

## WANDA (VAL) / CARLA

MALE VO

Ladies and gentlemen, coming to the stage right now from Last Horizons Hospice...give it up for the fantastic Wanda Mitchell!!!

(VAL walks out as Wanda, holding a microphone, ready to perform a standup comedy routine. Soundtrack of crowd applauding/responding/laughing plays throughout her set.)

WANDA

(to the audience)

Hello, hi. Are we doing okay out there? Yeah? So who out here is proud of their adult child? ...who still lives at home?

(a few whoops and claps, some chuckles)

Me too! My daughter is a journalist! And by that I mean she fills diaries with her feelings. But it sounds more impressive the first way.

(Crowd chuckles.)

Yeah, she's always

(She acts out writing furiously.)

Processing. I found one of her journals once, on the kitchen table. I didn't read it! I would never. Instead I wrote in it. Just turned to the last blank page and wrote, "I feel the same way."

(Crowd laughs.)

Just those mysterious five words...waiting...

(Crowd laughs.)

It's gonna freak her out: you know what freaks me out? Dried flowers. All crispy, decaying. Depressing! A friend told me her boyfriend was such a romantic, he gave her twelve dried roses. Ugh! I'd be like, "you got me dried flowers? Here's some dried condoms."

(The crowd laughs. Then CARLA heckles WANDA from the audience.)

CARLA

You're not that funny.

WANDA

Hello! So nice to meet you. You want to come up here?

CARLA

Sure.

WANDA

Really? Wow, a taker. Okay, okay.

(to the audience:)

I assume no responsibility for what is about to happen.

CARLA

You're a hospice volunteer.

WANDA

Okay, stating the obvious, not a great comedy technique.

CARLA

You think you're some kind of entertainer?

WANDA

Are dying people not allowed to have fun?

CARLA

I mean, condom jokes? It's not really appropriate.

WANDA

Made your mom laugh, didn't I?

(After a beat, Carla turns to the audience.)

CARLA

So my mom never wanted me to eat junk food, she always wanted me to snack on veggies instead. Like, how classic mom is that?

(Pause, no laughs from the audience)

So one time I'm in the kitchen, and I dig around in the fridge, and I pull out this plastic bag of baby bell peppers.

And my mom yells from the dining room, I think she was grouchy because she'd just gotten cancer, she's like "NO CHIPS, CARLA!"

(Pause)

She'd heard the plastic bag and me crunch into a pepper and thought I was breaking into the chips! And I walk in and I show her and she laughed about that.

(No laughs from the audience)

WANDA  
(gently)

I'm sure...that really...lifted her spirits.

(Vivian heckles Carla from the audience.)

VIVIAN

It's really dead out here.

CARLA

What??

VIVIAN

You're killing me. But not in a good way.

WANDA  
(to Carla)

See how it feels?

VIVIAN

Not in the right way.

WANDA  
(to Carla)

Look, comedy is all about timing.

CARLA  
(to Wanda)

We weren't living in a sitcom.

WANDA

It was just a matter of timing. I couldn't stop your mom from dying, you know that.

VIVIAN

She doesn't know.

WANDA

She didn't choose me over you. She chose human connection without the weightiness of context. To let go of who she most fiercely loved. She couldn't bear to see your unlined face and wonder what she would miss.

Wanda was presence with no past. Wanda was now. She could leave Wanda. But she couldn't leave you. So she pretended she already had.

Everyone has to go in their own way.

(Carla take this in for a beat. Then Vivian starts throwing wadded up paper at Carla.)