

Excerpts from
She Was the Sun

Synopsis

After losing her secret girlfriend of two years to a horrific accident, Sadie struggles to get her life back on track. Juggling her overbearing mother, wonky best friend, and her own guilt, she searches for a way to move on without forgetting the woman that she loves.

Cast

Sadie

A closeted lesbian who has recently lost the love of her life. Formerly an uptight rule-follower and people-pleaser. Currently a stone-faced well of emotions.

Nancy

A nurse at the rehab facility. Very loving. Definitely has won “Best Grandmother of The Year” a time or two. The person Sadie has let closest to her during her stay.

Elizabeth

Sadie’s overbearing mother. She wants what’s best for her daughter, even if it doesn’t always come across that way.

Roger

Sadie’s father. He’s a factory worker who doesn’t have a lot to say. He and Sadie are more similar than different. Neither know how to have or handle emotions.

Sam

Sadie’s little brother. He’s a teenage boy and doesn’t let you forget it. He has always secretly looked up to Sadie

Jamie

Sadie’s long-term, recently-deceased girlfriend. She was fun-loving and carefree -- everything Sadie was not when they first got together.

Jack

Sadie’s best friend. Gay in every sense of the word. Often misdirected, always loveable.

ACT ONE, Scene One

(LIGHTS UP on a white room. Against the middle of the far wall is a woman lying on a cot. She is wearing drab, loose-fitting clothes. Her back is to the audience. We hear only her side of the conversation as she talks to what appears to be no one.)

SADIE

I'm going home today. To our apartment. *My* apartment. It's not home anymore. Not without you. I don't know if I'm any better off after being here, but I know if they hear me talking to you, they'll want me to stay longer, so I have to keep it short. I just miss you. So much. And I don't know what it's going to be like outside of here without you, but I know that I don't want to know. And I know that I really don't get a choice because no matter how much I scream to the heavens about how fucked up this all was, you're still not coming back and--

(There's a knock at the door. NANCY enters.)

NANCY

Sadie?

(SADIE clears her throat and rolls over, sitting up.)

SADIE

Yes?

NANCY

Your family is here. Are you all ready to go?

SADIE

As ready as I can be.

NANCY

Great. Your mother is just discussing some things with Doctor Mellin and then you'll be all set. It shouldn't be too long.

(SADIE sighs. NANCY laughs lightly.)

You sound very excited to be going home.

SADIE

Don't tell Doctor Mellin, but I don't know if I'm ready to leave.

NANCY

Oh?

SADIE

I'm not, like, going to hurt myself or anything. It's just been really nice to not have to face... everything.

NANCY

I know what you mean, sweetheart. When my Donnie passed, the house was just so quiet. I wasn't sure I'd make it. Retirement is sweeter when you have someone to spend it with, so I came here and picked up a few shifts a week, and I haven't looked back. Seeing you kiddos fight through the worst life can throw at you has inspired me to keep pushing right along, too.

SADIE

I'm going to miss you, Nance.

(They embrace. It's cut short by ELIZABETH entering the room, speaking loudly on her phone.)

ELIZABETH

Yes, Roger. We will be out in just a moment. Well, I had to talk to her doctor first. Oh hush. We will be out when we're out. I don't know why you're so antsy. Goodbye.

SADIE

Hi, mom.

ELIZABETH

Oh, sweetie.

(ELIZABETH is overcome with emotion. She embraces SADIE. SADIE does not reciprocate. After a moment, ELIZABETH pulls away and pulls herself together.)

Are you all set?

SADIE

Uh, yeah. Yeah I am.

ELIZABETH

Good, your father is getting antsy. You know how he is around these places.

(To NANCY)

No offense.

NANCY

None taken. Lots of people get nervous around rehab facilities, but it's entirely unnecessary.

ELIZABETH

Yes, well, let's get going before he drives off and we're *both* stuck here!

(The joke falls flat. NANCY breaks the uncomfortable silence.)

NANCY

Let me help you with your bags, honey.

SADIE

You really don't have to do that.

NANCY

Nonsense! It's the least I can do for my favorite resident.

SADIE

Thank you.

NANCY

You'll have to write to me and keep me updated on all your adventures outside of here. You're going places, sweetheart.

SADIE

(Quietly, to herself.)

I'm glad someone thinks so.

(They exit.)

ACT ONE, Scene Two

(LIGHTS UP on a kitchen. Sitting at the table are SADIE, ELIZABETH, ROGER and SAM. The room is tense. SADIE hardly touches her plate.)

ROGER

What did you say this was, Liz?

ELIZABETH

Penne a la vodka with broccoli and tuna.

ROGER

Whatever that means, it's great. Right, Sadie?

SADIE

Uh, yeah, it's really good, Mom.

ELIZABETH

Sam? Do you want any more?

SAM

We sat down two seconds ago. I haven't even tasted it yet.

(Beat. Everyone picks at their food.)

SADIE

So, Sam, how's school?

SAM

It's been cool. Basketball started last week. I made varsity this year.

SADIE

That's awesome!

SAM

You should come to a game or two.

SADIE

I'd love to.

ELIZABETH

You can sit with your father and I in the family section.

ROGER

It gets a little rowdy sometimes.

SADIE

I'll see what I can do.

(A long pause. No one knows what to say.)

So... what else is new?

SAM

Dad got a promotion at work.

SADIE

You didn't mention that.

ROGER

It's nothing, really.

SADIE

Well you were a shift manager before. Are you in charge of the whole place now?

ROGER

No, nothing like that. I'm just the operations manager. I order whatever materials they need on the floor.

SADIE

Does that mean you're not working the line anymore?

ROGER

Sometimes I do.

(Another long pause.)

SADIE

Well, Mom, everyone else seems to have big news. What's new with you?

ELIZABETH *(beat. Then, rushed)*

Your father and I have been talking and we think you should stay here for awhile.

SADIE

What?

ELIZABETH

We think it would be best.

SADIE

What about my apartment?

ELIZABETH

Well, Jamie's family has been through it and I'm not sure what kind of mess they've left for you.

SADIE

Jamie's family went through the apartment?

ELIZABETH

They had to clear out her stuff.

SADIE

They took her stuff?

ELIZABETH

Not all of it. They want you to go through and keep what you want.

SADIE

Do you know what they took?

ELIZABETH

It's not like I had an itemized list of your apartment.

SADIE

I just mean--

ELIZABETH

You hardly ever let me come over there, anyways.

ROGER

Liz.

ELIZABETH

What? She never wanted us over there.

ROGER

It's her first day home.

SADIE

I just want to sleep in my own bed, if that's okay.

ELIZABETH

That's fine. Your father can go pick it up after work tomorrow and we can set it up in the spare room for you.

SADIE

I'm not staying here.

ELIZABETH

I'd rather have you here.

SADIE

Why?

ELIZABETH

We like having you around.

SADIE

I live fifteen minutes across town. Fifteen minutes. I'm still "around."

ELIZABETH

Fifteen minutes can be a lot if I'm having a busy day.

SADIE

Are you planning on stopping every day?

ELIZABETH

I said you're staying here. That's final.

SADIE

That's not final. I am not a child. You don't get to make these decisions for me.

ELIZABETH

It's better for all of us if we have you here.

SADIE

Why? Why does it matter so much?

ROGER

For Christ's sake.

(Beat. SADIE hears what no one is willing to say.)

SADIE

Oh. Oh, I get it. You want me here so you can stand guard 24/7 in case I try to off myself.

ROGER

Sadie.

SADIE

Well, I won't.

ELIZABETH

And we're just supposed to believe you?

SADIE

I just spent ten weeks in a tiny white room on a tiny white cot, being watched every single second of every single day. I'm going home. To sleep in my bed. Alone.

(SADIE stands. She exits. Beat)

ELIZABETH

Roger, go after her.

(ROGER stands, grabs his keys and jacket.)

What are you doing?

ROGER

I'm not going to make her walk.

(He exits.)

ACT TWO, Scene Two

(Lights up in a park. It's late at night. SADIE lies in the grass next to her childhood friend, JACK. They are both staring up at the stars, quietly reflecting on the events of the last year. A swing set squeaks in the background.)

SADIE

Jack?

JACK

Yeah?

SADIE

Have you ever seen the Sun?

(JACK leans up on his elbows and turns to stare at SADIE. His brows are knitted in confusion.)

JACK

What? Everyone has seen the sun.

SADIE

I don't mean 'have you seen the sun?' What I mean is, have you *seen* the sun? Like, really *looked* at it?

(JACK takes a moment to stare at SADIE while he tries to decipher what she just said.)

JACK

Ummm... maybe I looked at it when I was little, but I try not to do that too much anymore because it could make me blind... You *do* know that makes you blind, right?

(SADIE laughs.)

SADIE

Yes, I know.

(Beat. JACK levels her with a disbelieving look.)

I didn't mean that. I meant...well...

(SADIE trails off, trying to think of a better way to say it. The words elude her. She sighs, frustratedly.)

You know what I mean!

JACK

I really don't. And I know you're, like, a college graduate, and way smarter than me, but I don't even think Einstein would be able to figure this one out.

SADIE

You're just not thinking about it right!

JACK

I'm thinking about it, and I just keep getting distracted by the fact that it would *literally* fuck up your eyes.

(SADIE shoves him. They lie in silence for a moment.)

What even made you think about the sun right now? It's the middle of the night. We came out here to talk and watch the stars. The sun's probably in... China or something by now.

SADIE

It's a tragedy.

(JACK turns and stares at her in confusion.)

The sun, I mean.

JACK

A tragedy?

SADIE

Yes. The Sun is a tragedy.

JACK

Okay, Copernicus.

SADIE

Really, Jack. It's science. The sun is a tragedy.

(JACK shoots SADIE a sideways glance.)

The surface of the sun is... a hot mess. It's all million-degree plasma that just keeps moving all the time. And in the core, there's so much heat and so much pressure that the hydrogen inside turns into helium and the fusion sends the electromagnetic radiation back to the surface and it creates this brilliant, blinding light and so much heat. And it just keeps going under all of that heat and all of that pressure. And it's just going to keep on going until it finally uses its entire supply of hydrogen and then it will implode into nothingness. The Sun is a tragedy. In order to keep everyone else alive, it has to use its entire life supply, and my God, Jack, I just....relate to it more than I probably should. One big, hot mess that's always under pressure and constantly moving and never slowing down or stopping because then everything around me would cease to exist.

(There's a long silence on stage as JACK unpacks the implications of SADIE's words.)

JACK

Are you... feeling what I'm feeling right now?

SADIE

Are you feeling a deep state of depression?

JACK

No, I just... Nevermind.

SADIE

What?

JACK

It's nothing.

(SADIE punches JACK in the arm.)

Ow! What was that for?

SADIE

I just poured my heart soul out to you and you can't even tell me what you're feeling.

JACK

It doesn't matter.

(SADIE hits him again.)

SADIE

Yes it does.

JACK

It was dumb.

(SADIE hits him again.)

SADIE

Tell me.

JACK

No.

(SADIE hits him again.)

SADIE

Tell me.

JACK

I'm not going to tell you.

(SADIE hits him again.)

Ow! Would you stop hitting me? Jesus!

SADIE

I'll stop hitting you when you tell me what you were thinking.

(SADIE begins hitting and poking at him quickly. They are laughing. JACK finally relents.)

JACK

Fine! Fine. I was thinking that I should kiss you.

SADIE

What? What!

(SADIE fake gags.)

JACK

Oh, okay. Thank you for that.

SADIE

In what fucking world should you have kissed me after that, Jack?

JACK

I don't know! It was just so poetic! And- and beautiful!

SADIE

I'm gay, Jack.

JACK

It was a moment!

SADIE

You're gay, Jack!

JACK

It seemed like the right thing to do!

SADIE

Kissing me after I give this depressing ass speech about being a mess because my girlfriend died? That seemed like the right thing to do?

JACK

It was a moment!!

(Beat. They stare at one another. They laugh.)

SADIE

You are so fucked up.

JACK

And you're not, Little Miss Sunshine?

SADIE

Oh, fuck you.

(Jack rolls onto his side, cuddling into SADIE. He drops his voice, trying to sound seductive.)

JACK

When, where and how hard?

SADIE

Oh my God. Gay, remember?!

JACK

Oh, c'mon. I'm just trying to lighten the mood, Sade! I love you and all, but you really know how to put a damper on a nice, *romantic* evening.

SADIE

Romance is dead.

JACK

The sun, dead. Romance, dead. You're starting to make me nervous. Are you sure you're ready to be out of the center?

(SADIE gives JACK a hurt look. He rushes to recover.)

That was supposed to be a joke.

SADIE

I'm not going back there.

JACK

It was a joke, Sadie, I swear.

SADIE

A bad one.

JACK

I'm not good with these things.

SADIE

No kidding.

JACK

What'd they do to you in there to make you hate it so much?

SADIE

I don't want to talk about it.

JACK

You know you can tell me anything, right?

SADIE

I said I don't want to talk about it.

(Beat. SADIE lies back down in the grass. JACK continues to stare at her.)

Look, I brought you out here to get away from all of that. Can we please just watch the stars or something?

(JACK lies back down. Blackout.)