

RACHEL AND RUTHIE

By Karen Sokolof Javitch

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SYNOPSIS: When Ruthie wanders into Rachel's room at her sorority house, it seems at first to be a random meeting. Soon, however, it becomes apparent that Ruthie may have wandered farther than she originally thought. *Rachel and Ruthie* is the poignant story of two 21-year-olds in their last year of college who discover they have much more in common than they originally thought. Each girl has something to gain from their encounter, and the experience will prove incredibly rewarding for both. This riveting show will bring tears to your eyes and inspire you to reach for your loved ones.

DURATION: 20 minutes.

TIME: 2007.

SETTING: College dorm room.

CAST OF CHARACTERS

(3-4 females)

RACHEL (f).....21-year-old college senior. Wearing jeans with holes in them and a University of Wisconsin sweatshirt. *(99 lines)*

RUTHIE (f).....21-year-old college senior. Wearing clothes from 1947 (a nice skirt and sweater; the skirt is a little below the knee.) Ages at the end of the show to be a youthful 81-year-old. *(85 lines)*

RUTHIE/NONNY (f)81-year-old youthful looking grandmother. Can be played as a separate part or by aging the young Ruthie. *(11 lines)*

SARAH (f).....Friend of Rachel. College-age female. Funny. Outrageous hair and outfit! On stage twice. *(3 lines)*

SET

One set—a sorority house bedroom at the University of Wisconsin. Has a day bed, desk with a computer, chair. With a blanket. Photos and posters to represent the university of Wisconsin in 2007.

MUSIC

There is one song, entitled *You Look Familiar*, written by Karen Sokolof Javitch. It is a duet between Rachel and Ruthie. It can be sung a cappella. They sing the entire song once and then a reprise of the song's ending a little later in the show. An instrumental of the song is played at the very end as they walk off together.

AUTHOR'S NOTE

My lovely mom was the inspiration for 'Rachel and Ruthie.' She died at age 56 and never got to be with my daughter, Rachel. This is my way of bringing them together. Thanks for sharing 'Rachel and Ruthie' with me.

Updated 8/2024

AT RISE: *RACHEL is on the computer working on a paper for one of her college courses. She is in her room in her sorority house. The year is 2007. Another college student, RUTHIE, walks in the room and walks around, a little confused. She then walks out of the room. A few seconds later, she walks in again. RACHEL looks up.*

RUTHIE: Hello. *(She is a little disoriented.)*

RACHEL: Hi. Are you looking for someone? My roommate just left and should be back—

RUTHIE: I'm not sure. I was studying in my room and got up to get a drink of water and all of a sudden I'm in your room. Do I know you? I'm Ruthie.

RACHEL: Hi Ruthie. I'm Rachel. Where do you live?

RUTHIE: Well, I live at the SDT House, but somehow I don't think I'm there anymore.

RACHEL: Yeah, no, this is Chi Omega. It seems like you're a little ways from home.

RUTHIE: I don't remember walking into this building. Do you mind if I sit down for a moment, I'm feeling a little out of sorts.

RACHEL: Sure. *(Pulls out a chair for RUTHIE.)* Can I get you some water? *(Grabs a bottled water.)* Here. *(Hands it to her.)*

RUTHIE: *(Looks at the bottle.)* Oh my goodness. Water in a bottle. What will they think of next?

RACHEL: *(Laughs nervously.)* Uh huh. So, I've been to the SDT house—I have a few friends there, but I've never seen you. Where are you from?

RUTHIE: I'm from Omaha.

RACHEL: Seriously? For real?

RUTHIE: Yes. *(Takes a sip of water.)* You too?

RACHEL: Sure am. How amazing is that? Does everyone think you live on a farm?

RUTHIE: Oh, yes, with cows and the whole bit. *(They laugh.)* No one knows how great it is living there.

RACHEL: That's so true. Especially now that they've built the new mall out west. Have you been there?

RUTHIE shakes her head “no”, a little confused.

RACHEL: I went to Westside High School. Where did you go?

RUTHIE: I went to Central. Funny, I never heard of Westside.

RACHEL: Huh? That's strange. What year are you?

RUTHIE: I'm a senior.

RACHEL: Me too. I can't wait to graduate and then hopefully get a job next year. What are you studying—when you're not at the SDT house?

RUTHIE: Psychology, with a minor in sociology. I hope to graduate early so I can go home and get my M R S Degree. *(She says the letters M, R, S.)*

RACHEL: Your what?

RUTHIE: My M R S degree. I'm almost engaged!

RACHEL: Wow! That's awesome! I think.

RUTHIE: Yeah, awe... some. Does that mean swell?

RACHEL: Yeah, swell. Maybe that's a Central High School word. Who are you almost engaged to?

RUTHIE: Oh, my sweetheart from Omaha. He's a real intelligent and handsome fella. He's four years older than me. And he sings. He's about to ask me—he just doesn't know it yet. I write him so many letters dropping him hints. I also keep telling him about all of the other guys on campus who are asking me out. To make him jealous, you know.

RACHEL: Is it working? That's so romantic that you are writing him letters. Maybe I ought to try that.

RUTHIE: You don't write letters?

RACHEL: Only to one person—I have a friend who's in Iraq, so I write to him. Do you have any friends in the service?

RUTHIE: Oh, um my brother enlisted, but then the war ended. Where's Iraq?

RACHEL: What? Oh, yeah—hah—like you don't know.

RUTHIE: *(Ignores RACHEL'S comment because she doesn't understand it.)* How do you communicate with your family then, if you don't write letters?

RACHEL: Oh, you know—my cell phone.

RUTHIE: *(Doesn't understand.)* Oh, of course: your cell... phone. Sometimes I call home, but it's expensive—long distance, you know.

RACHEL: *(Only half-listening.)* Oh, sure. I email, too.

RUTHIE: E... mail?

RACHEL: Yeah. Do you have a laptop?

RUTHIE: *(Looks at her lap.)* Well, yeah. Don't you?

RACHEL: No, I just use my desktop—over there. *(Points to her desktop computer.)*

RUTHIE: Your what?

RACHEL: My computer. Right here. I was typing on it when you walked in.

RUTHIE: *(Puts her hands to her head, like she doesn't feel well.)*

This is getting spooky. Maybe I'd better go. But I don't know where to go. Frankly, I'm not sure how to get home. *(Pause.)* This room. These photos. Email, laptop, mall, Iraq—I don't understand. You know, you look like someone I should know—or that I have known—somewhere, but I don't know how exactly. You look familiar, but somehow this place is not right.

RACHEL: I know. You showing up kind of out of nowhere—this situation—it's so strange.

RUTHIE walks away and starts to nervously hum the song "You Look Familiar". RACHEL walks over to her, taps her on the shoulder. RUTHIE turns around.

RUTHIE: Sorry, sometimes when I get nervous I sing one of the songs I play on the piano. That's my favorite one.

RACHEL: I know that song. My mom taught it to me when I was little. I would sing it all the time. It drove my brother crazy!

SONG #1: YOU LOOK FAMILIAR

RUTHIE AND RACHEL

(Sung a cappella.)

RACHEL:

YOU LOOK FAMILIAR,

BOTH:

LIKE I'VE SEEN YOU IN SOME LONG-LOST PLACE.
WHEN YOU SMILE YOUR SMILE,
I KNOW YOUR FACE.
WE'RE CONNECTED SOMEHOW, I DON'T KNOW.

RUTHIE:

YOU LOOK FAMILIAR,
LIKE I'VE DREAMT OF YOU OR FELT YOUR HUG.

RACHEL:

LIKE I FELT YOUR WARMTH AND FELT YOUR LOVE.

BOTH:

WE'RE CONNECTED SOMEHOW. I DON'T KNOW.

RUTHIE:

MAYBE IT'S THE WAY YOU LAUGH, YOUR GIGGLE.

RACHEL giggles.

RACHEL:

THE WAY YOUR HAIR FALLS DOWN THE MIDDLE.

RUTHIE:

YOUR NOSE, YOUR TEETH,

RACHEL:

YOUR CLOTHES, YOUR CHEEKS.

BOTH:

WHO KNOWS?

RUTHIE:

MAYBE IT'S THE WAY YOU WALK, YOU WADDLE!

RACHEL:

THE WAY YOU MOVE LIKE A MODEL.

Both laugh as RACHEL moves like a model.

RUTHIE:

YOUR SPARKLING EYES,

BOTH:

WHO KNOWS FROM WHERE WE CAME?

RUTHIE:

IT'S JUST THAT NOW WE'VE FOUND EACH OTHER

BOTH:

AND

RACHEL:

SOMEHOW WE KNOW WE KNOW EACH OTHER

BOTH:

AND SOMEHOW WE KNOW WE KNOW WE'LL NEVER BE APART.

End of song is a nice moment together. They are standing next to each other holding hands and they look down and step apart because they both feel a little uncomfortable because they don't know what is happening.

RUTHIE: Well, um, what do we do now?

RACHEL: Figure out how to get you home, I guess. Want to use my cell phone?

RACHEL shows RUTHIE her cell phone.

RUTHIE: *(Her mood changes. She gets upset.)* No, I don't want to use your cell phone! I don't even know what a "cell phone" is. I just want to use a regular phone that's on the wall with regular numbers on it that you dial. And all of these things in your room look so, so... strange. *(Exasperated.)* I have a headache—do you have some Bufferin or something? And why are you wearing a

University of Wisconsin sweatshirt, anyway? Where's your Indiana University sweatshirt?

RACHEL: Okay, slow down. Why should I have an Indiana sweatshirt on? This is so surreal. You're not from around here, are you?

RUTHIE: No, I told you I live in the SDT house. On Jordan Avenue.

RACHEL: But we don't have a Jordan Avenue here. *(Pause)* Ruthie, can I ask you something? Do my clothes look different to you?

RUTHIE: Well, yes, but I didn't want to be rude. I thought maybe you were in a play or something. I don't have any pants that look like that—

RACHEL: You mean jeans, with holes in them?

RUTHIE: Yes, that too.

RACHEL: Ruthie, how old are you?

RUTHIE: I'm twenty-one. How old are you?

RACHEL: The same. And, uh, What year were you born?

RUTHIE: Don't be ridiculous, you know what year—

RACHEL: Come on, Ruthie, just tell me. What year were you born?

RUTHIE: 1925. The same year you were born in.

RACHEL: Holy cow!

RUTHIE: What? WHAT?

RACHEL: Ruthie. Guess when I was born?

RUTHIE: Not 1925? When then?

RACHEL: 1985! 1985!

RUTHIE: *(Nervous laugh.)* But that's impossible. *(Fast-paced as if trying to get it all out.)* Okay, Just a minute ago I was in my sorority room studying psychology. I was so tired of studying, and I got up to get a drink of water and walked into the hallway. *(Now slower and pensive.)* But it was really quiet—so I walked into my friend's room—and there you were.

RACHEL: Were you thinking anything unusual? Doing anything unusual?

RUTHIE: No, I had just written my boyfriend, Phil, another letter—my sixth this week, and of course he hasn't written back. What were you doing?

RACHEL: I was writing a paper. A paper on someone who I most admired in my family.

RUTHIE: Who were you writing about?

RACHEL: My Grandma, Ruthieeeeeeeeeee!

They both look at each other and abruptly separate.

RUTHIE: *(Goes over in her head.)* Oh, gosh, I was in my room and I just wrote a letter to Phil and started studying and then got up to... oh, gosh!

RACHEL: What? WHAT?

RUTHIE: I need a cigarette! You do have one, don't you?

RACHEL: Nope. Don't smoke. But maybe I'll start.

RUTHIE: No, no. This is too bizarre. This can't be. I'm not even going to think about it.

RUTHIE sits on the bed, in a daze, not listening to RACHEL.

RACHEL: *(Mutters to herself as she walks around.)* Of course, I always wanted to know my grandma because she died before I was born and Mom always talked about her and she was so close to her but I never thought that I would actually be meeting my grandma...

RUTHIE: *(Interrupts.)* I can't be your... grandma. Even though you're so cute and adorable, and of course, I would love to be a grandma someday when I'm older—but now I'm only 21 and it's 1947.

RACHEL: *(Checking out her computer.)* Did you say 1947?
(RUTHIE nods.) OMG! *(Using the initials).*

RUTHIE reacts to that comment.

RUTHIE: What ?

RACHEL: And your boyfriend's name is—Phil?

RUTHIE: Yes. Why? Do you know him?

RACHEL: Ahuh! *(RACHEL nods her head with a very knowing yes.)*

RUTHIE: No. He's not... oh, no... your grandfather?

RACHEL: Yeah! *(RACHEL nods her head again.)*

RUTHIE: This is so—what was it that you said? OMG? And your grandfather is Phil? (*Brightening up immensely.*) Yes! (*Hugs RACHEL.*) Oh my! So he does ask me to marry him! Oh, thank you, Rachel. I've been so worried that he doesn't love me, but he does!

RUTHIE: (*Downstage to the audience—puts out her hands because she's so happy.*) OMG! I'm not sure what that means but I'm sure it's appropriate. Are you sure you don't have a cigarette?

RACHEL: No. I don't smoke. Some girls do. I don't. It makes me cough.

RUTHIE: Yeah? That's too bad. Calms my nerves.

RACHEL: But it's really not very good for you. I guess you don't know that yet.

RUTHIE: No. Okay, so anyway, let's put our heads together and think. The year now is—let's see—2007? Boy, isn't that something. It's sixty years later. And we're still here.

RACHEL: What do you mean?

RUTHIE: Well, World War II ended two years ago. We got rid of Hitler and the Nazis. Thank God!

RACHEL: Yeah, thank God. Now we have terrorists and a guy named Osama.

RUTHIE: Who's that?

RACHEL: Um, I think we will save that one for another time.

RACHEL'S FRIEND SARAH barges in listening to wild music and wildly dancing in with unnaturally colored hair, ear piercings, and torn jeans, tattoos and loudly singing or rapping. Makes a very funny appearance singing and dancing. Then dances out.

RUTHIE: What was that?

RACHEL: A friend. Came to say, "Hi"!

RUTHIE: I take it Bing Crosby died?

RACHEL: Who's that? Here. I'll shut the door.

RACHEL starts dancing on her way back.

RUTHIE: Are you... dancing?

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