

"The Forever Pill"

by  
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1 INT. MARIE DRAKE'S HOSPITAL ROOM - EARLY EVENING

1

MARIE DRAKE, a fifty-year-old cancer patient, lies heavily medicated in a hospital bed. Around her, various medical equipment beeps, monitoring her heartbeat and other vital signs. Marie looks very frail and white. She wears a scarf over her bald head, having lost her hair during chemotherapy. Her husband, TIM DRAKE, exhausted and careworn, sits in a metal chair by his wife's bedside, holding her hand.

DR. MARTINSON, a white-haired man in a lab coat, is looking down at Marie's chart. When he doesn't speak, Tim does.

DRAKE  
(eagerly)  
Well, Doc?

MARTINSON  
(beat)  
I'm afraid the news isn't good,  
Mr. Drake.

DRAKE  
(growing emotional)  
How. . . How long does she have?

MARTINSON  
She's resting as comfortably as we  
can make her. Unfortunately, we  
can't take away *all* of her pain.

DRAKE  
(emphatically)  
How long does she have?

MARTINSON  
(long beat)  
I don't think she'll make it  
through the night.  
(beat)  
I'm *so* sorry.

FADE OUT.

2 INT. HOSPITAL CHAPEL - LATER

2

In the hospital's small chapel, recorded organ music is playing. Beneath a wooden statue of the crucified Jesus, several dozen offering candles are flickering. A handful of people kneel in the few pews, praying.

(CONTINUED)

FATHER OLIVER, an older man dressed in traditional black, sees Tim enter and approaches him. Tim is doing his best to hold back his sadness.

OLIVER

Good news, I hope.

DRAKE

No, Father. Dr. Martinson doesn't expect her to. . . make it through the night.

OLIVER

Oh my!

DRAKE

Could you give her the Last Rites?

OLIVER

Of course.

DRAKE

(sighs)  
She's fought so *hard*!

OLIVER

That she has. Unfortunately, the leukemia is stronger. It's not fair.

DRAKE

(beat)  
Father, do you believe in Heaven?

OLIVER

Of course I do. It comes with the job.

DRAKE

(grows teary)  
It's a. . . nice place - right?

OLIVER

So the Bible tells us. The Book of Revelation says that every tear will be wiped away there, and that there will be no sorrow or pain.

(CONTINUED)

DRAKE

(beat)

I suppose that's the best I can  
hope for Marie now.

FADE OUT.

EXT. HOSPITAL CHAPEL - MOMENTS LATER

Tim steps out of the chapel and into the harsh lights of the hospital lobby. Many people pass him by, and the occasional page can heard over the speakers. As the chapel door closes behind him, Tim sniffs and clears his throat.

He is approached by COOPERSMITH a dark-haired man in a suit and tie. He holds a briefcase in his right hand.

COOPERSMITH

Mr. Drake?

Drake looks up.

DRAKE

Do I. . . know you?

COOPERSMITH

Not yet.

DRAKE

Look, friend -

COOPERSMITH

Alfred Coopersmith.

DRAKE

Whatever.

(beat)

You are looking, Mr. Coopersmith,  
at a man smack dab in the middle  
of the worst day of his life, so  
if you'd -

COOPERSMITH

I know all about the day you're  
having.

DRAKE

(grows angry)

You're just a font of wisdom,  
aren't you?

(CONTINUED)

COOPERSMITH

I have no intention of angering you.

DRAKE

Well, you are!

COOPERSMITH

Nothing could be further from my mind!

DRAKE

Pal, the best thing you can do right now is take yourself further from me before you need dental work. I'm in no -

COOPERSMITH

I can save her.

DRAKE

*What?*

COOPERSMITH

Your wife, Marie. I can save her life.

FADE OUT.

Drake and Coopersmith sit at a table. Around them, many people are chatting, having a snack, and talking on their cell phones. Under the cafe's harsh lights, bad Muzak is playing. Tim looks irritated.

Coopersmith removes a small pill bottle from his briefcase. He shakes it. We see that the single pill inside the bottle is pink and shaped like a star. He holds the bottle before him.

COOPERSMITH

*This* is what she needs.

DRAKE

(disbelievingly)  
One pill?

COOPERSMITH

One very special pill.  
(beat)  
Here.

(CONTINUED)

Coopersmith hands Drake the pill bottle. He looks at it and shakes it.

DRAKE

(with some sarcasm)  
This will cure her leukemia?

COOPERSMITH

No. It will take *three* pills to do that. This first pill will merely keep her alive. Make her stable.

DRAKE

Uh huh.

COOPERSMITH

You *don't* believe me?

DRAKE

Let's say that if you didn't promise to buy me a cup of coffee for listening to your. . . sales pitch, I wouldn't be here.

COOPERSMITH

Why is it so hard for you to believe that *I* could be the person who cures this horrible disease?

DRAKE

Well. . .

COOPERSMITH

Two ordinary men - brothers - gave the world flight. One man, Jonas Salk, blessed humanity with the cure for *another* dreaded disease: Polio. The cure for leukemia must come from somewhere. . . from someone.

DRAKE

How did you know what was troubling me outside of the chapel?

COOPERSMITH

(beat)  
It was like gazing into a mirror.

DRAKE

Excuse me?

(CONTINUED)

COOPERSMITH

The look on your face was on *my* face four years ago. . . when I lost my brother to leukemia. I vowed then that I would cure this disease so no one else would ever have to suffer like he did.

DRAKE

And my name?

COOPERSMITH

I overheard the priest in the chapel speaking with you.

DRAKE

So you're. . . some kind of a doctor?

COOPERSMITH

No. I'm a scientist.

DRAKE

(sarcastically)  
And you're trolling the hospital with a cancer cure in hand?

COOPERSMITH

I was visiting a friend.

DRAKE

The cancer ward?

COOPERSMITH

Maternity: The flip side of the coin.

Tim shakes the pill bottle again.

DRAKE

What's in this?

COOPERSMITH

Hope. . . and life.

DRAKE

If this *really* works, why aren't you a millionaire already?

COOPERSMITH

Because it doesn't cure leukemia in one swoop.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

COOPERSMITH (CONT'D)

It will take *many* doses, and the medical profession has no patience for a cure that takes time.

DRAKE

How long does it take?

COOPERSMITH

One pill every week for your wife's lifetime.

DRAKE

This, Mr. Coopersmith, is the point in your pitch where you tell me this pill costs a billion dollars - right?

COOPERSMITH

It will cost you *one* dollar.

DRAKE

*What?*

COOPERSMITH

Legally, I believe we *must* exchange something.

DRAKE

And the *other* pills?

COOPERSMITH

One dollar each.

(beat)

Surely, your wife's life is worth \$52 a year.

DRAKE

Of course it is!

He looks at the pill.

DRAKE

Has this cured anyone?

COOPERSMITH

(beat)

It is . . . untried. I only finished developing it last month.

DRAKE

(aghast)

You want my wife to be. . . your guinea pig?

(CONTINUED)



COOPERSMITH

I wouldn't put it *that* way.

DRAKE

That's what she'll be if she takes *this*!

COOPERSMITH

Your wife is not expected to survive the night. You said so yourself.

DRAKE

What business is it of -

COOPERSMITH

You hold her *salvation* in your hand! What is the worst that could happen?

DRAKE

It could kill her!

COOPERSMITH

A few hours earlier than the cancer will.

(beat)

It will *not* kill her.

Drake looks at the pill.

DRAKE

What's it made of?

COOPERSMITH

It is my own special formulation derived from *years* of work.

After an uneasy pause, Coopersmith quickly rises.

COOPERSMITH

If you're not interes-

DRAKE

Wait a second! I never said. . .

He sits down again.

COOPERSMITH

Yes?

(CONTINUED)

DRAKE

(beat)  
A dollar?

COOPERSMITH

I'll tell you what: For you, the first three pills are free.

DRAKE

What will they do?

COOPERSMITH

The first pill, as I said, will stabilize her condition. The second will begin her recovery. The third will put her into remission. She should be able to leave the hospital not long after that.

DRAKE

You have all three pills on you?

COOPERSMITH

No, only that one. The pills must be given at weekly intervals - no sooner.

DRAKE

Why?

COOPERSMITH

That is how they *work*, how they were designed.

DRAKE

But how will we -

COOPERSMITH

I will find you.

(beat)  
I assume you're at the hospital often?

DRAKE

(sighs)  
I practically *live* here.

COOPERSMITH

Take the pill. It is yours to do with as you please.

(beat)  
(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

4

CONTINUED: (6)

4

COOPERSMITH (CONT'D)

If you *do* give it to your wife,  
note the time. The other pills  
must be taken exactly one week  
apart or the cure will not work.

DRAKE

(beat; uncertain)

Thank you.

Drake stands and puts the pill bottle in his pants  
pocket. He takes a few steps.

COOPERSMITH

Mr. Drake?

Tim stops and turns.

DRAKE

Yes?

COOPERSMITH

Whatever you decide to do, I wish  
you and your dear wife peace.

FADE OUT.

5

INT. MARIE DRAKE'S HOSPITAL ROOM - LATER

5

Tim quietly enters Marie's room. The lights are off, but  
the equipment is casting a dim glow over her as she lies  
in bed. Tim looks at her and wipes a tear from his eye.  
He slowly removes the pill bottle from his pants pocket.  
He removes the cap and shakes the pink, star-shaped pill  
into his palm. He puts the empty bottle back into his  
pocket.

He approaches Marie and shakes her gently. As she starts  
to awaken, he leans in close to her and speaks softly.

DRAKE

Marie, honey? Can you hear me?

Marie is weak and in pain. She responds in not much more  
than a whisper.

MARIE

Yes.

DRAKE

How's your pain?

(CONTINUED)

MARIE

Pretty bad. The doctor. . . The  
doctor says he's given me all the  
meds I can have for now.

DRAKE

Not quite.  
(beat)  
There's one more.

He holds the pill before her.

MARIE

(chuckles slightly)  
It's *pink*.

DRAKE

Blue for boys, pink for girls.  
(beat)  
Can you. . . Can you take it?

MARIE

I'll *try*.

Tim picks up a cup of water from Marie's bedside. He  
grabs her gently and pulls her upright. She takes the  
pill and puts it in her mouth. She sips some of the water  
through the straw and coughs a little.

DRAKE

Did you swallow it?

MARIE

(beat)  
Yes.

DRAKE

Good girl.

Her lays her back down and fixes her covers. She drifts  
off to sleep. Beginning to cry, he lovingly brushes her  
cheek.

DRAKE

Rest now. I'll be right here.

FADE OUT.

6

INT. MARIE DRAKE'S HOSPITAL ROOM - EARLY MORNING

6

It is very early in morning. The equipment is still beeping and casting its glow. Tim has fallen asleep in the chair, his wife's hand in his.

Martinson gently shakes him awake.

MARTINSON

Mr. Drake?  
(beat)  
*Mr. Drake?*

Tim yawns and begins to awaken.

DRAKE

What. . . What time is it?

MARTINSON

4:00 a.m.

DRAKE

(urgently)  
Marie? How's -

MARTINSON

She's holding her own.

DRAKE

*How?*

MARTINSON

I was afraid you'd ask that. The truth is. . . I have no idea. I didn't think she had this amount of fight left in her.

(beat)  
I'm ordering some new tests, and I'm updating her condition to critical, but *stable*.

DRAKE

Will she get even better?

MARTINSON

It's possible. . . I might even say likely.

DRAKE

But how can -

(CONTINUED)

MARTINSON

Doctors are only human, not gods.  
Every test, every reading pointed  
to what I told you. . . I'm  
*thrilled* to say I was wrong.

(beat)

You must be *exhausted*. You should  
go downstairs for a *strong* cup of  
coffee.

DRAKE

But I don't want to l-

MARTINSON

You needn't worry. She's holding  
her own. I'll be here when you get  
back.

FADE OUT.

INT. HOSPITAL COFFEE SHOP - MOMENTS LATER

The cafe is less crowded so early in the morning. Tim  
approaches the young CLERK. Stifling a yawn, he orders.

DRAKE

Black coffee please - in the  
largest cup you can find.

CLERK

Right away, sir.

Tim sees Coopersmith approaching.

COOPERSMITH

Mr. Drake, I hope things are  
looking up.

Tim musters a tired smile.

DRAKE

Like a *miracle*.

(beat)

Do you have a minute?

COOPERSMITH

All the time in the world.

FADE OUT.

8

INT. HOSPITAL COFFEE SHOP - MOMENTS LATER

8

Fewer people are about as Coopersmith and Drake sit at a table with their coffees.

DRAKE

Martinson has no idea how it happened. It *must* be the pill.

COOPERSMITH

Wonderful! It's working just as I knew it would.

(beat)

At what time did she take the pill?

DRAKE

6:45 last night.

COOPERSMITH

Then she is due for her second pill *next* Wednesday evening at the same time.

DRAKE

If you have the other pills with you, I'll -

COOPERSMITH

Oh, no, no.

(beat)

They must remain in a climate-controlled case until the morning of the day they are needed. If I remove them any earlier, they will begin to lose their potency.

DRAKE

So how will I get the other pills?

COOPERSMITH

I will meet you here every Wednesday your wife is still hospitalized. Shall we say 5:00?

DRAKE

Perfect.

COOPERSMITH

Once she is discharged, we will make other arrangements.

(beat)

The cure is beginning.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

COOPERSMITH (CONT'D)

It is *vital*ly important that your wife take these pills on schedule. Missing even *one* dose may allow the cancer to return.

DRAKE

She'll take them.

(beat; grows emotional)

I. . . I don't know how to thank you.

COOPERSMITH

I'm thrilled to help. I wish you two *many* more happy years together.

FADE OUT.

INT. MARIE DRAKE'S HOSPITAL ROOM - A WEEK LATER

Many of the monitors previously there are now gone. Marie is sitting up in her bed. Some color has returned to her cheeks, and small sprouts of hair can be seen below her head kerchief. Tim sits on the metal chair, and Martinson stands at the foot of her bed.

DRAKE

How are the test results?

MARTINSON

Improving every day.

DRAKE

Might she go into remission?

MARTINSON

*Anything* is possible. Her body is fighting the cancer aggressively.

MARIE

A week ago, you wouldn't have given a plug nickel for my chances, would you, Doc?

MARTINSON

I wouldn't put it *that* way.

DRAKE

What way *would* you put it?

(CONTINUED)



MARTINSON

I was. . . pessimistic.

DRAKE

And now?

MARTINSON

I'm happy, very happy. . . for  
both of you.

FADE OUT.

Many of the doctors and nurses are gathered about as Tim pushes Marie's wheelchair toward the elevators. We hear the occasional page and see some nurses milling about caring for other patients.

The elevator doors opens. Marie calls out to the staff as Tim wheels her inside.

MARIE

Goodbye! Thank you *all*.

DRAKE

Thanks, everyone!

The elevator doors shut.

MARTINSON

(chuckles)

A young NURSE in a starched-white uniform is curious.

NURSE

Something, Doctor?

MARTINSON

Just. . . thinking.

(beat)

That woman came in here as cancer ridden as I've ever seen. And now, she's in remission and heading home.

NURSE

You did well.

MARTINSON

No, not *me*. The usual playbook didn't do much good.

(CONTINUED)

NURSE

Then how. . .

MARTINSON

I don't know. Strength of will,  
maybe? I wish I *did* know how she  
beat her cancer. I'd bottle it,  
and give it to all of our other  
patients.

FADE OUT.

Tim and Marie are seated in their living room. Marie  
looks even stronger than on her discharge date. The  
doorbell rings, and Tim jumps up.

DRAKE

I'll get it.

MARIE

Tim, I'm perfectly capable -

DRAKE

I'm sure you are, but I want you  
to rest.

MARIE

I -

DRAKE

When I go back to work next week,  
you'll *have* to do everything.  
While I'm here, let me help.

The bell rings again. Tim rushes to the door.

DRAKE

(calling)  
Coming!

He opens the door. We see Coopersmith on the stoop.

COOPERSMITH

Good afternoon.

DRAKE

(relieved)  
I was getting concerned.

(CONTINUED)

COOPERSMITH

Sorry. There was a lot of traffic.

DRAKE

Do you have the pill?

COOPERSMITH

Right here.

He hands him a pill bottle, which Tim puts into his pants pocket.

DRAKE

Thanks!

Marie approaches from behind them.

COOPERSMITH

I can't tell you how happy I -

MARIE

Good afternoon.

COOPERSMITH

(surprised)

Good afternoon, Mrs. Drake.

DRAKE

Marie, I told you to -

MARIE

Aren't you going to introduce us?

DRAKE

(beat)

Marie, this is Al Coopersmith.

MARIE

A pleasure.

COOPERSMITH

Likewise.

MARIE

And how do you know Tim?

DRAKE

(interjecting)

He works in my office.

MARIE

He does? I thought I had met everyone you work with.

(CONTINUED)

11 CONTINUED: (2)

11

COOPERSMITH

I transferred from the Buffalo office. I started about a month and a half ago, shortly before Tim began his leave of absence.

MARIE

I see.

DRAKE

Dear, would you be OK if Al and I went down to the pub for a beer?

MARIE

Of course. You've been waiting on me hand and foot since we got home last week. You deserve a break.

FADE OUT.

12 INT. PUB - LATER

12

Tim and Coopersmith sit at a table in the neighborhood bar, a mug of beer before each of them. Some other patrons are about, and the jukebox is playing the oldies. Tim reaches for his wallet.

DRAKE

I have your buck right here.

Coopersmith waves him off.

COOPERSMITH

You bought me a beer. Let's call it square.

DRAKE

(chuckles)

If you say so.

They each sip their beers during their conversation.

COOPERSMITH

Are you having any problems getting Marie to take the pills?

DRAKE

None. She's on a lot of other meds. I'll just slip this one into the Wednesday evening slot in her pillbox. She won't even notice. She hasn't so far.

(CONTINUED)

COOPERSMITH

She's taking them at the same time every week?

DRAKE

Oh yes. We don't want to take the chance of anything happening by missing a pill.

COOPERSMITH

I should say not!

DRAKE

Don't worry about it, Al. You and these pills are godsend.

(beat)

Cheers!

They clink their glasses together.

FADE OUT.

Marie sits on the examining table. She has a thin head of fuzz and is no longer wearing her head kerchief. Martinson stands before her, clipboard in hand.

MARTINSON

How are things going?

MARIE

Very well. I can't remember ever feeling so good.

MARTINSON

That's wonderful.

Martinson flips to the second page on his clipboard.

MARTINSON

You're here for your six-week, post-discharge check-up.

MARIE

That's right.

(chuckles)

Hard to believe that not long ago I was knock, knock, knockin' on Heaven's door.

(CONTINUED)

MARTINSON

Let's not dwell on the past.

(beat)

Are you eating well?

MARIE

Fine. I've even put on a couple of pounds.

MARTINSON

Sleeping?

MARIE

Like a baby.

MARTINSON

Are you in *any* pain?

MARIE

Not a bit.

MARTINSON

You're taking your pills, of course?

MARIE

Oh, yes. Tim bought this big pillbox with *lots* of little compartments. Every Sunday night, we fill it up with my meds for the coming week.

MARTINSON

Do you need any refill prescriptions?

MARIE

I don't think so.

MARTINSON

Call me if you do.

MARIE

I will.

(chuckles)

That little pink pill is very pretty.

MARTINSON

Pink pill?

MARIE

The star-shaped one.

(CONTINUED)

MARTINSON

(beat)  
I'm not aware -

MARIE

I only take it once a week - every  
Wednesday after dinner.

Martinson skims through the other pages on his clipboard.

MARIE

Is something wrong?

MARTINSON

None of the pills I've prescribed  
meets that description. And I  
haven't prescribed any *weekly*  
medication for you.

MARIE

But that pill is in the box every  
Wednesday night.

MARTINSON

So you took it last Wednesday?

MARIE

Right.

MARTINSON

And there's *another* one in the  
pillbox for this coming Wednesday?

MARIE

There *should* be.

(beat)  
You *must* have prescribed it.

MARTINSON

No.

MARIE

Then how. . .

MARTINSON

It must be coming from your  
husband.

MARIE

Tim? Why would he. . .  
(growing alarmed)  
You don't think he's trying. . .  
to harm me?

(CONTINUED)

MARTINSON

Oh, no, no, no. Certainly not!

MARIE

Then what?

MARTINSON

It's likely some herbal medication  
he put you on.

MARIE

Without asking me?

(beat)

Why would he do that?

MARTINSON

He must have believed it will  
help.

(beat)

The problem is, it *could* be having  
an effect on the meds I've  
prescribed.

MARIE

What should I do?

MARTINSON

Your husband is back at work now,  
right?

MARIE

Yes.

MARTINSON

I want you to go home and remove  
that pill from the pillbox. *Don't*  
take it! Call me. I want you to  
bring it in so I can check it out.

MARIE

Do you think it's harmful?

MARTINSON

It's probably fine. I just don't  
want to take any chances with your  
recovery.

(beat)

Will you do that for me?

MARIE

Certainly.

(CONTINUED)



MARTINSON

As soon as I get a chance, I'm going to consult my sources and see if I can find any listing for a star-shaped pink pill.

FADE OUT.

Marie is on the phone with Martinson, who we see on a split screen.

MARTINSON

It's *not* there?

MARIE

No.

MARTINSON

How about with the prescription bottles?

MARIE

No. I checked.

MARTINSON

He must have run out.

(beat)

He still has time to get you another pill before your next dose.

MARIE

Why is Tim sneaking this pill in with my meds?

MARTINSON

Who said anything about *sneaking*? When you two lay out your pills for each week, isn't *that* pill among them?

MARIE

I. . . I *think* so. There are *so* many, I. . . I can't be sure.

MARTINSON

Don't you worry. Just because that pink pill isn't in the box now, that doesn't mean it won't be there for Wednesday night.

(CONTINUED)

MARIE

I. . . I hadn't thought of that.

MARTINSON

Remember: When it *does* show up,  
don't take it, and call me as soon  
as you can.

MARIE

Should I ask Tim about it?

MARTINSON

No. I'm sure that - in his own way  
- he thinks he's helping you. And  
maybe that little pill *is* doing  
you some good.

MARIE

Did you find a listing for it?

MARTINSON

No. I even went online.

(beat)

Don't worry. I'm sure it will  
prove to be harmless.

FADE OUT.

Tim and Marie are washing the dinner dishes.

DRAKE

*Delicious* meatloaf, honey.

MARIE

Thank you. I'm glad you liked it.

DRAKE

Meatloaf *every* Wednesday. You  
spoil me.

(beat)

Did you take your pills?

MARIE

Just before you came into the  
kitchen.

DRAKE

Good girl!

(CONTINUED)

MARIE

There are *so* many of them!

DRAKE

They're necessary. . . for now.

(beat)

Martinson said that, as time goes on and you get better, the number of pills you'll have to take will dwindle.

MARIE

I can't wait for that!

DRAKE

(chuckles)

Who knows? Before too long, you might only need one pill a week!

FADE OUT.

Marie is lying in bed. She looks pale and lethargic, and her voice sounds like she has a bad cold. Tim stands before her.

DRAKE

Are you *sure* you're OK?

MARIE

I'm fine. It's just a little cold.

DRAKE

I could stay home. All I have to do is call Bob N-

MARIE

No, no, no! I don't want you to.

(beat)

Your company was *very* good to you when I was in the hospital. . . All that time off!

DRAKE

A lot of people donated unused vacation days so I could be with you.

(CONTINUED)

MARIE

Go to work. I'll be fine. I'll  
just go back to sleep.

FADE OUT.

Marie is on the phone with Martinson, who we see in a split screen. She is sitting in her kitchen, talking on the wall phone.

MARTINSON

You sound *terrible*!

MARIE

It's a bad cold. I'll shake it  
soon.

(beat)

Have you had a chance to look over  
the pill I brought you?

MARTINSON

Yes, and I don't know *what* it is.

MARIE

It's *not* herbal?

MARTINSON

No. There's a *lot* in it - some  
things I don't even recognize -  
but there's no sign that it's  
herbal at all.

MARIE

Then what. . .

MARTINSON

My colleague, Bill Franski, will  
be back from his vacation on  
Monday. He's much more well versed  
in these things. He'll be able to  
fig-

Marie coughs violently for several seconds. She swoons  
and drops the telephone. We faintly hear Martinson  
through the receiver.

MARTINSON

Mrs. Drake? Are you alright?

(CONTINUED)

17 CONTINUED:

17

Marie moans loudly and falls to the floor. As she lies there, we hear Martinson again.

MARTINSON

Mrs. Drake?  
(beat)  
*Mrs. Drake?!*

FADE OUT.

18 INT. DRAKE HOME - DAYS LATER

18

Tim is sitting alone on the couch, dressed in his best black suit. His tie is askew, and the top button of his shirt is undone. Seeming to be in a daze, he is sipping on a beer.

The doorbell rings, and he slowly goes to answer it. He is surprised to see Coopersmith, also dressed in black, on the stoop.

DRAKE

Mr. Coopersmith?

COOPERSMITH

May I come in?

DRAKE

Sure.

Coopersmith walks inside, and Drake closes the door behind him.

COOPERSMITH

I'm so sorry for your loss.

DRAKE

Thank you.

COOPERSMITH

I waited until the last mourner drove away.

DRAKE

Thanks for *that* too.

(beat)

It's been a *crazy* couple of days.

COOPERSMITH

My apologies.

(CONTINUED)

DRAKE

For what?

COOPERSMITH

For failing you. . . and your wife.

DRAKE

Fail? Your pills gave Marie weeks of life that she never would have had. I'm *thankful* to you.

(beat; growing emotional)

A cold. That's what she said it was. A *bad* cold. I should go to work, she said.

(beat)

Martinson called me. I dashed home. . . but she was already dead. He said the leukemia had come back with *incredible* force.

COOPERSMITH

I've been *racking* my brain trying to figure out what went wrong!

(beat)

She took the pills every week?

DRAKE

Yes.

COOPERSMITH

(beat)

I wish I could give you an explanation.

DRAKE

You don't owe me one.

(beat)

So what now: Back to the drawing board?

COOPERSMITH

(exasperated)

I don't think so.

DRAKE

But you're *so* close.

COOPERSMITH

I *can't* figure out what the problem is!

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

COOPERSMITH (CONT'D)

I've gone over all my notes, and I  
can't see *anything* that would  
explain the pills' failure.

DRAKE

Maybe with more time -

COOPERSMITH

No.

(beat)

I guess I'm not destined to be the  
next Jonas Salk or the third  
Wright brother. The name Alfred  
Coopersmith *won't* find a place in  
the history books.

(beat)

I simply don't have what it takes.

FADE TO BLACK.