

PIP. Stay... Rosie. Would you?... I was a mouse. A mouse, Mum. The only thing I thought was pretty about me was my hair. Which is what you tore out of my head. Funny that.

FRAN. It was a moment. A moment of anger.

PIP. I had a bald patch for a whole term. It still doesn't grow properly there.

FRAN. It was one time. And now what? You're unhappy because I pulled your hair when you were twelve years old.

PIP. I was fourteen.

BOB *comes into the garden with the tea tray.*

FRAN. Are you going to tell him or will I?

PIP. Go right ahead.

FRAN. She's leaving Steve.

BOB. Steve?

FRAN. Well, who else would she be leaving, Bob?

BOB. Why?

FRAN. Because I pulled her hair when she was fourteen years old and she's been unhappy ever since.

ROSIE. Mum!

BOB. Pip?

PIP. It hasn't been good for a while, Dad.

BOB. Well, I know there's been a rough patch. But that's true for most marriages.

PIP. I've tried.

BOB. Well, have you thought about trying some more?

PIP. I'm not happy, Dad.

FRAN. There's that word, Bob. Happy. As if that is the point of living.

BOB. And what about Steve? How's he feel about it?

PIP. I think he'd like things to stay the same.

FRAN. You have a husband who loves you, who treats you well, who's a wonderful father and you're walking away from that.

PIP. Not easily.

FRAN. It doesn't make sense.

PIP. I know. He's a good man.

FRAN. Oh, I get it.

PIP. What?

FRAN. There's someone else?

PIP. No.

FRAN. Look at me.

PIP. I'm doing this for myself.

FRAN. Yeah, that much is clear.

PIP. Can you just take my side, Mum?

FRAN. The man's done nothing wrong. He's loved you and been a good father. Why would I make an enemy of him?

PIP. I don't love him.

FRAN. Too bad. You've got kids. You make it work. Look at me and tell me there's no other man.

*She looks at her... FRAN thinks she sees the lie in her face.*

You stupid girl!

PIP. Don't.

FRAN. Why would you do that to yourself?

BOB. She said there's no one.

FRAN. Please, God, tell me he's not married.

ROSIE. Mum... Please don't.

BOB. What about the girls... where are they in all this?

PIP. I've been offered a position in Vancouver. I'm going to take it.

FRAN. You're taking the girls from him too?

PIP. They're staying here.

FRAN (to BOB). Do you hear that?

BOB. Now hold on... I don't think that's right, Pip.

PIP. The position is for twelve months... I'm going to see how it goes. At the end we'll decide what's best.

FRAN. Do you hear what she's saying?

PIP. If it was a man making this decision... If it was Mark or Ben you would support it. There would be no question that they should do this.

FRAN. Not if they were walking out on their kids.

PIP. My work is important to me, Mum. This is a professional opportunity. I'm going to take it.

FRAN. And who's going to pick up the slack with the kids? I've been a mother for thirty-four years. I'm over it.

PIP. I'm not asking you to do anything more than you already do.

FRAN. How's he going to manage for twelve months? On his own.

PIP. The same as I would if it was him that was going.

FRAN. But you'd have me. And Dad. You know you would. Day and night. And you've gone ahead on this knowing we will be there.

ROSIE. I'll be able to help.

FRAN. Shut it, Rosie.

ROSIE. I'm just saying I would help.

FRAN. You made a choice. Nine years ago. To have children. You don't walk away from that.

PIP. Things don't have to stay the same... people work these things out differently now. Steve is as good a parent as I am.

FRAN. Those girls need their mother.

PIP. Not if she is unhappy.

FRAN. You selfish bitch.

BOB. Jesus, Fran.

FRAN. Your happiness is not what matters here.

BOB. Pull it back a notch would you?

PIP. Because you know what happens then, Mum? She will make sure her children are unhappy too. She will choose one and she will make sure that she feels like shit about herself.

FRAN. What happened, Pip? Did some guy bored with his wife look twice at you and make you feel like you were more than a mouse?

BOB. What's the matter with you?

FRAN. She's walking out on her kids. What's the matter with you? Christ, Bob. You know what you get when you treat a girl like a princess. You get a fucking princess.

BOB. Oh, we're swearing now, are we?

PIP. You're going to annihilate me.

FRAN. Toughen up... You'll need to if you're planning to shack up with some Canadian for the winter.

BOB. Stop it!

FRAN. Or what? You'll raise your hand to me. You'll do it once and once only, Bob Price.

FRAN *walks inside – a moment.*

BOB (to ROSIE). Go and see if your mother's all right... I want a moment with Pip.

ROSIE *goes inside.*

Is she right? Is there something more to this? Someone else?

*A moment... He couldn't bear it to be true.*

PIP. No.

BOB. All right then... You're an intelligent woman. You know your own mind. If this is an opportunity then grab it with both hands. Because life is horribly short. And there's no gain staying with a man who you have no love for, no matter