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release

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by Michael Cheikin

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To contact the playwright:
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dedicated to my patients and colleagues at
Inglis House, A Wheelchair Community
in Philadelphia

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release

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Production Information

Synopsis: RELEASE is a short drama about the effects of multiple sclerosis on a loving couple.

Actors: Two actors:
 Male, mid 30's
 Female, early 30's

Set: An interior. Sofa, cocktail table, chest of drawers, two doors, and an optional window.

Running Time: Approximately 25 minutes.

Props: Walker with wheels in front.
 Pocketbook with eye liner, mirror.
 Small suitcase.

Time: Present. Fall. Friday night.

Place: A one-bedroom apartment, with sofa, cocktail table, small chest of drawers, two doors.

Dramatis Personae (in order of appearance)

GAIL: A woman with multiple sclerosis. Mid 30's, intelligent, gentle. Was in finance. Now has a marked shake of her trunk, arms, legs and voice. This requires her to walk with a walker, speak slowly, and be careful with carrying and drinking liquids (fear of spilling and choking). She occasionally loses balance and falls.

PETER: Her husband, also mid 30's. Chubby, balding, quiet, sweet--an average Joe--can be an electrician or computer programmer.

[TO THE ACTORS: This is the first time Peter is visiting Gail at her mother's apartment, since her recent hospitalization for an exacerbation of Multiple Sclerosis. They were high school sweethearts who married, and thus know each other very well.]

(IN THE BLACKNESS, WE HEAR A DOORBELL RING.)

(THE LIGHTS RAPIDLY RISE, REVEALING A SIMPLE APARTMENT, WITH A SOFA, COCKTAIL TABLE AND CHEST OF DRAWERS. THERE ARE DOORS TO THE BEDROOM AND ENTRANCE, AND AN OPTIONAL WINDOW).

(GAIL ENTERS FROM THE BEDROOM DOOR, WALKING WITH A WALKER. THERE IS A SHAKINESS TO HER BODY, ARMS, LEGS AND VOICE. SHE IS DRESSED NICELY, WITH SOME MAKEUP (NO EYELINER), WHICH IS UNEVEN FROM IT'S BEING APPLIED BY HER SHAKY HAND.)

(THE DOORBELL RINGS AGAIN.)

GAIL:

Coming.

(SHE WALKS SLOWLY OVER TO THE DOOR. SHE PUTS THE WALKER BEHIND HER, LEANING BACK ON IT. OPENS THE DOOR. PETER ENTERS, WEARING A FALL JACKET AND CARRYING A SMALL SUITCASE.)

PETER:

Hi.

GAIL:

Hi.

(HE PUTS THE SUITCASE DOWN AND GIVES HER A BIG KISS.)

(SHE LOSES BALANCE, MOVES TO THE WALKER.)

PETER:

Sorry I'm late. I couldn't get to a phone.

GAIL:

It's OK.

PETER:

It annoys you.

GAIL:
I used the time. (FLIRTACEOUSLY) Put on some makeup. For our Friday night date.

PETER:
You look beautiful.

GAIL:
Really?

PETER:
Very.

GAIL:
(COYLY, PLAYFUL) Well, then, I'm not angry.

PETER:
I can't wait to get you home, Gaily.

GAIL:
Me too, Petey. She's getting on my nerves.

PETER:
It was nice of her to help.

GAIL:
Well, come in.

(HE TAKES A FEW STEPS IN, CAUTIOUSLY.
SHE CLOSES THE DOOR AS HE LOOKS AROUND.)

PETER:
Where is she?

GAIL:
Went to a friend's.

PETER:
She left you alone?

GAIL:
I'm safe. For a few hours. She needed a break.

PETER:
Yeah. (PAUSE, AS HE CONTEMPLATES HIS GUILT) Geez, this place is small.

GAIL:
That's the best part of it. I can get to everything.

PETER:

Remember how big your house was, when you grew up? You must be on top of each other now.

GAIL:

Yeah. Give me your coat.

.....

(AS HE HANDS HER THE COAT, THE LIGHTS CHANGE AND MUSIC STARTS. THEY GO BACK IN TIME. SHE COMES OUT FROM HER WALKER AND HOPS OR JUMPS LIKE A CHEERLEADER.)

GAIL:

Give me your coat!

PETER:

Gee, Gaily, this is a nice house.

GAIL:

(SEXY) They're away.

PETER:

Really? For how long?

GAIL:

Till tomorrow. Wanna stay over?

PETER:

What about your brother?

GAIL:

He had his girlfriend over last night!

PETER:

Really?! I don't know.

GAIL:

You love me, don't you.

PETER:

You know it, baby. But, your Dad doesn't--he doesn't even like me. I'm not classy enough for you.

GAIL:

I don't care what he thinks.

PETER:
But I do--Ms. Independence. I want him to like me.

GAIL:
I love you. That's all that matters...

(THEY KISS, THE LIGHTS AND MUSIC CHANGE
BACK, THEY SEPARATE, SHE GOES BACK TO
HER WALKER.)

.....

(SHE DRAPES HIS COAT OVER HER WALKER.)

GAIL:
Before we pack, I need you to do something for me.

PETER:
What?

GAIL:
I couldn't put on my eyeliner. I was afraid I'd poke my eye out!

PETER:
You don't need any makeup for me.

GAIL:
It makes me feel better.

PETER:
OK.

GAIL:
My pocketbook is over there.

(HE GETS IT AND BRINGS IT TO HER.)

GAIL:
You can get it.

PETER:
OK.

(HE RUMMAGES AND FINDS IT.)

PETER:
You'll have to sit down, Gaily.

GAIL:
OK... Petey.

(SHE SITS.)

PETER:
(HE'S DONE THIS BEFORE) How do you want it?

GAIL:
Light. It's only for tonight. For you.

(HE HOLDS HER FACE TO APPLY THE MAKEUP.
WE SEE HIM EXAMINING HER CLOSELY AS HER
EYES ARE CLOSED. HE APPLIES THE
EYELINER CONFIDENTLY. HE HAS DONE THIS
MANY TIMES BEFORE, LICKING THE TIP LIKE
A PRO. AS HE APPLIES IT:)

PETER:
I hate this Revlon shit. (PAUSE) Cover Girl's much better. (PAUSE) I'll
buy you some.

GAIL:
(LAUGHING) I'd like to see the cashier's face.

PETER:
Keep still. (FINISHES EYELINER) There.

GAIL:
Could you get me the mirror?

PETER:
(INSECURE ABOUT MAKEUP JOB) Really?

GAIL:
Really.

(HE GOES INTO HER BAG TO GET IT, THEN
STOPS. HE GIVES HER THE BAG.)

PETER:
No! You get it yourself! Miss independence!

GAIL:
(SLIGHT PAUSE, AS SHE LOOKS) Thank you, Peter. See--how easy it is--to
become a cripple?

PETER:
Cripple?!...

(SHE CLOSSES THE MIRROR ABRUPTLY, ANGRY.)

.....
(THE LIGHTS CHANGE AND MUSIC STARTS AS
THEY AGAIN GO BACK IN TIME.)

GAIL:

It's only a few years.

PETER:

They're doing this! They're trying to break us up.

GAIL:

No. It's a good school. Come on, Petey, you don't want me to be some dependent housewife, do you?

PETER:

That wouldn't be so bad.

GAIL:

You're lying. You love me 'cause I'm strong. I want a career, Petey.

PETER:

You'll meet some guy in class.

GAIL:

No I won't. I'll come home every holiday. And some weekends. Summers.
(PAUSE) Just think how nice it's gonna be, saying goodbye. And hello.
(SEXY, PLAYFUL) Hellooooo...

PETER:

Well... Just give me a kiss like you mean it. One that will last for four long years! Miss Independence!

(THEY KISS, THE LIGHTS AND MUSIC CHANGE
BACK, THEY SEPARATE, SHE GOES BACK TO
HER WALKER.)
.....

PETER:

(SMILING) Was that the M.S. moving your tongue?

GAIL:

(SMILING BACK) No. That was me! Now lets start packing.

You didn't start?

PETER:

No. I had a doctor's appointment. Then I had to take a nap. I get real fatigued.

GAIL:

(SLIGHT PAUSE)

What'd he say? About the new medicine?

PETER:

He doesn't think it's doing very much.

GAIL:

(DISAPPOINTED) Oh? But the ads say--

PETER:

--He says it's all a hype.

GAIL:

The bastards!

PETER:

At least I bought stock!

GAIL:

So, what does this mean?

PETER:

What?

GAIL:

With your M.S.?

PETER:

He says I'm slowly progressive.

GAIL:

Oh.

PETER:

I'm going to continue to...to...

GAIL:

Hey! Let's not go there. We need to think positive! What did he say about stress?

PETER:

GAIL:
He says stress can make it worse. Or better. Depends.

PETER:
That's why I got to get you home. You know, living with your mother is real stressful.

GAIL:
Yeah. But at least she could get off from work. Until you could. Come on, let's get started.

PETER:
Where's your stuff?

GAIL:
In this chest. The sofa opens up. I'll get my things from the bathroom.

PETER:
I'll get 'em.

GAIL:
No! I will!

(SHE WALKS SLOWLY AND SHAKILY INTO THE BEDROOM. HE WATCHES HER. THERE IS A SAD, CARING LOOK ON HIS FACE.)

(HE HAS A PRIVATE MOMENT. HE WALKS AROUND; NOW HE CAN TAKE A GOOD LOOK. STRAIGHTENS A PICTURE, SMELLS THE FLOWERS.

.....
(THE LIGHTS CHANGE AND MUSIC STARTS AS THEY AGAIN GO BACK IN TIME.)

(GAIL RE-ENTERS, NOW IN THE PAST.)

GAIL:
Petey!

PETER:
Gaily!

(THEY RUSH TOWARDS EACH OTHER, HUG AND KISS.)

GAIL:
Let me look at you.

PETER:

Man, I've missed you. Wait, what did you do to your hair?

GAIL:

I grew it out. And I'm wearing my new sorority pin. Like it?

PETER:

Yeah! When can I visit?

GAIL:

Silly boy--there's a house mother.

PETER:

What about the guy who answered the phone?

GAIL:

What guy?

PETER:

What guy? The one on the phone when I called yesterday. In your room.

GAIL:

I don't know. Must have been my roommate's friend.

PETER:

You can tell me, Gail. I'm a big boy. I can take it. You're seeing someone, aren't you?

GAIL:

No!

PETER:

Are you sure?

GAIL:

(SARCASTIC) Let me see... (SHE THINKS) No!

PETER:

Now you're making fun of me.

GAIL:

You know, guys do visit.

PETER:

But not me?

GAIL:

They can't sleep over.

Sure.

PETER:

GAIL:
You're not being fair, Peter. You know how many hours I drove today to see you?

PETER:
Oh yeah? And what about the boyfriend? When you drive back, do you tell him the same thing?

GAIL:
(SACRASTIC) Oh yeah--that's it!

(SHE RUNS BACK INTO THE BEDROOM)

.....

(THE LIGHTS AND MUSIC CHANGE BACK. SHE RE-ENTERS, NOW WITH HER WALKER AND A SMALL BAG WITH TOILETRIES.)

GAIL:
What are you doing?

PETER:
Nothing.

GAIL:
Come on, I'll hand you the stuff.

(SHE MOVES TO THE DRESSER AND OPENS THE TOP DRAWER. TAKES OUT SOME CLOTHES. HE HESITATES (BECAUSE HE KNOWS HE CAN'T BE HOME WITH HER, BUT IS BUILDING UP THE COURAGE TO TELL HER).)

GAIL:
Here. Come on, open the suitcase.

(HE OPENS THE SUITCASE, PLACES IT ON THE FLOOR OR SOFA, TAKES THE STUFF, PUTS IT IN THE SUITCASE.)

GAIL:
Hey, keep it neat. It's ironed.

PETER:
You ironed?

GAIL:

No-- (IRONICALLY) My Mommy did it. She takes good care of me.

PETER:

Not as good as me?

GAIL:

You know what I mean. But I'm really looking forward to us spending time together, Peter.

PETER:

Me too.

GAIL:

You know, Petey, with your working so much, we never really have time to talk.

PETER:

What's there to talk about?

GAIL:

Our future. Our dreams.

PETER:

What's to talk? We have our house. We're going to have kids. You're going to be a mom.

GAIL:

I've gotten sick.

PETER:

So?

GAIL:

So, we have to make some,... adjustments.

PETER:

You'll be fine. (CHANGING SUBJECT) So, what have you been doing here all day?

GAIL:

Well, my physical therapist comes three times a week. And occupational therapy twice. And my Speech Therapist--she's a big fat bitch! They're working me real hard.

PETER:

Good.

GAIL:

But I'm not safe yet. I fell just this morning.

PETER:

You OK?

GAIL:

Yeah. Good thing I'm light. Mom could lift me.

(PETER GETS REAL SAD. LOOKS DOWN, IS ABOUT TO CRY.)

GAIL:

Pee-ter!

(SHE SITS BESIDE HIM.)

PETER:

What!?

GAIL:

Please! (PAUSE. NOW SHE CHANGES SUBJECT) So, how was your week?

PETER:

My week? Hmm. What can I tell you? Like usual, it sucked. Maybe less than last week. Now that you've been released from the hospital.

GAIL:

Is that Bill still bothering you?

PETER:

No. Found a girl. A lot calmer.

(THEY LAUGH)

GAIL:

(LAUGHS) I bet she's getting tense!

(THEY LAUGH MORE. SHE APPROACHES HIM.)

GAIL:

What about you, Petey?

PETER:

What about me?

GAIL:

You know. Have you been getting...tense? Or have you been... releasing--

PETER:

--I'm taking care of myself.

GAIL:

(TOUCHES HIM) Do you think of me?

PETER:

Yeah. Best of.

(THEY LAUGH)

GAIL:

Didn't you tell me some babe at work is flirting with you?

PETER:

She's no babe. She don't touch you, Gail.

GAIL:

Yeah, but I bet she want's to touch you. Women always like your smell.

.....

(SHE GIVES HIM A SNIFF. THE LIGHTS CHANGE, MUSIC STARTS, A FLASHBACK. PETER IS QUITE DRUNK.)

GAIL:

You reek! Where have you been?

PETER:

No where.

GAIL:

I hate lies, Peter.

I just went for a few drinks.

With who?

The guys.

Where?

Out!

Specifically!

I love you!

Oh? And what about this lipstick?

What!?

Is this from one of the guys?

No.

So, who?

I don't know!

You don't know?!

(STANDS, UNSTEADY) Look, I don't question what you do at college. I got a life too, you know. I know, you want me to hold my breath while I wait for you:

(HE HOLDS HIS BREATH)

GAIL:

Stop it! Peter, stop it! Who is she? I can take it.

PETER:

No one.

GAIL:

No one?

PETER:

OK OK, I went to Candy's Cave. You know, baby, I'm lonely without you.

GAIL:

Oh. (PAUSE) Is that all?

PETER:

(CONFESSING) I didn't know about the lipstick.

GAIL:

Obviously.

PETER:

You love me?

GAIL:

Yeah, I love you, silly boy. I even like it when you smell of liquor.

(SHE SNIFFS/SNUGGLES HIM. LIGHTS AND
MUSIC CHANGE BACK TO THE PRESENT.)

.....

PETER:

I miss your smell too.

GAIL:

Come on, let's get home.

(SHE AGAIN STANDS AND GOES TO CHEST OF
DRAWERS.)

GAIL:

So, how much time did Bob give you off from work?

PETER:

Uh, there was, uh, a slight change in plans.

GAIL:

What?

PETER:
I can't get off for another week.

GAIL:
WHAT!?

PETER:
We're swamped lately. We're still down a guy. That's how I got all that overtime.

GAIL:
But Peter, I, I, can't be alone all day. Not yet.

PETER:
What about that help?

GAIL:
It's just a few hours.

PETER:
We got the weekend to set you up. You'll be fine.

GAIL:
No--I'm not safe.

PETER:
We can get more help.

GAIL:
--No! I want you to take care of me. Not some stranger.

PETER:
I want to--it's just--

GAIL:
--I better sit down. (PAUSE) Sometimes, Petey, I think you work so hard so you don't have to be home. Like it hurts you to see me this way.

PETER:
That isn't true.

GAIL:
You were never so busy before.

PETER:
But, Gaily, I'm getting overtime. It's paying the mortgage. You can't-- you--don't-- don't have to work any more.

GAIL:
Yes, but I need you home.

PETER:

What am I gonna do? Move in with your mother too?

GAIL:

No. But we could do with less.

PETER:

Less! I'll tell you what. When you come home, we can talk about it.

GAIL:

No, we have to talk about it before I come home. So I can come home.
(SHE STRUGGLES TO STAND) Petey, Look at me. Look at me! I'm not the way
I was. I'm... crippled.

PETER:

DON'T you talk that way! You hear! You NEVER talk that way.

GAIL:

But I am. I can't take care of myself any more.

(SHE TURNS HER BACK TO HIM. HE COMES
OVER, PUTS HIS HANDS ON HER SHOULDERS:)

.....

(LIGHTS AND MUSIC CHANGE AGAIN. SHE IS
NOW LOOKING AT HER DAD IN HIS COFFIN.
HE APPROACHES HER.)

PETER:

Hey, Gaily...

GAIL:

Hey, Petey...

PETER:

I'm real sorry.

GAIL:

Thanks for coming.

PETER:

I wouldn't miss this for nothing. (REALIZES IT SOUNDS LIKE A POSITIVE
THING) I mean--

GAIL:

--I know. You're here for me.

PETER:
Yeah.

GAIL:
He looks really handsome, doesn't he?

PETER:
Yeah. (PAUSE). (AWKWARD) They did real good with the makeup.

GAIL:
I never got to say goodbye.

PETER:
(PAUSE) (AWKWARD) I guess, now, I'll never get him to like me.

GAIL:
Who's gonna take care of me now?

PETER:
I will, Gaily. I will.

(THEY HUG, THE LIGHTS AND MUSIC SLOWLY
FADE BACK TO THE PRESENT, THEY PULL
APART, SHE GOES BEHIND HER WALKER.)

.....

GAIL:
Petey, we gotta figure out who's gonna take care of me. We gotta talk
about this. Please, Petey, for me.

PETER:
(AVOIDING) We're talking!

GAIL:
No--we gotta talk about the details.

PETER:
What details?

GAIL:
The social worker told me--that with no income, I'd be eligible for all
sorts of help. Even 24 hours. Medicines. Even equipment.

PETER:
I got insurance.

GAIL:

Yeah, but it doesn't cover what I need. And with your income, we're ineligible.

PETER:

That's why I'm working overtime.

GAIL:

It can be thousands a month. A wheelchair is real expensive.

PETER:

You ain't goin' in no wheelchair. No way.

GAIL:

The social worker said that couples like us do better if we separate. Then your income won't be considered. We would do better. And you wouldn't have to work so hard.

PETER:

Who's this social worker? I'm going to give her a real big dental bill!

GAIL:

Petey, it makes sense. We could enjoy each other. I won't have so much guilt.

PETER:

You're feeling guilty?

GAIL:

All the time. I think it's keeping me from...

PETER:

...getting better. Gee. I've been feeling real guilty too.

GAIL:

It's no one's fault, Petey. Not yours or mine. It just is.

(HE STARTS TO CRY. SHE HUGS HIM.)

GAIL:

Don't cry. All I want is more time with you.

PETER:

I want more time with you, too.

GAIL:

I can't make this decision alone.

I don't know.

PETER:

I would need my own address.

GAIL:

WHAT!

PETER:

To be eligible.

GAIL:

What? What the hell is this? Are you telling me you can't come home?

PETER:

Not if we want the help.

GAIL:

No way! You're coming home, Gaily, and that's it. Tonight.

PETER:

(HE GETS UP AND BEGINS TO PACK THE SUITCASE FRENETICALLY.)

Peter, it's just a possibility.

GAIL:

No way! I'll work four jobs before I let you move out!

PETER:

Please sit down. I can't come home yet--not if you can't be there.

GAIL:

You're coming home tonight!

PETER:

Please, Peter, stop. Peter! I still need--

GAIL:

(DURING THE ABOVE, AS HE BACK WITH HIS BACK TO HER, SHE GETS UP, WALKS TO HIM, TRIES TO GRAB HIS ELBOW. HE SHAKES HER LOOSE, SHE LOSES BALANCE AND FALLS.)

Ohhh.

GAIL:

Gail! Aw, shit.

PETER:

(HE GOES TO HER ON THE FLOOR.)

GAIL:

I'm sorry.

PETER:

Are you all right?

GAIL:

Yes.

PETER:

I didn't mean to--

GAIL:

--I told you. My balance is still off. I'm sorry.

PETER:

What the hell are you apologizing for?

GAIL:

For... (PAUSE)

PETER:

For what?

GAIL:

For... disappointing you.

PETER:

Oh, baby, you're not disappointing me. You're the best thing that ever happened to me. I'm the one who's no good.

.....

(THE LAST FLASHBACK. THE LIGHTS AND MUSIC CHANGE. SHE ROLLS ON TOP OF HIM, THEY'RE BOTH ON THE FLOOR, LAUGHING, BOTH DRUNK. THEY'RE HORSE PLAYING.)

GAIL:

See--I'm on--

(PETER ROLLS BACK ON TOP OF HER.)

PETER:

No, I am. Just admit that I--

(GAIL ROLLS BACK ON PETER.)

GAIL:

I got you this time. And just to keep you where you belong...

(SHE GRABS EACH OF HIS WRISTS AND PINS HIS ARMS DOWN ABOVE HIM.)

PETER:

I give up. You win.

(SHE KISSES HIM.)

GAIL:

You start up with me, and I'll knock you down again.

PETER:

OK OK. Well, now that you're on top, how about marrying me!

GAIL:

What!?

PETER:

Come on, baby, let's do it. I'm helpless!

GAIL:

Petey, are you serious?

PETER:

You betcha.

GAIL:

But what about school?

PETER:

We'll do it after you graduate. I bet your Mom needs a year to plan.

GAIL:

Really?

PETER:

I love you, baby. It's about time.

GAIL:

Yeah. It's time.

(THEY KISS.)

PETER:

...time to tickle you...

(THEY HORSEPLAY AGAIN. THEY SEPARATE AS THE LIGHTS AND MUSIC CHANGE BACK TO THE PRESENT.)

.....

GAIL:

Don't you see-- I'm gonna drag you down with me.

PETER:

I don't care.

GAIL:

I know how hard it is for you, honey, to see me like this. To be so dependent. It's gonna get worse. You're going to get more and more frustrated. And our lifetime of love will be wiped out by a few bad months.

PETER:

No way.

GAIL:

Petey, I want you to go on with your life.

PETER:

I'm living!

GAIL:

No. I mean. I'm your wife. But I can't be. I can't be your wife--it's too much of a responsibility. It's making me sick. I have no right to make you--be lonely.

PETER:

I'm not lonely.

(MUSIC SLOWLY RISES IN THE BACKGROUND, REACHING FULL VOLUME BY THE LINE "I RELEASE YOU")

GAIL:

Petey, please, don't make this any more difficult than it is. I have to free myself of this guilt. It's my only chance to slow this thing down.

PETER:

I'm not laying no guilt trip on you.

GAIL:

No, I am. It's bad enough I got this thing. I don't want to bring you down with me. Why let it destroy two lives?

(ARE THEY STILL ON THE FLOOR?)

PETER:

(DESPERATE) Gaily, please. Please don't talk this way. You're coming home to me. We're gonna have kids. You gotta be a mom, baby.

GAIL:

(PAUSE. TAKES A BREATH. LOOKS HIM STRAIGHT IN THE EYE, MAKING A PRONOUNCEMENT:) Peter, I release you.

PETER:

What--what the hell are you talking about?

GAIL:

Peter, I release you. You are my husband, but I release you from your vows, your obligations to me. [All of them.]

(MUSIC SLOWLY FADES.)

PETER:

I don't... (ANGRY, TO HIMSELF) I knew I shouldn't let you come to your mother's!

GAIL:

Petey--I'm giving you no choice. I'd rather do this, now, myself, than have you need to do it later--when you can't take it any more.

PETER:

I didn't mean to push you, baby!

GAIL:

It's not that. It's the whole damn thing.

PETER:

(HE CRIES) But I don't want to release you. I want you.

(SHE CRIES TOO. THEY HUG.)

GAIL:

I want you too, darling. But I want you to have good memories of me.

PETER:

Don't talk that way!

GAIL:

In our support group, not one couple has survived. You can't even take it, going there.

PETER:

They're a lot worse than you.

GAIL:

They are me. In not too long. Petey, I have to let go... of... many...

(PETER SOBS)

GAIL:

(PAUSE) Please, Petey, let me do this. If you love me, you'll let me do this.

PETER:

No way.

GAIL:

You'll never disappoint me, Peter. What ever you do for me is great. But it's OK to say no to me. I just have to know I've released you.

PETER:

I don't agree. And that's that.

GAIL:

OK OK. We'll talk more.

PETER:

Now what am I supposed to do?

GAIL:

Stop working so hard.

PETER:

What's the point? If you're not home?

GAIL:

You can come to see me every day. I want you to.

PETER:

Visit?! What, like some, some, stranger?

GAIL:

It can be like we were dating again.

PETER:

This is so damn...

GAIL:

It could be fun. We could look in each other's eyes, like in junior high...

PETER:

Ya think we could get your Mom to yell at me?

GAIL:

Sure. (PAUSE) Come on, Petey, let's, just, enjoy our time together.

PETER:

Geez, I feel like shit! Maybe I'm gettin M.S. too!

GAIL:

Maybe you need a massage?

PETER:

I'm not in the mood.

GAIL:

Well, that's how I know you need one. Doesn't this hurt?

(SHE PRESSES HIS SHOULDER.)

PETER:

Ow! Yeah.

GAIL:

You'll always be my lover, Petey. My first and last.

PETER:

You've been the only girl for me--messing me up since the day I met you.

(THEY KISS.)

PETER:

All this heavy shit.

GAIL:

Yeah. Heavy. How about here? Does this hurt?

PETER:

Ow, Gaily! Stop hurting me.

GAIL:
Sorry. I'm just trying to help.

(THE LIGHTS SLOWLY FADE)

GAIL:
How about here?

PETER:
OW! Will you cut that out! Be gentle.

GAIL:
OK OK.

PETER:
I've had a rough week.

GAIL:
Yeah, I know. (PAUSE) I know...
(LIGHTS FADE TO BLACK.)

(THE END.)