

Our Cuckoo Bird

A Ten-Minute Play

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Characters:

Lucille Gran – Female – (Mid Fifties.) Loving mother of Kate and Megan and bird admirer: Always willing to do whatever she can for her family.

Megan Gran – Female – (Early Thirties.) The oldest daughter. Always wants moments with her family to be ‘picture perfect’ all the time.

Kate Gran – Female – (Late Twenties.) The Youngest daughter. Never felt as if she truly belonged in the family.

Setting:

2010. The dining room of **LUCILLE’s** home. Blue floral wall paper covers every side with white dove’s symmetrically throughout. Top of the sage is one large old china cabinet (filled to the brim with objects of their family’s history.) In front of the cabinet, a small table and three chairs around it, covered in a thin white table cloth.

Props:

- A tea set
- Photo Album
- An old leather bound contact book
- A bottle of liquor
- A bouquet of sunflowers

LIGHTS UP. KATE is sitting alone at the dining room table. She is anxious to talk to her mother, LUCILLE.

KATE

Mom we need to talk! I love you very much and you've never judged me for anything I've done and I want you to know the same goes for me. That's why I need you to understand why I'm asking you this. Even if it seems like a horrible and ugly thing, please just tell me the truth.

From the other room.

LUCILLE

Kate? Are you in here?

KATE

In the dining room.

She gets up and tries to shake off her nerves. LUCILLE enters; she is coming back from one of her nature walks with a camera around her neck.

LUCILLE

Hi honey, is everything alright? You seemed strange on the phone. Is Meg her too?

KATE

No it's just me. Can we talk?

LUCILLE

If I knew you were off today I would have invited you along with us. Take a look at the birds we saw, so many beauties.

KATE

Mom, I love you very much and you've never judged me for anything and there's no easy way-

MEGAN burst through the front door.

MEGAN

-Hello!? Is anyone home? Hello!?

KATE

Mom, did you ever have-

LUCILLE

-Megan? We're in the dining room.

MEGAN rushing in, she is carrying a couple of sunflowers and she is out of breath.

Megan, what a surprise! What are you doing here?

MEGAN

Oh, Kate didn't tell you? Did I get to you before she could tell you?

KATE

I was just about to ask her-

She steps in-between them.

MEGAN

-Good I'm just in time! We wanted to surprise you with a good old fashion girl's day. We're going to go out, get pampered and just have a nice relaxing, all together, the three of us, never alone without Meg, night. How does that sound?

LUCILLE

That sounds delightful, oh I love it when my little chickadees surprise me and with sunflowers, my favorite. Is that what you were so nervous about Kate?

MEGAN

Well she was nervous you would say no, we all know how you love to take care of others. We figured we should do the same for you. Right Kate?

She puts a hand on KATE's shoulder and squeezes it.

Why don't we head out now? You know what they say about the early bird.

LUCILLE

I think the worm can wait for us. You two just relax. I'll make us some tea too while I'm at it.

KATE

Let me help you with that mom-

She squeezes her shoulder again.

MEGAN

-no let me do that and Kate can stay here. Or we can both stay here, as long as Kate stays with me.

LUCILLE

I can handle it. I'll grab some snacks and a vase for these beauties you brought Meg. Your father had a sunflower on our wedding day. Said it was bait so that I would come straight to him. When I did I gobbled him right up.

MEGAN

Gross mom.

She exits off stage right to the kitchen.

KATE

Just an FYI, you can't stop me.

MEGAN

Well just an FYI, you are going to do no such thing! We are going to have a nice, un-revealing night as a family.

From the other room.

LUCILLE

The water is on!

MEGAN

It was a bad idea what we did and I'll regret it till I'm six feet under. So let me do that in peace.

KATE

Why don't you want to know?

MEGAN

Why do you want to? You're just going to hurt her.

KATE

I'm going to get the truth.

MEGAN

Don't you do it!

KATE

Mom-

MEGAN covers her mouth. She tries to break free.

MEGAN

-tell us how bird watching went!

LUCILLE

It was lovely. Dina and I saw all kinds of finches. Gold, house and a downy woodpecker too! She swore she saw a stork by the stream but I think that's just her eyes going. But the best is when we saw a cardinal. Oh it made me and Dina so happy. They're a symbol you know, that someone you love is with you. She's just been so sad since Big Dan passed away.

MEGAN

Funny, I saw little Danny just the other day.

LUCILLE

Get out! How was he?

KATE breaks free.

KATE

Mom-

MEGAN grabbing her again.

MEGAN

-he seemed fine to me.

LUCILLE

Well good, I'm glad. She has been so worried about Danny for the longest time. He was so close with your father and when he died he was so beside himself. He quit his job, was really on the bottle, just not in a good place. She was so worried about him; she looked like she was ready to fall apart. You two should spend more time with that boy. You three were so close when you were younger. Always horsing around.

Enters the room with a tray of cookies.

Those were the days. . .

She is confused to see them fighting.

What's going on?

MEGAN

Don't worry mom, Kate thought she was going to start convulsing so I thought a head lock would help.

KATE

Get off of me!

LUCILLE

Let her go Megan, right now.

Separating them.

What the hell is going on?

KATE

We know you cheated on dad!

LUCILLE

What?

MEGAN

Nothing mom, you did nothing. You have been a great mom to the both of us. I think she must have hit her head. I'll take her home and we can forget all about this.

She started to pull on KATE.

LUCILLE

Enough!

They stop.

Okay, let's all sit down and relax.

They all take a seat.

Take a breath. Now, what is going on? What has got you both so worked up?

MEGAN tries to talk but KATE cuts her off.

KATE

We know you had an affair.

LUCILLE

What are you talking about? What would make you say something like that?

KATE

I know dad's not my real dad.

LUCILLE

Of course he's your father.

KATE

No he's not! We went on this website, "Geneticsworldwide.com." You answer a few questions, pay some money and boom. Your whole lineage right there in front of you. Except that Meg's and mine were like oil and water.

LUCILLE

What made you do all this?

KATE

It was Meg's idea.

LUCILLE looks at MEGAN.

MEGAN

I wanted to see if we were Greek.

KATE

But it all makes sense now. Something always felt wrong growing up. Everyone would joke around that I was the milkman's kid and now I have proof. Hard hitting, scientific proof that I have a different father. There's no denying it. I deserve to know now mom. Who's my real father?

LUCILLE is silent.

MEGAN

Mom I'm so sorry that we did this and I don't want you to think that we don't love you because of one moment of weakness.

LUCILLE

It's not that. There were no moments of weakness. There's a part of my life that I didn't think I would have to tell you both. But obviously now, I guess there's no way around it now. Well, Kate, first off I'm sorry that you had to find out all about this from someone else other than me. But you're wrong about one thing. I never cheated on your father.

KATE

We have proof that you did.

LUCILLE

You're father was the love of my life. I had never thought of sleeping with someone else behind his back and I never did. We had a very strong marriage, we had so much love for one another that we wanted to share that love with others.

KATE

What do you mean?

LUCILLE

We were swingers.

Pause.

MEGAN

I'm sorry, what?

LUCILLE

We were swingers; your father, me and about twelve others from around the neighborhood. It was a whole group of us. We would all get together at the end of the week and . . . you know, fool around a little. We had some great times but I loved your father and no one meant more to me than him. The whole thing just fizzled out not long after we all started having kids.

Pause. KATE is stunned while MEGAN is horrified.

KATE

Did you guys have a name for this group?

MEGAN

They weren't a baseball team.

LUCILLE

I know this is a little hard to wrap your heads around.

MEGAN

A little?

LUCILLE

It was all harmless fun. We all trusted each other and didn't think anything bad could happen.

KATE and MEGAN don't know what to say.

Again, Kate, I'm so sorry you had to find out about this. If there is anything I can do to make this easier for you I will.

KATE

Help me find my father, my real one.

LUCILLE grabs her hand.

LUCILLE

Okay, we can do that. I believe I still have an old contact sheet and some old photos of everyone. We can start there.

MEGAN

I'll go get them. I need to process this.

LUCILLE

There should be an old notebook in the bottom drawer underneath the liquor cabinet.

MEGAN gets up and exits towards the kitchen.

KATE

Did you know?

LUCILLE

We talked about it being a possibility. But we agreed that whatever the case may be, we would still love you and treat you as our own.

MEGAN returns with the notebook and a bottle of liquor.

MEGAN

I think I found it.

She hands it off to LUCILLE. MEGAN and KATE crowd around her.

Wait.

She drinks from the bottle. LUCILLE opens the notebook and takes out the photos.

LUCILLE

There we all are. God, look how young we look back then. Oh my god, look at this one!

KATE

Oh god, mom you're naked!

LURILLE

I remember that night. You're mom had some damn good feathers, bright and perky. There's Bob Plicken and his wife Janelle.

MEGAN

My math teacher?

LUCILLE

Oh yeah, she taught your mom a thing or two. She was as beautiful as a swan, and a bit of a goose.

LUCILLE gets lost in her thoughts. KATE snaps her fingers to bring her back.

KATE

Is that Danny's parents?

LUCILLE

Yep, his Dina and your dad went to college together. There's Officer Milton there, Mrs. Bronson, and Brian Delsanto, the milkman.

MEGAN and KATE look at one another.

MEGAN

You did actually have milk men back then, right?

LUCILLE

That's just what we called him.

LUCILLE rustles through the pages and pulls out a sheet with phone numbers on it.

Here we are. I don't know if any of the numbers are the same, but it's as good a place to start.

KATE grabs the sheet.

MEGAN

Maybe this isn't a good idea.

KATE

What is your problem with this?

MEGAN

I just don't see if this will do any good.

KATE

This isn't about you; this is about what I want. I'll know who I really am. I'll know who I come from. Why don't you want me to be happy?

MEGAN

I'm just worried. I'm looking out for you as your sister-

KATE

I'm only half your sister, and half of this family. So the only thing I want from you is the half we share to let me do what's best for me.

Pause. MEGAN fights back tears.

LUCILLE

Meg I think I hear the pot whistling, can you go and grab it for us?

She exits.

What do you know about cuckoo birds, Kate?

KATE

Mom please, no more birds-

LUCILLE

-People love them; they think these wonderful birds. I meant they must be to have a clock made after you. But Cuckoo birds are a strange type of bird. They scout out birds that are similar to them and lay their eggs in their nests. Then they have those unsuspecting birds raise their young. I would sometimes wonder who the baby cuckoo's count as their parents. The ones they look like or the ones that raised them. It's completely silly I know, birds don't think that way. But what if they did? Would they feel disappointed to find out who they come from? Shouldn't they count the ones that love them as their real family? Shouldn't their real father be the one whose photo is always in his wallet?

MEGAN comes back in with the tea pot and two cups.

Well Kate, who do you think is your real father?

They all gather around the photo. KATE puts down the sheet.

KATE

That guy, the guy right there next to you mom.

MEGAN

But-

LUCILLE

-he kind of looks like you, don't you think Meg?

MEGAN

Yeah I think so. What a looker.

LUCILLE

Greatest lay I ever had.

LUCILLE puts her arms around them both.

KATE

Gross mom.

LIGHTS FADE - END OF PLAY