

Tab 1

Fort.

A One Act play by Sheree Veysey.

SYNOPSIS:

Casey is hiding out in the backyard fort, until her no-nonsense mother hunts her out. What drama is happening now? This warm, witty play explores the tangled bonds of mothers and daughters; love, laughter, and the messy truth of family.

CHARACTERS:

LYNN: A working woman in her fifties

CASEY: A working solo mum, twenty-nine

DIRECTOR'S NOTES

Comic moments must not overwhelm the play's themes. / indicates the following line should cut across the previous.

SETTING

Present day, Friday, 4:00 p.m. A suburban backyard with garden furniture and potted plants. A worn children's fort is visible. Ambient suburban sounds can be heard.

(LYNN enters from stage right, speaking on her cell phone. She looks anxiously toward the fort.)

LYNN:

No, I'm here now. Yes, I know who it is. No, not an intruder. *(Beat.)* Thank you, Marjorie. *Frustrated.* Yes, it would be an emergency if it was a masked man! *(Beat.)* Yes, a good high fence. Thank you for the call. No, thank you for letting me know. Goodbye!

(LYNN looks up at the fort.)

Casey! What are you doing up there? Come down.

CASEY:

Leave me alone.

LYNN:

Marjorie Jenkins was gonna call the police; thought we were being robbed.

CASEY:
We're not being robbed.

LYNN:
I know that! *(Beat.)* What are you doing?

CASEY:
I needed some space.

LYNN:
Up there? Don't be ridiculous, come out.

CASEY:
Mum, can you leave it? I'm fine.

LYNN:
You're not fine.

CASEY:
Yes, I am!

LYNN:
Which is why you're hiding in the playhut?

CASEY:
(Beat.) It's a fort.

LYNN:
Casey Teresa Rickard! Get down this instant!

(LYNN's cell phone rings.)

Hi Marjorie. No, no fire brigade thanks. *(Beat.)* They do get cats down. *(Beat.)* Yes, my daughter. Thank you, No, I'm good... No, thank you Marjorie... Yes... Goodbye.

CASEY:
The wifi's not letting me in.

LYNN:
I changed the password.

CASEY:
Mum!

LYNN:
Get off your phone, come out and talk to me.

CASEY:
Do I have to?

LYNN:
Yes!

(CASEY groans. She appears for the first time, awkwardly climbing down a child-sized ladder in business clothes and stocking feet. The ladder creaks under her weight, adding to the comic effect.)

LYNN:
So what's going on? Are the kids alright?

CASEY:
Yes.
(CASEY sits beside her mother.)

LYNN:
Where are they?

CASEY:
It's Liam's weekend.

LYNN:
You gave me a right fright. I thought we had a burglar.

CASEY:
Where were you?

LYNN:
Where do you think?
(LYNN pulls at her damp hair.)

CASEY:
Sorry.

LYNN:
I paid for a blowdry. Flat tack all week, and soon as I take a moment for myself... This better be a real emergency.

CASEY:
It's not.

LYNN:
Well, what's up?

CASEY:
Nothing. I just had a conference at school.

LYNN:
Is Millie not doing well?

CASEY:

She's always doing well. (*Long pause.*)
Just. Oh, first I had the whole board in, which is always
full on and now Jonah's pissed because I had to take off
early. And then there was an accident at the turn off,
and the car's air conditioner's gone.

LYNN:

How does jumping my fence help any of that?

CASEY:

I don't know. (*Beat.*) I'm unravelling, thread by thread.

LYNN:

No, you're not.

CASEY

Then this top must have polyester in it because it
stinks. (*CASEY sniffs at her top.*) So I'm all stressed,
smelly and when I get there.

LYNN:

To the primary?

CASEY:

Yes. Well I bloody knock out my left tail light.

LYNN:

Casey!

CASEY:

At least it was the same side as last week.

LYNN:

How's the other car?

CASEY:

It was a pole.

LYNN:

Jumped out of nowhere did it?

CASEY:

I told you. I'm losing my mind. So I rush up to the
classroom and Mr "Never on time" is already there all
cool and collected. (*Beat.*) And I'm trying hard to
reframe it or something because it's not like he took the
time for these things when we were together.

LYNN:

Did you tell him you'd crashed the car?

CASEY:
I didn't crash. I dinged it.

LYNN:
Did the lens thingy smash?

CASEY:
Yes

LYNN:
That's a crash.

CASEY:
Well Millie's bouncing around all excited that both Mum and Dad are there and Miss Becca is all... *(CASEY Groans.)*

LYNN:
This teacher she loves?

CASEY:
Yes. Who looks like a teenager's wet dream.

LYNN:
Casey.

CASEY:
I mean she's nice. She's nice, competent, friendly. But. She had a full manicure.

LYNN:
So?

CASEY:
(Looking at her own hands.) Who teaches primary school and still has perfect nails!

LYNN:
She won't have kids.

CASEY:
At 22? I should hope not. *(Sighs.)* She probably gets gels.

LYNN:
So you've rushed me home because you're jealous of Millie's teacher?

CASEY:
No. Not jealous, only- No wonder he doesn't moan about school pickups; I could tell he was all "Ba -Boing!"
(CASEY makes her finger extend.)

LYNN
Casey! Don't be crass.

CASEY:
Why not?

LYNN:
Because you weren't raised that way.

CASEY:
I wasn't raised to be a divorcee either.
(Long pause.)

LYNN:
But our Millie is doing well?

CASEY
Great. They're studying feathers. I had to ooh and aah
over a pigeon one.

LYNN:
Hygienic.
*(The phone rings again. LYNN looks, and holds up phone to
show CASEY.)*

CASEY:
Don't take it.

LYNN:
I have to. Hi Marjorie. Yes, good. *(Beat.)* Well, I
appreciate the care. *(Beat.)* They are important aren't
they? *(Beat.)* No, still got plenty of lemons left. *Beat*
Yes, thank you. Thank you. Bye, Marjorie.

CASEY:
Why do you let her do it?

LYNN:
It's only once a day unless there's a drama.

CASEY:
Like me?

LYNN:
Someone climbing my fence? Absolutely. Why on earth
didn't you use the gate?

CASEY:
There's a lock on it.

LYNN:

Oh. That's your father. (*Beat.*) Marjorie spotted a sick kiwi in her bushes last month. You're the first excitement since then.

CASEY:

What? In the suburbs?

LYNN:

She called SPCA and half the street before it was confirmed to be a dying hedgehog.

CASEY:

I wouldn't have the patience.

LYNN:

Oh she reminds me of your Gran. Loves a chat and never happier than when she's got someone else to worry about.

CASEY:

It would drive me nuts.

LYNN:

I don't want to miss the one call when something's really wrong.

CASEY:

She should get one of those alarms.

LYNN:

Her son's too cheap for the monitoring.

CASEY:

How much will a new taillight set me back?

LYNN:

You should upgrade. Get air con and a backing camera.

CASEY:

With my pots of money? Oh mum, it's all too hard.

LYNN:

No. You've just got yourself frazzled.

CASEY:

He acts like father of the year. If he'd been this interested back then maybe we'd still be together.

LYNN:

You left because he cheated.

CASEY
Yeah. But...

LYNN:
I said at the time it might be worth another go.

CASEY:
Mum, he cheated twice. How can I trust a man who lies
that well?

LYNN:
(*Shrugs.*) Less stressful with two incomes though.

CASEY:
God.
(*CASEY goes to the fort, leaning against its ladder.*)

LYNN:
What!

CASEY:
Sometimes I don't know why I bother talking to you.

LYNN:
What's that supposed to mean?

CASEY:
It means that I'd like a little support!

LYNN:
Well, I would like a moment to myself! Have you asked how
I am? No, you haven't? I've had a week from hades myself,
and then you've made me rush home for an intruder in the
yard.

CASEY
I thought you were dropping some hours.

LYNN:
I did. But then Cara got the flu. (*Beat.*)
Why were you in the playhut of all places?

CASEY:
(*Shrugs.*) It's really hard being on my own sometimes.

LYNN:
You're not on your own. I'm here. And your father. The
kids. Your friends.

CASEY:
I'm 29 years old. It's not meant to be like this.

LYNN:
Isn't it?

CASEY:
No.

LYNN:
(Beat.) Was it comfortable inside?

CASEY:
Not really. Martina Bishop and I used to sit in there and
smoke ciggies.

LYNN:
I know.

CASEY:
And not always nicotine.

LYNN:
Casey Rickard!

CASEY:
Only a couple of times.

LYNN:
I can't believe you had jazz cabbage at my house.

CASEY:
Jazz cabbage?! Where did you hear that?

LYNN:
On the telly.

CASEY:
What were you watching?

LYNN:
Your father likes crime things.

CASEY:
We coughed more than we inhaled.

LYNN:
Well you two never needed any help getting the giggles.

CASEY:
That's Millie too. And talking with friends when she
should be listening.

LYNN:

No idea where she gets that from.

CASEY:

Did you know Liam had her up at urgent care?

LYNN:

No? When?!

CASEY:

During my Melbourne trip. They put her on the nebulizer.

LYNN:

Why didn't he call?

CASEY:

Apparently my phone was off.

LYNN:

He could have called us!

CASEY:

Never mentioned it, until it came up at parent teacher.
Then I got that heat flush we get.

LYNN:

Embarrassed? Mad?

CASEY:

Both! It wouldn't have happened on my watch. I can
guarantee he forgot the antihistamines and then didn't
catch it with the puffer. It's only life or death!

LYNN:

She's okay, she's fine. At least he knew to get her up
there.

CASEY:

It's always such a lot. (*Beat.*) Too much. I think I'm
having a nervous breakdown

LYNN:

You're not having a nervous breakdown

CASEY:

Climbing fences, hiding in the fort. I scraped my leg
too. Can you get tetanus from wood?

LYNN:

It's a hiccup not a breakdown.

CASEY:
What?

LYNN:
My breakdown I got two days up the coast. Maxed out the credit cards before your father found me. Now that's how you do a breakdown.

CASEY:
What? When?

LYNN:
Wine and shoes. You know, when your brother was small.

CASEY:
Where was I?

LYNN:
I dropped you at the neighbours.

CASEY:
The neighbours! Why have I never heard about this?

LYNN:
Casey, I've told you the whole thing.

CASEY:
When?

LYNN:
When you had the blues with Millie.

CASEY:
Oh. Well, there's six months there that's a blank.

LYNN:
Well I told you. And you found my experience very helpful.
present

CASEY:
Great.

LYNN:
He found me drinking lemon sours in a dive bar. We returned most things but I'd scuffed the red boots so I got to keep those.

CASEY:
Your red boots, red boots?

LYNN:

Yes. They come with history.

CASEY:

Do you know what triggered it?

LYNN:

(Shrugs.) Lack of sleep. Probably post natal like you.

CASEY:

God. *(Beat.)* Well I've crashed the car with nothing natal.

LYNN:

You dinged it. *(Beat.)* I'll call it a nervous breakdown when you move into that. *(LYNN gestures up at the fort.)*

CASEY:

Is that an option? What's the rent?

LYNN:

Four ten. A week.

CASEY:

Mum!

LYNN:

We're a good neighbourhood. It gets lots of light.

CASEY:

Because it lets water in. And there's spiders.

LYNN:

Glad it's getting used.

CASEY:

Oh you won't charge the spiders but you'll charge your only daughter. *(Beat.)* It was my favourite place in the world.

LYNN:

I never understood the appeal.

CASEY:

It was my own.

LYNN:

You had your own bedroom, in your favourite colours.

CASEY:

I liked being outside. Above things.

LYNN:

Your father wants to pull it down.

CASEY:

Don't let him!

(The phone rings again.)

LYNN:

Speak of the devil. Pour some wine will you?

CASEY:

It's only four?

LYNN:

(To person on the phone.) Hang on.

(To CASEY) Are you having a breakdown or not?

(CASEY exits indoors.)

No, just Case. So how did you go? *(Beat.)* What do you mean it's cancelled? *Pause.* No! How is that a priority? *Long pause.* No, Brian! Of course, I'm not happy. Well you can jolly well rebook it! *Pause.* No. Yes you are. Fine. I'll see you tonight.

(CASEY has entered carrying two wine glasses.)

CASEY:

Everything okay?

LYNN:

Who knows! He's only gone and missed the doctor again!

(LYNN takes a gulp of the wine.)

CASEY:

He's sick?

LYNN:

No, a physical. The third one I've tried to get him to!

And lo and behold there's an "urgent" need to get the tyres balanced.

CASEY:

Men should try pushing watermelon's out their hoohaa's before they complain about prostate checks.

LYNN:

I don't think that's it. He scraped the Volvo last week..

CASEY:

Like father, like daughter.

LYNN:

Been tilting his head watching tv.

CASEY:

You don't think... dementia or something?

LYNN:

He's far too young!

CASEY:

He was very taken aback when it was my birthday.

LYNN:

Oh he never knows birthdays. No, I think his eyesights iffy; he doesn't want doctors telling him he can't drive.

CASEY:

Surely he just needs glasses or something.

LYNN:

Which is what I said.

CASEY:

Let him sort himself, or face the consequences.

LYNN:

It's not just him that faces the consequences though is it? Imagine if I'd not nagged him about that mole?

(LYNN takes another sip of the wine.)

Oh I love a good Riesling.

CASEY:

I thought you were giving up.

LYNN:

I never said that.

CASEY:

You absolutely did, at the restaurant you said/

LYNN:

I'm cutting back.

CASEY:

Okay. Whatever. Like you're cutting back to three days work a week?

LYNN:

You're the one who's ruined my afternoon off.

CASEY:

(Beat.) I've been cutting back on coffee. Down to one latte a day.

LYNN:

Well. There you go.

CASEY:

What?

LYNN:

You jumping the fence and hiding.

CASEY:

It's not cause of caffeine.

LYNN:

Yes, it will be, it's caffeine deprivation. You wouldn't have had Marjorie all agitated if you were on your usual dose.

CASEY:

She loves the excitement.

LYNN:

She does. It's lonely getting old. (Sighs.) Can I move in with you when I'm eighty?

CASEY:

Let's talk then.

LYNN:

Oh that's very supportive!

CASEY:

Are you really going to want to live with me? I thought you had enough of me last year?

LYNN:

That's not the point. You should want your mother to live with you.

CASEY:

I already do. But you're charging too much for the playhut.

LYNN:

Fort. (Beat.) So, no kids this weekend; Got plans?

CASEY:

No. I'm up to here with scheduling and running them about all the time and then when it's Liam's weekend I'm ...

LYNN:

You could get your nails done?

CASEY:

Hah hah. *(Beat.)* When the house is empty it hits me. This is my life now, I'm never going to have the family I dreamed of.

LYNN:

None of us get the family we dreamed of.

CASEY:

Ouch.

LYNN:

What?! Your father and I certainly didn't plan on all your brothers stuff - or you three descending on us last year.

CASEY:

Wasn't my plan either.

LYNN:

Still I'm grateful for my two beautiful grandchildren. At least you picked a cheater who was handsome.

CASEY:

Hoorah for me.

LYNN:

And I'm grateful for good weather, health touch wood, and that you manage a civil relationship with their father.

CASEY:

Civil.

LYNN:

What?

CASEY:

Oh. We had a big barney in the playground. Afterwards.

LYNN:

With the kids there?

CASEY:

Dominic was at daycare.

LYNN:

Millie's the one with the big ears.

CASEY:

I know! I screwed up okay.

LYNN:

She doesn't miss a tick that one. Still parenting's hard.

CASEY:

I know!

LYNN:

It was for me. That brother of yours especially, and with your Dad always/

CASEY:

Could you just listen for once!

(CASEY gets up and goes to the bushes, she starts pulling at leaves or blossoms from the plant.)

LYNN:

I do listen!

CASEY:

No, you always turn the conversation to you.

LYNN:

I don't. Stop attacking my plants!

(CASEY throws mangled plant bits on the ground. There is silence. She picks up a faded painted stone from a pot plant.)

CASEY:

Remember this.

LYNN:

Yes.

CASEY:

I made you a mothers day gift, and got told off for it.

LYNN:

Because you just decorated some stone from the garden.

CASEY:

I got it from the river. And Dad said you'd prefer something handmade.

LYNN:

Well he was wrong.

CASEY:

He was. You hated it.

LYNN:

It wasn't that.

CASEY:

What then?

LYNN:

It was only a week or so after you'd had that big tanty.

CASEY:

Pardon?

LYNN:

You remember. You were up there, (*gestures at fort*)
having a fit at Ben and his friend, and when I told you
off, you huffed a stone at me.

CASEY:

I remember,

LYNN:

You're lucky it didn't crack the glass.

CASEY:

What's that got to do with?

LYNN:

It felt like a go at me. Throwing a rock one week,
painting me one the next.

CASEY:

Mum! I was eleven!

LYNN:

So?

CASEY:

So you thought I had some nefarious plan to get at you
with my mothers day gift?

LYNN:

You'd painted "Love" on it.

CASEY:

To say I love you.

LYNN:

I thought, maybe to say my love was hard.

CASEY:
God. Really?

LYNN:
Well, that was a very tricky year for me.

CASEY:
Funny you remember me biffing the stone and not why.

LYNN:
I know why. Because I'd ripped a strip off you for
calling him a stupid dickhead.

CASEY:
Because he and Jamie Wilson had been chanting "Casey
Retard" all afternoon.

LYNN:
No they weren't.

CASEY:
Yes. Casey, Casey RR-RR RRetard,

LYNN:
(Beat.) Well I didn't know that.

CASEY:
They'd been saying it at school too.

LYNN:
We didn't know about the dyslexia then, did we?

CASEY:
Yes. My year five teacher spotted it.

LYNN:
You should have explained.

CASEY:
You didn't ask.

LYNN:
You should have told me anyway. Not that it excuses
chucking rocks.

CASEY:
(Makes a sound.)

LYNN:

What?

CASEY:

Well I was upset.

LYNN:

You didn't tell me, how was I supposed to know?

CASEY

I was scared, okay!

LYNN:

Why on earth? *(Beat.)* We'd only just had that ranchslider put in, how was I meant to react? Good thing you always had a poor throwing arm.

CASEY:

Could you just say sorry?

LYNN:

Are you sorry for throwing the rock?

CASEY:

I said so at the time! And I got grounded.

LYNN:

Well. Sorry then. Still you turned out alright didn't you? Mostly.

CASEY:

I suppose.

LYNN:

Casey, this was umpteen years ago. You have very unrealistic expectations sometimes.

CASEY:

What?

LYNN:

Well, I can't magically say what you want all the time. And how much support and money have your father and I given you these past couple of years? It's like you're always asking for more.

CASEY:

I'm not. You guys have been great. I've told you that.

LYNN:

Why are you getting teary? God.

CASEY
I'm just exhausted.

LYNN:
None of it is that big a deal.

CASEY:
Isn't it? And now you're pissed at me.

LYNN:
I'm not "pissed". I hate that word.

CASEY:
I don't know what I'm doing. Even on good weeks I'm only muddling through.

LYNN:
Everyone's only muddling through. Even the government's only muddling through. Especially the government.
(Beat.) If you're really not coping maybe you should see the doctor?

CASEY:
I don't need the doctor

LYNN:
Well what do you need then?
(Beat.) Stop picking at my plants.
Pour another wine if you have to do something with your hands.

CASEY:
Oh great mental health advice Mum!

LYNN:
(Laughs.) Wine or coffee, choose your poison.

CASEY:
I just.

LYNN:
What.

CASEY:
I want you to empathise.

LYNN:
When do I not empathise?

CASEY:

(Struggling for words.) I guess sometimes, it's more I want to hear myself say stuff and have you agree.

LYNN:

I'm not going to agree with you when I don't agree.

CASEY:

When I say that I'm having trouble juggling two kids and work and life.

LYNN:

Yes.

CASEY:

And you go - *(CASEY stops, gathers herself.)* Could you just say "That sounds hard."

LYNN.

(Beat.) It does sound hard.

CASEY:

And it's bloody exhausting having to stay polite with Liam all the time. When he can be such an arse.

LYNN:

Form of torture isn't it, having to stay nicey nicey with ex's.

CASEY:

(Beat.) He wants to take them to Australia.

LYNN:

What! He can't do that!

CASEY:

That's what I said!

LYNN:

No wonder you lost it. But shared custody, he doesn't have a leg to stand on.

CASEY:

Exactly.

LYNN:

The cheek. If he tries we'll chip in with legal fees.

CASEY:

No. *(Beat.)* Not permanently.

LYNN:

Oh.

CASEY:

A holiday. To visit his sister.

LYNN:

What's wrong with/

CASEY:

He wants to do it over Christmas!

LYNN:

Well the kids would love to/

CASEY:

At Christmas Mum! The first year since it's all gone through and I'm meant to do without my babies! For three and a half weeks!

(Silence.)

LYNN:

The kids love their cousins.

CASEY:

Don't take his side! And now Millie knows about it.

LYNN:

(Beat.) It would be a great treat for them.

CASEY:

(becoming increasingly agitated.)

Mum! I'm not going to let him take my children away. It's not happening.

LYNN:

Case. If their father wants to give them a wonderful holiday..

CASEY:

(Begins to pace).

And what about me huh! I'm supposed to wake up on Christmas morning and what? Cry? Those kids are all I have. You want Christmas without them?

LYNN:

Casey.

CASEY:

I'll oppose it. He's not stealing Christmas and no judge is going to approve him taking little children over the/

LYNN:

(Sharply.) Casey. This isn't about you.

CASEY:

But Mum it is! His way of showing me up, because of course he can afford the holiday away, and the cleaner and the money to always/

LYNN:

Even if that's true, you need to/

CASEY:

What do I need to do? On top of all the thousands of other things expected of me

LYNN:

You need to pull finger and start/

CASEY:

It's just too much today
Mum! It's too much it's
too much! I'm too and I
can't, I can't, I can't,

LYNN:

Casey, Casey, stop. Honey
stop.

CASEY:

I told you. I'm falling apart. I'm a failure, I can't do anything right.

LYNN:

Come here you goose. You're not a failure. You're my clever daughter with two beautiful children, who is sometimes a little dramatic.

CASEY:

I'm so tired.

LYNN:

You've not been sleeping well? I should have seen it. You were like this as a kid you know.

CASEY

Was I?

LYNN:

Yes, good as gold until you got overwhelmed. And then I'd find you under the bed, or up in that fort. What do you need?

CASEY:

I don't know. *(Beat.)* I don't know. A lobotomy?

LYNN:

No. You're not allowed a lobotomy, who would I moan about your father to. *(Beat.)*

When you were small, you normally needed a cuddle and some hot chocolate. With a marshmallow.

CASEY:

Swiss Miss. With pink ones.

LYNN:

White ones taste the same.

CASEY:

No they don't. *(Beat.)*

(CASEY moves to make physical connection to her fort.)

It just never stops, you know? I'm sick of trying to be the bigger person, and not talk bad about him when he's over there introducing the kids to female "friends". Work and bills and I love my children, but then they're all over me and I just need my space and my body to myself.

LYNN:

Relentless.

CASEY:

And then they go to their dads... *(Beat.)* Oh I can't win.

LYNN:

You could go over too.

CASEY:

I can't afford it.

LYNN:

Can't you? If he's got the kids' flights?

CASEY:

(Shakes her head.) Not just airfares: there's activities, accommodation.

LYNN:

What about going part of the time? Sydney yeah? Connie would have you stay?

CASEY:
I don't know.

LYNN:
We'll give you some cash for Christmas? It's not like they need more plastic junk.

CASEY:
Oh Mum. I just don't feel like a grown up today.

LYNN:
(LYNN laughs.) Do you usually?

CASEY:
Don't you?

LYNN:
Sometimes. Some days I'm surprised I'm not still thirteen, wondering what mum's making for dinner. And you know what tomorrow is?

CASEY:
What?

LYNN:
Four years since she passed.

CASEY:
It doesn't seem that long.

LYNN:
No. Till I realise Dominic wasn't even born. I wish she could have met him. *Long pause.*
(LYNN has picked up the rock and is turning it over in her hands.)
Out of interest, what would you have bought me?

CASEY:
What? Oh, for that mothers day?

LYNN:
Yes.

CASEY:
There were eight dollar perfumes at The Warehouse?

LYNN:
Lord. Okay. Maybe I do prefer the painted rock.

CASEY:
Can you still see the little bee I put in the corner?

LYNN:
I love honeybees.

CASEY:
I know. (*LYNN looks at the rock, smiles.*) Maybe your father can put some seal on it so it doesn't fade any more.

CASEY:
At least I managed to send Millie to the playground before I really let loose on him.

LYNN:
Catching yourself. That's being a good mum.

CASEY:
I don't feel like one. Oh, what even is a good mum?

LYNN:
Putting children's needs first.

CASEY:
Yeah.

LYNN:
Except when you shouldn't. Because mum's need to put their own mask on first. But not too much first, that's not healthy and not once children are adults because then you end up...

CASEY:
Oh God.

LYNN:
If you're anything like me, you'll know every perfect parenting decision in hindsight. (*Beat.*) What do you think about this idea of joining the kids?

CASEY:
You'd have Christmas without us?

LYNN:
I'd cope. Wouldn't cook. And Dominic would adore a plane trip.

CASEY:
Yes. (*Beat.*) Well, all your ideas are good. It gets annoying.

LYNN:

No need to decide now. *(Beat.)* You do look exhausted. Why don't you stay tonight?

CASEY:

Yeah, okay. I'm sorry I interrupted your blowwave.

LYNN:

It's Bianca, she'll give me a credit.

CASEY:

Did you wanna visit Gran's grave tomorrow? Get coffee after?

LYNN:

Okay. Yes, I would like that.

CASEY:

Dominic would think a plane trip was his Christmas present. *(Beat.)* He'd think going to the airport was the Christmas present. *(Sighs.)* Guess I'm having holidays over the ditch. It's gonna be stinking hot.

LYNN:

Do you want another wine? Or I'll make a mug of Swiss Miss?

CASEY:

No. I'm fine. *(Beat.)* I could do with a hug though.

(LYNN and CASEY meet in a embrace. They continue talking in this until the end.)

LYNN:

That's what I'd ask from my mum, you know. If she was still here.

CASEY:

A hug?

LYNN:

Yeah. Her arms around me. Good sniff of her. Hear her laugh again.

CASEY:

I'm sorry Mum. I know daughters' hugs aren't as good.

LYNN:

Oh I don't know. In some ways they aren't.
In some ways they're better.

- END.