For The Maine Public Theatre
and the people of Lewiston, Maine

ACT I

An art studio. The kind where Paint and Sip parties are held. Five chairs and easels are set up with a blank canvas on each one. There is also a long table for food and drinks.

Miriam is first to arrive. She looks at the paintings done by previous Paint Night painters. Some are pretty good. Some... not so much.

She moves about the studio, checking things out. Her phone rings.

MIRIAM

(Answering) Is it him? *(Beat.)* I thought you weren't going to call unless... It's okay. But I shouldn't be doing this. No. I'm coming home. *(Beat.)* We'll still celebrate Lolly. Just at home. I know she does, but... I *know*. You're right. Yes. I'll stay. But I'm going to hate every second of it. When did Lolly decide she was an *artist?* I mean seriously. I guess I should be grateful we're not all chanting at some Deeksha blessing, right? Or in silence? Wait, silence might not be so bad. Fern is coming after all. Call me, if you hear anything... no matter what it is. But Joe, don't call just to call, you know? Every time the phone rings I think... my heart just stops... I know. You too.

Miriam hangs up. She starts to feel hot. Her breath quickens. She has to vomit. She finds a trash can and throws up in it.

Vera, the art studio owner enters and sees Miriam getting sick. She gets a glass of water.

MIRIAM

I'm so sorry.

VERA

Here.

Vera gives Miriam the water.

MIRIAM

I'm not contagious or anything. I just— I don't know— maybe I ate something a little off or...

VERA

Had a difficult phone call?

MIRIAM

God, you heard that?

VERA

Had a few of those myself. Don't worry about it.

MIRIAM
The trash. I can take it out.

VERA
That's not the trash.

MIRIAM
What is it?

VERA
Supplies for a kids pottery birthday party tomorrow.

MIRIAM
Oh. Oh *no*. I'm so sorry. I can pay for it. I don't have cash with me but Venmo or—

VERA
I have more. It's really okay.

MIRIAM
I should go home.

VERA
The two women who set this whole thing up will be very disappointed. Bree was it? And Fern? I've only talked to Fern twice but I would not recommend disappointing Fern.

MIRIAM
You mean because she'll murder me if I don't stay and have *the best time ever.*

VERA
Depends.

Vera grabs a clipboard.

Which one are you?

MIRIAM
Miriam.

Vera looks at her clipboard.

VERA
Mother of the bride. Well... While I can't promise *the best time ever* I do lead a pretty decent Paint Night if the reviews are to be believed. Besides, I was really looking forward to the distraction so... I'll stay if you will.

MIRIAM
Isn't this *your* art studio?

VERA
Yes.

MIRIAM
So don't you kind of have to stay?

VERA
Isn't it your daughter's wedding?

Beat. Point made.

MIRIAM
What are you hoping to be distracted from?

VERA
It's kind of personal.

MIRIAM
I just threw up a whole bucket full of personal into your pottery supplies so...

Beat.

VERA
It's... daughter stuff.

MIRIAM
Now that's a club I'm familiar with.

Vera picks up the garbage pale.

VERA
I'll put this out in the hall for now. Come on. I'll take you to the bathroom and you can get cleaned up. That is... if you're staying?

MIRIAM
I'm staying.

VERA
Good. end

Vera and Miriam exit.

A few moments later, Bree enters.

She is a flurry of precariously balanced snacks and plates and utensils. She is voice texting.

BREE
(Holding her phone out in front of her with one barely free hand) Mr. Koch *(Pronounced Coke)*, comma, so sorry I missed our meeting today. Exclamation point exclamation point. *(Beat.)* Exclamation point. It's a very long story involving mashed peas, a lost rubber duck and stopping for gas after—

The food comes crashing down.

Shit. Shit shit shit shit shit!