

SIDES: OLDER MILLIE (Older Ruby)

OLDER RUBY (*female/60s*) A spirited woman who is on the verge of life changes, experiencing real love for the first time. Yet she is anxious about what this may mean for her very close relationship with her sister.

OLDER MILLIE (*female/60s-70s*) Even at this age, she maintains her role as cautious older sister—caring and protective. She is faced with an exciting opportunity which would take her thousands of miles away from her current home, and she struggles to accept this new life apart from her sister.

1990s, summer. Ruby and Millie are outside in a community garden adjacent to the Senior Apartments where they live. MILLIE is working near a fig tree. Millie has just revealed her son and his wife, who live in England, are expecting their first baby.

MILLIE

And so, I'm sure it's nothing more than maybe guilt and the baby talk, but, they...mentioned having me come and live with them. It's silly, I know. I'm sure they feel obligated asking. Those aren't our gloves over there, are they? Those are men's gloves. Honestly, people envy our plot in the community garden and they're trying to weasel their way into our space. Stanley's tomatoes are far too close to our border.

RUBY

This is a big deal, Millie.

MILLIE

Then you should have a talk with that Stanley. He seems to like you. Maybe you can set him straight about keeping his tomatoes—

RUBY

Not that, Millie. We can deal with Stanley later. I mean that Adrian asked you to move to England. That's not silly at all. It's a very big deal.

MILLIE

Maybe how you're looking at it.

RUBY

What did you tell them?

MILLIE

I told Adrian no, of course.

RUBY

You didn't even say you'd think about it?

MILLIE

What's to think about, Ruby? My life is here. I'm not going to uproot myself to move across the pond when I'm almost 70!

RUBY

But he's your son. And...you could live with your grandchild. You're going to have a grandchild!

MILLIE

I know... Oh, Ruby! To smell that baby hair again...the way they put their arms completely around your neck and fall asleep. I only had my one. How could I know how fast the time would go? I was barely sleeping that first year.

RUBY

But now you can see those first steps again. First words. And you'd be sleeping at night this time.

(pause)

Why don't you go, Millie?

MILLIE

I've always lived in Westchester. I have my sewing group and the book club. The Senior Apartments are so nice here in Hastings. And I love our community garden.

RUBY

But Adrian and Jenny and this little baby—they're your family. You can find another book club in London.

MILLIE

But I can't find another sister in London.

RUBY

Millie...

MILLIE

Ruby, we've been by each other's side since you were born. You can't gloss over that history.

RUBY

I know.

MILLIE

I can't imagine living without you, your long explanations to short questions.

RUBY

Your telling me I'm cleaning dishes the wrong way.

MILLIE

Your walking down the hall in those silly ladybug slippers to have tea with me in the morning.

RUBY

Your convincing me to go swimming in the Sound, even though I always get earaches.

MILLIE

I can't imagine life without you.

RUBY

I would miss you.

(pause)

MILLIE

Why don't you move with me? I'm sure if I asked Adrian, he'd—

RUBY

No, Millie.

MILLIE

Now you're being quick to say no too!

RUBY

Yes, but—Millie, you have a reason to leave Westchester now. Your husband has been dead ten years. Mama's gone, and of course, Papa never came back from the war. It's all ghosts here.

MILLIE

You're not a ghost.

RUBY

No. But I'm only one person. I'm not enough and I shouldn't compare to them.

MILLIE

So why don't you leave those ghosts behind too and come with me, Ruby?

RUBY

I...it's not all ghosts for me here.

MILLIE

What do you mean?