

LORI. (*Suddenly.*) Is Clover up?
 POPPY. What? I — don't know.
 LORI. Will you see? Will you see if she's up, too?
 POPPY. Shall I wake her up, if she isn't?
 LORI. I don't know. No. Yeah. Maybe. Just — go and see, will you. (*Beat. Poppy turns and scampers out of the room. Lori stays motionless. Poppy and Clover come into the room and Poppy closes the door carefully behind them. Beat. Clover and Lori look at each other and Poppy looks from one to the other.*)
 POPPY. She wasn't awake but I woke her. (*Beat.*)
 CLOVER. What did you want? (*Beat.*)
 LORI. Nothing. Just — To see you.
 CLOVER. You had all day to see us. I was asleep. (*Beat.*)
 LORI. Go back to bed then.
 CLOVER. There's no point now. I'm awake now. (*Beat.*) You had all day to see us if you wanted to. We came home from school early. I skipped music practice. I'm meant to have a solo in the Christmas concert. It's a big deal, Lori. And I lied to Mum about it and we came home early. You had all day. And Mum cooked dinner — a special dinner — special for you — and —
 LORI. I'm sorry.
 CLOVER. So you should be.
 POPPY. Clover?
 CLOVER. (*Without taking her eyes off Lori.*) Yeah.
 POPPY. Please don't. We're here now. We're all here. It's alright now.
 CLOVER. So she thinks it's alright for her to spend all day in bed — not coming out, not speaking to anyone — and then to wake us up when we're trying to sleep?
 LORI. I'm sorry.
 CLOVER. That's not good enough.
 LORI. Then I'm sorry for that, too. (*Silence. They stare at each other.*)
 CLOVER. So what did you want? (*Beat.*)
 POPPY. She just wanted to see us, Clover. She's been tired — haven't you, Lori — it's not her fault — she's ill — she just wanted to see us. I think you're being —
 CLOVER. You think I'm being?
 POPPY. Just stop it. Let's just be nice to each other.
 CLOVER. Right. Good plan.



LORI. Please don't do this to me.
 CLOVER. Oh I'm sorry. I forgot for a second that it was poor you. I forgot: You're the one that swallowed a whole bottle of fucking sleeping tablets and almost died and I forgot that we had to be nice to you because of it /
 POPPY. / *Clover!*
 CLOVER. You know what, Lori? You wouldn't've done what you did if you stopped to think for one second and remembered the rest of us. What do you think it's been like for us, then?
 POPPY. Shut up, Clover. Shut up, OK?
 LORI. I didn't mean it like that.
 POPPY. It's OK, Lori —
 CLOVER. You didn't mean what like what, you didn't mean the sleeping pills, was that a mistake, / because
 LORI. / I didn't mean —
 CLOVER. Do you know that you pretty much broke Mum's heart, for a start? Do you think there's a hope that she'll ever be happy again? I always used to be so proud that you were my older sister. In school and that. I mean yeah of course I hated it too, sometimes — I hated *you* sometimes — but most of the time I was so proud of you.
 LORI. You've grown up since I've been away.
 CLOVER. Yeah, you reckon? Well you're — You're — (*Petulantlly.*) Grown down. (*Beat. Clover, and then Lori, unexpectedly — despite themselves — and Clover very grudgingly — start to giggle. Poppy is bemused.*) Stupid.
 POPPY. Stop it, you two — why are you laughing? What's so funny?
 LORI. Nothing. Nothing's funny. Nothing at all.
 CLOVER. You have, though. You've got dead skinny. You look about twelve. You look like you should be the youngest out of all of us. Doesn't she, Poppy?
 LORI. I wish I could be twelve again.
 POPPY. It's not that great.
 CLOVER. You haven't even been twelve for the first time yet.
 POPPY. Shut up. I practically am.
 CLOVER. Lori — you'd hate to be twelve again, anyway. I know I would. Remember how shit being twelve actually is.
 POPPY. (*Harshly.*) Yeah, especially if you've got older sisters who treat you like —
 CLOVER. Shush, you'll wake Mum and Dad. (*Beat.*) And don't

be silly, Lori, “I wanna be twelve again,” it’s not as if your life’s over.
POPPY. Clover!

CLOVER. Don’t you be telling me what I can and cannot say,
Poppy. *(Beat.)*

LORI. C’mere, Pops. Come and sit here. *(Beat.)*
POPPY. Come on, Clover. Let’s just be friends.

CLOVER. There’s not room for three.

POPPY. Yes there is!

CLOVER. I’m not — *cuddling up* on Lori’s bed, OK?

POPPY. You’re horrible, Clover. You always have to spoil everything.

CLOVER. Piss off, Poppy.

POPPY. Shut up!

CLOVER. Shut up? Shut up, no, I will not shut up! ‘Cause, Poppy,
I want Lori to answer my questions! Like why did she stay hidden
away in her room all day? Does she have any idea how horrible it was
at dinner time? Does she have any idea how horrible it’s been? *(Beat.)*

POPPY. She’s. Ill. Clover. Ignore her, Lori. *(Beat.)*

CLOVER. Well if you’ve got nothing to say for yourself then —
I’m going back to bed.

POPPY. Go on then. We’re fine just the two of us, aren’t we, Lori.
CLOVER. I mean it. Unless you — unless you have anything to
say, I’m going back to bed right now.

LORI. Clover, in the — *(Beat.)* When I was in the clinic — on
the ward — I couldn’t sleep — the sound of other people, you
know, their breathing, and, and the little whimpering noises they’d
make in their sleep. For the first couple of days they gave me pills,
you know, and you’d just pass out and be unconscious ‘til the
morning. And then the last two nights they didn’t, and I lay there
trying to think myself somewhere else. And I thought — do you
know what I thought of — do you remember when we used to play
Bedknobs and Broomsticks on the bed in the spare room?

CLOVER. So? I don’t see what that has to do with anything, Lori.

LORI. Well — Where would you go, if you could go anywhere?

CLOVER. What? I don’t know. Anywhere?

LORI. Yeah like it can be anywhere, like from when we were little
or anything. It doesn’t even have to be real.

CLOVER. I don’t know —

LORI. Anywhere ...

CLOVER. I don’t know.

LORI. Where I decided on, was Donaghadee. The lighthouse at

Donaghadee.

CLOVER. Right. But — Lori — I don’t know what you’re saying.

LORI. Remember every time Dad test-drove a new car we’d all
pile in and drive up to Donaghadee?

CLOVER. *(Despite herself.)* The way the cars always smelt.

LORI. And we’d always get an ice cream —

CLOVER. *(Despite herself.)* Oh yeah, from the Italian place. And
you always got Pooch Bear.

POPPY. I don’t remember that.

LORI. Oh you were probably too young, this is, like, when me
and Clover were wee, isn’t it, Clover —

CLOVER. Yeah, ‘cause it was before Grandpa died, wasn’t it,
‘cause after he died Dad would never go to Donaghadee any
more. *(Beat.)*

LORI. That’s right. But do you know why it’s the place I chose?
‘Cause when we were driving back, over Craiganter, and you could
see all of Belfast, and the lights were just beginning to come on —
Mum said, once, that when we were really little, we used to think
all the lights were Fairyland. I like that. I mean I can’t remember it
— I’ve tried and tried and I can’t actually remember it at all, but I
like it that we thought that. *(Beat.)* Do you understand what I’m
trying to say? *(Beat.)*

CLOVER. No, Lori — no — actually — I don’t.
LORI. I don’t know how to say it any other way. You really don’t
understand? *(Beat.)* You remember, though?

CLOVER. Yeah, but Lori, what’s remembering got to do with —

POPPY. I remember. Fairyland. I remember that. *(Beat.)*

LORI. You don’t remember that, Pops.
POPPY. I do!

LORI. You don’t. There’s no way you can remember that. You
weren’t born yet.

POPPY. I want to remember what you two remember.

LORI. But you weren’t there, Pops! Or else you were too young
to —

POPPY. That’s what you always say. You always say, / “You’re too
young, Poppy —”

CLOVER. Poppy ...

POPPY. No, it’s not fair! All my life, Lori, all my life you’ve always
said, “You’re too young, Poppy.” Like when the two of you used
to play Stick In The Mud with *(Flaps her hands as she gets increasingly*

flustered.) with that boy and girl who used to live next door but one —

CLOVER. Pops —

POPPY. No, Clover, I want to say this — when you two used to play and, Lori, you never used to let me play.

CLOVER. Poppy —

LORI. You were too little, Poppy. Your legs were too short.

POPPY. That! That's what you always said! "You're too little, /

Poppy, your legs —"

CLOVER. You used to cry when you were I.

POPPY. What?

CLOVER. You used to cry / when you —

POPPY. Only because I could never run fast enough to catch you.

LORI. Exactly, Pops, see it wasn't your fault, you were just too little to —

POPPY. But, Lori, I've always been too little. I used to think that when I got to your age — whatever age you were — or Clover's age — But by then you were always bigger. And by the time I was old enough to play Sick In The Mud properly you never wanted to play any more because you were all into — make-up, and boys.

If I had sisters, Lori, that were the age of Clover and me when you were my age — I'd love them. I'd play with them all day. I'd never be too bored or too grown-up to play with them. And I would never, *ever* laugh at them, or run so fast they couldn't keep up, or —

LORI. Well, good for you, Poppy.

POPPY. What?

LORI. I said, good for you. You'd make a much better sister than I ever was. I'm a failure even at being a sister, I know, I don't need you to tell me. So — good for you. *(Beat.)*

CLOVER. There's no need for that. There's no need to be —
POPPY. You're not a failure, Lori, don't say that. *(Beat.)* Mum found one of your old school photos the other day — it was of your ballet class. And she thought it was me and I was like — Mum — since when have I done ballet? And I looked so like you, Mum left it out for Dad to see. And when Dad came home, he picked it up and said, Poppy, since when have you done ballet? But it was you.
LORI. You're not me, Poppy. *(Beat.)*

POPPY. What?

LORI. I said you're not me.

POPPY. I heard what you said —

LORI. Well then.

POPPY. I wasn't saying that I was. I was just saying — I was just trying to be —

CLOVER. Leave her alone, Lori.

LORI. What?

CLOVER. Picking on Poppy, it's pathetic, you're almost twenty, she's not even twelve. Leave her alone.

POPPY. I don't need you to stick up for me, Clover.

LORI. *(To Clover.)* Since when did you become the chairman of us? Clover. *(To Lori.)* You're stupid if you want to be like her anyway, Poppy. You're better than her. We both are.

POPPY. Shut up, Clover. *(Beat.)*

CLOVER. I'm going back to bed. *(Beat.)* You should go back to bed too, Poppy. *(Beat. Poppy does not move. Clover turns and leaves. Silence.)*

LORI. You should go to bed too, Poppy.

POPPY. What? Why?

LORI. It's — late.

POPPY. I don't mind! I don't mind that, Lori! Shall I play the tape again? "The Skaters' Waltz"? Shall I play it?

LORI. No. No. Not — now. You should go back to bed.

POPPY. Lori, can I — Can I stay with you? Can I sleep in your bed? I won't take up much room, and I won't kick or anything —

LORI. I don't —

POPPY. Please, Lori? I don't think you should be — I just want to, is all. Please, Lori?

LORI. I think you should go back to bed. *(Beat.)*

POPPY. *(Crestfallen.)* Fine. Alright, Lori. *(She gets up and goes to the door. She lingers in the doorway. Beat.)*

LORI. Go to bed, Poppy.

POPPY. I just wanted to say, Lori — I'm glad you're back. I was the one that made the card, and — and wrapped the presents, and everything.

LORI. Right. *(Poppy waits for a second, but Lori doesn't say anything and Poppy leaves quickly. Lori stands in the middle of the room. She goes over to the wall and gazes at the photo collage. She pulls down one of the photos and stares at it. She lets it drop to the floor. She pulls down another, drops it. And another.)*