

Good Mother Elise Sharron Full Script

Seventh grader Sara wanted nothing more on her birthday than the huge party that her parents had promised her. But when she lies to her mother the consequence is that she loses her big party and has to settle for a little sleepover. This drops her social rating substantially but her mother is bound and determined to make sure that this slumber party goes perfectly. But like all great plans things slowly begin to fall apart as her father dresses like a woman and calls it a clown, the scary ghost stories get a little too real, the fire in the living room for smores makes Sara's little sister disappear, and a late night lock at the door puts Sara in a situation that could make or break her popularity. But as the sun rises and the girls head home Sara still manages to end the event with a smile on her face and a hug for her mom.

When sisters to Tameka and Tessa are born the world did not stand on its feet and applaud them. For these girls who were from the moment of conception unwanted their lives became out sticking together and figuring out how to stay alive at the abusive hands of their mother and father. The two decide that, as twins they should have their own language, something that made them different but also a way for them to escape into a world where only the two of them existed and everything was okay. After suffering years of abuse the girls find themselves out on the streets and desperate. They decide that robbing and hustling like their parents did would be the only way but when petty crimes turn into bank heists the girls make the ultimate sacrifice promising that if they get caught they would both stay silent until one of them dies. On this day we watch the reflection as Tameka speaks for the first time after years of incarceration because on this day she finds out that her sister has died in prison. To hear the woman give the accounts of their childhood while loving and supporting her sister every step of the way it shines a light on the human ability to endure pain while also capturing the humanity of our most simplistic emotion, love. The sisters held up their promise to each other and when Tameka finally does speak, everyone will listen.

Some would say that the most difficult relationship is that between a mother and her daughter. In this collection we explore a damaged relationship between mother and daughter. In Sometimes the daughter expresses how more times than not she hates her mother. Within the poem she shares the nights of being homeless and not being able to feel like she had a home but it through the eyes of a child we are drawn to agree with her. In *Adulting Sucks* the young girl has grown up. She is now a mother and living on her own. In her reflection she realizes all of the things that she now doesn't know because when her mother spoke she turned her off and didn't listen. How much easier would her life be right now if she has listened to her mother when she was a teenager? What did she miss? And finally, in *Apology Poem* we see the next stage of this woman's life as she sits next to her dying mother and apologies for all of the things that she did and didn't do throughout her life. A coming of age story that reminds us to appreciate our parents and all of the advice they have to give because at some point in life, those wise words will drift away with the people that we called mom and dad.

One of the most challenging situations for teenagers in the present time is suicide. Preteens and teens are killing themselves or attempting to kill themselves at alarming levels. In this scene we meet Kameron Beck, a teenage girl who has walked into her high school with a knife in one hand and a gun in the other. As she walks blankly down the hall she clearly has a purpose, to find the dark hall closet. She walks into the closet and the scene begins. This is not another school shooting, this is a suicidal teenager who feels safe in the one place that looks how she feels, dark and alone. The scene travels through different interactions in her present life: with her best friend who recognizes something is wrong but wants her to "get over it," her mother who loves her and sees her sadness. She tries to help her by listening and supporting her, but to no avail. Finally, we hear from Kameron who shares what she is feeling as her "voice" tries to push her to get the job done. This is a story that shows us the power of

depression. It's not just about the suicide or the fear of a school shooting, it's trying to find the words to explain these feelings and why asking for help is so difficult. Kameron is left with a choice: she can either choose life or death. As we hear Kameron's voice, the voice that lives within her as well as the reporter outside all of their emotions are real and present. (This scene comes with two endings for the performer or director to choose from.)

God once declared everything in the world "very good." Can you imagine it? A Vision of Hope for a Broken World Shalom is what God declared. Shalom is what the Kingdom of God looks like. Shalom is when all people have enough. It's when families are healed. It's when churches, schools, and public policies protect human dignity. Shalom is when the image of God is recognized in every single human. Shalom is our calling as followers of Jesus's gospel. It is the vision God set forth in the Garden and the restoration God desires for every relationship. What can we do to bring shalom to our nations, our communities, and our souls? Through a careful exploration of biblical text, particularly the first three chapters of Genesis, Lisa Sharon Harper shows us what "very good" can look like today, even after the Fall. Because despite our anxious minds, despite division and threats of violence, God's vision remains: Wholeness for a hurting world. Peace for a fearful soul. Shalom.

Jennifer is a young woman in the midst of preparing for her wedding day. She shuffles through a closet looking for the items that she needs to make this day the most special day it could possibly be. She tells us how special the relationship is with her and her father, and in the midst of that tells us of the loss of her mother in a tragic car accident. Getting married without her mother is difficult, but also having her father refuse to attend is a heartbreaking realization. Jennifer is marrying Samantha and her father doesn't support it. She never goes into details about his reasons why, just that in order to love who she loves she has to let go of someone else she loves. A father who was her everything and who changed his life to make sure she was taken care of when her mother died. This is an emotional story about a woman on her wedding day coming to terms with the fact that the two people who she loves most may never meet each other and that she may have to walk herself down the aisle, an emotional reality. It is a fun and honest glimpse into what it means to love and how difficult it is to move forward when In This Moment all she wants is her perfect everything. Love is love, between a child and her father and mother but also between that one person that gives your smile a new meaning.

In American history there have been many times of racial tension. In recent years there has been another rise of racism that makes us realize that we are not removed from it nor are we immune to it. In "All For You" we are engaged in the story of a Mexican- American teenage girl Lucia that reflects on her life in America and how she got here from Mexico. She tells the positive story of being an immigrant then becoming educated by the woman that her mother worked for and her and her brother taught their mother everything they learned. Until as a family they all are able to become American citizens together, as a family. It is not until her senior year in high school that her and her brother are accosted by a group of kids at their high school. They are called names and beaten for no other reason than they are from Mexico. It is in this moment that she realizes that no one is immune to the discourse of racism. They are able to make it out of this moment, get home, and still reflect on their lives, wondering if this is home or if their home lies back in Mexico. Home is where the people you love are.

It is the late 1940s in rural Ireland, and Kathleen Steele has been prematurely thrust into adulthood by the death of her twin sister, Nuala. Debilitated by grief, their mother has descended into a state of near-catatonia, and it is left to Kathleen to care for her younger siblings, and her taciturn father. When a traumatised young man, Joseph Foley, mysteriously appears in the small farming community, a tentative love affair develops. But as Mrs Steele's illness deepens, Kathleen's relationship with her father grows ever more disturbing. When Kathleen agrees to marry Joseph, her mother begins to regain her health. But by then it has

become clear that the events of the intervening years will cast a dark shadow over the new generation. Tender and unblinking, *The Road to the Sea* is a novel about faith and fidelity, about the heart's ability to break, and to heal. A paean to the lost landscapes and communities of Ireland, and a meditation on the responsibilities of parents, this is an exquisite debut from a young novelist of great promise.

On the morning of September 6, 2015 Stacy gets up and proceeds like any other morning. But unfortunately as her day progresses she finds out that there has been a shooting at her son's middle school. As she watches the television frantic and frozen she realizes that she has to get to her son's school as soon as possible. Upon arrival she stands behind the barricades with all of the rest of the parents holding pictures of their children in hand, waiting to hear a word from the authorities. As time passes the all-clear signal is given and children begin to exit the school. Stacy watches as parents around her are reunited with her children. She asked one of the students if they know her son and the mother replies "He's shooter." Surrounded by a mob of angry parents without the ability to defend herself Stacy is brutally attacked. The one thing that she holds onto is the only thing that she has, a school picture of her son Andrew. She finally realizes what it was that took her son to do what he did, but by this time it is too late, for both of them. This performance is a mature and very real look into the horror associated with being a parent in the midst of a crisis and the realization that humanity is not always present and not always on our side.

In the world of work, the single greatest asset of successful individuals, teams, and organizations is their mindset—what happens in between their ears. It's not the corporate strategy, the sales compensation plan, or the market segments they're pursuing. It is what each leader, team member, and employee chooses to focus on, believe, and create for themselves and others. *7 Principles of Transformational Leadership* presents the fundamental concepts whose implementation will result in dramatic revenue, performance, and relationship growth. Specifically, leaders will learn to: Live their professional and personal lives with unbridled purpose and passion. Execute strategic priorities more effectively and with accelerated results. Retain the brightest and best talent. Have employees, key stakeholders, and managers enthusiastically follow them. Be exemplars of innovation, growth, and positive mindsets. Cascade excellence throughout their organizations. You may have employees with all the talent in the world, but you'll never achieve remarkable results until you change your employees' mindset. *7 Principles of Transformational Leadership* will help you convert your human potential into accelerated business results.

A young African American woman shares a story that has been a hot topic in the news recently, natural hair in the workplace. She talks of her memories being a little girl and getting her hair combed by her mother on Sunday night, no chemicals just natural, that's all you need. But as a child she didn't understand why the other little black girls had straight hair like the pretty white girls. Because in her young eyes white was beautiful, black was not and she didn't have anything that she could find in them that was also in her. Instead of looking inwards or to her mother as an example of beauty she continued to look outside. As she grew into herself, she gained an understanding of black hair and the pride that her mother was trying to instill in her. As she sits in an interview where she is the only black person, she is excited for this moment. She is prepared, she interviews well, she nailed it. To find out weeks later that while everyone believed she was the best interviewee they didn't think her Afro puff was the kind of representation they wanted for their company. This is a coming of age story where one little girl becomes a woman and still must accept racism is still alive and well, it just presents itself in very different ways.

In this collection, we address the challenges that religion can bring for women. There is no specific religion mentioned within the two poems in this collection but both are written with the same feel of women being taught how to think, present themselves in order to gain the proper

status to become someone who is desirable as a wife. In *¿Mother Said¿* this storyteller reflects back on all of the things that her mother told her from a young child until the present. In listening to the reflection, it is clear that the women are not seen as equals to their male counterparts. The poem gives strength to the mother in her beliefs as to what she will pass on to her daughter. Finally, the daughter starts to take off all of the things that have been holding her down and shielding her from the outside world and she stands in front of a mirror and looks at herself for the first time. In *¿Confinement¿* as the title implies we hear a young woman speak about what confinement is. With the use of other words that mean the same thing we hear her speak of things that can be confined finally ending with women. As the poem comes to an end she decides that she will break free from her own confinement and become the woman she is supposed to be. ***This collection does not address any specific religion.

Lucia is a strong woman who migrated from Mexico like most in hopes of a better life. Her journey begins with her remembering what freedom felt like, something as simple as feeling the sun on her face. When her mother decides to take her and her sisters to America in search of work the women endure a treacherous seventeen-hour trip that ends with two less stowaways than they started with, a sign of their life to come. For seven years from age 11-18 she worked on a vegetable farm in California living in slave-like conditions until her mother died and she realized that for a second time in her life the only thing she could do to save her life is run. After burying her mother on the property of the field she turns and runs to her freedom, a story of survival and struggle in a present time situation that is not regulated in America. Lucia is the voice of many migrant workers and her story should be told and heard. *Character does speak some Spanish.

This collection looks at online dating in 2017 from three different perspectives. First, a comedic look as we see a young woman talk about how easy dating is, jump on her apps and start swiping. She even jokes with her mom about how she can't believe all of the effort people use to go through to date *¿back in the day.¿* Next we see a woman, older than the first woman who talks about her reservations to online dating. She didn't feel like she was ready but after some encouragement from her girlfriends she decides that maybe it is time. After meeting a *¿nice guy¿* she finds herself on the receiving end of a sexual assault that takes her to a dark place, but reminds her to trust herself before anyone else. Lastly, we see the high spirited grandmother who is introduced to the world of online dating by her granddaughter. She swipes right, connects with an elderly man who, like her, just wants someone to talk to. They have both lived long lives, lost their significant others, but have decided that a friend to talk to might be exactly what they need. It makes you smile and feel the love that is possible at any age.

This is the story of a high school teenager who has battled and overcome the stresses of being smart enough. She is a product of a broken home with not much support from her mother she puts a lot of her focus into her education so she can use it as a means to get out. However, this concept becomes her obsession and eventually she begins to make bad choices for the sake of the grade. She stops eating and taking care of her body until her body begins to shut down. The one thing she never forgot was her first-grade teacher that taught her the word "intelligence." She held on to that all through her years in school and it was this teacher, Miss Keller that randomly sees her at the library, holds her, talks to her, and gets her the help that she needs. This is a story about a young person who uses drugs and deprives themselves of a healthy life because they have no coping skills with how to deal with life and the things that are coming at them. In this day and age teen suicide is at an all-time high and this story hits on one of the more ignored topics: anxiety and the idea of educational perfection. *This can be performed by a male or female student. It is permissible to change pronouns as needed. Describes the style of a "parliamentary" debate and presents five sample debates to help students learn how to research and present a successful debate.

When a teenage Sophia walks into her high school calculus class it was just like any other day,

until it wasn't. In the midst of last minute cramming she realizes that the room is nearly empty and the mood in the building is off. Students running to leave the building and others broken down into tears in the hallway, what is happening? She looks to her phone and sees four missed calls from her mother. When she finally connects with her, her mother is in tears and screaming, warning her not to come home, they are being actively deported back to Mexico. Sophia, an only child, has nowhere to go and no one to help her. The students are separated and sent to foster homes where abuse ensues and finally Sophia decides that going back to Mexico is the best thing for her. She doesn't know if her parents are there, she doesn't know what she is going home to but she packs her bag and sneaks away into the early morning and the heat of the desert making the trip back to Mexico on the same trip that her parents had made with her many years earlier. As she walks, the heat overcomes her. She can feel her life leaving her body and all she wants is to see her parents again. She looks for them in the heat of the sun beating down on her. She finds them off in the distance, or what she believes to be them. She uses her last piece of energy to make it to them, reaching for them, to her last breath. (*Actress has moments of speaking Spanish.)

Elise loses a tooth and discovers the magic of the real tooth fairy.

Laura is a nurse that loves her job. On a daily basis she sings to her favorite guest named Jackson or "Mr. Broadway" as he used to be a Broadway star before his accident left him in a coma. Laura believes that he is still in there listening to her, so she asks him if he can hear her on a daily basis and on this day he blinks at her. This moment transfers both of them into a life where both of them can talk to each other about life. We see Jackson as an actor auditioning and falling in love with Lisa another actress but in a strange turn of events their relationship ends and they never see each other again. Laura soon realizes that the man laying in a coma is her father that her mother spoke of all her life but never gave him a name. As Jackson and the love of his life sing and dance with each other Laura is able to live in a dream watching from a distance the joy of her mother and her love. As the scene comes to an end Laura gets closure for some of her questions but of course it all ends too soon as Jackson slips back into his coma never to sing, or dance again. Now living in his everlasting silence. When Allison comes home and tells her mom Karen that she has so graciously volunteered her to be the president of the cheer moms booster club Karen nearly dies, literally. After talking to the angel and the devil that live on her shoulders she realizes she has to do this for her daughter. It isn't until the meeting that she realizes that the cheer moms are every piece of hell she thought they would be. From the mean mom and her sidekick to the mom that is super skinny and eats the entire time to the outgoing president that tried to direct her path all of these women are insane. When it becomes clear that the best way to gain their respect is through selling the most cookies Karen takes on the challenge. In the end she realizes that being a great mom is the most important thing in the world.

There are many things that can tear a family apart. Divorce is one that takes a family and turns it upside down never to be right side up again. In this collection a seemingly normal family reflects on the life that they had and how that life, over time changed, and how that change eventually left all of the members of the family broken. Told from the perspective of all of the members of the family: mom, dad and child this collection explores how we get to the final moment of a divorce. Every family is different. Every mom, dad and child is different. But the goal is to show that each person has their own story to tell within the tragedy of divorce. Each poem begins with what they said last

then going backwards so that the audience learns how we got where we are, and finally ending with the first thing they said. Divorce is not a decision to be made easily. It is an emotional experience that affects a family for the rest of their lives.***The poem of "child" can be male or female and can be edited as necessary by the performer.

With Steady Hands

Some wonders what it takes for a child to lose their innocence. For the young woman in this story it started the day that her parents sat her down and told her that they were getting a divorce. She translated this into a situation where their divorce was not only her fault but that she wasn't a priority for them. She made it her mission to make their lives hell. Everything she cared about she let go of. Her classes, after school activities, no thing mattered anymore except making their lives hell. Then her best friend Brian who she has known all her life falls in love with her and she with him and finally someone loves her. His parents send him away and at fourteen she finds herself hustling her way from Texas to Arizona to find him. They end up living on the streets robbing people, in a Bonnie and Clyde kind of relationship. She then finds out she is pregnant. She wants the baby and without even a conversation Brian kisses her and walks out of her life forever. She makes the decision to immediately go home, finds the courage to ask her mother to allow her and her soon to be grandchild back into her home and with much joy her mother says yes. She does exactly what she said she would, she became the best mother possible. Her hope is that she can give Brian's mother some closure by telling her that he sends her anniversary cards every year. After speaking with her mother she realizes that the worst thing for a parent's to suffer through is the not knowing. Now that she is a mother, she truly understands that. In a time when school shootings have become an unfortunate way of life a teenage Rachel Woodard is living in her own private hell. The challenges of being a teenager, not being understood by her peers, not feeling loved at home and no one to talk to when the worst day of her life happens, she shifts, breaks and does the unthinkable. Often after these shootings in the midst of mourning those who lost their lives, the world wonders, "why?" More often than not this question is never answered. For Rachel, who finds herself a viral sensation when her classmates bully her, take unspeakable pictures of her and post them online ruining the little piece of self-worth she has left, she reaches out to everyone for assistance. No help from her schools' administration, no help from her peers but the most disappointing moment is the realization that her mom/dad doesn't care to support or help her. Sometimes the answers are right in front of us, but we don't want to see them, we don't want to take responsibility for being the person or group of people that could have made a difference in this young person's life and didn't. Her mom/ dad always wanted Rachel to be a "star." Sadly, when Rachel is waiting for her execution for the shooting that she orchestrated that day her mom/dad comes to visit, and a lot of these questions are addressed. In her final moment all Rachel wants it to be told by her mom/ dad that they love her. Instead their focus is on the crowd of reporters outside and how they can make this her shining moment as the first female school shooter. Hence, making her a "star."*This piece specifies that Rachel's mom or dad can be either or for the purpose of the script.

Steve is desperate for a lot of things. He is desperate to get out of his mother's house and all of the things that come with it: rubbing feet, applying ointment and being yelled at daily. Leaving home is easier said than done. As Steve goes from job to job getting

fired time after time and hearing those same words, "Maybe this isn't the job for you" he starts to get discouraged. Until he walks into the HelllllllP Daycare. A place where the people are strange and the children are stranger. But when he starts working with the 2-4 year olds he is faced with a list of challenges: a lazy coworker, his mother that won't go away, children that are...different and an incident that turns Steve from worker to detective. The characters are fun and the story is hilarious. Steve ends the day with a job that he loves and realizes that being a teacher of sorts isn't half bad.

Alejandra is a Honduran woman in her mid-fifties who is preparing for a very important visitor. On this day someone is coming to her home to interview her about the trip that she took forty years ago in 2018 from Honduras to America. She was a part of the Caravan to America and it is now about to be added into a history book. It is very important to Alejandra that the interviewer get the story right. She tells the story of why she needed to flee her home country, the murders of her father and brothers and the day that her mother told her that she had to leave. With a backpack and a bible in hand she joined the caravan. Her story is compelling remembering all of the humanitarians who came out and fed them, gave them water and rides to get them closer to the border. The deaths and the lives of the wonderful people she traveled with. Then finally reaching the border and being detained, the detention centers and the hatred they encountered at the border. Finally, she is granted asylum only to endure more racism from American citizens who treated her like she was not welcome. The scene goes back and forth between adult Alejandra and her as a teenager on the trip to America. It is a story of courage and limitless strength that is beautifully told through the eyes of someone who never thought she was a fighter.***The performer speaks Spanish within the piece, it is actually encouraged. The publication specifies that the actor may speak as much Spanish or as little as they may choose.***

Emma stands at a podium talking to the crowd that has assembled for the funeral of her best friend Tess. She recalls the first time that she met her on the playground paying hop scotch like two little girls should and it is in that moment that she learns that her soon to be best friend is hearing impaired. As they grow up together Tess teaches Emma sign language because she is the first person to want to communicate with her in her way. In a performance that spans from elementary school through high school we watch these two young ladies grow in their friendship. When Emma finds out how Tess lost her hearing their friendship is challenged in a way they never thought possible. How do you support someone whose life has been tragically changed forever at the hands of the people we are taught to trust the most? The silence that Tess had kept for so long is now forced to scream as the day nears that she must confront her abusers. Tess makes a final decision that will end all of her pain, suffering and fear but will also end her life. In the end Emma pulls herself together to memorialize her best friend who fought as long and hard as she could be signing her way through all of her life's pain, until she can no longer handle the hand she was dealt. ***Both actresses will use sign language throughout the entire performance.

Hero stands before us as a beautiful, well-put together woman in her mid twenties. She is very well spoken and warm when connecting with the audience about her life. She is a conductor. Her love for music goes back to her mother who introduced her to classical music when she was still in the womb but it made all the difference. When she was young she witnessed her mother express her passion for music and express that

when played correctly music was like poetry, in it's finest form. Her passion for music stayed with Hero her entire life, as did the demons that afflicted her mother, or did they? As Hero continues to share her life with us we begin to question if it is true or if it is fiction. Did she really go to college? Was she really the first woman to conduct the New York Symphony? Was any of this real or just a piece of her imagination that she captured from her mother? As the story unfolds we learn that Hero's mother died as a result of her fight with paranoid schizophrenia. Hero has moments in the performance when she sees even speaks to other people who are not present to us. Even though the symptoms are there is her success as a conductor, her memory of her childhood and her present life, is it as real to us as it is for her? Is it possible to be sick with something as debilitating as paranoid schizophrenia and still stand tall at the podium and make music? As Hero conducts the passion is real. As she speaks her life is real. As she connects with the audience the story is real. But when someone is sick does truth bleed into fantasy so strongly that everyone involved is questioning, ¿What is real?¿ It is a beautiful story that makes Hero wonder if she's sick at all or if she's just a brilliant musician, creating poetry through music. It is quite glorious.

Luther Jones is an African American man living in Selma, AL. He is an older man who has lived through a lot of life. In the wake of the 50th anniversary of the March on Selma he reflects on his participation on that day fifty years earlier. From singing in church to saying goodbye to his mother Luther recounts the activities that he believes shaped his life. Events that made him want to create a better life for his children even if it met risking his life to do it. He walks hand in hand with the other thousands of men and women that day hoping for equality. As he sifts through his memories of this day we see a man that has risked his life for the greater good and lost a lot of himself along the way. But no matter the price that was paid he is determined to make the march again, visit the trail where his life was forever changed and grab hands for his Walk To Remember.

What is your purpose? Charlie Rossen is like any other man in this world. He works hard for what he believes in, dedicates his time to helping other people and has even experienced death first hand. Charlie, a young man in his early twenties, tells the story of when he decided it was time to come out to his parents that he was gay. Is there ever a good or right time? But he knew that his. Mother would understand, make him cookies and accept him for who he was. But he was disappointed to find out that this reality turn her against him and she would tell him to not tell his father. But the next morning he does exactly that, owning his new-found strength in who he is and feels he has always been. He then takes it one step further when he gets to school. His friends always bullied the kids that were different including the gay kids, and Charlie always did nothing- said nothing. But on this day, he stands up for one of his classmates who is too afraid to step into the shower because they are there. Charlie lets him know, he's not the only gay person in the showers. In this moment his friends turn against him and beat him with a pipe. After many months in the hospital he recovers with a new found need to live out his purpose. He runs a food pantry that serves the homeless. The people that he feels are ignored and avoided but what he realizes is that everyone deserves to experience the gratitude of others and makes affirmations a part of his daily life because it is his purpose. Everyone has a purpose and through his experience Charlie found his.

In the wake of the biggest mass shooting in American history to date this story revolves around the Las Vegas shooting of 2017. A young man decides to celebrate his 25th birthday by surprising his parents with a trip to Vegas for the music festival. Little did they know that his surprise would quickly turn his world to a darker place than it has ever been. When they arrive, he introduces them to his fiancé Jesse, they were surprised but excited to see him so happy. The group arrive at the festival, and as they are joying the music Jesse suddenly falls into his hands, his hands now covered in blood. As he holds her he also watches his father and mother go down. At the hospital his parents are in surgery and his fiancé has died. His parents recover he tells them that she has died. This story shows us that we are never ready for loss, no matter in what kind of a tragedy. This story is not about the shooter, the situation or sensationalizing. This story is about love, loss and being able to reflect on how even in the midst of a tragedy love should always win.

When her best friend gifts her with an eerily realistic skull walking stick, Riva's already crappy life descends into terror. As if dealing with the local queen bitch out for revenge and her drunk mother weren't bad enough, Riva's "gift" has sprung to life, unleashing a spirit hell bent on stealing her body. A curse set into motion. Three possessed walking sticks, three girls turning to wood. Riva won't go down without a fight, but can she reverse the magic before it's too late.

Chelsey was death the unthinkable. When Her Only Surviving Parent, her beloved father, was violently murdered days before her fourteenth birthday, Chelsey's life was forever changed. As she was forced to come to terms with a new home life, a new school . . . a new identity as an orphan, Chelsey struggled to make sense of her personal tragedy. Yet she found a way to flourish despite all the odds. "I thought of myself in a new light: a girl, newly fourteen, standing in her dead father's study, all in black, a single tear streaming down her cheek. I was alone. My family told me again and again I was not, but without him, I was. I was no longer anyone's child." Because Truth Is More Fascinating Than Fiction

On April 15, 1941, Sarajevo fell to Germany's 16th Motorized Infantry Division. The city, along with the rest of Bosnia, was incorporated into the Independent State of Croatia, one of the most brutal of Nazi satellite states run by the ultranationalist Croat Ustasha regime. The occupation posed an extraordinary set of challenges to Sarajevo's famously cosmopolitan culture and its civic consciousness; these challenges included humanitarian and political crises and tensions of national identity. As detailed for the first time in Emily Greble's book, the city's complex mosaic of confessions (Catholic, Orthodox, Muslim, Jewish) and ethnicities (Croat, Serb, Jew, Bosnian Muslim, Roma, and various other national minorities) began to fracture under the Ustasha regime's violent assault on "Serbs, Jews, and Roma"—contested categories of identity in this multiconfessional space—tearing at the city's most basic traditions. Nor was there unanimity within the various ethnic and confessional groups: some Catholic Croats detested the Ustasha regime while others rode to power within it; Muslims quarreled about how best to position themselves for the postwar world, and some cast their lot with Hitler and joined the ill-fated Muslim Waffen SS. In time, these centripetal forces were complicated by the Yugoslav civil war, a multisided civil conflict fought among Communist Partisans, Chetniks (Serb nationalists), Usthas, and a host of other smaller groups. The absence of military conflict in Sarajevo allows Greble to

explore the different sides of civil conflict, shedding light on the ways that humanitarian crises contributed to civil tensions and the ways that marginalized groups sought political power within the shifting political system. There is much drama in these pages: In the late days of the war, the Ustasha leaders, realizing that their game was up, turned the city into a slaughterhouse before fleeing abroad. The arrival of the Communist Partisans in April 1945 ushered in a new revolutionary era, one met with caution by the townspeople. Greble tells this complex story with remarkable clarity. Throughout, she emphasizes the measures that the city's leaders took to preserve against staggering odds the cultural and religious pluralism that had long enabled the city's diverse populations to thrive together.

Ann is a seemingly happy and wonderful small-town girl with an electric personality. The audience enjoys her smile and the love she has for her son Jessie who she rocks in her arms at the beginning of the scene. Ann then tells us about the struggles of growing up in a small town where everyone knows everyone, but no one ever really listens. She is initially excited and shares this joy with her husband but as time passes and her body begins to change, and hormones take over she begins to feel emotions that she never thought possible. She is in a constant state of panic and fear. Fear for the health of her baby, is she doing everything right, will the baby be okay, what if the baby is sick and she doesn't know it. Her body becomes an unhealthy place for the baby and as much as she begs for help from her doctor, her mother and her husband everyone around her continues to tell her to calm down and relax. Often, we don't realize the pain someone else is in because when they speak about it we aren't truly listening. Ann has to come to terms with her pregnancy, even if she has to do it alone. She now speaks to us about the struggles of Post- Partum Depression and that it is a real illness because she had it. And though her episode was different from most, and the results of her non diagnoses for so many months affected her for the rest of her life she is still able to share her story. Her son Jessie is born, and she wants to love him but can't. She wants to be a mother to him but can't, and in a series of unbalanced moments of the severe depression things happen that she can never forgive herself for nor can she ever take back. But through years of full-time mental care, medication and psychological support Ann is able to tell us her greatest story of gaining all that she wanted in the world and then losing forever.

An Ancient Curse. An Immortal Monster. A Forbidden Love. Seventeen year-old Hope Nicholas has spent her entire life on the run. With her mom, she's traveled from town to town, barely staying long enough to meet anyone, let alone make friends. If she wants to stay alive, she'll have to keep it that way. When her mother is murdered, Hope is left orphaned and alone. Is this the fulfillment of Apollo's curse? Is Hope, too, being hunted? Hope flees again, staying hidden now more important than ever. But learning to navigate mean girls, demigods, and shadow-monsters from the Underworld is nothing compared to enigmatic and persistent new-boy, Athan Michael. In a modern world still ruled by the Greek Gods, being a monster is more than a curse. It is a death sentence.

Hannah Weston is a surgeon. She takes great pride in her job even reciting the doctor oath during surgeries but like all people Hannah has a story to tell. After finishing a surgery she shares her first experiences as a doctor as a child giving her mother stitches after her drunken father beat her. This continued for many years until her

mother got the courage to leave her father, but she also left her behind. The abuse had already been a part of her life but got worse upon her mother's departure but Hannah never lost sight of her life goal, to be a doctor and she achieved it. It is not until a drunk driver is brought in that she realizes just how much unfinished business she has with her father. With the man laying on her table her minds begins to wonder if she could kill him. Finally realizing that this man isn't her father she operates on him and saves his life though in the car accident he caused five people died. She realizes that doctors do have the ability to play God, to give and take life, but she could not do it anymore. Immediately after this night her hand begins to have uncontrollable tremors that end her career but it forces her to deal with herself. It is in working on the inside that she finds the ability to once again breath freely and live day-to-day helping people in whatever way she can.

In this collection we see the world through the eyes of a normal teenager that believes his/her life is anything but normal. When they reflect on their life as a white teenager living in the suburbs they begins to see things in their world that they didn't know to be true. In False Truths we see this teen walk outside of their home and see their world for exactly what it is, a place where people secretly take out their personal trash because we have to hold up a certain level of false realities in order to be a part of this group. They share that it is all a lie that they are keeping up appearances on when the reality is that they are just as much of a mess as any other family or teenager anywhere else. Reflecting on doing drugs and getting away with it, hiding the trips to rehab because mom and dad can afford to do so. This is the life of the suburban teen, and it's their lie. In Dominoes a teen reflects on the day that their best friend dies of an overdose at a party and no one talks about it. No one gets in trouble for it and no one is honest about what the problem is. Reflecting on the life and death of their friend. Talking about the days after when he is buried and the following day there is another party where another group of friends will be there celebrating the life of their dead friend. This is their reality, this is the American suburban lie.

The most difficult bond to break is that of family. The connection that a father has with his son is not like any other relationship they will forge. For Devin (African American) his male role model came in the form of Pop's, his grandfather. Pop's told him about his great grand father who was a freed slave and how their bloodline came to be. He taught him how to be a man and more than that he taught him how to love. That in the midst of the abusive home he was raised in his father's drinking and his mother's inability to stand up for her self and her child Devin could still be a good person. Now Devin is in the midst of the greatest moment of his life, he is about to become a father. But as he sits in his unborn son's room he wonders how he will explain to him that his grandmother is dead at the hands of his grandfather. How does he tell him that you can love someone and still decide that putting them in prison for the rest of their lives is the best decision for everyone involved? And through all that he still remembers moments of joy and love, he still knows that his father loves him. He still holds onto the values Pop's taught him but as a man and as a person he refuses to allow his son to live in the same shadows that he lived in. It is in the passing down of stories and sometimes artifacts that history is made. This piece is a brief moment in time for a young man to reflect on his life before he brings life into the world that was created for him.

Jessi is a wonderful young woman in his mid-twenties. She has been deaf since she

