

Lisa se Klavier, or Lisa's Piano- 2024 Staged Reading

Young Lisa- Maggie McQuillen

Weathered Lisa- Emily Ann Wright

Carla- McKenna Dvorak

Estelle- Faviana Petru

Rusty- Tom Butler

Deon- Jeffrey Payton

Stage Direction- Cat Jambe

Lisa se Klavier, or Lisa's Piano

Characters:

LISA, Young (Late 20s) and Weathered (Early 50s)- a free, soft, somewhat mystical woman who communicates best through music

CARLA (Early 20s)- Lisa's daughter and caretaker, practical and type-A, sarcastic, but deeply sympathetic- Part time preschool music teacher.

ESTELLE (Late 20s and Early 50s)- Lesbian journalist, outspoken, full of fighting spirit, best friends with Lisa

RUSTY (Early 30s)- Magnetic personality, a little awkward. Part time rugby player, part time accountant.

DEON (30s)- More than meets the eye, old soul- a houseless man who frequents the pavement outside Lisa's window in Cape Town.

Note- ESTELLE at different ages should be played by the same actress. Only LISA should have two actresses playing her- a younger version and a weathered version.

An apartment on Orange Street, Cape Town- Late 90s

A cottage on Carpenter Street, Carmel-by-the-sea, California, Early 2020s.

Scene 1

Lights up on an old, wooden upright piano- it has been through a lot. A melancholy woman (YOUNG LISA) enters the stage, first looking at the audience, really seeing everyone (she moves based on the space she is in). She is wearing a floral dress. After taking everyone in, she sits at the piano, touching its keys and testing its pedals. She becomes still after a while. She begins to play a melody. Let the audience sit in this. Blackout.

Scene 2

Carmel by the Sea, California. A kitchen and living room take up most of the stage. At the far side, a door, with a huge box outside it (big enough to fit a piano). CARLA comes onstage in a haste- she is late. She rushes through the space and rips open the door, almost running into the box. She inspects it, stunned.

CARLA

What the hell (*seeing address*)- Mommy! You've got a package. (*No answer*) Mom! (*still no answer*) Listen, Mom, I've really got to go, the school is expecting me in ten minutes- we'll figure it out when I get home alright! (*Still no answer*) Christ... Love you too, bye. (*She squeezes past, and exits*)

WEATHERED LISA comes out, freaked out. She runs to the box, and inspects it. Sees who it was sent by. This elicits a reaction. She doesn't know what to do with the package.

WEATHERED LISA

God, we haven't spoken for twenty five years, and she sends me this beauty- the minx ...Christ, it even smells like home. Oh my word!

CARLA runs back on.

CARLA

Oh. You're up. Sorry-I didn't set out your medicine.

WEATHERED LISA

No, darling, you don't have to do that, I can cope.

CARLA

Mommy, I hear you, but I don't fully believe you.

WEATHERED LISA

Well, I'm not completely incapable yet. You don't have to miss work on my account.

CARLA

Well, I'm sorry my mother's well being is more important to me than singing little songs with 3 year olds.

WEATHERED LISA

How lucky am I.

A moment of silence. The two women look at each other.

CARLA

You're not going to say anything?

WEATHERED LISA

What do you mean?

CARLA

Mother, there is a giant box on the doorstep. From a woman named Estelle. From Cape Town.

WEATHERED LISA

Ja, I've noticed that.

CARLA

Mom.

WEATHERED LISA

Darling, I'm as confused as you are!

CARLA

Don't lie!

WEATHERED LISA

You know I don't believe in that-

CARLA

Mom!

WEATHERED LISA

Yes, ja, okay! Your Auntie Estelle sent it to me- apparently it was finally “time.”

CARLA

Auntie?

WEATHERED LISA

She emailed me a few weeks ago warning me she was sending it. It was in her storage and she wanted to get rid of it.

CARLA

Oh my god...

WEATHERED LISA

I thought you would have already been at work, and I could just hide it in the garage or something and pull it out when I wanted to give it a spin.

CARLA

In what world would that have worked? I live here too!

WEATHERED LISA

I’m just not ready, Carla! You can’t push me.

CARLA

What the fuck, Mother! I’m not pushing you to do anything- a piano from *South Africa* shows up at our doorstep and I am rightfully confused. (*Lisa is silent, deep breathing*) You can’t blame me for wanting answers- I’ve been saying this my whole life-

WEATHERED LISA

-it's your dad's.

CARLA

(Giggles) What?

WEATHERED LISA

Rusty's.

Carla stares. Lisa rubs her hands together, avoiding eye contact. Carla gets up, and disappears into the bedroom.

Scene 3

A bohemian flat in Cape Town. That same piano is the centerpiece of the room. ESTELLE lounges on the couch, shoes off, writing in a red notebook. She is smoking a cigarette. YOUNG LISA enters, almost floating through space.

ESTELLE

Oooooo. Someone's happy.

YOUNG LISA

Mmmmm...

ESTELLE

It's that man again isn't it... *(scoffs)* He's not going to be around forever, friend.

YOUNG LISA

Ja, I know, but can't a girl have fun?

ESTELLE

Of course she can, but a girl must also realize that she isn't a spring chicken free of responsibilities.

YOUNG LISA

Ag, but I know that! You know this kind of man doesn't come along everyday. He gave me a *piano* for God's sake. And, he reads Sol Plaatje and Ingrid Jonker!

ESTELLE

Bull-twang. He's going to turn out to be an asshole in a few weeks- this is always how it goes. I've never felt luckier to love women. Now tell me how this sounds- "Is PAGAD a multi person Robin Hood, or just plain terrorists?"

YOUNG LISA

Harsh.

ESTELLE

Well I can't be neutral, can I? The public wants to read something that has an opinion.

YOUNG LISA

I just don't think it's sympathetic.

ESTELLE

To whom?

YOUNG LISA

The people that have been bombed.

ESTELLE

So journalists must work simply on pathos now?

YOUNG LISA

No darling- you know I'm not saying that. I just think the country may need some more... I don't know... community building? Especially after the struggle.

ESTELLE

Happy-clappy community building isn't compelling journalism. And isn't the point of my article. I'm supposed to be doing an exposé on gangsterism.

YOUNG LISA

Well, isn't PAGAD killing innocent people just the same as gangsterism?

ESTELLE

I am trying to report on current events in the city, Lisa. I am obviously not going to make PAGAD out to be doing God's work. Besides, there are arguments they are helping their communities. How's that for "community building."

YOUNG LISA

Why must you always be such a smart ass?

(Estelle blows a cheeky kiss, Lisa scoffs and goes and sits by the piano)

ESTELLE

Ag no man, we were just having a good conversation.

(Lisa turns around, winks, and starts playing a romantic melody)

Why must the music of a man interrupt the sisterhood? Why can we not simply have an intellectual conversation as women and not be corrupted by heterosexual love?

(No answer)

What's his name again, anyway? Richard? Rupert? Ron?

YOUNG LISA

Rusty.

ESTELLE

Ugh, you say it with such *romance*! Rrrrustyyy. Rusty, come undress me here...

YOUNG LISA

(plays staccato dissonant chord) Stella! He's much more than that to me!

ESTELLE

Listen to you, you sound like a schoolgirl!

YOUNG LISA

Estelle, stop.

ESTELLE

What, you want to marry him now? After six months of "no labels?"

YOUNG LISA

Maybe...

ESTELLE

My girl... what's gotten into you?

YOUNG LISA

(Beat. Lisa refuses to look at Estelle. She plays a staccato, forte, minor chord) I'm almost certain that I'm pregnant.

ESTELLE

Lisa, don't make fucking jokes like that.

YOUNG LISA

I'm not joking.

ESTELLE

(Beat) You're sure it's not just some irregularities? Late twenties hormonal changes?

YOUNG LISA

I took a test.

ESTELLE

Christ. You're sure it's his?

YOUNG LISA

Last time I checked.

ESTELLE

You're going to keep it?

YOUNG LISA

I don't know. Rusty and I haven't talked about it.

ESTELLE

He doesn't know? (*Lisa shakes her head*) Do you plan on telling him? Because as much as this pains me to say, he deserves to know.

YOUNG LISA

The right time just hasn't come up. We've talked about starting a family together, so..

ESTELLE

Ja, but that doesn't mean he's just going to put his life on pause for you.

YOUNG LISA

He doesn't have to! And also, it won't just be for me, it will be for the baby.

ESTELLE

This feels like some weird way to tie him down. (*Beat*) You're terrified he's going to leave you.

YOUNG LISA

Estelle!

ESTELLE

Ja, but you're always like this with men. You want them to stay so bad, you sacrifice yourself.

Which is not how that works! You even do it with that *boemelaar* that lives under your building.

He sits there, drooling over you. You play and play and play, basically pimp yourself out for his pleasure.

YOUNG LISA

That's not fucking true, Estelle. I play because I want to, and I know that *Deon* deserves to hear music. We have good conversations, and he comes up for coffee.

ESTELLE

Don't be righteous now, I'm trying to make a point.

YOUNG LISA

It's not righteous to treat everyone like fucking human beings!

ESTELLE

You're deflecting.

YOUNG LISA

You're making a point completely unfounded just to beat me into submission.

ESTELLE

Listen to yourself! You sound like a baby. How can you possibly think you're ready to raise a child?

YOUNG LISA

That's not fucking fair. (*Getting up, leaving*) I'm going for a walk.

ESTELLE

(*Yelling after her*) Ja! Go, run into his arms! He'll make you feel like a grownup- he'll tell you everything you want to hear, not what you need- fine, walk away from your oldest friend for a fucking man!

Scene 4

Carla and Lisa's cottage. Carla sits on the floor, struggling to process this news. Lisa enters, struggles with a pile of boxes in her arms.

WEATHERED LISA

My word. You're making this old body carry all these boxes. *(No response, LISA sighs, and places the boxes carefully on the ground)*. Did you call the preschool, telling them you weren't coming in today? *(Carla nods, still looking away)* Darling, at least I'm telling you now. You can't be upset with me forever.

CARLA

You lied.

WEATHERED LISA

Ja, but only to protect you! The fact that you didn't grow up with a father doesn't define you- I didn't want you to have "daddy issues." I wanted you to be able to become your own person.

CARLA

I don't think that's up to you. I think "daddy issues" come from not having a dad.

WEATHERED LISA

You know it's not my fault. I had to be both.

CARLA

I'm not saying it's your fault he's dead. You told me you didn't know anything about him. You told me he was a stranger to you. Meanwhile you've got boxes and boxes of his shit sitting in *our* house, and receiving packages from him post- mortem. Of course it's your fault I'm upset.

WEATHERED LISA

I was protecting you.

CARLA

You were protecting yourself.

WEATHERED LISA

(Not looking at Carla, handing her a rugby jersey) This was his- never been washed.

CARLA

(Takes the jersey, sniffs it, exhales loudly) Mmm, grass and sweat.

WEATHERED LISA

Carla.

CARLA

I don't know anything about the man, how am I supposed to find his scent sentimental?

WEATHERED LISA

Well, now you know he played rugby. So there.

CARLA

I don't even know his full name.

WEATHERED LISA

John Robert Blom. "Rusty." He had strawberry blonde hair.

CARLA

Blom?

WEATHERED LISA

Flower. In Afrikaans.

CARLA

(Strikes something in her) Mmm. What did he do? For a living?

WEATHERED LISA

Cost accounting. He was very good at math. Like you.

CARLA

May I see a picture?

WEATHERED LISA

(Digs in another box, pulls out a black and white photo of a man in the same rugby jersey, and short rugby shorts. He is smiling.) The last time I saw him. Died in a car accident after this match.

CARLA

You didn't get to say goodbye?

WEATHERED LISA

Technically. I said "Goodbye, see you at home." He was going out with his teammates after the match. *(Her fingers begin to play on her lap.)*

CARLA

(Noticing) He gave you the piano?

WEATHERED LISA

On our third date.

CARLA

And you accepted? That seems a bit forward. Or psycho.

WEATHERED LISA

It was his grandmother's. Nobody in his family could play. And he liked to hear me play.

CARLA

I didn't even know you *could* play.

WEATHERED LISA

Ja, well, your mother's full of surprises.

CARLA

Evidently. *(She picks up one of the boxes, and begins to sift through. Lisa watches. Blackout.)*

Scene 5

LISA'S Cape Town apartment. Piano is at the center. She sits at the piano bench. RUSTY sits on the couch, somewhat uncomfortably. He does not know what to do with his hands.

RUSTY

I feel like you are about to break up with me.

YOUNG LISA

I am not. Rather, I think you may break up with me.

RUSTY

Lisa...

YOUNG LISA

Rusty, I know we haven't been together officially for so long...

RUSTY

You're pregnant?

YOUNG LISA

What?

RUSTY

Fuck, sorry- wrong assumption... oh god...

YOUNG LISA

No...no, you're right. Four months along.

RUSTY

Oh. I mean, I noticed the belly a bit- but I didn't want to be rude.

YOUNG LISA

I should have told you earlier.

RUSTY

No! No. I mean, thank you for telling me. It's much harder for you than it is for me. I guess I'm going to have to start thinking more about-

YOUNG LISA

You're not upset?

RUSTY

Why would I be upset?

YOUNG LISA

We hadn't planned it? I'm only telling you now? Your spawn is inside of me?

RUSTY

I mean, I knew I always *wanted* children, I didn't imagine it would come so soon and so unexpectedly... Still, it's a dream come true...

YOUNG LISA

Rusty, darling... what!?

RUSTY

Am I doing something wrong?

YOUNG LISA

No, I'm just surprised. I expected you to be angrier.

RUSTY

Lisa, my love, I don't think you understand- I *want* this. With *you*. Nobody else but *you*, I'm realizing.

YOUNG LISA

Would you be okay with me keeping it? Because that's what I am going to do. And you can be involved if you like.

RUSTY

Of course! Jesus- of course! I want to be here forever- I don't want to miss anything! Not with our baby and not with you either.

YOUNG LISA

Rusty- I don't want you to feel pressured or anything-

RUSTY

Do you know if it's a boy or girl?

YOUNG LISA

They're almost certain it's a girl. According to the ultrasound.

RUSTY

(Deeply moved by this) Oh. Gosh.

YOUNG LISA

I don't have any control over it.

RUSTY

Darling- I know- can I be honest? I've always wanted a daughter. So, thank you, really.

YOUNG LISA

You don't have to say that.

RUSTY

God, I'm going to be a father! We've got to tell our parents. And we should start looking at little houses-for our family. And would you like to get married? I mean, it only seems right considering we love each other, and we're going to be parents, and our little girl deserves stability...

YOUNG LISA

Rusty, I love you. I'd really like that.

Estelle enters

ESTELLE

Lisa!! You won't believe what that twat boss of mine said in the meeting today- he's a fucking white nationalist I'm telling you- (*Seeing the moment*) Oh shit. Hello, Mr. Rusty.

(Rusty waves sheepishly)

YOUNG LISA

We are getting married. And starting a family.

ESTELLE

(Giggles) Fucking hell. Skipped a few steps there, hey?

RUSTY

Thank you, Estelle. Always knew you as the compassionate, congratulatory type.

ESTELLE

You *don't* know me. So, he's stepping up, I presume? Lisa?

YOUNG LISA

Yes. He says so.

ESTELLE

Well good, Mr. Rusty. I'm glad. If you leave her, I'll castrate you.

RUSTY

Only expected.

ESTELLE

Yes, well you've got a gem. The best woman in the whole Western Cape to produce offspring with, if you ask me.

RUSTY

I know. I'm very lucky.

YOUNG LISA

It would only be right for me to ask my oldest friend to be godmother.

ESTELLE

My girl, you don't have to do that.

RUSTY

(Unsure) She's right. *(ESTELLE glares)*

YOUNG LISA

Ag, I know. But it's my baby. And I can only try my best to give her a good life, and Auntie Estelle is an important person for her to have on her team.

ESTELLE

Lisa- I...

YOUNG LISA

You have to say yes. The other option is my mother.

ESTELLE

NO! No- that *tief* has caused enough strife. *(Deeply moved)* I'm honored, friend.

YOUNG LISA

(Squeezing Estelle's hand) Thank you, Stella. *(pulling her close)* He won't come in the way of us, I promise. He's a good one.

ESTELLE

Ag, I know. Just taking the piss, testing him. *(To both of them now)* So, any names you have in mind for the little one?

YOUNG LISA

No, I haven't-

RUSTY

Carla? It was my grandmother's name- the piano belonged to her. It was what brought us together, hey?

YOUNG LISA

Carla...

ESTELLE

Baby Carla. *(The two women grin at each other).*

Scene 6

LISA and CARLA's house. Boxes and pictures and papers litter the stage. This time, Lisa sits on the floor, eyes closed. CARLA enters with two cups of tea, and lightly taps her mother with her foot.

CARLA

Hey. Mommy. Not bedtime yet.

WEATHERED LISA

I wasn't sleeping, *bokkie*. I've had to use a lot of brain power today.

CARLA

(Handing her a cup of tea) You're the only person I've met who only drinks apricot red bush.

WEATHERED LISA

Rooibos. It doesn't smell like how I usually make it.

CARLA

Right. My apologies, Miss South Africa- I made it exactly how you taught me.

WEATHERED LISA

Are you sure?

CARLA

Yes mother. I know better than that. Careful your fingers.

WEATHERED LISA

Ag! *(Clicks tongue)* You've become too Americanized.

CARLA

Why did you leave? You never told me.

WEATHERED LISA

It was complicated.

CARLA

You were pregnant. You left your entire support system for a random town on the other side of the world. Literally.

WEATHERED LISA

I wanted to take art classes. And Carmel was one of the best in the world for that. I needed an outlet.

CARLA

Surely there were art classes in Cape Town. You didn't need to go all the way to California for that. I mean, to think I could have grown up around family or people who cared for me, other than you...

WEATHERED LISA

I was protecting you.

CARLA

Stop saying that! It is not your *job* to protect me! You're supposed to nurture me and care for me and tell me the truth about my life. Do you know how fucking confusing it is to suddenly feel like a whole person, knowing finally where I come from? Like, do I need to go back and do it all over again, knowing what I know now?

WEATHERED LISA

No darling, of course not!

CARLA

Well then what am I supposed to do?

WEATHERED LISA

I don't know, Carla. I don't know.

(Beat. CARLA stares at LISA)

I couldn't play. Nothing worked- the keys were strangers. The sounds coming out were strange to me. The car horns and engines took over every thought. I needed to get out of that apartment. It looked like him. It smelled like him. I could still feel him around me. Estelle kept harping on, saying I "needed to get a grip". It was deafening. So I got out. Now, *you* remind me of him.

CARLA

That's not my fault.

WEATHERED LISA

Of course it's not. But still, it's been painful to be your mother.

CARLA

Excuse me?

WEATHERED LISA

What?

CARLA

I didn't ask to be in your life. *You* chose that.

WEATHERED LISA

I don't regret having you.

CARLA

Doesn't sound very convincing.

WEATHERED LISA

Carla, don't do that. You're the best thing that's ever happened to me, but you don't think it was difficult for me? You came out of a lot of grief. I was a single mother in a new country, and yes, I chose that, but still. (*CARLA stares, not budging*) My girl, please. You got me out of that.

CARLA

(*Bitterly*) Why have I never heard you play the piano?

WEATHERED LISA

...

Scene 7

LISA's flat in Cape Town. She sits on the bench of the piano, attempting to play a melody. Everything comes out wrong. We hear DEON's voice offstage- LISA looks out the window.

DEON

That piano's voice isn't so sweet this morning.

YOUNG LISA

Ja, sorry, Deon. Fingers aren't working how they should.

DEON

Soul isn't working how it should, more like it.

YOUNG LISA

(Taken aback) Mmhm. *(Beat)* I've got coffee going- and fresh rusks? On my balcony?

DEON

For me?

YOUNG LISA

For us,

DEON

I'll be on the *stoep* in a minute.

(now LISA's porch. Enter DEON, a smiley young gentleman- not typically what one would assume a houseless person looks like, LISA hands him a cup of coffee, and he thanks her. He sits on the couch. LISA sits on the floor.)

I've been spoiled with your beautiful playing. Made the street sounds more bearable.

YOUNG LISA

Ja, well. I guess I was spoiled too, in a way.

DEON

I know you miss him.

YOUNG LISA

How'd you know?

DEON

The piano holds more than you think. And he doesn't come around anymore. And you laugh less.

YOUNG LISA

Normally I can play these things out of my system.

DEON

This isn't one of "these things" though, hey?

YOUNG LISA

(Looking at belly) I guess not.

DEON

I went to music school, you know. In England. Guildhall.

YOUNG LISA

You're joking.

DEON

Nope. Right after high school. Got a scholarship. For conducting, out of all things.

YOUNG LISA

Sorry- this is probably not appropriate-

DEON

Why am I not conducting a world-class symphony right now? Why am I on the street?

YOUNG LISA

Yes..(*giggles uncomfortably*).

DEON

Not anything complicated really. The British love to drink, so did I. My mother died suddenly. From a car crash. I woke up every morning with a bottle of whiskey, and went to bed with a bottle of wine. Professors began to notice. I was completely incoherent most of the time. I was thrown out of my program, and drank away all the money I had, and my visa ran out, and was put on a boat back home. And at home I had nothing. Except for drink. And nobody wants to hire a drunk. No matter how talented. So here I am. *A boemelaar*.

YOUNG LISA

Christ.

DEON

Never been able to get back on my feet.

YOUNG LISA

What was her name?

DEON

Who?

YOUNG LISA

Your mother.

DEON

Lisa. She taught me piano.

YOUNG LISA

She played?

DEON

She was incredible. You remind me of her.

YOUNG LISA

Right. Thank you. *(Beat. LISA is deep in thought.)*

DEON

I didn't mean to make you uncomfortable.

YOUNG LISA

No, no. There's just a lot happening *(points to chest)*.

DEON

I know how that feels. *(Beat)* Is he dead? Or just gone?

YOUNG LISA

Not with us anymore. Car accident.

DEON

Oh god. I didn't mean to...

YOUNG LISA

No, thank you. I needed that- everything doesn't feel so lonely anymore.

DEON

Ja. I guess so. *(They smile at each other)* No more melodies, then?

YOUNG LISA

I don't know if I can anymore.

DEON

You can't? Or you won't?

YOUNG LISA

I don't know. Everything feels too heavy here.

DEON

Fly away then. It's not worth it. To sit in that.

YOUNG LISA

What?

DEON

Go somewhere where you can feel light again.

YOUNG LISA

I... I don't know.

DEON

Go. Trust me. *(He exits, leaving LISA alone with this proposition).*

Scene 8

A graveyard in Cape Town. Rusty's and his mother's grave is in front of CARLA and LISA. They look down at them. ESTELLE enters, holding a bottle of wine.

ESTELLE

Hello girls! Let the festivities commence!

WEATHERED LISA

Jesus, Estelle. Have some fucking respect.

ESTELLE

I haven't seen my best friend in twenty five years and am finally meeting my *goddaughter*- this calls for a celebration.

WEATHERED LISA

We're in a cemetery for Christ's sake.

CARLA

(Giggling about this situation) Hi Aunt Estelle, it's nice to meet you.

ESTELLE

Ag, my girl! *(Squeezing CARLA tighter than comfortable).*

WEATHERED LISA

(Realizing what's happening) Okay, okay...that's enough.

ESTELLE

(Noticing LISA's fingers) Yoh. Those fingers have gotten crooked, hey?

WEATHERED LISA

Yes they have.

ESTELLE

(Teasing) Like a little witch-

CARLA

It's been really hard, the last few years. She's had a lot of pain.

ESTELLE

Ag, I was only making a joke. We're old friends. *(Winks at LISA, LISA is not amused)*

CARLA

I look after her. So I know- I'm there when she's crying on the floor because she can't open her toothpaste or open the bathroom door.

ESTELLE

Jesus. Didn't know things were that bad Lisa. Or that my goddaughter was so prickly...

WEATHERED LISA

Well, you never called, so...

ESTELLE

You left. You left me alone.

WEATHERED LISA

Because I had to. You know that.

ESTELLE

That doesn't make it better.

CARLA

Can we not do this over my dad's grave?

WEATHERED LISA

You're right, darling. This should be a sacred moment for us. You need to reconnect.

ESTELLE

(Under her breath) Ag. Sacred my ass.

WEATHERED LISA

Estelle!

ESTELLE

All this fuss over a man!

CARLA

He's my father.

WEATHERED LISA

Clearly you have an opinion on the topic, *Stella*?

ESTELLE

He ruined your life! He left you, with child, and drove you further and further away from everyone in your life.

WEATHERED LISA

By everyone, you mean you?

ESTELLE

Ja, I guess so! You leave, take *my* goddaughter away from me, when you knew I would have been there to support you!

WEATHERED LISA

Stella, what's this about? Where's this coming from?

ESTELLE

God, Lisa you could always be so thick sometimes! I sent the fucking piano because I thought I could finally be rid of him. I had hoped you had moved on or something, that we could reconnect and everything could be like it used to. Or how I had imagined. You know, a peace offering. And here we are!

WEATHERED LISA

Ag, what the fuck?

ESTELLE

But now you've gone and scratched open old wounds.

WEATHERED LISA

He's the father of my child. Of course it was going to open up old wounds.

CARLA

Yeah, but you never told me anything about him.

ESTELLE

What?

WEATHERED LISA

Carla, that's not the issue at hand.

ESTELLE

God, what are you running from?

WEATHERED LISA

I'm not running! How could you think *that* piano could bring us together again?

ESTELLE

Fuck, if I had known that, I would never have even thought-

WEATHERED LISA

Ja, well, it's brought everything back now... so...

ESTELLE

Carla...I'm so sorry.

CARLA

No, thank you. Without you, I may have never known Rusty. And who I was.

WEATHERED LISA

Christ.

ESTELLE

That piano holds part of you, darling. A part of you that you had to bury (*Everyone looks to the grave*). God, I've been such an idiot...I'm...I'm sorry...

CARLA

Mommy?

(LISA has gotten on her knees now, eyes closed, with her hands on the tombstone, fingering a melody. We hear the melody over the speakers. ESTELLE begins to walk away, but CARLA grabs her hand, holding her close.)

Scene 9

CARLA enters her and LISA's cottage in Carmel. She has groceries. LISA sits on the couch, holding Rusty's jersey.

CARLA

Mom- They didn't have any ground turkey, so I got beef instead- Oh. Hi.

WEATHERED LISA

Hello, my *bokkie*. Beef is fine.

CARLA

Is everything okay?

WEATHERED LISA

Have I been a bad mother?

CARLA

What?

WEATHERED LISA

What do you think?

CARLA

I don't think so. I don't really have anything else to compare you with.

WEATHERED LISA

I should have been honest with you.

CARLA

You're right.

WEATHERED LISA

I should have been honest with myself, first and foremost.

CARLA

Mommy, what's happening here?

WEATHERED LISA

(Looking at piano) You've never heard me play.

CARLA

I didn't even know you ever played until a few months ago. Are you alright?

WEATHERED LISA

Your father loved it when I played for him.

CARLA

You must have been pretty good.

WEATHERED LISA

I'm sorry, darling.

CARLA

(Taken aback) Mother, you don't have to...

WEATHERED LISA

Would you mind if I played for us? I'm very out of practice, I haven't played for twenty five years...

CARLA

Mommy... I would love that.

WEATHERED LISA sits down at the piano. She tests the keys, the pedals- everything is exactly as it should be. She looks back, unsure. CARLA gives her a smile. WEATHERED LISA takes a deep breath and becomes still. The same melody from Scene 1 pours out of her. YOUNG LISA

comes onstage in the floral dress. She sits next to WEATHERED LISA, and the melody becomes a duet. The music swells, and they move in unison.

END OF PLAY

Pronunciation Guide

Ag- a sound of exasperation in Afrikaans- g is a voiceless uvular fricative. Uh- g

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Voiceless_uvular_fricative

Sol Plaatje- South African writer Soh-l pl-ah-ch-uh

Ingrid Jonker- South African writer Yoh-nk-r

Ja- Yes in Afrikans- y-ah

Boemelaar- homeless person in Afrikaans b-oo-muh-l-ah-r

Tief- bitch in Afrikaans t-ee-f

Bokkie- term of endearment in Afrikaans- little dear/antelope boh-k-ee

Rooibos- red tea from South Africa- r-oib-oh-s

Stoep- balcony/porch in Afrikaans st-oo-p

PAGAD- People Against Gangsterism and Drugs