

Down a Little Dirt Road
by
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CHARACTERS

ALICE - Female, 9. An adventurer, storyteller, and a kid.

DAD - Male, 30's. A scientist who studies earthquake prediction, and father of Alice.

MOM - Female, 30's. Artistic, athletic, and mother of Alice. She gets lost, but is not one to panic.

MCKAY - Male, 30's.

TIME: Now-ish

PLACE: A small home in Parkfield california, dream-space, and somewhere that is neither here nor there. Occasionally we visit Dad's office, and Alice's classroom.

(Dad sits on a bench outside, reading. The sounds of a ball being hit, off. Someone yells from offstage: Heads up!)

(Dad looks up. A moment of panic. He shields his head, and a baseball lands in his hand. He is shocked. He caught something.)

(Mom enters with a bat. She sees Dad with the ball.)

MOM

Am I out?

(They look at each other. A moment.)

(The moment is broken by Alice, in bed, listening to the story. Her bedroom is all in boxes. She protests.)

ALICE

That isn't right.

DAD

What do you mean, it isn't right?

ALICE

That's not the Real Story of how you met.
Do the Real story.

DAD

Okay. The Real story,

(Mom and Dad confer.)

MOM

Do you want to do the coming in, or should I be the one who-

DAD

Yeah, where I'm here and you-

ALICE

No talking in between!

I'll do your transition music until you're ready.

(She does her own version of something vaguely reminiscent of 'Peter and the Wolf' as Mom and Dad get into position. Dad gets work, and sits, working. Mom exits.)

ALICE

Ready?

MOM AND DAD

Ready!

ALICE

Okay.

Action!

(Mom enters with a pile of books, and looks around for an empty seat. The only one is next to Dad. She approaches.)

MOM

Is this seat taken?

DAD

No.

MOM

Do you mind if I share your table?

DAD

Not at all. Have a seat.

MOM

Thanks.

(She sits and reads. They read. And read. Alice protests.)

ALICE

Then what happened?

MOM

Nothing. That's it. That's the whole story.

ALICE

Really?

DAD

Pretty much.

ALICE

Okay, well that story is Boring. You guys could really use a better one.

DAD

We could, huh?

ALICE

That one is Completely Boring.

DAD

Well, what would your story be, if you were telling it?

(Alice thinks)

ALICE

Can I get up and show it?

MOM

Is it short?

ALICE

Yeah.

(Alice gets out of bed.)

ALICE

Dad, you get in bed and pretend to be me listening to it, okay? Just sit there and don't say anything.

DAD

How can I possibly be you and not say anything?

ALICE

Dad!
Just pretend, okay?

DAD

Allright.

(He gets in her bed.)

DAD

I'm you, listening.

ALICE

Okay good.
Mom, you pretend to be yourself and go over there and I'll be Dad and I'll whisper to you what to do and if there's anything to say, alright?

MOM

Over here?

ALICE

Yeah.
Pretend like you're hiking in the mountains, only don't move anywhere.

(Mom pretends to hike without moving anywhere.)

ALICE

Okay.
So Mom is hiking in the mountains a long time ago before I was born. And so was Dad. But they don't know each other and are both by themselves.
Mom was higher up the mountain, but she was tired and slower so Dad eventually caught up to her.

(Alice catches up to Mom)

ALICE

But! Before they can say Hello or start to kiss or anything, there's a Giant Earthquake!
(Pretend there's a giant earthquake)

MOM

(Like this?)

(She shakes)

ALICE

(yeah that's good. Keep doing that for a long time)

MOM

I'll do it for ten seconds.
Ten, nine, eight,

(She continues to count down under
Alice)

ALICE

The Giant Earthquake Epicenter was exactly under Mom's feet! And
right then the earthquake made the earth split wide open!
And Mom Fell In!
(Pretend to fall!)

(Mom pretends to fall)

DAD

Earthquakes don't usually split the earth open, Alice.

ALICE

Dad! You're pretending to be me! Stop being scientific!
Mom is falling inside the earth that was split wide open because
of the earthquake, and Dad is right there, so he sees it all
happen! And he runs forward! And takes a long rope off his
backpack! And ties one end around a tree and the other end
around his waist, and dives straight into the earth after Mom!
He is at the very end of the rope when he catches her, and
together they pull themselves back up to above ground again. And
when they get there the sun is setting. And they sit and watch
the sun set.

(Pretend to watch the sun set.)

MOM

(O.K.)

(Mom puts her arm around Alice,
and pretends to watch the sun
set. Beat. They begin a game
they know and play often. For
each line they speak, they mime
doing the action after.)

Take a breath,
Blow a wish,

ALICE

Pluck a chord,

MOM

Fish a fish.

ALICE/MOM

Cross a lake,
Swim a stream,

MOM

Climb a tree,

ALICE

Dream a dream.

ALICE/MOM

(They pretend to sleep with their
heads resting on the other.)

And then, you started to fall in love.
(Dad! Switch.)

ALICE

(Alice and Dad trade places. Alice
sings their transition music.)

(fall in love)

ALICE

I love you.

MOM

I love you too.

DAD

How much?

MOM

A Richter scale ten.

DAD

MOM
How is that different than a regular ten?

DAD
It's more violent!

(He bites her neck.)

ALICE
Dad, this is serious!

MOM
Alice,

ALICE
What.

MOM
You forgot one thing.

ALICE
I did?
What did I forget?

MOM AND DAD
The Kissing!

(They dive at Alice, and kiss
and tickle her. It is a game they
play almost every day. Laughter
all around.)

ALICE
Stop! Stop! Stop! No more tickling!

(It calms down. Dad gets out of
bed.)

DAD
Alright, Alice. I'm done being you. Back in bed.

(Alice climbs in.)

ALICE

Did you like my version better? Wasn't it Way more interesting?

DAD

It was definitely entertaining.

ALICE

From now on can we tell that one as the Real Story?

DAD

We'll see.

(He kisses her on the forehead)

DAD

Goodnight, Alice.

(Mom kisses her on the forehead)

MOM

Sweet dreams.

ALICE

Night.

(Mom and Dad turn out the light.)

(Mom and Dad sing together, in a well-practiced harmony.)

MOM AND DAD

Down a little dirt road
on a little oak tree
sits a little red bird
who sings to me,
Alice, Alice, Alice,
Alice, Alice, Alice,
Alice, Alice, Alice,
Alice, Alice.

MOM AND DAD CONT'D

The little red bird
on the little oak tree
down the little dirt road
who sings to me sings
Alice, Alice, Alice,
Alice, Alice, go to sleep
Alice, Alice, Alice,
Alice, dream deep.

(The song turns into a recording
of Mom and Dad singing. It ends.
We come out of the Story to Alice
at school. Mom and Dad are gone.
She stops the tape, and addresses
her class.)

ALICE

So that's the whole story of how my parents met.
I don't remember what year they said it was, so I left that part
blank. Is that okay, or should I find out and turn it in later?

(A shift. We transition to Alice
and Dad at home. They eat dinner
in a kitchen that is still mostly
unpacked boxes.)

ALICE

Everybody thinks I'm weird.

DAD

Sometimes it takes a while for people to warm up to someone new.

ALICE

I don't think they even want to try to warm up though.
They just think I'm weird.

DAD

What makes you so sure?

ALICE

Because they all stare and don't talk to me. And they've all
known each other forever like a family and I'm just some weirdo
from weird San Francisco who doesn't know anything about
anything.

DAD

Being different is never easy.

ALICE

Nevermind.
You won't understand anyway.

(beat)

ALICE

They don't even have different grades! How can you be in school and not have different grades?

DAD

There are different grades, just not different rooms.

ALICE

Well sitting next to kindergartners is stupid. We even had to do a dumb lesson all together today about remembering to remember things.

(She holds out her finger. There is a string tied to it.)

ALICE

Some of the little kids don't even know how to tie a knot yet. Will you help me get it off?

(Dad starts to work at the knot on her finger.)

DAD

What is your string a reminder for?

ALICE

Nothing.

DAD

There isn't anything you need help remembering?

ALICE

No.

(Dad works at the knot.)

DAD

Maybe I should have you tie it onto my finger then.

ALICE

Do you need reminders to remember things?

DAD

Mmhm. I need reminders for Meetings, Deadlines, Schedules, Talks,

ALICE

Dad, that's all boring stuff.

DAD

So?

ALICE

Nobody ties a string around their finger to remember a meeting. Anyway, you're not supposed to. It's mostly meant to be for important stuff you need to remember not to forget.

(Dad still works at the knot. Alice tries to think of something she needs help remembering. He gets the knot undone.)

ALICE

Actually, can you re-tie it?

DAD

Think of something?

(He begins to re-tie it)

ALICE

Mmhmm.

DAD

What's that?

ALICE

Just some details about things.

DAD

What sort of details?

They're secret.

ALICE

Top secret?

DAD

Mhm.

ALICE

(Dad finishes with the knot.)

Thanks.

ALICE

(Dad stands up, and clears the table. He starts putting away food and doing dishes.)

(Alice plays with her string. She hums the Alice lullaby from earlier to herself.)

Alice?

DAD

Hm.

ALICE

Will you bring your plate?

DAD

(She clears her place. A shift.)

(Dad at work, Alice at school. She talks to her classmates.)

ALICE
Why did we move to Parkfield?
Because my Dad got a really interesting job here on a one year special assignment to run these tests that he knows a lot about to measure different kinds of earthquakes. So he asked my mom if we could live there for a year and she said okay.

(Dad gives a lecture at work.)

DAD

Earthquake prediction is the analysis of stress.
Where does it come from, where is it being held, when is it
going to be released.

Some of this is measurable. Our technology today is good enough
to measure stresses, compressions, tiny movement and changes in
the rock that we can point to and say with certainty: Here. Here
is a breaking point.

The question is, When?

What I am working to find is a universal indicator, a pattern of
stress that will allow us to look at any fault in the world and
say: We expect a seismic event of significant size to occur
Here. In ten minutes. Get out of the building.

For the first time ever, we have data for continuous monitoring
of the San Andreas fault at Parkfield, California. Still, it may
not give us sufficient data for reliable prediction.

Each fault zone moves differently, and reacts as differently to
stress as different people do. The outcomes can be almost as
unpredictable as the course of your own life.

(Blackout. Dad enters the space
with a flashlight, searching. He
calls out as he finds his way to
the stage.)

DAD

Alice?
Alice?
Alice!
Are you in here?
Alice!
Hello?

(Alice, unseen in the dark, from
all sides.)

ALICE

Are you in here?

DAD

Alice?

Hello?	ALICE
Alice!	DAD
Alice!	ALICE
Where are you?	DAD
Are you here?	ALICE
Alice?	DAD
Alice?	ALICE
Hello!	DAD
Hello!	ALICE
Stay where you are. I'll find you.	DAD
Stay where you are.	ALICE
Alice?	DAD
Alice?	ALICE
Alice?	DAD
Alice!	ALICE

DAD

Alice!
Are you in here?
Alice?
Hello?

(Dad searches, and comes upon his own bed. He pulls back the covers to get in, and is petrified by what he sees. He drops the flashlight, and opens his mouth to yell out. The sound of an alarm clock.)

(Lights up. It is morning. Dad is in bed, asleep. Alice stands at his bedside, holding the buzzing alarm.)

ALICE

Dad?
Dad?
Dad!
Are you awake?
Dad!

(He rolls over, turns off the alarm.)

ALICE

Guess what?

DAD

Hm.

(She jumps on the bed, and sits)

ALICE

Guess what I saw out my window the second I woke up.

DAD

What?

ALICE

Guess!

An airplane?
DAD

No, an animal. Guess what kind.
ALICE

Squirrel?
DAD

Dad, squirrels are Everywhere. This was something Really Cool.
ALICE

A deer.
DAD

Nope!
ALICE

I give up. What was it.
DAD

Keep guessing.
ALICE

What was it, Alice?
DAD

Dad, you have to-
ALICE

Sorry.
Out of guesses.
DAD

Okay fine,
It was a whole entire family family of Wild Turkeys!
ALICE

Huh.
DAD

(He gets out of bed and dresses)

Isn't that cool?
ALICE

DAD

Pretty cool. What do you want for breakfast?

ALICE

Can we make pancakes?

DAD

Pancakes?

ALICE

I'll help!

DAD

Oh yeah?

ALICE

Definitely.

Can we do a double batch?

I'm hungry.

DAD

How hungry?

(Dad exits for the kitchen. Alice follows him out.)

ALICE

Super Hungry.

Really Super Hungry.

(A shift. We transition to Dad at work, and Alice at school. Dad talks to a co-worker.)

DAD

Why did we move to Parkfield?

Because I was offered the opportunity of a good job at a time when good jobs weren't easy to come by.

(Alice at school. She tells a secret story to another kid at recess)

ALICE

Okay. You want to know what really happened?

(Alice stands, and acts out the story as she tells it.)

ALICE

After my Dad and I left our old apartment and got in the U-haul, my Mom got in the car and started it and drove away too, following us. A block away she thought it would be nice to go back to the apartment for one final look by herself because she knew she would miss it. So she turned around, and went back. But!

When she got there, the house had disappeared!

You know why?

Because we had left, and all of our stuff was gone, so the apartment didn't have anything to do anymore and it disappeared. But my Mom went right up to where it used to be anyway, and just when she was putting her hand on the spot where the front door should have been, there was an earthquake.

It was so small that nobody felt it, but it confused the apartment and it un-vanished for a second and right then my Mom saw the door and opened it and went in but then the earthquake stopped and everything vanished again, with my Mom trapped inside.

So that's where she is.

She's trapped in the place my old apartment vanished to. It's like a whole different universe sort of, but not really.

And you know what else? Nobody ever found her car because my Mom didn't think she was going to be there very long and she parked it in a Friday street sweeping spot which meant it got towed almost right away and then somebody lost the paperwork so nobody knows that the car got towed and it just looks like it went missing.

But you know what?

I hired a guide to help her find the way back which means she should be home any day now.

(Dad at work, talking to a different co-worker)

DAD

Why did we move?

Because we were ready for a change.

You can only live in a city for so long before it starts to wear you down.

(Blackout. Dad enters the space with a lantern, searching. He

whispers for her as he finds his way around the stage. Her voice is a whisper back, from the darkness.)

Alice!	DAD
Alice!	ALICE
Where are you?	DAD
Are you here?	ALICE
Alice?	DAD
Alice?	ALICE
Hello!	DAD
Hello!	ALICE
Stay where you are. I'll find you.	DAD
Stay where you are.	ALICE
Alice?	DAD
Alice?	ALICE
Alice?	DAD

ALICE

Alice!

DAD

Alice!
Are you in here?
Alice?
Hello?

(Dad searches, and comes upon his own bed. On top of it sit Alice with Mom. They snuggle together and sing the Dirt Road Lullaby. It sounds a bit strange and dream-affected though.)

(Dad tries to reach them, to join them in their moment. But there is an invisible solid barrier between them, and the harder he fights to reach them, the more solid the barrier becomes.)

(Lights up. It is morning. Dad is in bed, asleep. Alice stands at his bedside, wrapped in blankets. She is holding the alarm, and prods him awake.)

ALICE

Dad!
Are you awake?
Dad!

(He rolls over, turns off the alarm.)

ALICE

Do you know where my book is?

DAD

What?

ALICE

Where my book is. I have to give a report but I can't find it anywhere.

DAD

Oh.

(yawn)

DAD

Didn't you put it in your backpack already?

(She thinks)

ALICE

I don't remember putting it in,

DAD

Have you checked?

ALICE

No,

DAD

Go take a look.

And put a sweater on. How many times have I asked you not to drag blankets around the house?

(Alice runs off to check. Dad gets out of bed, and dresses. Alice yells from off.)

ALICE

Found it!

(She runs back on, still with the blankets.)

ALICE

What's for breakfast?

We have enough eggs for pancakes, I checked.

DAD

Go put a sweater on.

ALICE

Can we have pancakes?

DAD

Go put on a sweater and we'll see.

ALICE

Okay!

(She drops the blankets where she stands, and runs off to get a sweater. Dad carefully picks up the blankets, shakes them out, folds them, and puts them on the bed before exiting.)

(A shift to Mom. She is in a space that is neither here nor there.)

MOM

Something changed.

To make it different
than it was before.

A Shift? Maybe?

Some Shift, but I don't remember.

I can't remember Anything

But I know it was Different Before.

There was a feeling.

A feeling that, I don't know the name for it.

If I knew the name for it, I could find it.

that Feeling.

If I could name it, I could Remember it.

Maybe.

But I don't know where my-

I lost them.

Some of them, the important ones.

(A shift. We transition to Alice at school, and Dad at work. Alice gives a book report presentation.)

ALICE

The book I chose is Alice in Wonderland, by Lewis Carroll. I chose it because my name is Alice, and everyone always asks me if I know this story, and since I had never read it before I thought I probably should.

So I did.

Anyway, it's a story about Alice who goes on a really cool and kind of weird adventure, and everyone thinks she's making it up or has just dreamed it but Alice knows that it all really did happen for real.

Um.

Oh yeah! I would highly recommend this book because it's funny and there are a lot of neat characters like a disappearing cat who I think you would probably like.

Okay that's all.

(Dad at work. He gives another talk, this one more intimate than before. Maybe it is just to a single funder, or board member.)

DAD

I have already established a partnership with the San Andreas Fault Observatory at Depth's monitoring team, and am working with them to ensure their instruments are perfectly calibrated 24/7. With such accurate data collection, there is greater potential than ever to understand the physics behind earthquake initiation and rupture.

As you know, the fault here is one of the most active and easily accessible in the country, much of the reason that Parkfield is the most closely observed earthquake zone in the world.

Here is where we have learned most of what we know.

When you fund seismic research in Parkfield, you fund the next great discovery.

I can't guarantee when the breakthrough will happen, but it's really only a matter of time.

(Alice at school, talking to a different student.)

ALICE

Where's my Mom?

Nobody knows for sure, but I'm almost positive something really exciting and strange happened, and when she finds her way home it will lead to an amazing new scientific discovery about a whole new dimension nobody in the whole world ever knew existed.

(Dad and Alice at home. Alice does her homework. Dad analyzes data. Alice gets stuck on a problem and stops.)

Dad? ALICE

(He does not hear her.)

Dad? ALICE

Hm. DAD

Can you help me with this? ALICE

(Beat)

What? DAD

Nevermind. ALICE

(She skips the problem, and goes onto something else.)

(Mom in here nor there. She is lost. McKay enters, just passing by. He sees Mom and stops. He is not pleased to see her.)

What are you doing here. MCKAY
How did you get in?

Excuse me? MOM

You aren't allowed to be here. MCKAY

MOM

Oh.
I'm sorry.
I didn't know, I
didn't see a

sign, or-

(McKay comes close to Mom, and
looks at her carefully from all
sides, trying to make an
assessment.)

MOM

or anything.

MCKAY

Have you spoken with anyone else?

MOM

I don't
Think so,

MCKAY

Have you been seen by anyone at all?

MOM

Not that I
Know of,

MCKAY

And do you know who I am.

(She thinks about it.)

MOM

No.

(he is relieved)

MCKAY

That's good.

(McKay puts out his hand to
shake.)

MCKAY

Charlie McKay.

MOM

I'm,

(She can't remember her name)

MCKAY

Don't remember?

MOM

Not really,

MCKAY

No matter.
I do.

MOM

Oh.
That's lucky.

MCKAY

For one of us, at least.

MOM

Really? Which one?

MCKAY

Come with me, and I'll finish what I started.
Shouldn't take long,

(he leaves)

(We shift to Alice at school.
Another student, another story.)

ALICE

She was in one of those planes that crashed on September 11th. Not one that crashed in New York into the building though. The other one where the passengers tried to take over from the hijackers and they made a movie about it. The writer and director interviewed me and my dad about it because she called and talked to us while it was happening.

(Blackout. Dad enters the space with a flashlight, searching. He calls to her as he finds his

way around the stage. His voice is the sing-song voice you use to play Marco Polo. Alice calls back to him in earnest this time.)

Alice!	DAD
Dad!	ALICE
Where are you?	DAD
Are you here?	ALICE
Alice?	DAD
Dad?	ALICE
Hello!	DAD
Hello!	ALICE
Stay where you are. I'll find you.	DAD
Stay where you are.	ALICE
Alice?	DAD
	(beat)
Alice?	DAD
	(beat)

DAD

Alice!
Are you in here?
Alice?
Hello?

(Dad searches, and finally finds Alice. She is by a door, holding a rope that hangs down from above. She is struggling to pull something up from behind the door. Dad grabs hold of the rope as well, and helps. Together, they pull. From the shadows, McKay watches as the pull and pull. From behind the door, Mom is hoisted up high enough for them to at last see her. She is dead, hanging. Alice and Dad yell out, and drop the rope.)

(Lights up. Alice is by Dad's bed, waking him.)

ALICE

Are you awake?
Dad?

(He wakes up. He sees her face.)

DAD

What's wrong? Are you alright?

ALICE

Can I snuggle with you for a little?

(He opens his arms. They snuggle.)

DAD

What's wrong?

ALICE

Nothing.

(Beat)

I had a nightmare. ALICE

Was it scary? DAD

Yeah. ALICE

What was it about? DAD

Nothing. ALICE
I don't want to say. You'll be mad.

I won't be mad, Alice. It was a dream. Lots of things happen in dreams. DAD

You promise? ALICE

Promise. DAD

Pinky Swear. ALICE

(They pinky swear)

ALICE
First I was looking for Mom.
Well actually I think we were looking for each other too, but then you found me and I had a rope to save her, but

(Alice is too sad to continue for a moment. Dad holds her. He is suddenly very scared.)

DAD
we killed her by accident.

(Alice stares at him, both

fascinated and horrified.)

ALICE

How did you know.

DAD

Was that what happened, Alice?

ALICE

How did you know.

DAD

I guessed.

ALICE

No, you knew. How did you know!

DAD

Alice, I guessed.

I had a bad dream too that sounded the same so I guessed.

ALICE

Say what color her dress was on three.
One, Two, Three.

ALICE AND DAD

Orange.

(Beat. Dad gets out of bed,
and starts to get dressed. He
is a little clumsy this morning.)

ALICE

Was it real?

DAD

No.

ALICE

If we both dreamed it, how do you know it wasn't real?

(Dad starts trying to make
the bed, but Alice is in it.)

DAD

Come on. Get up.

(She does.)

ALICE

How do you know it wasn't-

DAD

Is there a rope on the floor?

(Alice look on the floor)

ALICE

No.

DAD

It was a dream, Alice.

(He puts on slippers, and goes into the kitchen to start breakfast. Alice follows.)

ALICE

Does that happen a lot?

DAD

Does what happen?

ALICE

Sharing dreams.

DAD

I don't know.
I wouldn't worry about it.
Pancakes?

ALICE

Okay.

DAD

Go get dressed, and I'll put them on.

(Alice runs off to get dressed. Dad, alone in the kitchen, stops. He sits down at the table, and takes a deep breath, trying to hold it together. He is not entirely successful. A small,

private breakdown.)

(There is a little earthquake,
very small. Alice, from off.)

ALICE

Did you feel that!

(Dad pulls it together, and
quickly begins mixing pancake
batter as Alice runs in,
pulling on a sweatshirt.)

ALICE

Was it another earthquake?

DAD

I think so.

ALICE

How big?

DAD

Guess.

ALICE

3.7.
What's your guess?

DAD

3.4.

ALICE

Will you check when you get to work to see who's closest?

DAD

What do I get if I win?

ALICE

An extra two cookies for dessert.

DAD

An extra Two?
I'll definitely be sure to check then.

(A shift. We go to Alice at school.)

She is student of the week, and is answering classmates questions.)

ALICE

My favorite book? Um,
The Witches. I've probably read it at least five times.
Well, four times me reading it to myself, and one time when my
Mom read it to me when I was little. She used different voices
and everything. I still remember all the voices she picked for
the characters, and that's how I hear them in my head now when I
re-read it on my own.

Pistachio. But if they don't have pistachio, my next favorite is
Mint Chip.

I think it would be,
it would be time traveling because then you could just go into
the past and change one tiny thing like make somebody's train
late, and then everything else would change because of that one
little tiny thing and you could save the world super easily.
And also if I messed it up for some reason, I could go back in
time a second time and fix it.
So yeah, I'd definitely pick time traveling.

(A shift. We go to here nor there.
McKay by the door, wrapping up the
rope. He leads Mom the The Door.)

MCKAY

We're done. Get going before somebody sees you.

(Mom looks at the door, but
doesn't move.)

MOM

Is that where the book is?

MCKAY

What book.

MOM

The one I remember reading with
kind of a Funny Cover.
Is it in there?

MCKAY

I doubt it.

MOM

Oh.

(Mom moves away from the door,
looking around at the rest of here
nor there for the book.)

MOM

Do you think you might be able to help me find it?
I remember reading it and,
and it being important.

(McKay comes to her, lifts a hand,
and sees the string.)

MCKAY

Shit.

I remember sitting on a bed with yellow blankets, and
the smell of her hair when I kissed it before singing her to
sleep.

(He leads Mom to a seat.)

MCKAY

Sit.

(She does. As she talks, McKay
tries to untie the string from
her finger. It is a stubborn one.)

MOM

I remember the song!

MCKAY

Do you?

MOM

Would you like to hear it?

MCKAY

No.

Not particularly.

(A shift. We move to Dad at work. He is looking at the readout of a seismograph they have there, searching for something on it.)

DAD

Huh.
Weird.

(He pulls out a different seismograph readout, and checks that one as too.)

DAD

?
weird,

(He pulls out one last readout, and checks it. He finds nothing, and compares it to the first two.)

(Utterly confused, Dad rolls up all three readouts, and takes them with him to another space.)

(In here nor there, McKay is still unable to get the string off of Mom's finger. He stands.)

MCKAY

Come with me.

(Mom follows him off.)

At work, Dad rolls the readouts out again to display, and talks to a single person of slightly higher authority than him.)

DAD

I'm starting to believe there's something
Different about the way, uh. The way earthquakes
Happen Here. I've been experiencing-
I have to tell you I can't
Find what I've been experiencing in um.

DAD CONT'D

Any of the literature, and I'll admit I'm hesitant.
To,
Express my interest. In the phenomenon.
As far as I can tell it is entirely unprecedented.
Or maybe just, very poorly documented.
Entirely undocumented. Actually.
But in any case, I have been
Experiencing
almost daily earthquakes since my arrival. In Parkfield.
Small ones, I'd guess 3.5, 3.6, large enough to be felt,
small enough to be Harmless.
I have Studied Earthquakes for a very uh,
A very long time. And I know I have felt these-
the little ones.
The weird thing is, not one of them has registered.
Not on any seismograph within One Hundred Miles.
They don't show up at all.
Both of us know these thigs constantly measure
Hundreds of earthquakes so small they are invisible to us,
so why are these ones
Invisible
to them?
I do not understand it. And would like the
Opportunity to study it further.
With your permission, of course.

(Beat.)

(Dad rolls up the readouts, and returns to his office. He unplugs one of the instruments that are there, and takes it with him.)

(A shift. We return to Mom and McKay. He leads her to a table.)

MCKAY

We'll start at the beginning.

(He unrolls a sheet of assorted sharp instruments, and places them next to him, on the table.)

MCKAY

Do you remember your name?

(mom thinks)

MOM

No,

MCKAY

Good.
Birthdate?

(Mom thinks)

MOM

Don't remember.

MCKAY

Allergies?

MOM

What's that?

MCKAY

Favorite smell.

MOM

Outdoors right before it rains.
!

MCKAY

Finger,

(Mom holds up her index finger. On it is the string. McKay carefully selects one of the sharp instruments, and cuts it off. He puts the string into his own pocket.)

MCKAY

Favorite smell?

(Mom thinks)

MOM

Don't remember.

Good.
Fifth grade teacher.

MCKAY

Mr. Jacobs.

MOM

Finger.

MCKAY

(She holds it out. He cuts off the string.)

Favorite breakfast?

MCKAY

French Toast.

MOM

Finger.

MCKAY

(She holds it out. He cuts off the string.)

Feeling of sand beneath your feet.

MCKAY

Wet is like cold sandpaper,
dry is hot snow.

MOM

(He puts out his hand, she holds out her finger. He cuts off the string.)

The sound of her laugh.

MCKAY

(Mom thinks, remembers. Smiles.)

Finger.

MCKAY

(She holds it out. There is another string tied to it. McKay selects

another sharp object and cuts it off. He nicks her finger.)

MOM

Ouch.

MCKAY

Sorry.

(He stows the string in his pocket.)

MCKAY

What about that song?

(She hums the dirt road lullaby.
As she hums,)

MCKAY

Finger?

(She holds it out to him, humming. McKay selects one of the sharp objects, and cuts it. The string does not cut. He selects another and cuts it. The string does not cut. He selects a third and cuts it. The string does not cut. Frustrated, he bites the string off. It rips, and at last comes off. Mom stops singing.)

(Dad and Alice at home. Dad is working with some instruments. Alice throwing up a baseball and trying to hit it. She misses every time, and gets more and more frustrated. She gives up, and goes to see what Dad is up to.)

ALICE

What's That?

DAD

Something we used to use at work to detect tiny little earthquakes. Want to see how it works?

ALICE

Okay.

DAD

This part here would be connected to a piece that would go deep inside the earth, where the earthquakes start. Then, when it senses movement, like this,

(he moves the sensor)

DAD

the instrument shows us a different kind of line. See?

ALICE

Why does it do that?

DAD

Because that's what it was built to do.

ALICE

Cool.
Are you going to test our house for earthquakes?

DAD

That's the plan.

ALICE

Why our house?

DAD

Because I've been trying to check those little earthquakes we feel at work,

ALICE

Did I win?

DAD

It's hard to say.
None of them have shown up on the seismographs we have there.

ALICE

Oh. Nobody else at school has felt them either.
Is that normal?

DAD

Not really.

So I thought I would bring this one home. To test it at the source.

ALICE

Do you think it will work?

DAD

It's an experiment.

ALICE

Yeah but will it work?

DAD

I don't know. That's what makes it an experiment.

(Beat. Dad fiddles with the instruments, Alice watches.)

ALICE

Can I do an experiment with it?

DAD

Go ahead.

(Alice takes the sensor)

ALICE

Do you think just by holding it it can tell what I'm thinking?

DAD

Give it a try.

ALICE

Okay.

I'm thinking about something really really nice and happy now.

(She screws up her eyes and thinks of something really really nice and happy.)

(Beat)

(She peeks)

ALICE

What did it do?

DAD

Nothing.

Think of something else.

ALICE

Okay.

I'm thinking of something really funny and weird now.

(She screws up her eyes and thinks
of something really funny and weird.)

(beat)

(She peeks)

ALICE

Did it do something now?

DAD

No.

(Alice comes over to take a look at
the readout as well)

ALICE

This part's kind of sort of a little bit different than what it
did the first time.

DAD

Where?

(Alice points to a part of the line.
Nothing is different about it.)

DAD

I don't see it,

ALICE

Do you want to try?

DAD

Another time, maybe.

ALICE

Come on, Dad. It might lead to your greatest discovery ever.
You never know,

DAD

Not now, Alice.
It's time for bed.

ALICE

It'll only take a second,

DAD

No good experiment ever takes a second, Alice.
You don't want to rush it.
Come on, go brush your teeth.

(Alice gets ready for bed. Dad tucks
her in, and kisses her on the
forehead.)

ALICE

Dad?

DAD

Hm.

ALICE

Do you still remember what Mom looks like?

DAD

Mmhm. I do.

ALICE

I think I'm starting to forget the details.
I can't close my eyes and see her face anymore.

DAD

That's why we have pictures,

(He goes to a box, finds a
picture. He hands it to Alice.)

DAD

Here.

(They look at the photo together)

Remember now?
DAD

Mmhmm.
ALICE

(beat)

ALICE
What's your favorite part of how she looked?

DAD
All of her.

ALICE
No, your one favorite small thing?

DAD
Her eyes.

ALICE
Mine is her hair. Especially how it smelled.
I wish we could have a picture of that too.
Do you remember what she smelled like?

(beat)

DAD
Sometimes,
(They look at the photo.)

ALICE
Where were we when you took this?

DAD
I don't know.
It was a while ago now.

(Alice looks at it with an expert eye.)

ALICE

It looks like Mom just took me on my first roller coaster ride ever which is why we both look so crazy and excited and stuff, because before we got on I thought I was going to hate it, but I didn't and actually liked it a lot and now she's asking me if I want to get a candy apple or some salt water taffy.

(beat)

ALICE

Can I hold it tonight?

DAD

Allright.
Sweet dreams, Alice.

ALICE

Goodnight.

(Alice sits in bed, looking at
the photo of her and Mom.)

ALICE

Right after we got in our seats, and before the roller coaster started you leaned over and whispered me your secret:

(Alice whispers)

ALICE

I've never been on a roller coaster before either.

(Mom and McKay in here nor there.
He leads her to The Door once
again.)

ALICE

And neither of us knew where the camera was where they take your picture on one of the hills, so we were making really ridiculous faces and when we saw them on the screens at the end of the ride we couldn't stop laughing for so long that we both got the hiccups.

(McKay holds out a hand of
farewell to Mom.)

MCKAY

So long,

(Epiphany!)

MOM

...that we both got the hiccups!

MCKAY

What.

ALICE/MOM

I/you picked salt water taffy.

(Words in bold are said by
both Alice and Mom.
Otherwise, it is just Alice.)

ALICE/MOM

We got **three flavors: cinnamon, and coffee, and cherry.**

Then me and you **and Dad rode the Ferris Wheel.**

The sun was setting.

And it smelled **like it was going to rain.**

(Mom reveals her fingers, covered
in new strings. McKay makes a grab
for them, but Mom pulls away from
him, protecting her new memories.)

MCKAY

Wait here.

(McKay leaves. Mom, thinking as
hard as she possibly can.)

MOM

Something changed.

To make it different
than it was before.

A Shift. Definitely.

Some shift but I don't remember How.

I still can't Remember How.

But it was Definitely Different. Before.

There was a Feeling

a Feeling that, all of these added up to.

Somehow.

MOM CONT'D

If I could add them up, I could Remember it.
That feeling,
If I could-

(Blackout)

MOM

Hello?

(Dad enters the space with a
flashlight. His own voice
echoes back at him.)

DAD

Alice?

MOM

Alice?

DAD

Alice?

(She remembers the name)

MOM

Alice!

MOM AND DAD

Are you in here?
Alice!
Hello?
Stay where you are. I'll find you.

(He searches, and searches)

(We see Alice in bed, dead. McKay
stands beside her, holding a knife.
Mom comes to Alice, and holds her.
McKay, unnoticed, places the knife
into Mom's hand, and sinks back to
watch.)

(Mom notices the knife in her
hand just as Dad at last
comes upon the bed and finds her

there with Alice. In the dream,
Alice is now dead.)

DAD

No. No. No. No. No. No. No. No. No. No. No. No. No.

(Dad wakes himself up. Lights up.
He sits up in bed. Alice is standing
next to his bed, wrapped in
blankets. She is silent, and still.)

DAD

Alice.
Are you all right?

(Still wrapped in blankets, she
climbs into bed with Dad, and covers
her head with the comforter.)

DAD

Did you have any dreams, Alice?

(He pulls the comforter off her
face.)

DAD

Alice?

(She tries to cover her face again,
but Dad holds the covers.)

DAD

Did you have any dreams.

(She shakes her head)

DAD

Are you sure?

(She nods once)

DAD

I don't believe you.

(Alice tries to pull the covers up

over her head once more. Dad stops her.)

Alice, talk to me.

DAD

No.

ALICE

What did you see.

DAD

(beat)

Alice, please.

DAD

(beat)

What did you dream?

DAD

(Alice sits up and screams at him)

NOTHING!

ALICE

I'VE NEVER HAD A SINGLE DREAM IN MY WHOLE ENTIRE LIFE SO STOP ASKING STUPID QUESTIONS AND GO AWAY!

(She dives back under the covers and hides beneath them.)

What did you dream about, Alice?

DAD

(beat)

I won't be mad, whatever you tell me.

DAD

(Beat)

Alice?

DAD

(beat)

(Dad begins to sing his lullaby to her, from before.)

DAD
Down a little dirt road,

ALICE
Stop it.

DAD
On a little oak tree,

ALICE
Stop it!

DAD
Sits a little red bird,

(She sits up and yells at him.)

ALICE
STOP it!

(He holds her, and comforts.)

DAD
Shhh...
Alice. Shhh...

ALICE
I wish I was dead.

DAD
You what.

ALICE
Wish I was dead.

DAD
No you don't.

ALICE
I do.

DAD

Well I don't.
I would miss you
very much.

ALICE

Would you be mad if I chose Mom over you?

(beat)

ALICE

She invited me, and I want to go, but I don't want to make you
mad.

(beat)

DAD

What do you mean.

ALICE

In my dream she did, and-

DAD

It was a dream, Alice.
You were asleep, you had a dream.

ALICE

But she told me-

DAD

You dreamed it!
I know you miss her Alice, but this has to stop.

ALICE

But I heard her-

DAD

It Did Not Happen!

ALICE

It did though,

DAD

Stop, Alice,

ALICE
But Dad,

DAD
STOP!

(Beat. Dad gets out of bed, and looks for his slippers. He puts them on.)

DAD
It's just us now, Alice.
And I can't do it alone.

(He starts to cry)

ALICE
Dad?

DAD
Come here,

(Alice gets up, and goes to Dad. They hold each other. A small earthquake. Mom slides into the space, unnoticed. She does not see Dad or Alice.)

ALICE
Earthquake?

DAD
Yeah.

ALICE
3.7

DAD
3.5

ALICE
Can we go check and see?

DAD
All right.

Help me fold these first.

(They pick up the blankets that Alice was wrapped in, and begin to fold them. A knife falls out. They all see the knife. Mom too.)

(beat)

ALICE

What do you-

DAD

Go get dressed.

(Alice leaves to go get dressed.)

(Dad stares at the knife on the ground. Mom, stares too. Without seeing one another, they bend down together, and pick up the knife. They hold it out, and look. McKay enters.)

MCKAY

Drop it.

(Only Mom hears him. She lets go of the knife. Dad still holds it, noticing nothing else.)

MOM

Where is she?

(McKay shrugs. Mom screams at him.)

MOM

Where is she!

MCKAY

Not here.

(They silently stare down for a moment, before Mom breaks his gaze, and begins her own search.)

MOM

Alice?
Alice?
Are you in here?
Alice? Hello?

(Mom exits, searching.)

(Dad tears open a box, and drops the knife inside. He searches the room for tape. McKay removes the knife, and unrolls his cache of sharp objects. As Dad returns to the box and tapes it shut multiple times over, McKay replaces the knife in his cache, rolls it up, and puts it away. Dad goes to the kitchen.)

(Alice comes into the kitchen, dressed. Dad stands, and pulls out his chair for her.)

Sit. DAD

(She does.)

Am I in trouble? ALICE

No, but. DAD
I need to you to tell me the truth, Alice.
All right?

Okay. ALICE

No stories this time. DAD
Promise?

Promise. ALICE

(Dad sits down. A breath.)

DAD

Did you put it there?

ALICE

No.

DAD

Did you know it was in your blankets?

ALICE

No,

DAD

Then why weren't you also surprised to see it?

ALICE

Well,

I guess the dream felt so real it just wasn't that surprising.

(Back to Mom, in here nor there. She is still searching. McKay lies in wait for her. She sees him, and he tries to lead her to the Door once more.)

MOM

No, that's not
where I need to be.

MCKAY

Yes it is.

MOM

She needs me.
Someone's Hurting her.
I saw it.
I need to I
need to Save her.

MCKAY

You aren't making this easy.

(McKay grabs her hand, and tries to bite off the string that is still on her finger.)

MOM
I have to get back, I Need to
Stop them.
I need to I
need to Save Her.
I need to
Get her out of there.
I need to
Rescue Her.
from being hurt,

(Mom at last wriggles our of McKay's grip, and tries to leave, but he grabs her by the hair, and she stops.)

MOM
Ow!
(He slams the door shut again, and leads Mom off, by the hair.)

(We shift to Alice at school, giving a presentation to her class. She holds a large wooden pencil box. Her backpack sits on the ground beside her.)

ALICE
For my Family Object I brought this.
It's a box for pencils and things that my mom said she used when she was my age to keep things in.

(She opens it, and turns it over. It is empty.)

ALICE
But there's nothing in it now.
I guess that was a long time ago.

(She closes it. McKay enters. Alice does not see him, and carries on with her presentation.)

ALICE

My grandpa makes tables and chairs and things out of wood for fun,
and she said they made this together.
See on the back?

(She shows her classmates the back of the box.)

ALICE

They carved the day in that they finished making it, that's what these numbers mean.
And then my mom painted it.
When she was my age.
I guess she liked flowers, but I don't know what kind they are even though they look like they're supposed to be a certain kind.

(Alice studies the flowers. Beat.)

ALICE

Should I pass it around now?

(She does. The box goes to McKay, who slips something inside of it. The box goes back to Alice, and she returns to her desk. McKay leaves without being seen. Alice opens the box, finds the note. Reads it. There is one large word written on it: LIAR.)

(Alice stuffs the note back in, and throws the box in her backpack.)

(A shift. We transition to Dad and Alice at home. They eat dinner.)

ALICE

Dad?

DAD

Hm.

ALICE

If I tell stories that aren't true, does that make me a Liar?

DAD

It depends.

ALICE

What if they're stories about Mom that make me feel better?
Am I a liar then too?

(Beat.)

DAD

What do you think?

ALICE

I asked you first.

DAD

I can't tell you, Alice.
That's what your own conscience is for.

(Beat. They eat.)

ALICE

Can I share my theory with you then?

DAD

About what.

ALICE

Our earthquakes.

DAD

Is it short?

ALICE

Yeah.

(She gets up, and runs to get the
machine from the other room, and
pushes it into the kitchen. Dad
jumps up to help her.)

DAD

Be careful with that,

ALICE

I am!

Dad, sit down, I'm giving a presentation.

(Dad makes sure the machine is
set down correctly, and returns to
his seat.)

ALICE

Now.

As you can see, there have been daily earthquakes recorded on
this machine, which means they happened in this house.

My fellow earthquake expert here can testify that they didn't
get recoded anywhere else, right?

Dad!

Right?

DAD

That's right,

ALICE

And my theory is this!

Alice and her Dad actually...

Have a Superpower.

(Dad laughs a little)

DAD

Do we!

ALICE

No questions please!

Save them until the end of the presentation.

DAD

Can my superpower be flying?

ALICE

I said no questions!

Will you let me finish?

DAD

Sorry.

Go ahead.

ALICE

Thank you.

As I was saying, Alice and her dad...

have a Superpower.

They're very special.

In fact, they're the only family in the whole history of the world ever to have it.

And it's because her Dad is the most genius seismotologist-

DAD

Seismologist.

ALICE

The most genius Seismotologist Ever.

He's so in tune with the earth, that both their hearts are actually almost literally connected to the San Andreas Fault, the part that goes right next to their house.

And that almost exactly literal connection means that every time their hearts break, it pulls at the earth until it shakes.

So that's how they cause the earthquakes.

That's my theory.

(beat.)

ALICE

Do you like it?

DAD

I do.

Very much.

(Alice examines the readout again,
and dad starts to clear their
places.)

ALICE

Can you help me find the earthquake from yesterday?

Is this it?

(Dad comes over, looks, and points it
out to her.)

DAD

This was it.

ALICE

Oh.
How big?

DAD

3 point,
seven. Ish.

(Alice grins and holds out her hand.)

ALICE

Cookies, please.

DAD

Cookies?

(He transforms into a tickle monster,
and tickles Alice.)

ALICE

Dad! Stop stop stop
no more tickling!

(A shift back to Mom and McKay. He
is standing before her. She sits
in the chair at their table.)

MCKAY

Let me make this abundantly clear to you.
You are Not going Back.

MOM

But-

MCKAY

And even if you did somehow manage to get there, you would not
be able to save her from anything.

MOM

Let me go,

MCKAY

You would be stuck watching every event from afar, and you would
sit through the remainder of her life as a distant observer.
Nothing more.

MOM

I don't care.

MCKAY

Then by all means, go.

Go watch her birthday. And the next one. And the next one. And the next one.

And go watch the first time she blows out the candles and forgets to wish you were there with her to see it.

Go. Sit and say nothing as you watch her be too embarrassed to tell her father she has just gotten her first period.

Go ahead.

You can watch, unable to comfort her, on the day she finds out she did not get into the college of her choice.

Doesn't that sound nice?

MOM

No,

MCKAY

Why not go watch her pass an exam. You can celebrate alone when she graduates from college, and gets her first real job.

You can watch in silence as she she miscarries her first child, and do nothing to help while she buries her father.

(Mom's heart is slowly beginning to break)

MOM

Stop,

MCKAY

You can be there to see the birth of her second child, but the two of you will never meet.

(Her heart breaks more. The earth begins to tremble.)

MOM

Stop,

MCKAY

You will be absent from the most important moments of her life, and because of it you will become, to her, the shadow of an idea of a mother. Nothing more.

(Mom's heart is broken. The ground shakes more. It is a great quake.)

(McKay did not expect this, and he panics.)

MCKAY

Take cover!

(He dives underneath the table, covers, and holds. Mom gets up, and runs off, stumbling over the shaking earth.)

(Blackout. The earth still shakes. Alice and Dad desperately try to find one another in the dark. Dad has a flashlight. Alice has nothing. She has ducked and covered under a table, and is holding onto a leg of it like you're supposed to do in an earthquake.)

DAD

Alice!

ALICE

Dad!

DAD

Where are you?

ALICE

Are you here?

DAD

Alice?

ALICE

Dad?

DAD

Hello!

ALICE

Hello!

DAD

Stay where you are. I'll find you.

(He searches and searches for her.)

(Mom in front of the Last Door,
still struggling to stand on the
shaking ground. She sees Alice, and
calls out.)

MOM

Alice!

(Alice sees Mom and springs into
action. She probably mimes this,
instead of doing for real.)

ALICE

Stay where you are! I know what to do!
I have to rush into action, find a rope, tie one end to a tree,
and the other end around my waist, and dive straight into the
earth after Mom!

(She rushes to Mom)

(Dad, still searching)

DAD

Stay where you are! I'll find you!

(Alice and Mom hold each other)

ALICE

Got you.
Take a breath,
Blow a wish,

MOM

Pluck a chord,

ALICE/MOM

Fish a fish.

(Dad still searching)

Stay where you are!

DAD

Cross a lake,
swim a stream,

MOM

climb a tree,

ALICE

Dream a dream.

MOM/ALICE

(They pretend to sleep on their arms together. Dad at last finds them.)

Alice!

DAD

Dad. Switch.

ALICE

(She ducks away so Dad can take her place. Dad tries, but can not get through to Mom. Mom tries, but she can not get through to Dad. They are stuck, with Alice crouched down between them, hands over her head in earthquake protecting position.)

(They begin to fight in earnest to reach each other, to no avail. Alice grows more terrified below them, as the earthquake still shakes the ground below her, and her parents shake the earth above.)

no. no. no. no. no. no. no. no. no. no. no. no.

ALICE

(Mom and Dad at last see Alice and her terror, and stop. In one motion, they kneel to comfort her. They are both able to touch Alice, from opposite sides. It is as close as

they will ever get. They comfort her.)

MOM/DAD

Shhh, Alice.
Shhhh.

(Alice moves towards Dad, and lets him comfort her. Mom retreats.)

DAD

Cross a lake,
swim a stream,
climb a tree,
Dream a dream.

(Mom calls Dad to their own private moment)

MOM

Climb a dream.

DAD

Blow above.

MOM

Cross a wish.

MOM/DAD

leave a love.

(Mom unties her last finger string. She walks through the door, and closes it behind her. The shaking stops.)

(Lights up. We are at school. Alice is giving a presentation to her class. She holds a seismograph readout that has recorded a large quake.)

ALICE

And the same second the door closed,
all the shaking Stopped.
You can see where that happened, right
There.

(She points it out on the paper.)

ALICE

So that's why we just had such a big earthquake.
A Richter Scale Ten.
My Dad is the most genius Seismologist ever, and we created the
experiment together at home and figured it all out, which is how
I know all this.
Thank you very much for listening to my presentation.
I'll take questions now.
Any questions?

(A shift. A kind of epilogue. Dad
and Alice talk to various co-workers
and classmates.)

DAD

Why did we move to Parkfield?
Because we were ready for a change.

ALICE

How did she die?
She was in South America and taking sleeping pills to stop these
really bad nightmares she was having all the time, and she took
one so she could take a nap, and as soon as she fell asleep
there was a big earthquake.
Nothing fell on her or anything but the gas to the oven broke
and she died in her sleep because of no air.

DAD

My wife passed away not long ago and we had to leave.
Too many memories.

ALICE

She died of leukemia. It happened pretty fast, over a summer.
One day she was okay, and the next she was sick, and then she
was dead.

DAD

How did she die?
It's kind of a long story.

ALICE

Her heart was bad. Since she was exactly the age I am right now it had never worked right. She was going to get a brand new one that would work forever and ever and ever, but before she could go in and get it installed, the old one finally broke and stopped beating and so she died.

DAD

It was a rare situation, one of those we've-never-seen-anything-quite-like-this-before type things. Lots of people were interested in what was going on, and I um, I can't say it made things any easier.

ALICE

She died in childbirth. I never met her at all.

DAD

The attention
Definitely did not make it easier.

ALICE

A bike accident.

DAD

Especially not for Alice.

ALICE

She was in one of those planes that crashed on September 11th. Not one that crashed in New York into the building though. The other one where the passengers tried to take over from the hijackers and they made a movie about it. The writer and director interviewed me and my dad about it because she called and talked to us while it was happening.

DAD

What are you supposed to tell your kid, when the truth is
Not Really an option?

(beat)

DAD

Alice?

ALICE

She got sick.

DAD

Alice,

ALICE

That's what happened. She got sick.

(beat)

ALICE

It was okay though, because it was the kind of getting sick that doesn't make you hurt anywhere at all, so she didn't hurt anywhere. At all.

(beat)

DAD

It was okay though, because we knew exactly how much time we had left together as a family, and got to spend the last days with her doing everything we'd ever wanted to do.

ALICE

It was okay though, because she had a chance to read me my favorite book out loud one more time and I recorded it on a tape so I could listen to her reading it to me forever.

DAD

It was okay though, because we all had a chance to share all the last thoughts we had, so nothing at all was left unsaid.

ALICE

It was okay though, because she died in her own, super comfortable bed,

DAD

under her favorite clean sheets and favorite clean blankets,

ALICE

with Dad sitting on her right side,

DAD

and you sitting on her left,

ALICE

watching the most beautiful sunset ever through the biggest best window in the house

DAD

while listening to her favorite song on her her favorite record

ALICE

while eating home made vanilla ice cream with strawberries and chocolate and whipped cream and nuts, which is pretty much the best way to die ever.

(beat)

ALICE

Do you like it?

DAD

Very much.

ALICE

Good.
Then that's the Real story.

(Dad and Alice come home. Together they pack up the earthquake sensing machine, put it in the closet, and close the door.)

END OF PLAY