

## The Lesson

by Lisa Rosenthal

1 Girl — teens

Female — Serious

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3 *(This girl struggles in the monolog to come to grips with*  
4 *what she now regards as two painful learning experiences*  
5 *years ago. She probably hasn't consciously engaged these*  
6 *memories for some time, but it's necessary that she do so*  
7 *now in order to remind herself of what she learned and apply*  
8 *it to her present life. For dramatic effectiveness, the actor must*  
9 *avoid playing the speech as a cold recollection of the past,*  
10 *and instead remind herself that the memory and learning*  
11 *experience is vividly part of the young woman's present*  
12 *problems, which demand some resolution.)*  
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14 When I was a little girl, my grandfather grew very ill, so  
15 ill in fact he couldn't see many people, or at least didn't  
16 want to. It was probably ALS, although they didn't know  
17 it at the time. So all the aunts and uncles got together,  
18 and with my grandmother's blessing, decided I should  
19 go visit him. I wasn't the only grandchild, but for  
20 whatever reason they chose me. So I went, and I helped  
21 Nanna. It was very difficult to see Papa the way he was,  
22 all thin and frail, looking nothing like the grandfather  
23 who read to me on his lap with his big burly arms  
24 around me. I started making excuses to run to the store  
25 or anywhere else that would get me away from him  
26 because I was scared. He was scary. Eventually my visit  
27 came to an end and Nanna writes me a letter telling me  
28 how much she appreciated my help and how much Papa  
29 looked forward to and enjoyed my visit. A week later he

1 died. I was nine years old. I thought I'd killed him, my  
2 not wanting to be around him, my getting impatient with  
3 his slowness, all of that made him feel unwanted,  
4 unloved, like life had gone on without him so he wasn't  
5 needed any more. Five years later my Nanna got sick. I  
6 didn't want to go. I knew if the aunts and uncles voted to  
7 send me, well. They voted again; they sent me again. I  
8 tried harder this time to be more patient with her than  
9 Papa, more loving — I knew her life depended on it. But  
10 I couldn't hold on to that. I loved her, but she wasn't the  
11 same. When it came time to catch my plane I was so  
12 relieved to be going home that I ran out of the car and  
13 into the airport, forgetting to even kiss her goodbye. And  
14 then she was gone. I'm older now. There are many things  
15 I don't understand, but I learned that if I don't care  
16 enough about someone, I can make them disappear.  
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