer. He is heavily into slumber and doesn't move.

“You couldn't go to a doctor, could you? When they removed that tumor when you were young, you just couldn't go back. Oh, Everette, why? Why did it have to be this way? I don't even know where to start. You know, I knew we'd see our fortieth wedding anniversary. I just *knew* it. Why couldn't we? Even with the trouble we had, as many times as we were going to end it, we never did. Then, Elizabeth came along... now, this... This horrible end.”

She stands and paces as she speaks.

“You had to seem so damned strong. Why couldn't you swallow that pride and admit you were human? Admit to yourself that you could lose your life. As we have lost our own.”

Grabs a handful of tissues from the box and sobs hard, she covers her nose and mouth to silence her own fury and injustice.

“Cancer. Dear God in Heaven. Why? Why wouldn't you ignore the pride that killed you? Why couldn't you just listen? I hate you for putting us here. I hate you for leaving me like this. You aren't even strong enough to talk to me now. If you'd listened to me, we would be home, now. You would've gotten treatment and they could've helped you stay with us.”

The lights dim and the stage goes black. In the darkness of the stage, the narrator speaks again:

“Though wise men at their end know dark is right,
Because their words had forked no lightning they
Do not go gentle into that good night....”

“No, my father did not go gentle into that good night. He did not follow them in accepting his fate. When the realization hit, he did not accept the end. Nor did I. I refused to accept his fate with every shred of denial in my being. How can a child accept something so hopeless?”

Act II:

Scene opens in the waiting room. Three daughters wait, side-by-side. All look frightened, with hints of the same desperation carried by Maggie. The girls rise and go to their mother when she exits the double-doors from the patient area.

Lisa:

“What is it, mom?”

Maggie:

“It’s cancer. They want to do all they can.”

Melissa:

“How serious is it, mom?”

Maggie:

“Six months...”

She fights to prevent the tears which slip past her eyes.

“They give him six months to live. They’ll try everything they can, but you know how that is.”

Silence envelopes the group for a moment. Separate looks of sorrow and confusion, all equally touched by every word Maggie speaks. Attention goes to Elizabeth. Her mind has never had to deal with such a crushing blow. All her life, her father didn’t even have a cold, no flu, no sickness of any kind. She is unaware of how to deal with such news. Her denial is open.

Elizabeth:

“He’ll be fine, mom. He can’t die. They’ve made a mistake, that’s all. I bet they’ll have this cleared up in a few hours.”

Maggie:

“Honey, I know it’s hard.”

Maggie awkwardly tries to make Elizabeth realize it isn’t a mistake. Her approach is too gentle and the child is unaware of what she is saying.

Elizabeth:

“Hard? What’s hard?”

She is indignant. Although, she is respectful and does not protest openly or aggressively, the crowd can see she is not accepting the news.

Lisa:

“We’ll get through it.”

Pats Melissa’s hand with the knowing comfort a big sister has. She puts an arm around Elizabeth, although the child seems oblivious to the gesture.

Melissa:

“Yes. It’s okay, Liz. Don’t worry.”

Puts arm around Elizabeth.

Melissa:

“Are they going to keep him?”

Maggie:

“Yes, for observation. They are starting a new line of testing tomorrow. I am staying here with Everette. Elizabeth, you can stay with Lisa.”

Lisa:

“How did dad handle the diagnosis? I know how he hates doctors.”

Maggie:

“Surprisingly well. I think it’s the sedatives. They’ve kept him relaxed....”

The first of her tears start. She tries to hide her emotion from Elizabeth, but can’t

fight them. Her tears are streaming, but she has to hold fast to her own stability. She has a daughter to support.

“A cold. A goddamned common cold. That was all he was *supposed* to have. I knew when they sent him here from the doctor’s office it was something bad. They saw the tumor. They looked in his eye with one of those little lights and saw a tumor. That’s why his eyes have been bothering him.”

The older girls gather, all crying and embracing. The baby is not emotional. She watches them intently, but with reserve.

Narrator:

“Good men, the last wave by, crying how bright
Their frail deeds might have danced in a green bay,
Rage, rage against the dying of the light.”

“Like my father, I raged. I didn’t want to hear how bad he’d gotten. I didn’t want to know he was fading, that his light was dying. My family openly discussed his symptoms, his bad spells. Although they became more frequent, I would not accept it.”

Her voice grows stern and unyielding. “I refused to accept it.”

ACT III

April 1988

Scene opens in a neat living room. Brown paneled walls and light tan carpet. This scene is where the majority of life takes place while Everette is ill. The family gathers in the room, and always has.

Everette is showing signs of his illness. His hair is graying, while it was a comb-over style before he became ill, it is much thinner. His stomach is slightly swollen from fluid buildup. His exhaustion is obvious as they talk.

We view the living room from the front, a large couch on the left with the entrance to the kitchen behind it. The front door is on the right and Everett's recliner is on the right. The room is paneled and on the right wall, behind Everett's chair, is a large picture window. An organ is pushed up against the corner of the far left.

Maggie is folding clothes on the couch. She rambles about the local gossip.

Maggie:

"You know, that woman still talks like she always did. Gossip, gossip, gossip. It's like she never stops, always someone to talk about and someone to criticize. What is going on in her mind?"

Everett:

"She's a hot-air balloon with a slow leak."

He smirks at his humor and Maggie giggles. It's a good day, he is weak, but still able to laugh.

Maggie:

"I'm more apt to believe it's the Goodyear with a large puncture."

Elizabeth is the only child there. She quietly studies her father and still doesn't know how to take the changes in his physical features. She is silent and her eyes travel from parent to parent. After a moment she leaves the room.

Everett:

"You know... Maggie. Haven't we came a long way? You remember that apartment we lived in when we were first married? Those thin walls and our greedy landlord? I've been thinking a lot of those years... I was a bastard."

His eyes drift off into memory.

Maggie:

Abruptly turns her attention from the clothing to her husband. She snips:

“Now, Everett. Don’t be that way. You were young. We both were.”

Everett:

“It does bother me, now. It bothers me a lot. I treated you horribly.”

Maggie:

She puts a pair of folded pants on the stack by her. She speaks firmly and stops working on the clothing. She doesn’t show any sign of doubt or hesitance:

“What’s done is done, Everett. We’ll never have those days back. It’s no use to look back with sadness. You learn from it and go on. There were good times, focus on those. Life isn’t wine and roses, ever. Now, no more about that. We got two beautiful girls from that time, didn’t we?”

Everett:

“Yea. They are beautiful and smart. They take after their mother in so many ways.”

Maggie:

She giggles and her face looks years younger.

“It had to be, Everett. Everything. Nothing happens by accident. We struggled for twenty years to get everything we have. We’ll go as far as we can to live.”

Everette:

“I wonder why we’re going through this. How long will it be before I’m better? I know the doctor said it would be extended treatment, but I’m useless. I need to get better. This place is falling apart without me. Did you see the guttering? I need to fix that spot by the eave.”

Maggie:

“Not now. Doctor Fields said...”

Everette:

“What does he know?”

Maggie:

Hurt by his denial, but ignoring the verbal blow.

“It will take some time, Everette. Healing always does.”

Everette:

“It’s not like God wants me. Why would he kill me?”

ACT IV

Elizabeth walks in to her bedroom and begins writing in a journal. She speaks as she writes:

Elizabeth:

“I still don’t understand why they think he’s dying. Aside from looking like he has the flu, I don’t see why they think he’s dying. He looks perfectly healthy to me.”

She pauses a moment to consider what she wrote. She begins again:

“Why do I have to go through this. Why does everyone treat me so strangely? They pity me so, and I don’t know why. He isn’t going to die, not daddy. Not ever.

“In all of my life, the one person who’s been there constantly is daddy. He’s never sick. Never too tired to do what has to be done. Who is this person? Where is my daddy?

“I think God hates me. Look at what he’s doing. Other girls worry about boys, about their looks, about their clothes. They don’t have to wonder if their father is dying. They don’t have to lay awake and listen to what I hear. Every night, I know it’s coming. Something. Something horrible. But, I can’t believe it. How do you begin to speak to someone knowing their dying? Knowing your time is short? Knowing the clock is ticking? I can’t. What is this new and horrible distance?”

Lightly cries as she writes. She constantly glances over her shoulder to verify no one has opened her bedroom door.

ACT V

Scene returns to living room with Everette and Maggie. Mood has changed, for both adults are on the verge of tears. They speak softly, as not to let Elizabeth know what they are saying.

EVERETTE:

“Maggie, I want to be buried over the hill. Where your father is buried.”

MAGGIE:

“Are you sure? You father and grandfather are buried in that cemetery in Tennessee.”

EVERETTE:

“My home is here... my land is here. We worked all our lives for this. We have enough saved up to pay off the house and car. Have you heard from the attorney about Social Security?”

MAGGIE:

“They rejected our claim, Everette. They won’t pay us anything, but our attorney knows what he is doing.”

EVERETTE:

“Incredible, isn’t it? I’m dying, be dead within six months, and they aren’t willing to help you and Elizabeth.”

MAGGIE:

“We’ll get help, it’ll be okay.”

EVERETTE:

“A man works his fingers to the bone for thirty years and you’d think he could get a little help. I paid and paid into Social Security. I have five doctors behind me. Two medical doctors, neurologists, radiologists, all of that and nothing. They’re still refusing to help.”

MAGGIE:

“Well, you can’t give up hope, Everette.”

She walks to his side and places her arms around him.

“We’ll be fine.”

EVERETTE:

“I can’t rest until you all are taken care of.”

MAGGIE:

“Now, enough of that.”

Narrator:

“Wild men who caught and sang the sun in flight,
And learn, too late, they grieved it on its way,
Do not go gentle into that good night.”

Act IV

May 1988

Scene opens in same living room. Maggie and Everette are alone again. Everette is showing signs of his illness in full force. His hair is gone from chemotherapy, all that remains is thin, sparse patches of white hair barely visible. He has retained fluid and it appears he's gained much weight. Purple-marker lines extend from the sides of his eyes to above his ears, guiding lines for the radium laser to travel.

The room seems darker, and Maggie is more withdrawn. Everette looks more desperate and the shock has given way to anger and bitterness. He has no peace and feels full of venom at the terrible fate life has given him. Maggie attempts to soothe him as best she can, but not even her encouragement and love can ease the horror inside Everette.

EVERETTE:

"I can't take it. I'm too weak, I'm worthless."

Everette tries to open a jar without success. The new weakness has sapped him of desire to live.

MAGGIE:

"Now, Everette. Don't talk like that. You're fine, you're just ill. The doctors are doing all they can."

EVERETTE:

"Well it isn't enough. I'm dying, Maggie."

MAGGIE:

"Don't you think I know that? I spend all my time terrified of what the future may hold."

Maggie is unaccustomed to talking to Everette in such a manner. However, the previous month has brought him further and further into the throes of despondency. At times she feels crazed by that lack of support, and the drastic change in her husband's attitude. She suddenly realizes how much her own words hurt him.

MAGGIE:

"Everette, I'm so sorry. We must have faith, it will be alright."

EVERETTE:

"Faith in what?"

His rage begins to raise. The acrid tone grows louder as Maggie tries to keep his mind from the direction it's going in.

MAGGIE:

"Faith in God. We will survive, Everette. We will be fine."

EVERETTE:

"Wake up, Maggie. God has it our for me. Look at this, this, this death he's given me. A long slow death and there's no way out. I might as well go up to the barn and hang myself because it's going to happen regardless."

MAGGIE:

"Don't talk like that, damn it. Don't you dare give up. What if Elizabeth heard you? What if Melissa or Lisa heard you? How do you think it would make them feel?"

EVERETTE:

"They would live. Literally, Maggie. They will live."

He sighs deeply, his mind far away. Both look like they are on the verge of a breakdown and the tension is smothering them.

MAGGIE:

"You need to make peace, Everette. Even if only for yourself. You deserve it."

EVERETTE:

"There is no peace, Maggie. Peace is a pipe dream, a fantasy, all that exists for me is death. I lay awake at night and wait to see if the angel of death will come for me. You can keep God, he's given me nothing, but pain."

Maggie is silent and stares at him. There is a knock at the front door and Maggie answers with a smile. It is the minister Bill Vermillion, a man she grew up around. He isn't surprised by Everette's coldness, his manner is patient and calm.

BILL:

"Hello, Maggie, Everette."

Maggie motions for him to sit on the opposite side of the couch. He cautiously watches Everette for signs of aggression. Everette won't look at Bill, he looks at his hands and clenches his jaw.

BILL:

"I wanted to talk to you, Everette. I want to help you."

EVERETTE:

"I'm sorry, Bill. You can't help me. No one can."

BILL:

"God can."

EVERETTE:

"Look, I appreciate your time, Bill. But, I think God has already did enough. Look at me. I'm a freak, a monster. I'm bloated like a rotten carcass and you want me to go gracefully? Just give up and leave?"

BILL:

"Everette, no one can take it away, although we would all love to. We don't want you to suffer, we don't want you to leave. Above all, we don't want you unhappy. Being angry won't change it. Do you think your temper will erase the results at the hospital?"

EVERETTE:

"No."

BILL:

"Don't you think your family would give anything to see you better?"

EVERETTE:

"Yes."

BILL:

"Then stop fighting us, Everette. Stop pushing us away. Surely you can't believe God has it out for you, he has called you home. I shudder to think of what we'll have to deal with as time moves on, and you will be safe and free of pain. Free of agony and fear, you will be eternal."

EVERETTE:

"I don't want to be eternal, I just want to live."

BILL:

"You will live, Everette. Through God and those who love you, you are already immortal. No time can erase you."

Lights dim and scene fades into blackness.

Act V

Narrator:

"Grave men, near death, who see with blinding sight,
Blind eyes could blaze like meteors and be gay,
Rage, rage against the dying of the light."

Scene opens in small bedroom. The walls are covered with a tan wallpaper, tiny brown flowers scatter the paper. Twin beds are in the room, and Everette lay in one.

He is alone in the room and an angel visits.

It is not the average angel, this is a large man in black clothing. He is twice the size of Everette and towers over the man in the bed. Everette wakes and is strangely calm to the ethereal man. The angel appears to glow in the dim room.

His hands are clothed in black leather gloves, a black overcoat cascades to the floor.

EVERETTE:

"Is it time?"

ANGEL:

"No, not yet."

EVERETTE:

“What are you doing here?”

ANGEL:

“I came to talk to you, Everette. I think you know why.”

EVERETTE:

“I can think of so many reasons.”

ANGEL:

“Everette, let go of your hate. Your rage. Just let it go. You’ll die faster with that in your soul.”

EVERETTE:

“How can I let it go? I have a family to support, I have a life I need to take care of.”

ANGEL:

“Everette, it will all be taken care of. You can’t change what will be.”

EVERETTE:

“Why do I have to die now?”

ANGEL:

“Because it is your time, Everette. Be still for a moment.”

Angel waves his left hand over Everette’s body, for a moment Everette has a slight seizure. He looks at the angel with question on his face.

EVERETTE:

“What was that?”

ANGEL:

“I want to know how it felt.”

EVERETTE:

“I felt like a boy, a young man. Everything was...was....”

ANGEL:

“Without pain?”

EVERETTE:

“Yes.”

ANGEL:

“Without cancer?”

EVERETTE:

“Yes.”

ANGEL:

“You didn’t feel weak or tired?”

EVERETTE:

“No. I felt like a young man again.”

ANGEL:

“I’ve given you a taste of what you can look forward to, Everette. But, this will only be your fate if you make peace in your life and in your heart. And with God.”

Scene fades with a soft sob from Everette.

Act V

Narrator:

“And you, my father, there on the sad height,
Curse, bless me now with your fierce tears, I pray.
Do not go gentle into that good night,
Rage, rage against the dying of the light.”

*It is now June, and the Summer has arrived with a brutal heat wave.
Scene opens with Maggie and Everette alone again in the living room. Everette has worsened, his weight is up to an uncomfortable point. He is barely mobile, suffering dizziness and fainting spells.*

Maggie is pallid and looks thinner, her face is drawn from weeks of worrying.

MAGGIE:

"It's not over, Everette. They may've refused, but our attorney is appealing it."

EVERETTE:

"A man works for years, Maggs. He works for years and all he asks for is that his family is taken care of. I'm dying fast, and the Social Security Board has refused our claim again. How could they do that?"

He hits the side of the chair. His punch is light from his weakness.

EVERETTE:

"How the hell could they refuse us when I'm dying? How many people get on it and don't even need it? Yet, when a person is dying, they shut the door in his face."

He wipes his eyes quickly. He doesn't allow any tears to come forth although he looks like he will suffer a breakdown at any time.

"It's hopeless. I used all I had saved to pay off the house and car for you and Elizabeth. I know Melissa and Lisa will be taken care of."

MAGGIE:

"We'll all be taken care of."

EVERETTE:

"What good will an appeal do? They've already refused."

MAGGIE:

"Everette, if it takes it, I will take this to our Congressman. Don't you worry, I'll help."

In a strange show of affection, Maggie walks to Everette and they embrace. Tears finally show, but silently. They continue talking.

EVERETTE:

"I was so mean to you when we were young."

MAGGIE:

"We were young. That was years ago, and is nothing for you to worry about now."

EVERETTE:

"My mind returns, Maggie. I re-live all those times when I was so cold."

MAGGIE:

"I don't want to hear another word about it. Everette Chamberlain, that was twenty years ago. It's over, I forgave you and won't hear anymore about it."

EVERETTE:

"I can't help, but think of what life will be like when I'm gone."

MAGGIE:

"I don't want to think of that now."

EVERETTE:

"But, you have to. It isn't going away. You are still young. I want you to marry again."

MAGGIE:

"Everette, hush! No more. I don't know if I'll want to."

EVERETTE:

"I don't want you to be alone. I'm not alone in my last days."

MAGGIE:

"I don't want to hear anymore about it."

Lights dim. Next scene begins.

ACT VI

Everette and Maggie sit in the living room. They begin with silence that escalates into a secret permission. Maggie shuffles through the mail and tears open a particular envelope. Her face brightens.

MAGGIE:

“We finally got approved. It’s over, Everette. It’s over.”

EVERETTE:

“Thank God. Maggie, we’re safe. We’re safe.”

MAGGIE:

“I told you, Everette Chamberlain. There wasn’t anything to worry about.”

EVERETTE:

“I know, I know. I’m so happy you were right.”

Everette seems to sway in his seat. Maggie doesn’t notice at first, then he falls. He’s fainted.

EVERETTE:

“I can’t breathe, I can’t breathe.”

Maggie runs into the kitchen and grabs a small fan. She rushes back to his side and plugs it in the outlet. She knows it will do no good and runs for the telephone. In the desperation of Maggie’s cries on the telephone, Elizabeth walks into see her father laying on the floor, gasping for breath. She is awkward and can’t concentrate on her coordination. She stumbles and trips over her feet, trying to get into the kitchen with Maggie. Her face is one of complete desperation, she doesn’t know how to act or how to help. She only knows she is scared to death. She clumsily walks around his body, not knowing how to act.

ELIZABETH:

“Daddy?”

EVERETTE:

“I’m sorry, honey.”

That is all he says for a moment. Maggie runs over with the organ stool in her hand and motions. He is still struggling to breathe and both Maggie and Elizabeth strain to lift him. They finally raise him and he leans forward, hands on knees.

MAGGIE:

“I’ve called the paramedics, they’re on their way.”

*All is silent except for Everette’s struggled breathing.
Lights dim.*

ACT VII

Lights rise with Elizabeth standing on the threshold of a hospital room. She stares back into the room, sounds of heart monitors and oxygen lines can be heard. She stands with a backpack on, her back to the audience. Behind her, the same angel stands, his hand on her shoulder. She can’t feel his touch and ignores his presence.

*Her attention is completely towards Everette who is laying in the room.
Off to the far-right, Maggie stands talking to Lisa and Melissa. All look tired and devastated.*

ELIZABETH:

“Daddy?”

EVERETTE:

“What is it, hon?”

ELIZABETH:

“Can I stay out of school to see you home?”

EVERETTE:

“No, sweetie. Your grades are important, this is your first year of Middle School.”

ELIZABETH:

“Are you sure you’ll be home tomorrow?”

EVERETTE:

“Yes, I’ll be there.”

ELIZABETH:

"I want to tell you something..."

She pauses, trying to approach the situation tactfully. She feels like breaking down, but refuses to, believing it will upset Everette. She stands up straight, her head held high, just as the angel whispers something in her ear. She pays no attention to the presence but finally speaks:

"Daddy, I love you."

EVERETTE:

"I love you, too."

Elizabeth walks off-stage, just as she exits, there is the sound of the heart monitor beeping a flat rate. Doctors and nurses emerge from the right and run into the room. Maggie and the two older daughters weep together.

MAGGIE:

"I don't know what to do, girls. He's leaving us."

LISA:

"It's not forever, mom."

MAGGIE:

"It feels like it. What'll I do without him? What'll become of me? I can't let him go."

Maggie rushes towards the hospital door, while Lisa and Melissa restrain her. The medical staff can be heard yelling to one another inside.

LISA:

"Mom, you can't go with him."

MELISSA:

"Please, mom. We're here."

MAGGIE:

"But, he's not."

She collapses as the two daughters carry her to a near-by chair. The doctor comes out, his face worn and worried. He doesn't have to tell the women what happened. For a

moment he is speechless.

DOCTOR:

"I'm sorry..."

MAGGIE:

"No... No!"

The first no was a whisper, while the second was a scream.

MELISSA:

"We're here, mom."

She speaks through tears of her own. Maggie is sobbing so hard her body almost convulses, a nurse carries a small white cup with a pill inside.

DOCTOR:

"This will make you feel better, Ms. Chamberlain. Now, would you like to go to the chapel?"

Lights dim.

ACT VIII

Stage is dark while narrator speaks:

Narrator:

"My father died on a Monday, the same day he was scheduled to be released to go back home. There was nothing more they could do. Everyone knew he was going home that day, my clearest memories are of the bittersweet happiness. We were all glad he would be at home instead of a hospital. We never knew how literal life would happen.

My father did go home that Monday, only not out home. He went to a home we couldn't visit."

Lights barely come on, it is a funeral home. A white angel, a young woman in a long flowing gown seems to float in the far background, behind the coffin. Her skin

is so pale it is powder white. Her hair is long and flows down the back of her dress. She has her head bowed with her hands folded in prayer, her hands are even with her head. The dark angel who spoke to Everette before stands beside the coffin, with one hand on the casket. Above the head of the white angel, a white cross hangs on the wall. Illuminated against the dimly lit room.

BILL VERMILLION:

“The Lord is my shepherd... I shall not want...”

Continues reading Psalms, Chapter 23. Rows of people dressed in black are seated with their backs to the audience. Bill faces the people in the pews. His voice fades with the lights.

Narrator:

“The last thing I said to my father was that I loved him. I never knew what made me say it. We were not an affectionate family, nothing like we should’ve been. At our last talk, the urge came over me like a tidal wave, somehow, I think I knew he would die....

“And you, my father, there on the sad height,
Curse, bless me now with your fierce tears I pray.
Do not go gentle into that good night,
Rage, rage against the dying of the light...”

Lights dim.