

## Digital Story Script

From Our Love Language: A Story of Sisters © 2024

For a time, Mark Lester might as well have been a member of our family. When he played Oliver Twist in the film musical, my sister Suzanne and I had a crush on him. I was four and she was twelve. Now when I see *Oliver!* will play on TV, it's a no brainer. I phone her, and we crack up.

For as long as I can remember, I've wanted to catch up in age to my sister. She was always taller, smarter, prettier. When she was dating the captain of the basketball team, I was into our cat Mitzi, playing cards and telling riddles.

Movies were our common language.

In the case of *Oliver!*, my sister sang and danced to "Consider Yourself" and "Food Glorious Food" with her friends and let me join in. When she was 18, she smuggled a bunch of us in to the Wellfleet Drive-in to see *Ode to Billy Joe*, my first R-rated movie; she got grounded. She was mad when I gave away the ending to *Hair* halfway through the film. Still, she took care of me.

When she married at 22 and moved far away, movies were always central to our phone conversations.

For her fiftieth birthday, I took her to the Sundance Film Festival. We saw 13 films in five days. We laughed, watched for stars, and talked movies over meals. The stories we witnessed together bonded us. It felt like my age had finally caught up to hers.

A year later, I visited Suzanne to collaborate on a memory book for our mom's eightieth birthday. Soon after, she was in the hospital with incapacitating vertigo and deafness in an ear.

Her life as she knew it—full of exotic travel and mountain climbing—was over; she feels nauseous and dizzy all the time. Her world has become very small. But she still has movies. The only day she felt vertigo briefly lift was the day she decided to write screenplays.

She's had little relief from the brain surgery.

When we talk long distance now, I ask how's the screenplay coming? I know you're making Mark Lester proud.