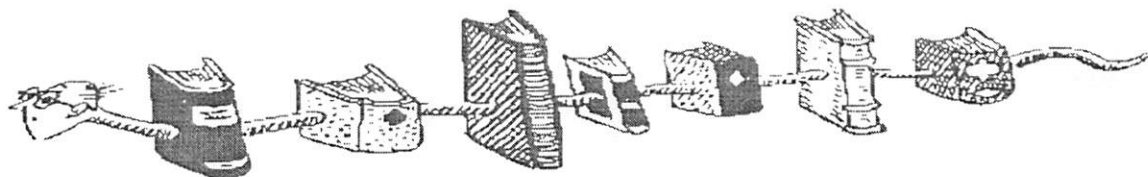


Youthwrite 2002

The definitive anthology of student written plays

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(Association of B.C. Drama Educators)*

Youthwrite 2002



Dear Readers,

It is with great pleasure that I present the 2002 Youthwrite Anthology.

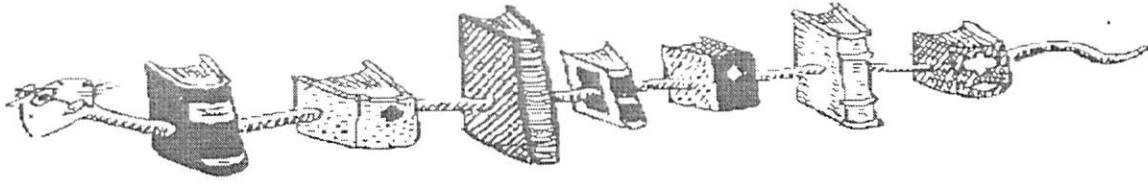
The following plays are the winners of the 2002 B.C. Youthwrite Competition, held under the sponsorship of the Association of the British Columbia Drama Educators. Nineteen plays were submitted from schools around B.C. and then given to three adjudicators to read (Ian Fenwick, Lana O'Brien, and Linda Beaven). Each reader gave feedback to the playwright. Six plays were then chosen and now given the opportunity to see the work in print as a part of the Youthwrite Anthology.

The Association of B.C. Drama Educators feels that these plays are of an interest to teachers and students around the province, and these works could provide challenging and interesting scripts for further productions. We would like to remind you that these scripts are covered by copyright and the payment of royalties to the playwright may encourage them to write more plays. Royalty information will appear with each script.

I know you will be impressed with the variety of talent these young writers possess. Enjoy!

*Gordon Hamilton
Youthwrite Coordinator*

Table Of Contents



The Butterfly Kiss

by Erin Stacey

A Fly on the Wall

by Isaiah Bell

200 Miles to Tonopah

by Cam Johnson

Something's Wrong with Ophelia!

by Regan Eby

Another One Bites the Dust

by Laurie Forman and Kristine Trsek

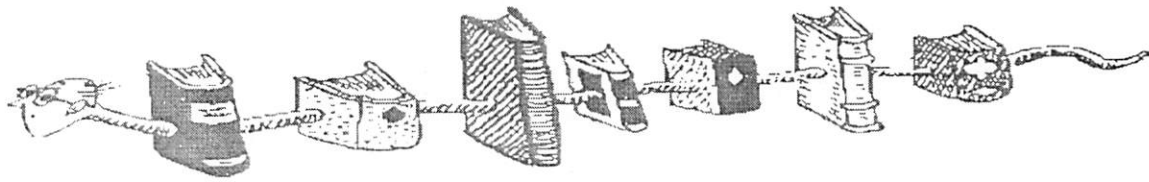
He's Dead for God's sake

by Jessica Elliot

The Butterfly Kiss

by

Erin Stacey



Caution: Professionals and Amateurs are hereby warned that "The Butterfly Kiss" by Erin Stacey is subject to royalty. It is protected under Copyright Law. Inquiries regarding performance rights and royalties should be directed to: Erin Stacey at 1284 Margaret Place, Duncan B.C. V9L 5R6. There is no fee for a single production of this play .

The Butterfly Kiss

Scene 1 – Interior. Church. Day. ELLEN and WILLIAM, her father, seated side by side in the pew, not facing each other, looking straight ahead. They are dressed in black, and churchbells are ringing in the background as the scene starts. They speak with slight pauses between lines, and don't look at each other.

ELLEN: The funeral was really, beautiful, you know . . . you did a really good job.

WILLIAM: Umm.

ELLEN: Mom would have loved that hymn you chose . . . It was one of her favorites! When I was listening, I just couldn't sing . . . I got all teary eyed, just remembering her. Did you?

WILLIAM: Not everyone grieves openly, Ellen.

ELLEN: Well, I suppose. But it was nice so many people showed up, even Mom's hairdresser.

WILLIAM: (*quiet menace*) Olivia wasn't here, though. Her mother's funeral, and she wasn't here!
(*silence*)

ELLEN: I'm sure Olivia meant to be here.

WILLIAM: I doubt that!

ELLEN: (*unconvincingly*) She probably just mixed up the time, or forgot . . . you know how she is, Dad, always has her head in the clouds. I'm sure she has a good reason for not being here . . . Maybe she had another meeting for the scholarship.

WILLIAM: (*turns to ELLEN, angry*) That's no excuse! Where was she? I can't believe she – even she – would do this to us, to your mother.

ELLEN: Dad . . . she probably didn't realize that the funeral was today. I bet she's filling in another of those forms Dalhousie keeps sending us right at this very moment.

WILLIAM: For God's sake, Ellen, she missed her own mother's funeral! She didn't even call to say she'd be late! She's irresponsible.

(*silence*)

ELLEN: (*still highly unconvincing*) It's quite likely Olivia made a mistake, you know. She loved Mom, and I don't think she would miss her funeral on purpose. Why don't I talk to her about it when we get home, and find out why she's not here?

WILLIAM: No. She's not here for a reason. I don't know why. I don't understand anything that goes on in her head, but if she wanted to be here, she'd have been here.

ELLEN: Well, then I'll just have a nice little chat with her.

WILLIAM: (*shrugs*) Why should she talk to you now? She hasn't had a polite conversation with you since you decided to go to school here last fall, instead of somewhere else in the province. But I'll tell you this! I'm not going to go out of my way to make amends with her. Not after today. This is really the last straw.

ELLEN: Dad, really! I don't know what you're talking about! Of course she'll talk to me; I'm her sister.

WILLIAM: *(looks at Ellen, then speaks)* And this was only her mother's funeral.

(Enter LUKE, with vase of flowers)

LUKE: *(clears throat, others look up)* Sorry to interrupt.

ELLEN: *(hastily)* Oh, you aren't interrupting, Luke!

LUKE: Oh . . . good . . . Uh, my mom wanted me to ask where you guys wanted the rest of these *(holds up vase of flowers)*. The flowers are the last of the stuff we're taking back to your house . . . everything else has already gone.

WILLIAM: Ah . . . thank you, Luke. Tell your mother to just put them anywhere in the house. She's been too kind as it is.

ELLEN: *(quickly)* Maybe the table in the front hall would be best, Luke . . .

LUKE: Okay, I'll tell her. *(turns to go, then turns back)* Have you seen Olivia yet?

WILLIAM: Why do you ask?

LUKE: Oh . . . I was just wondering . . . since she wasn't at the funeral.

ELLEN: No. She hasn't shown up. *(to WILLIAM)* I don't think she's coming.

WILLIAM: I'm going home. Are you coming, or are you going to walk?

ELLEN: I'll walk. It's only a couple of blocks . . . I'll be home in ten minutes.

WILLIAM: Fine. Suit yourself. I'll take those, Luke. *(takes flowers from LUKE)* Tell my daughter that we've gone home if you see her.

LUKE: Umm . . . okay, I'll tell her. Err, that is, if I see her.

(Exit WILLIAM with flowers)

ELLEN: *(sighing with relief. Façade melts.)* Ugh, god, sometimes he can be so naïve! He doesn't understand, how Olivia is just mad at us. That's why she skipped the funeral, you know. I should still apologize for him though. . . he was kind of rude to you. He's just really upset Olivia didn't show up.

LUKE: Are you sure Olivia would do that? On purpose? And don't worry about . . . about him being rude to me. It's understandable. He doesn't know me that well, after all. It was your mom who knew me.

ELLEN: *(a little grudgingly, a little coldly, but not betraying any feelings)* Yes. She was very fond of you. And of course, Olivia! Her favorite child.

LUKE: She was wonderful. I just can't believe Olivia didn't show up for the funeral. Your Dad was so angry . . .

ELLEN: Yeah, well, he's never really understood Olivia. Then again, I don't understand why she does things all the time either. It was Mom who was the most patient with her.

LUKE: Oh no, it was more than just patience. Your mom adored Olivia! She was so happy when Liv got that scholarship to Dalhousie . . . I think she was glad Olivia was off to explore the world. I'm just going to miss her, I'm going to miss them both now.

ELLEN: *(a little hurt and angry)* Well, the local university has been fine for me.

LUKE: Oh, I didn't mean . . .

ELLEN: *(interrupting)* And I still think Olivia skipped the funeral to prove a point. She's just mad because Dad sided with me on the autopsy argument. Can you believe, she didn't want to know why my mother died?

LUKE: *(shocked)* What? No, she wouldn't do that just to spite you . . . she probably had a good reason.

ELLEN: Honestly, Luke, I don't know. She's been so difficult this last week . . . about everything, really, but especially about the business with the autopsy. She was really mad we did one, didn't agree with it at all. She was furious when Dad allowed it . . . and I have to pretend that Olivia and I actually get along.

LUKE: Don't you?

ELLEN: God, no! She was always trying to steal Mom's attention, and now she'll probably try and steal Dad's too.

LUKE: I'm sure Olivia wouldn't . . .

ELLEN: *(interrupting again)* Oh, but she would. That girl has absolutely no interest in anyone but herself most of the time. I'm not exactly heartbroken she didn't come, obviously, because it prevents her from becoming Daddy's little girl too, but I think she's gone too far with this.

(LUKE is pretty much shocked)

ELLEN: She's always perceived as being so perfect! It's just Dad and I who know what she's really like, and half the time Dad doesn't have a clue. She even had Mom fooled. She was always the favorite. Now maybe everyone will realize that she's not the angel they think she is, and she'll get what she deserves for once!

LUKE: Calm down, Ellen, I'm sure you don't want to do anything to hurt Olivia.

ELLEN: No, of course not! I'm not happy about her trying to steal Dad's attention, but I'm not going to go throw her off a cliff. I just wish I could really show everyone what she's like, but I can't think of anything I could do. Look, Luke, I have to get home. Thank you for everything you did today.

LUKE: No problem, but . . .

ELLEN: Goodbye then.

(ELLEN exits. LUKE stands in shock for a moment, trying to collect his thoughts, then follows.)

Scene 2 – Exterior. Shaded grove with large tree. Day. OLIVIA seated beneath tree. Enter LUKE.

LUKE: Hey you . . . I thought I might find you here.

OLIVIA: *(looking up)* Oh, hey Luke.

LUKE: Liv, what are you doing here? You were supposed to be at the church at two o'clock!

OLIVIA: *(coldly)* I skipped a funeral and am currently working on alienating my family. Can't you tell? And while you're at it, any other questions?

LUKE: Olivia! What did I do? I'm just trying to . . . Oh, never mind.

(pause)

OLIVIA: I'm sorry.

LUKE: I just want to know why, Olivia.

OLIVIA: *(smiling)* Why? Why am I sorry? Because I know you're just trying to help, and because you're a good friend, Luke, and besides . . . *(playfully)* you're too cute to stay mad at.

LUKE: I meant, why weren't you at the funeral?

OLIVIA: *(still smiling)* I know.

LUKE: So?

OLIVIA: So what?

LUKE: Liv! So why weren't you there?

OLIVIA: Stop it! Why are you pushing me into answering?

LUKE: I'm just trying to help, Olivia! I want to know why you weren't there so I can make you feel better!

OLIVIA: That's not your job! You aren't a psychiatrist! You're not supposed to analyze me, you're just supposed to be my friend.

LUKE: *(hurt)* I thought that was what I was doing.

OLIVIA: Well, it wasn't! And it isn't helping. So just stop it.

LUKE: Fine.

(pause)

LUKE: I just can't understand why you won't tell me, that's all!

OLIVIA: Luke! Why are you forcing this?

LUKE: *(at a loss)* Well, just because . . . because I don't want you to be in pain, Olivia. *(puts his hand on her shoulder lightly, hesitantly)* I've known you for ages, and I care about you, Liv. I can't just sit by while you aren't happy.

OLIVIA: *(giving in a bit)* I care about you too, Luke. You're great, but you don't have to try to make me feel better. My mom just died, for God's sake, I think I'm allowed to indulge in a little sadness.

LUKE: Oh . . . I guess trying to cheer you up isn't exactly the right thing then, is it?

OLIVIA: *(weak smile)* Probably not, all things considered. *(as an afterthought)* But I do appreciate the gesture. *(smile fades)* To tell you the truth, I don't really know why I skipped the funeral. I was going to go, I was on my way there – but I just couldn't do it. I put on this dress, *(indicates to black dress she's wearing)* and found my shoes and everything, and then . . . something in me just . . . *(sigh)* I guess I just don't like funerals, that's all.

LUKE: That's not a very good reason, Liv.

OLIVIA: Who's side are you on?!

LUKE: Yours, of course. But it still isn't a good reason. I'm sorry, but would you rather I lie to you? *(softer)* You're being a little unfair to your family here, Olivia.

OLIVIA: (*angry*) How is not going to a funeral selfish? I hate them! There's no point! She's dead, and going to some church and singing hymns isn't going to fix everything!

LUKE: Oh Liv, that's not the point of funerals! The person is dead, they're gone. You aren't going for their sake, but for the sake of the people who loved your mom, Olivia, and for your own sake. (*pause*) How can I explain this? Funerals aren't really so much about a person's death as about what they did in their life. You're not going to mourn their death so much as to say that . . . that you enjoyed their life . . . to celebrate . . .

OLIVIA: (*sarcastically*) The terrible tragedy of their passing? Since when are you an expert on death, Luke? Maybe you should go to Dalhousie instead of me next year . . . I think you'd make a great psychiatrist. You just spout nonsense like that, and get paid lots of money!

LUKE: (*shock*) I can't believe you just said that, Olivia! For Christ's sake, stop being so difficult! You're making everyone unhappy.

OLIVIA: I'm making everyone unhappy?! She goes and dies, and I'm the cause of tragic grief? How the hell is this all my fault?

LUKE: That's not what I meant . . . Oh, come on, let's go. I'll walk you home, okay?

OLIVIA: No! I don't exactly feel like going home right now, and especially not with you!

LUKE: Just come on, I'd feel bad if something happened to you!

OLIVIA: I don't care! You've been a total jerk just now, and you expect me to cater to your needs to feel like my great protector? I think I can make it from here to my house on my own, thank you! Unless you think I'm going to die? Jump off a cliff and kill myself?

LUKE: No, Olivia, I didn't say that . . .

OLIVIA: Of course you didn't. The problem with you, Luke, is you never quite come out and say what you're thinking!

LUKE: At least I don't spout hurtful insults at people who are trying to help! Especially when the insults aren't even true!

(*OLIVIA seems slightly shaken by this. There is an awkward pause as both characters absorb what has just happened.*)

LUKE: I don't know what I'm supposed to say, Olivia.

OLIVIA: (*anger gone*) Do you expect me to tell you?

LUKE: No, I'm not asking that. I'm just telling you, I don't know what to say, or how to act. I don't know whether I'm supposed to try and talk to you about your mother, or pretend everything is fine, or avoid the word death like the plague . . . I mean (*realizing what he has said*)

OLIVIA: (*weak, tired laugh*) I don't think you need to worry about little things like that Luke. And I'm sorry, I don't know the answers either. We'll just have to figure this out on our own, okay?

LUKE: (*smiling*) Okay. Now can I walk you home?

OLIVIA: (*sighs*) I don't know . . . I'm not sure I really want to face my father. He's just going to blow up in my face, and then Ellen will smirk the way she always does. I don't know what her problem is, I really don't. She's always accusing me of being the prodigal daughter, or some nonsense, but she's got it all wrong.

LUKE: Oh?

OLIVIA: Mmm. *(agreeing)* She thinks I want attention, but all I want is to get on with my life! I want my mother back, and I want to get out of this place . . .

LUKE: What, no plans for love?

OLIVIA: Not really. Who would I fall in love with?

LUKE: *(quietly, a little sadly)* Hmm, you've got me there.

OLIVIA: I suppose I might find love when I go away to university. Now that, that will really be an adventure. I can't wait to leave!

LUKE: Are you sure you aren't leaving anything important behind?

OLIVIA: What could I possibly leave behind here, of all places?

LUKE: I don't know . . . me?

OLIVIA: Oh Luke . . . you don't count. You'll always be around.

LUKE: *(a little bitterly)* Yep. That's me, good old reliable Luke, who's always there to walk the cute girls home safely.

OLIVIA: The whole 3 blocks to their house, no less!

LUKE: Well, fine! Spoil my fantasy!

OLIVIA: Just remember, Luke, I'm only doing it for the greater good. Destroying your fantasies early is just doing the world a favor!

LUKE: Well, fine! Be that way. I see you're never going to find a Prince Charming at this rate.

OLIVIA: Did I ever say I wanted one?

LUKE: Good point. *(pause)* Liv, why did you come here instead of going to the funeral?

OLIVIA: I thought I answered that already!

LUKE: No, that's not what I meant. I mean, why here? Why our place?

OLIVIA: *(shrugs)* I like it here. It's quiet, and it's . . . just special. I feel like if I could be close to her anywhere, I'd be closest to my mother here. *(pause)* Is that weird?

LUKE: Not really. It's actually . . . well, this is sappy, but that was well put, Liv, it was . . . well, beautiful.

OLIVIA: *(very softly)* Thank you.

LUKE: *(breaking the mood by talking in a half joking manner)* And so are you today, you know! I think it's the dress. You look – dare I say it – feminine! Shall we go?

OLIVIA: I guess. *(they start to exit)* But Luke, have you ever, in the seven years you've known me, seen me wear a dress of my own free will?

LUKE: Well . . . no.

OLIVIA: Then please, don't comment! You're going to ruin my reputation for being a tomboy. People might start to realize that I'm a girl! *(they exit)*

Scene 3—Interior. Kitchen. Day. Flowers are on table. ELLEN is chopping vegetables at counter. WILLIAM is reading a newspaper. Enter OLIVIA

(WILLIAM and ELLEN look up. Then ELLEN resumes chopping)

WILLIAM: *(quietly, measured tone)* Where have you been?
(silence)

WILLIAM: *(angry)* I asked you a question! Why weren't you there this afternoon? Where were you?

OLIVIA: *(softly)* I didn't want to go

WILLIAM: You . . . didn't want to go. So you just didn't show up? Well, now that shows maturity beyond your years! *(sarcastically)*

OLIVIA: I'm sorry . . .

WILLIAM: No, you aren't! At least be honest about it.

OLIVIA: But really, I didn't mean to . . .

WILLIAM: *(interrupting)* Of course you did! You did this all for effect! You think that you can prove a point by missing the service, that you're the only one who misses her, but you aren't! Even Ellen agrees with me! You have been difficult and rude ever since you found out we were going to have an autopsy done on your mother.

OLIVIA: Well, I'm sorry for objecting to my mother being sliced up and examined! She's dead! What good did it really do to just further hurt her body? The autopsy didn't even turn up any results! I don't even know what you were looking for!

ELLEN: The autopsy was necessary. How else were we supposed to know why she died?

OLIVIA: Well, maybe they don't teach you these things at the local college, but at real schools you learn that . . .

WILLIAM: Olivia! Stop it!

OLIVIA: What, you're just going to leap to her defense? Oh, of course you are. You always do! You actually supported her when she decided to stay here and waste away her life!

ELLEN: I'm not wasting my life away!

OLIVIA: Then what are you doing here still? Why are you still in this stupid town? There's nothing here!

WILLIAM: This is a nice place to live, Olivia. I have lots of work here, and it's a good community.

OLIVIA: Except there is no opportunity here, no adventure! I bet mom died of boredom!

ELLEN: Olivia!

OLIVIA: And I still can't believe you didn't jump at the chance to get out! You were accepted to the University of Toronto! But you stayed here! I just can't figure it out!

ELLEN: Rob was here . . . we made the decision together.

OLIVIA: Yeah, you both ruined your chances at a real life to stay here in this hick town! And look what happened! You don't even have him anymore! And I don't blame him!

WILLIAM: Olivia, that's enough! You can't just march in here and start hurling insults. That's just not how things work! Go upstairs and change out of that dress before you ruin it!

OLIVIA: Why, are we saving it for the next family funeral?

WILLIAM: I don't understand you sometimes, Olivia! I really don't! *(pause. then quietly)* Please, just go upstairs and change. Supper will be ready in fifteen minutes.

(Exit OLIVIA)

(silence)

ELLEN: *(softly)* I'm not sure she even understands, Dad. She's seventeen, and she's going to university next year on a full scholarship to study medicine, but I don't think she realizes that Mom's gone.

WILLIAM: What do you mean?

ELLEN: Well, she has all these stupid ideas . . . I don't think she really gets it, that she's gone, that she's not coming back.

WILLIAM: She knows.

ELLEN: No . . . she's different. Not stupid or anything, but . . . different. It's like . . . like she's living in another world half the time. I think she believes that Mom's watching over her and listening to her.

WILLIAM: Maybe she is.

ELLEN: Oh please, Dad! Be serious. There isn't any life after death.

WILLIAM: Don't you think you should let her believe what she wants? Why do you always feel the need to have everyone believe what you believe?

ELLEN: Fine. If she wants to go all religious that's fine with me. I can't stop her. But I think she should grow up and start living a normal life.

WILLIAM: She's fine, Ellen. Mind your own business.

ELLEN: I'm serious, Dad. How often does she talk to anyone? Besides Luke, and Mom of course. Now that Mom's gone . . . who knows?

WILLIAM: She's fine. There's nothing wrong with her.

ELLEN: I never said there was. I just said she was different.

WILLIAM: Your mother was a loner as a girl, too, and she turned out fine. Lone wolves always come to run with the pack in the end. Sometimes they just need a little time, and a helping hand.

ELLEN: God, you sound like some nature conservation officer or something! *(laughs)*

(knock at door. WILLIAM rises to answer it, and LUKE enters)

LUKE: My mom sent this over. *(gestures at pie in hands. ELLEN comes over to take the pie and stands by WILLIAM)*

WILLIAM: Well, send her our thanks. She's a good woman, your mother.

LUKE: She'd just say that's what neighbors are good for.

ELLEN: We were just about to eat, Luke, if you'd like to join us.

LUKE: Well, I don't know, I should probably be getting home soon.

ELLEN: Yes, your mother might want some company for supper.

WILLIAM: Well, really Luke, if you'd like to stay, you're completely welcome.

(Enter OLIVIA. dressed in long pants and a snug fitting sweater. not the dress. OLIVIA catches LUKE's eye.)

LUKE: Actually, thank you, I think I will stay after all.

WILLIAM: Good. Olivia, would you set the table please?

(OLIVIA moves to set the table)

LUKE: Here, I'll help Liv.

OLIVIA: Thanks.

ELLEN: Oh, Dad, I forgot to tell you. The MacGregors called to offer their sympathy, and Mrs. Swanson sent over these flowers. *(gestures at flowers on table)*

WILLIAM: Well, that was nice of them.

(OLIVIA pauses in her table setting)

OLIVIA: Mrs. Swanson didn't send the flowers, Mr. Clellan sent them. I read the card.

WILLIAM: Well, that was very nice of Mr. Clellan then.

ELLEN: No, I'm sure it was Mrs. Swanson, Olivia.

OLIVIA: No, it wasn't. Go read the card.

ELLEN: You don't always have to be right, Olivia. The Swansons dropped off the flowers when you were out picking your own flowers and watching cloud animals or whatever it was you were doing this afternoon!

OLIVIA: I wasn't picking flowers!

ELLEN: Then where were you?

OLIVIA: None of your business!

WILLIAM: Girls, please! *(Bends down to read the card.)* Mr. Clellan sent the flowers, but I'm sure there are a bunch from Mrs. Swanson around here somewhere. *(with a slightly morbid humor)* Anyone with allergies would drop dead around here.

ELLEN: That wasn't funny!

WILLIAM: Forget it, Ellen.

ELLEN: No, I'm serious! This whole thing is serious! You don't get it! She's dead, and you won't even cry in front of us! I thought you loved her enough to cry for her.

OLIVIA: Shut up, Ellen. You don't know what you're talking about.

ELLEN: What the hell is wrong with you? First you don't show up for the funeral, and now you tell me I can't express my opinions?

WILLIAM: Stop it!

LUKE: Uh, maybe I should just head home now . . .

WILLIAM: No, Luke. Don't. They'll behave, and we can all sit and have a nice dinner without you two scratching each others eyes out! Okay?

ELLEN: Whatever.

LUKE: *(slight uncomfortable pause)* Uhh, I'll help carry the dishes over.

OLIVIA: *(still menace in her voice intended for her sister)* Good idea.

(WILLIAM, LUKE, and OLIVIA go and sit at table. ELLEN carries a few dishes of food over. All begin eating.)

LUKE: Who did the cooking?

ELLEN: *(a little smugly)* I did.

LUKE: My compliments to the chef!

WILLIAM: Yes, it's very good.

ELLEN: *(after slight pause, seemingly trying to start an argument)* What do you think, Olivia?

OLIVIA: Mom's was better . . .

(ELLEN opens mouth and starts to say something)

OLIVIA: But this is good.

ELLEN: *(slightly unhappily)* Thank you.

(pause)

ELLEN: Dad, you should really clean out Mom's side of the closet.

OLIVIA: What??!!

WILLIAM: Don't you think it could wait a few days, Ellen?

(uncomfortable pause)

LUKE: My mom is always trying to make me clean out my closet . . .

ELLEN: Well, it could wait, I guess, but it will just remind you of her, Dad. You need to get on with your life. You should clean it out so she isn't, you know, haunting you.

OLIVIA: *(sarcastically)* Halloween is a few weeks off yet, Ellen.

ELLEN: You know what, Olivia? It's a good idea, and it has to be done anyway, so you can just keep your comments to yourself. Okay?

WILLIAM: Well, it does have to be done sometime. I might take a look tomorrow, if I get a chance. I took the work off week, after all. I might as well have something to do to fill my time.

LUKE: As I mentioned, my closet is up for grabs if you get really bored . . .

OLIVIA: I can't believe how you let her bully you into things, Dad. If you don't want to clean out Mom's side of the closet then you shouldn't have to! It's your personal choice, and she doesn't have the right to make it for you!

ELLEN: I was just offering an opinion, Olivia. Calm down! You're always so dramatic.

(pause)

LUKE: You know, I should try that personal opinion line on my mom the next time she tries to make me clean my closet! She keeps nagging me to do it. I think she hopes I'll find all those lost umbrellas in there or something, I don't know why she's so adamant about it. But she just doesn't seem to understand: there's probably toxic waste in there! It just isn't worth the risk.

OLIVIA: Luke, I've seen your closet. If the umbrellas were ever in there, those things are long gone!

(Mood relaxes a bit.)

WILLIAM: Well, is anyone ready to try some pie?

LUKE: I think I'm up for that.

WILLIAM: Ladies, if you'd be so kind? *(gestures to kitchen. OLIVIA and ELLEN rise and go get pie and plates and start cutting it up)*

ELLEN: *(whispering)* You didn't have to embarrass me like that, you know.

OLIVIA: *(not quite whispering)* How did I embarrass you? By standing up for Mom?

ELLEN: *(girls get progressively louder)* Why do you always insist on being the crusader, the martyr? Why can't you just act normally for once?

OLIVIA: Because! Normal people are boring. They're sheep. They let themselves get pushed around and they never really live. They stay in their hometowns all their lives with their boyfriends and go to crappy local colleges.

ELLEN: You know, the rest of us loved her too! You don't have to act like you're the only one who got hurt when Mom died!

OLIVIA: Could have fooled me, that you cared! You're just marching around here trying to fill in Mom's shoes! Well, you can't!

ELLEN: I am not! I'm just trying to carry on with my life, to move on!

OLIVIA: You know Ellen, the problem with you is . . .

WILLIAM: *(interrupting)* Girls, how's that pie coming?

ELLEN: Fine, Dad. *(whispering to OLIVIA)* You just don't seem to get it, Olivia. Just because Mom adored you doesn't mean that you're right in anyone but her opinion, and she's dead now. You aren't the favorite any more, and that's the way

things are going to stay. *(Carries two plates to table, smiling, and sets them in front of WILLIAM and LUKE. OLIVIA pauses for a moment and then picks up two remaining plates. She grudgingly puts one in front of ELLEN, the plate clattering against the table, and then sits down. Brief silence)*

WILLIAM: Well, this is a very good pie, Luke. Apple. Hmm. From your Mom's apple trees?

LUKE: Yeah. We had lots of apples this year.

OLIVIA: I should know! I had to help you pick them! How did you get me to help you again?

LUKE: Hmm . . . let's see . . . I believe that would be my great diplomacy and irresistible charm!

OLIVIA: *(snorts. Sarcastically)* Right . . . we all believe that.

LUKE: I'm sure there are still some late ones out there on those trees if you'd like a few. The only thing is . . .

OLIVIA: *(interrupting)* I have to come pick them myself? No thanks!

(more laughter)

WILLIAM: Well, that was nice of your mom to send that pie over, Luke.

LUKE: Thanks. Well, I should really be going soon. Thank you very much for dinner. *(gets up. Olivia rises hastily.)*

OLIVIA: I'll walk you home, Luke.

LUKE: Sure, if you want to.

OLIVIA: Be back in a minute, Dad. *(they exit)*

ELLEN: You do realize that the two of them will be gone for hours, right?

WILLIAM: Yes, I know, Ellen.

ELLEN: *(disbelief)* And you're perfectly fine with this? After what she did today, you're just going to forgive her, just like that?

WILLIAM: We're all grieving, Ellen. Just leave her alone.

ELLEN: Well, you may have forgotten about her missing the funeral, and how she fought about the autopsy, but I haven't! I'm not going to just say "Oh, of course Olivia, you were mummy's little girl, so of course it's okay to go gallivanting off with your little boyfriend and skip the funeral!" She's just going to continue being like this if we don't do something.

WILLIAM: And what do you suggest, Ellen? Kill off another one of her relatives?

ELLEN: I don't know, but we should do something!

WILLIAM: That's what I'm doing, letting her go talk to Luke. Stop trying to hurt your sister just because you don't get along with her, and realize that she's upset, too! She obviously is really suffering, and it will be good for her to talk to someone other than you and I. It's been a hard week for all of us, including me. I'm going to go read for a while. Would you tidy up the kitchen a bit, and put those dishes in the dishwasher? Thanks. *(exits)*

ELLEN: *(calls after him)* I can't believe you're being so unfair! Can't you see what she's doing here?*(to herself)* Something has to change.

Scene 4 – Interior. Kitchen. Night. Kitchen is deserted. Enter OLIVIA and LUKE, laughing.

OLIVIA: I'm starving! Oh, want some hot chocolate? Hot chocolate is always good for cold nights!

LUKE: Sure. You guys always have the best hot chocolate.

(OLIVIA starts boiling water, and sets out hot chocolate powder, spoons and mugs)

LUKE: I remember your mother always making me hot chocolate. The week you were away at your uncle's last winter, I even came over and sat and had hot chocolate with her when you weren't here!

OLIVIA: Did you? You never told me that.

LUKE: No, I suppose I didn't.

(silence)

OLIVIA: She never called it hot chocolate, you know. She called it cocoa.

LUKE: I know. I like it better. It sounds kind of like a warm hug. "Cocoa."

OLIVIA: Yeah. Very warm. This is almost ready. *(starts making hot chocolate)*

LUKE: *(softly and seriously)* You know, I really missed you that week.

OLIVIA: *(smiles, but clearly doesn't understand LUKE's deeper feelings)* I missed you too! My cousins are so . . . boring!

LUKE: *(sighs)* And we all know what kind of people you hate most:

UNISON: Boring people! *(both dissolve into giggles, and then OLIVIA grows quiet. OLIVIA hands LUKE his cocoa, and they go sit down at the table)*

OLIVIA: Seriously, though, what's the fun in being normal and average? I'd rather wear red and pink together and dance on the rooftops!

LUKE: Your mom was like that, too.

OLIVIA: *(nods, thinking)*

LUKE: Do you miss her terribly?

OLIVIA: Yes. But not so much yet as I will.

LUKE: Hmm?

OLIVIA: Well, I don't know that I can miss her yet, because I just miss the big things right now. It's the little things that get you. Like the way a person smells, or the color of their eyes, not just that they're alive.

LUKE: I think I'd have to agree with you. I'd miss the way you chew on your thumbnail when you're really nervous first!

OLIVIA: Oh! Some friend you are! Out of all my dazzling and wonderful qualities, you choose a bad habit to cherish?

LUKE: Sure. Why not? I like it!

OLIVIA: I think . . . I think what I miss most about my mom is the way she said goodnight to me. She'd creep up the stairs quietly, so I didn't hear her, and I'd be lying in bed reading, and she'd come up behind me. She'd tickle my feet! The same way she woke me up in the morning.

LUKE: I remember you saying something about that before! You said it was kind of disconcerting to be woken up by someone scratching the soles of your feet with their fingertips, and that it might be faster and more effective if she just dragged you out by your hair!

OLIVIA: *(laughs)* Yeah, that sounds like me! I'm not a morning person . . .

LUKE: I know!

(pause)

OLIVIA: But then . . . after the tickling, she'd lean close and whisper "Goodnight, Olivia" in my ear, and she'd brush her eyelashes against my cheek. Do you know what she called that? *(LUKE shakes head no)* She said it was a butterfly kiss, because it was like the fluttering of a butterfly's wings.

LUKE: I like that.

OLIVIA: Me too. It's hard to believe she's gone. I'm not even sure I do, anymore.

(Enter ELLEN, who hesitates by the door, clearly coming across the two unexpectedly, and deciding to eavesdrop. The others don't see her)

OLIVIA: I can see her chopping vegetables, *(screen behind stage is now lit, and we see ANNA's silhouette, just moving around quietly, inconspicuously)* and I think to myself, she's not dead. What are they talking about? They just can't see her. They need to look harder, and then they'll see her. I can see her right now, standing there, *(she looks to where ANNA's silhouette is)* with a mug in her hand, drinking cocoa with us. *(sigh)* But you can't see her, can you? *(light behind screen goes off, and ANNA's silhouette is invisible again.)*

LUKE: No, I can't. Sorry, Liv. But . . . Olivia, have you thought of going to see a psychiatrist?
(We see a slight reaction from ELLEN, a kind of "Why didn't I think of that?" gesture of impatience, and a look of relief as she works out the details of her idea.)

OLIVIA: Why would I? I'm not crazy or anything.

LUKE: I never said you were! Don't get all defensive. I just thought that maybe it would help, you know.

OLIVIA: *(slightly angry)* No, I don't know! Explain it to me, Luke, please! Enlighten us, so we can share your fixation with all these shrinks you seem obsessed with today!

LUKE: I don't think you should rule therapy out as an option too soon, Olivia!

OLIVIA: Luke! Drop it already!

LUKE: Okay, never mind! Sorry, bad suggestion.

OLIVIA: Well, not really. But, I'd feel weird. And Dad would think that I needed help, and then he'd just depend on Ellen more, and she'd get even more obnoxious! It would just make everything worse, and make her even more of the favorite!

(Exit ELLEN, without the others seeing her)

LUKE: You guys seriously don't get along, do you?

OLIVIA: Great observation there, Luke. No, I guess you could say we don't "exactly get along."

LUKE: Mind if I ask why?

OLIVIA: I don't mind, but I'm not sure if I can explain. She was always Dad's favorite, and I was always Mom's favorite. I guess we always had a huge rivalry for our parent's affection because we were so close in age.

LUKE: Hmm . . . I can't really relate, being an only child.

OLIVIA: Want to borrow Ellen for, say, a couple centuries?! I wouldn't miss her, you know!

LUKE: Oh, you don't mean that. Your sister isn't all bad, but she sure does have it in for you. She said today that she thought you skipped the funeral on purpose to make a point.

OLIVIA: Yeah, she told my dad that too. She's just . . . I don't know. I just can't understand why she stayed here with Rob.

LUKE: Her boyfriend?

OLIVIA: Her ex-boyfriend. She was accepted to U of T, but she didn't go. She stayed here so she could be with him.

LUKE: Well, that's kind of romantic . . .

OLIVIA: Not really, considering he ran off with someone else.

LUKE: Ah . . . well, that does make it kind of difficult.

OLIVIA: I just hate her for letting that happen to herself! She's such a sheep! She bullies people around, but she just lets herself get hurt.

LUKE: It doesn't really sound like you hate her, Liv. I think you're just mad at her for letting herself be hurt and manipulated.

OLIVIA: And again with the analyzing! I don't know, I don't think it's entirely her fault. I just know I'm never going to fall in love. Every guy's a sleazeball in my mind.

LUKE: Thank you! Makes me feel all warm and tingly inside . . .

OLIVIA: Well, I didn't mean you! You don't count!

LUKE: Oh, and now the insults move on from my gender in general to whether I actually belong to that gender! *(laughs, then grows serious)* I'd never hurt anyone, Liv. Especially not you.

OLIVIA: I know . . .

LUKE: But you still are never going to fall in love?

OLIVIA: Probably not.

LUKE: That's really too bad . . .

(pause)

OLIVIA: *(awkwardly, quickly)* So do you think I'm crazy? Seeing my mom?

LUKE: *(slowly)* Well, do you really see her?

OLIVIA: (*hesitating, unsure how to answer*) Not really . . . just her memory. I can remember her standing there, but she suddenly goes all fuzzy and she's not there anymore. That's why I know it's just a dream, that it's not real. But even though I know she's dead, I don't think she's gone. There's just a feeling to it, that she's still here in a way, and definitely that she's not really just . . . you know, poof, you're gone, or whatever death is.

LUKE: Then I don't think you're crazy at all Liv. But is that why you didn't go to the funeral today, Liv?

OLIVIA: Maybe. (*shrugs*) I honestly don't know. Like I said, I just . . . couldn't go. Just like I couldn't stand the thought of the autopsy. She was alive just a week ago . . . I just didn't want to . . . to realize, I guess. I still don't. All I want, more than anything in the world, is to see her walk through that door.

LUKE: Hmm . . . (*pause*) Well, it's getting late, Olivia, so I should be off. Thanks for the cocoa. (*smiles, reaches out, and squeezes OLIVIA's hand*)

OLIVIA: (*Smiling back softly*) You're welcome, Luke.

LUKE: See you at school tomorrow? Your bad "It's morning!" attitude and all?

OLIVIA: Yep, bright and early on those big yellow buses!

LUKE: Hey, no one can say that we don't arrive in style on those buses! At least we make an entrance! (*they stand from table, laughing*)

OLIVIA: Goodnight, Luke. And thanks for coming over. See you in the morning.

LUKE: (*laughing*) No problem. (*smiling*) Goodnight, Olivia. I'll see you in the morning, Liv, my love.

(*Exit LUKE*)

Scene 5 – Interior. Kitchen. Day. WILLIAM is making coffee and ELLEN is standing by him.

ELLEN: I'm telling you, Dad, she doesn't believe Mom is dead!

WILLIAM: Don't be ridiculous, Ellen. You said it yourself, the girl isn't stupid.

ELLEN: But Dad, I saw it with my own eyes! I was reading in bed, and suddenly it occurred to me that I might have forgotten to turn off the stove. So I went downstairs – just to double check – and the two of them, Luke and Olivia, were sitting at the table, drinking hot chocolate.

WILLIAM: What's your point, Ellen? (*WILLIAM pours his coffee, and goes to take a sip*)

ELLEN: She said, right then, that she could see Mom standing there, and she was really upset because Luke couldn't see her. (*WILLIAM hesitates, and doesn't drink coffee. He puts his cup down on the counter.*)

WILLIAM: Are you sure, Ellen? It just doesn't sound like Olivia.

ELLEN: I'm positive, Dad.

WILLIAM: Well, maybe we should talk to her about it.

ELLEN: And say what, Dad? "Mom's dead, Olivia, so stop talking to her" Come on, Dad! We can't do this.

WILLIAM: (*concerned*) Well, what do you suggest we do then?

ELLEN: I think we should take her to see a psychologist.

WILLIAM: (*shocked*) What? Ellen, Olivia isn't crazy!

ELLEN: I didn't say she was . . . but still, I think . . . that a psychologist might be able to help her.

WILLIAM: (*WILLIAM is shaking his head.*) I just don't know, Ellen. What's she going to think?

ELLEN: Dad! Do you want Olivia to end up like Mom?

WILLIAM: (*Angry*) Your mother wasn't crazy, Ellen!

ELLEN: (*upset*) Then why did she do it? A sane person doesn't take 27 sleeping pills!

WILLIAM: (*almost whispering*) She wasn't insane . . .

ELLEN: Face it, Dad! Mom didn't know what she was doing, and now she's dead! Maybe if she'd seen a psychiatrist, we would have known what to watch for, and she wouldn't be dead!

WILLIAM: (*angry*) What are you talking about Ellen?

ELLEN: (*whispering*) Dad . . . please . . . I don't want to lose Olivia, too.

WILLIAM: (*resigned*) Do you really think it's the right decision?

ELLEN: Yes, I do.

(*Enter OLIVIA, rushing to the door. She turns, and sees book on counter.*)

OLIVIA: Ellen, can you pass me that book? I'm going to miss my bus!

(*silence. No one moves*)

OLIVIA: I'm going to be late!!

WILLIAM: (*slowly*) Olivia . . . you aren't going to be late.

OLIVIA: Yes, I am! Arrg! (*impatient gesture*) Fine, I'll get the book myself! (*rushes over to counter, reaches for book*
WILLIAM reaches out his hand and stops her.)

WILLIAM: (*quietly*) You aren't going to school today, Olivia.

(*Olivia stops suddenly, catching the tone of voice.*)

OLIVIA: (*anxiously*) Why not?

Scene 6 – Exterior. Same shaded grove as Scene 2. Day. LUKE is sitting under OLIVIA's tree, reading a book. OLIVIA enters grove, out of breath and distraught. LUKE looks up.

LUKE: Olivia! Where were you today? I was worried about you!

OLIVIA: None of your business! What are you doing here?

LUKE: I was waiting for you, that's all.

OLIVIA: Well, don't! Please, just leave!

LUKE: Liv, what happened?

OLIVIA: I said it was none of your fucking business! Now go away!

LUKE: *(after a moment of hesitation)* No, I will not go away! I care about you very much, and you're obviously upset!

OLIVIA: Luke! What do you want then?!

LUKE: I want to know where you were today!

OLIVIA: Oh, right, like you can't figure it out on your own!

LUKE: What?

OLIVIA: You know perfectly well where I was today, Luke! Don't pretend to be all innocent.

LUKE: Okay, maybe I missed a big pre-university secret or something, but I was under the impression that when people ask questions, they're usually actually asking for an answer, and they don't ask questions if they already know the answer! Well, at least guys are like that! What the hell is wrong with you today?

OLIVIA: Isn't that what you were trying to figure out? Sending me to a shrink?

LUKE: What?!

OLIVIA: You heard me perfectly, Luke! You told Ellen that I should see a shrink, and Ellen convinced my father, and between the three of you I was shipped off to a psychiatrist today! Not only that, but a psychiatrist who would probably try to determine my true feelings if I told her to ram her stupid little drawings up her ass!

LUKE: What drawings, Olivia? You aren't making any sense!

OLIVIA: The little pictures they show you, the ones that don't look like anything, and they try to guess what your problem is from what you say they look like!

LUKE: I thought the movie people made those up.

OLIVIA: Oh, so did I! Until today, that is! Thanks to you, I now know exactly what the movie industry made up about psychiatrists and what is real. Thanks for betraying me!

LUKE: How did I betray you, Olivia? How?

OLIVIA: You told Ellen I should see a shrink! You couldn't convince me yourself, so you told her, and she just leapt at the chance to get back at me. And I had to spend all day saying, "It's a banana," or "It's a cat."

LUKE: Okay, hold on a minute! Can you forget about the little pictures for one minute Liv? For starters, I think it's good you went to see a shrink. You obviously need help more than we thought! And secondly, I didn't say anything to Ellen!

OLIVIA: You did too, Luke! And more than that, I bet that's the whole reason you even got to know me, to get closer to Ellen!

LUKE: You're being ridiculous, Olivia!

OLIVIA: I wish I was, but I didn't see it until today! You aren't even interested in me! I actually thought you were! But no, you're just using me to nurse your sick little obsession with my sister! Well, I can't stand it anymore! If you're in love with Ellen, you can go be with her, but don't come bothering me!

LUKE: Olivia, I am not in love with Ellen! I don't even like her! *(pauses, trying to be tactful)* I mean, I like her, she's your sister, but I don't have any feelings for her, other than respect and all, but that doesn't count and . . .

OLIVIA: Shut up, Luke! You can't start making excuses! It was cruel, leading me on! *(kind of smiles. in that way people do when they are cursing how stupid they are, almost about to break down and cry)* I felt something for you, I actually did, but you didn't even give it a chance! You didn't even pause to see me, you were so busy looking at my sister!

LUKE: *(quietly)* Oh Liv, if only you knew how far from the truth you were!

OLIVIA: What?

LUKE: Nothing! Look, I never even knew you liked me.

OLIVIA: Because you were too bloody busy trying to get at my sister! Or rather with her, I should say!

LUKE: For the last time, that isn't true! Why won't you listen to me?

OLIVIA: I don't want to listen to you any more!

LUKE: You haven't been listening to start with! How can you want to stop?

OLIVIA: I don't want to hear any more, and I never want to speak to you again! You're . . . *(pauses. growing quieter. realizing she isn't making too much sense)* I don't even know what you are! I don't even know you anymore! How could you have turned me in?

LUKE: But I didn't! *(LUKE pauses. rethinking the situation. He takes a long breath, and seems to collect himself.)* Olivia, I'm sorry. Whatever I did, I'm sorry. I honestly don't understand why you're mad at me, but I can't stand it. Olivia, I'm in love with you! *(LUKE now has OLIVIA's full attention, and she is very shocked at this statement)* I don't even like your sister! Not even a little! And I didn't say anything to her, or to your father! Olivia, I wanted you to see a psychiatrist because I thought it might help, not because I thought it would get me closer to Ellen, or that I would get anything out of it at all. Please, Liv . . . don't turn away from me now.

OLIVIA: *(OLIVIA's anger too is gone, and she seems a little sad and resigned, as if all her emotions have been used up in her burst of anger)* You really didn't say anything to Ellen at all?

LUKE: No, Olivia, I didn't.

OLIVIA: Then I'm sorry I accused you.

LUKE: *(speaking slightly faster. a note of relief in his voice)* Am I forgiven then?

OLIVIA: Yes.

LUKE: *(melting with relief)* Oh, Olivia, I'm glad. You had me so worried that I had lost you . . . *(moves closer)* I couldn't stand that, Olivia. If anything happened to you . . . *(laughing)* I might kill myself, just pining away for you, like the lovesick fool I really am. *(seriously again)* Olivia, I don't want this to be just a friendship anymore. *(He moves in to kiss her, but she pulls away)*

LUKE: What is it?

OLIVIA: I can't do this, Luke. This isn't going to work.

LUKE: Why not? I thought you felt something for me!

OLIVIA: I do! But I'm leaving! I'm going to Dalhousie! And you're going where? To college with Ellen? Or straight into a job that won't go anywhere?

LUKE: That's unfair, Liv.

OLIVIA: Maybe, but it doesn't change the fact that I'm leaving in two months. I don't want to start something that I can't follow through with, that I can't take with me. I'm leaving, and that isn't going to change. Whether we are in love in two months from now or not, I'm not going to be here. I can't stay here and waste away my whole life like Ellen is doing.

LUKE: And obviously loving me is a waste of your valuable time! Well, if that's the way you feel there's nothing I can really do, is there? I'm sorry that's the way it is, I really am, but if you aren't willing to give this a decent shot, then let's just forget about the whole thing.

OLIVIA: Wait, Luke, don't be angry! I'm sorry.

LUKE: You're sorry. For what? For being like everyone else? For giving in and giving up on what we might have had? I don't even think you're sorry for that.

OLIVIA: Luke, please, maybe I'm wrong . . .

LUKE: And maybe you're right, Olivia. Maybe this isn't what I thought it was. Maybe you aren't who I thought you were. Whatever the case, like you said, this isn't going to work. Good luck at Dalhousie. I hope you do very well there and eventually find a job that will "go somewhere."

(LUKE starts to exit. OLIVIA calls after him.)

OLIVIA: Luke!

(LUKE finishes exiting. OLIVIA is left alone.)

Scene 7 – Interior. Kitchen. Day. OLIVIA walks into kitchen, slamming the door. William is carrying two boxes of stuff into the room, tears in his eyes.

WILLIAM: *(surprised, voice very hoarse, obviously has been grieving)* Olivia . . . what are you doing home?

OLIVIA: *(snaps)* None of your business! *(pauses, realizing what her Dad is doing)* What are you doing?!

WILLIAM: Cleaning out your mother's side of the closet. What does it look like?

OLIVIA: *(angry)* It looks like you're giving in to Ellen, again! Just like you gave in to her and made me see a psychiatrist!

WILLIAM: *(surprised, he drops into sarcasm)* Well, I'm glad to see you learned something today.

OLIVIA: *(returns sarcasm)* Yeah, really made it worth your while, eh? Not only do we get to have Ellen wreaking her petty little vengeance trip on me, but I learn to analyze situations like a pro . . . pretty soon you'll be able to take perfectly healthy people to me to have them punished! That's all this was, wasn't it? A form of punishment?

WILLIAM: No, it wasn't! We were worried about you!

OLIVIA: Right! There is no way Ellen was worried about me. She's just trying to even some imaginary score between us. And I very much doubt you were really worried either!

WILLIAM: What the hell is wrong with you?

OLIVIA: Why don't you ask the psychiatrist?! Isn't that what she was supposed to tell you??
(pause)

WILLIAM: Look, we're both grieving here. Let's just forget about this little discussion, okay?

OLIVIA: *(giving in)* Fine.

WILLIAM: *(sarcastic)* Wonderful. I'm so glad you feel better now. *(She shoots him a look)* Would you please just help me with these boxes?

(OLIVIA grudgingly grabs one and tosses it onto the table. It tips over, and a bottle of sleeping pills roll out. Both OLIVIA and WILLIAM fall silent. Finally, WILLIAM reaches out a careful hand and rights the bottle, his hand resting on the lid for a long moment before returning to his side.)

WILLIAM: *(softly)* I'd better be going. I'm taking some of her old stuff to thrift. Unless you want any of it?

OLIVIA: *(harshly)* No.

WILLIAM: *(regards his daughter for a moment)* Something happen you want to talk about, Olivia? Because if you do, then . . .

OLIVIA: No! It's nothing, and I definitely don't want to talk about it! Just leave me alone.

WILLIAM: *(brusquely)* Fine, don't tell me, but don't think you can be rude just because you're going through a hard time.

OLIVIA: You really have no idea, Dad.

WILLIAM: *(sarcastic again)* Probably because you won't tell me. *(OLIVIA glares at him.)* Just a thought, though. I have those every once in a while, you know. So what's the matter? Is this about your mother, or something else?

OLIVIA: *(sarcastic)* Does it matter?

WILLIAM: *(sarcastic still)* I don't know. It might. I kind of need to know what we're discussing before I can answer that one though, don't I?

(OLIVIA is silent)

WILLIAM: So? Are you going to fill me in?

OLIVIA: I don't know how you can be so cheerful. Mom's dead, and you're sifting through her things, ready to get rid of them.

WILLIAM: Ah, that's what this is about. You're still mad because I'm taking Ellen's advice and moving on.

OLIVIA: Ellen doesn't always know what she's talking about, you know.

WILLIAM: No, she doesn't. But sometimes she does. I think cleaning out the closet is good for me. It's helping me put your mother's . . . "ghost" let's call it, to rest, so I just have memories.

OLIVIA: How can you be so fucking calm and collected? She was your wife! Did you even love her?

WILLIAM: *(quietly)* Yes, I did. Very much. *(There is an awkward silence, and WILLIAM starts making hot chocolate, automatically, to hide his discomfort.)*

OLIVIA: She wasn't crazy, you know. Ellen doesn't know what she's talking about. And she wasn't on drugs.

WILLIAM: I know.

OLIVIA: Then why did you agree to the autopsy?!

WILLIAM: *(shrugging)* I thought it might help Ellen banish some of her ghosts, and I didn't see the harm in it.

OLIVIA: How could you not see the harm in slicing up her body?!

WILLIAM: She was dead, Olivia! I don't know whether your hatred of autopsies means you'll do well at this whole medicine career thing or not, but I can pretty much say that you aren't going to go into forensic medicine!

OLIVIA: I don't care what you think. It was still wrong! I don't know why Ellen even wanted it!

WILLIAM: Probably to see if there was another reason that your mother killed herself.

OLIVIA: But there wasn't! How can Ellen not have seen that?

WILLIAM: Why did she kill herself, then, Olivia?

OLIVIA: What?

WILLIAM: I said, why do you think your mother killed herself?

OLIVIA: How should I know?

WILLIAM: Well, figure it out. Why would you want to kill yourself if you were Mom?

OLIVIA: What the hell are you trying to do? You sound like my psychiatrist!

WILLIAM: Well, at least you're admitting you have a psychiatrist now.

OLIVIA: That's exactly what she would have said! Did Dr. Peterman tell you to say that? I bet she told you to ask me all of this. That it would be good for me!

WILLIAM: Actually, *(he finishes making the hot chocolate, pouring the water and powder into the mugs)* she did suggest I talk about the suicide with you. Said that you might have some issues you were hiding that you'd feel more comfortable discussing with me than with her.

OLIVIA: Well, I'm sure as hell not discussing my problems with a stranger!

WILLIAM: At least you can admit you have problems. Do you want this? *(offers her one of the mugs)*

OLIVIA: *(regards the mug as she speaks)* Would you stop that crap? I don't want to hear anything more about her! Either Dr. Peterman or Mom! And I can't believe you made hot chocolate . . . that was Mom's special thing . . .

WILLIAM: Olivia, be reasonable. Your mother did not own the drink hot chocolate. She did not exactly have a patent on all cocoa-flavored beverages. If she did, we'd be very, very rich. I can make hot chocolate if want to. Just take it, Olivia, and stop being difficult.

(OLIVIA reaches for mug, and throws it, smashing it against the floor with an angry cry)

OLIVIA: It was hers! Make something else from now on! It was her drink!

WILLIAM: *(snapping. He is now angry)* Olivia! That's it! I tried to be patient with you! I tried to be a good parent, like your mother was, but I can't do it! I can't stand to be in this room one more second! I'm going out to take this stuff to thrift! I want this mess cleaned up! By the time I get back! Now!

(WILLIAM picks up box and walks out, slamming door. OLIVIA sighs, shaking slightly. She reaches to pick up a piece of the mug, and then lays it back down on the floor. She opens a tall cupboard and removes a mop. Slowly, she starts cleaning up the mess. Behind her enters a tall woman, who we learn is the ghost of OLIVIA's mother, ANNA.)

ANNA: Hello, Olivia.

(OLIVIA stiffens, not turning yet. She obviously recognizes the voice, and is frightened. She turns very slowly around)

OLIVIA: Mom?

ANNA: Yes, Olivia, it's me. Don't you recognize me? Do I look different?

OLIVIA: No . . . you look . . . great . . . you can't even see the autopsy marks. But . . . you're still dead, right?

ANNA: Yes, I've passed on, darling. But I'm happy, and you shouldn't be sad about my dying. I'm just in that next place, just over the top of the next hill.

OLIVIA: Are you . . . in pain?

ANNA: *(laughing gently)* No, I'm not in pain. But I can't feel everything clearly. This isn't my place anymore. I belong somewhere else now, and I need to go back there very shortly.

OLIVIA: No! Don't leave!

ANNA: Olivia, darling, I have to!

OLIVIA: Then why did you even come?

ANNA: To show you that I'm fine, that's all. To show you that I'm okay, and to tell you that I'll wait for you. But I have to go now.

OLIVIA: No! Please, stay! Mum!

ANNA: *(slightly less patiently, taking on a slightly more sinister mood, but still undetectably so)* Olivia, it's impossible for me to stay. We have to be apart. Unless . . .

OLIVIA: Unless what? Is there something that I can do to bring you back?

ANNA: No, Olivia. There isn't anything you can do to bring me back. I'm already gone, and my body is, too.

OLIVIA: But you said there was a way that we could still be together!

ANNA: There is, though. You could come with me, darling! Don't be frightened, it's just a quick little moment, and then all there is, is just this beautiful light, all around. Come with me! We'd be together again, just the two of us. You don't need Dad and Ellen . . . we were always a pair, weren't we, Olivia?

Oh, come, please come, it would make me so happy!

(OLIVIA is taken aback, completely off guard, unprepared for this statement. She pauses for a moment, in shock, considering it, thinking about it, then shakes her head violently.)

OLIVIA: You mean kill myself.

ANNA: Yes.

OLIVIA: But I can't do that!

ANNA: Yes, darling, you can! You can do anything you want in life . . . and in death. My sleeping pills are on the table there. All you'd have to do is open the lid, and swallow them, and then you could come with me. Don't you want to?

OLIVIA: I want to see you again, but . . . but I don't want to die!

ANNA: Olivia, you are entirely too scared of death. Didn't I always teach you to conquer your fears? You have to come with me now, to see that death isn't as bad as you think!

OLIVIA: No, I can't! I'm leaving in two months!

ANNA: Don't be naïve, darling. That won't matter once you're with me!

OLIVIA: But Dalhousie! Everything is going so well, and I'm leaving soon . . . I can't kill myself now . . . everything is just starting!

ANNA: Oh Olivia . . . you still think you have it made, don't you dear? That your life is the crème de la crème? I wish I could show you how your life really is.

OLIVIA: But my life is good!

ANNA: Are you sure?

OLIVIA: Yes!

ANNA: Then let's play a little game. Just like when you were a little girl! You sit down at the table and pour out those pills. Go ahead! *(She motions for OLIVIA to do this and OLIVIA does)* Now, we'll just have a little chat, about your life, and for everything in your life that is going well, you can throw one of the pills away, but for everything that is going badly, you have to swallow one. Shall we begin?

OLIVIA: *(hesitatingly)* Uhh . . . I guess . . . yes, fine. What's the harm? I know my life is good!

ANNA: Alright then. Now, first thing. I'm dead. Is that a bad thing? I think it is! Swallow one of those pills now. That's right. Just like that. Do you want some water?

OLIVIA: No . . .

(ANNA goes and pours OLIVIA a glass of water anyways and sets it on the table in front of her. OLIVIA hesitates for a long moment, and then swallows the pill. ANNA nods approvingly, and then continues.)

ANNA: But on the other hand, I came to visit you, and that's very nice. So you can throw one out.

OLIVIA: Fine. *(OLIVIA throws one into a wastebasket beside her)*

ANNA: Alright, let's continue then. Now, Luke loves you. That's good, you can throw another one out, but on the other hand, he's angry with you, and you can't be with him. So swallow another one of those.

(OLIVIA throws out a pill and swallows one)

OLIVIA: Okay, but I'm still half good things, half bad.

ANNA: Yes. And Dalhousie is another good thing. So you can throw one out. *(OLIVIA tosses another pill)* But it's also the reason you have to leave Luke. And you had to see a psychiatrist because everyone thinks you're crazy. And Ellen is trying to steal Dad's attention, and Dad is playing favorites. Dad has forgotten me, and Ellen is trying to replace me, and neither of them want you around, and neither does Luke. Now how many bad things is that? Were you counting? I wasn't. Maybe you should just take that whole pile of pills there. Yes, that big one. That's right, swallow them. *(OLIVIA swallows almost half of the sleeping pills)*

ANNA: So are you ready to come with me now Olivia?

OLIVIA: *(getting progressively more groggy)* No . . . no, I can't go!

ANNA: Olivia, I'm quickly losing patience with you. You lost the game fairly. Now come on, it's time to go!

OLIVIA: No!

ANNA: Why are you clinging to this life? What is there here that you need so badly?

OLIVIA: Luke!

ANNA: Luke isn't here, Olivia. I think all those sleeping pills confused you a little. I think you're going to have to come with me and take a long nap, whether you want to or not.

OLIVIA: *(breaking down, making little sense. She starts half crying)* No! Luke! I'm in love with Luke! I don't care . . . I need to live! I love him!

ANNA: You can't love him, Olivia. You're leaving for Dalhousie! Now come on!

OLIVIA: But I do love him! I'll stay here if I have to . . . I won't go to Dalhousie! But I need to be with him!

ANNA: I can see that you are still as hopeless as ever, Olivia! I'm leaving now, and taking you with me. But I want you to know I'm very disappointed in you. You always were a disappointment, Olivia.

OLIVIA: But . . . but you loved me!

ANNA: Oh no, Olivia. I never really loved you. You just thought I did!

OLIVIA: *(realization and horror dawning, she speaks in total shock)* You aren't my mother!

ANNA: No, Olivia, of course not! I'm you . . . just another part of you. You killed yourself, Olivia. Don't blame your dear old mum . . . she loved you. *(speaking quite harshly)* But you, just remember, you did this to yourself. Now, come on, we're leaving!

(OLIVIA screams and crumples to the floor. ANNA starts to bend over her, but the door opens and LUKE walks in. He doesn't see ANNA, but sees OLIVIA and rushes over.)

LUKE: Olivia! Olivia! Are you alright? Oh god, Liv, what have you done?

(ANNA slowly retreats, exiting the stage the other way. LUKE does not see her go.)

LUKE: Olivia, can you hear me? Hang on, Olivia, I'm going to call for help. Oh Liv, hang on . . . please . . . don't die . . . *(he is bending over her, cradling her head.)*

Scene 8: Interior. Hospital. Day. Olivia is lying in a hospital bed, her father seated by her side. She stirs, waking.

WILLIAM: Olivia?

OLIVIA: *(weakly, softly, confused)* What the hell happened? Where am I?

WILLIAM: You're in the hospital. You had . . . you had taken a bunch of your mother's sleeping pills . . . Luke found you, and called 911.

OLIVIA: Mom . . . ?

WILLIAM: *(gently)* Your mother died last week, Olivia. Remember?

OLIVIA: No, mom was there. She was! Except . . . she was just a part of me.

WILLIAM: I don't know, Olivia. I don't know what you dreamed when you were unconscious.

OLIVIA: No, it wasn't a dream. At least, I don't think it was.
(She looks around for the first time. Her room is full of flowers)

OLIVIA: Well, we finally found a use for all those leftover funeral flowers, didn't we?

WILLIAM: No, these were all fresh. That bunch on your left is from Ellen.

OLIVIA: Ellen sent me flowers?

WILLIAM: Uh huh.

OLIVIA: Why?

WILLIAM: Olivia! Probably because you are her sister, and you almost died!

OLIVIA: But she hates me!

WILLIAM: I don't think so, Olivia. Why don't you try talking to her? You might be surprised at what you find.

(Enter LUKE, after knocking softly)

LUKE: Oh, I'm sorry . . . I didn't know she was awake yet . . . you two must be busy, I'll come back later.

WILLIAM: No . . . no that's okay Luke. I'm sure we'll have plenty of time to talk. And she'd probably much rather talk to you. *(To OLIVIA:)* This is for you, Olivia. *(He produces a silver necklace with a locket on it.)* It was your mother's. I found it when I was cleaning out her closet. She would have wanted you to have it. She loved you very much. *(He puts it around her neck)* I'll try and be as good a parent as she was, but I don't think I'll be able to. I just want you to know though, that I still love you. *(He brushes the hair off her forehead and kisses it softly)*

(OLIVIA's face crumples as if she is about to cry, but she doesn't say anything. WILLIAM sighs and leaves)

LUKE: He really loves you, you know.

OLIVIA: I know. But . . . he's still not my mom. And he never will be.

LUKE: But don't you still love him?

OLIVIA: Yes, but he knows that.

LUKE: Are you sure? Maybe he doesn't. And anyway, I was taught that you never part without saying "I love you" to someone you love. You never know when you're going to see them again.

(OLIVIA starts crying)

LUKE: Oh Liv . . . I've said something wrong, haven't I? What have I done?

OLIVIA: Nothing. It's just . . . I never told my mom I loved her the day she died.

LUKE: She would have known, Olivia.

OLIVIA: But it's not the same, you know?

LUKE: Well, maybe you'll get a chance to say goodbye properly someday.

OLIVIA: I did. That's why I'm crying! I . . . I had a dream . . . I guess it was on the way to the hospital. I was asleep, and she was tickling my feet. She told me that I had to wake up, that it was really important. She said she loved me, but I had

to wake up, because I had to be awake to live my life. And then she bent down . . . *(OLIVIA chokes on a sob)* She bent down over my head and whispered "I love you, Olivia. I always will." She never said that part before, the always will bit. She was saying goodbye. And the last thing I remembered from the dream was the feel of her eyelashes . . . one last butterfly kiss.

LUKE: Oh Liv . . . *(he moves to hold her as she sits up, him sitting on the edge of the bed, arms wrapped around her tightly.)* It's okay . . . everything is going to be fine. I'm here. I love you.

OLIVIA: I love you too, Luke. And I'm not going to Dalhousie if it means leaving you.

LUKE: No, Olivia, you can't do that. Even if it meant we had to be apart, I'd want you to go. But . . .

OLIVIA: What is it?

LUKE: Well, I was going to tell you later, but I'm going to Dalhousie too. I got accepted. Into psychiatry.

OLIVIA: Luke! That's wonderful! Now we can be together!

LUKE: We could have been together before, Liv, but you didn't want to be.

OLIVIA: I was wrong . . .

LUKE: Why did you try to kill yourself, Olivia?

OLIVIA: I didn't mean to . . . I thought everything in my life was terrible . . . but then, after I took them . . . the pills, that is, I wanted to live. I wanted to live because I wanted to have a chance to love you. I was wrong, Luke. Please, give me a chance.

LUKE: A chance. How can I give you a chance? I'm not sure I know how. *(OLIVIA sighs, seeming to give up)* Is it anything like a butterfly kiss? *(OLIVIA looks up in surprise, realization coming to her. LUKE continues, feigning seriousness.)* Because you should know, Olivia, that I don't know how to give butterfly kisses, and even if I did, I wouldn't. That's a private thing between you and your mom, and I don't want to try to take that.

OLIVIA: *(playing along)* Well, then I guess we're stumped. I don't get a chance after all.

LUKE: Unless . . .

OLIVIA: Yes?

LUKE: Oh, never mind.

OLIVIA: No, tell me!

LUKE: Well, what if a chance is just a regular kiss? But it couldn't be. *(pause. He glances at OLIVIA)* Could it?

OLIVIA: Well, I don't know . . . maybe it could be a regular kiss . . . just this once.

LUKE: Oh, well, in that case, I know how to give those! And I only have one choice: I feel obligated, Olivia, to give you a chance. *(He smiles, and bends down, kissing her very gently while still holding her tightly. The kiss is prolonged and not rushed. After it stops, they look at each other for a minute before either speaks)*

OLIVIA: Luke?

LUKE: Mmm hmm?

OLIVIA: Are we going to stay together?

LUKE: I don't know, Olivia. To be honest, I really don't know. I could walk out of this room and across the street, and be hit with a car. But I do know that I care for you very much.

OLIVIA: I don't want you to leave me, Luke. It hurts to lose people. It's not fair! Why do they have to die?

LUKE: That's just the way things are, Liv. People are born, they live, if they're lucky, they love, and then they die. You can't stop it, and you shouldn't try to.

OLIVIA: But my mother's dead! *(LUKE looks at her carefully, unsure what to do. She continues.)* She's dead, and I didn't go to her funeral!

LUKE: Do you know why you didn't go to her funeral, Olivia?

OLIVIA: Yes, I do . . . I didn't believe she'd died . . . but she has . . . she's gone. *(starts to cry again)*

(LUKE holds her until her sobs quiet)

LUKE: Oh, Liv . . . People live and people die . . . they are born to die, and they die to live, and be born again. Your mother loved you, and your father and sister love you, and I love you. That's all that matters, Liv. Truly.

OLIVIA: You're probably right, but it still doesn't make me feel any better, about us staying together, or about my mom.

LUKE: It wasn't meant to. You just have to let go, and put your trust in life. Things usually turn out all right in the end. *(He begins untangling himself from OLIVIA)* But I have to go, Olivia. Visiting hours were over five minutes ago, and the nurse on this floor is really scary looking . . . I think she'd stick me with a couple needles if she found me here!

OLIVIA: *(laughing a little)* Well, then you'd better go. But I'll see you again, right?

LUKE: *(smiling)* Yes, you will. *(He kisses her forehead lightly)* Many times, I hope. I'll see you tomorrow, okay?
(OLIVIA nods and he starts to exit.)

OLIVIA: Luke! Wait . . .

LUKE: What is it?

OLIVIA: I love you . . .

LUKE: *(smiling)* I love you too, Olivia.

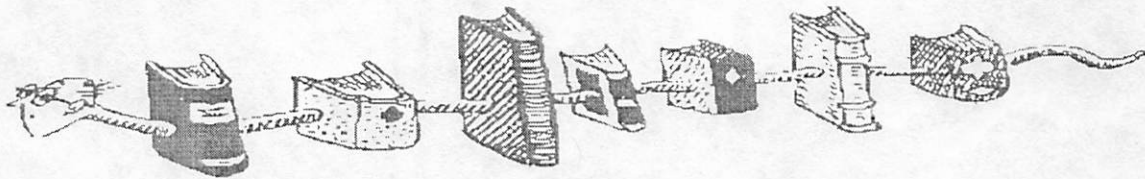
OLIVIA: Goodnight Luke. And thanks for coming.

LUKE: *(grins, recognizing the phrase.)* No problem. I'll see you again in the morning, Liv, my love. I'll always see you again in the morning.

A Fly on the Wall

by

Isaiah Bell



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A Fly on the Wall

– isaiah bell

(Stage is bare except for a desk down-left. ISOBEL enters from stage right. She has thick-rimmed coke-bottle glasses and carries a briefcase. She is dressed in second-hand clothing. ROY enters from stage left. He is dressed well, with clothes that are in style. He is carrying a single binder.)

ROY

(Walking backwards, calling off-stage, laughing, as if saying goodbye to a girlfriend)

I have to go to track practice – I'll call you after school, OK? Say hi to Janine for me. Of course I love you.

(ISOBEL is fumbling with her briefcase as she shuffles towards desk. She stops short as ROY almost runs into her. ISOBEL turns one way, then another, trying to get out of his way.)

ISOBEL

(barely audible)

Sorry. I'm sorry.

(ROY does not move for her. He does not look back as he crosses up-right. When he is almost at the exit he calls offstage again, as if to a friend ahead of him.)

ROY

Hey Janine, wait for me!

(ROY exits. ISOBEL watches him go, then moves down-centre. She pulls a small notebook out of her pocket, and a pen. She begins writing. There is silence for a moment. ISOBEL tears the page out and looks up, speaking to the audience)

ISOBEL

I look on

A Fly on the wall

Hoping someday it may happen to me

(She reads her page to the audience. Her voice grows more passionate as she reads the poem.)

To the person who doesn't exist
for being such a beautiful inspiration

To the one who isn't
because I wish you were

For that immaterial tryst
in my imagination

And although I know it isn't
the image helps me endure.

(She folds the paper and puts it into her briefcase. ROY enters, looking as though he's searching for something. His eyes fall upon ISOBEL and his face breaks into a huge smile.)

ROY

(crossing to ISOBEL, fawning)
Isobel! Where have you been?

ISOBEL
I've been waiting right here for you, Roy.

ROY
I missed you.

ISOBEL
I missed you too. I wrote a poem for you.

ROY
You know I love your poetry.

ISOBEL
(smiling)
I know. That's why I write it.

ROY
(reading the poem)
you sit there smiling
you laugh
your face lights up
your yellowish teeth flash
you grimace
you look frustrated
you look over at me
your eyes soften
you smile again
you cross the room
you sit beside me
your breath smells like smoke
i dont mind.

It's beautiful.

ISOBEL
Thank you.

ROY
Have you ever thought of getting your work published?

ISOBEL
Only every time you say that.

ROY
I'm going to put this up in my locker.

(he folds it carefully and puts it into his pocket)

Now come here. I wrote something for you too.

(sings "Do You Wanna Dance")

Do you wanna dance

Under the moonlight

Squeeze me all through the night

Oh baby, do you wanna dance...

ISOBEL

You didn't write that.

ROY

I know.

(they slow-dance with no music, around the stage. They are about to kiss when they reach DR. She suddenly glances at her watch)

ISOBEL

Oh my God! I'm late for class! I'll see you later – I love you – bye!

(ROY exits quickly & quietly. ISOBEL hurries across to her desk at DL and sits down. ROY re-enters, talking into a cell phone. ISOBEL looks up occasionally at him as she writes.)

ROY

Baby, I told you I was going to call you after school! Well, it's not after school yet, is it? I have a class to go to! ... Wait.... What? Garth Brooks! I love that album! I can't believe you got it for me! Of course I love you.

OK. Where are we going tonight? ... But I've already seen it! Who's coming? ... What about Janine? ... I'm just asking. Of course I care about you. ... OK. I'll talk to you after school. I can't wait. Love you. Bye.

(ROY exits left. He walks in front of ISOBEL'S desk but doesn't look at her)

ISOBEL

(Rising, reading from page)

i know you're not a good person

i know you're not for me

i think there's nothing worse than

having you look but not see me

lost in your world of perfection

and you don't want to step out

you screw my sense of direction

you make me want to pass out

i know that i should let you be

that i should let you go

i don't know how you feel towards me

and i don't want to know

(ROY enters from left. Once more he looks around. He stops at center stage as he spots ISOBEL.)

ROY

Isobel! Where have you been?

ISOBEL

I've been waiting right here for you, Roy.

ROY

Come here, I have a surprise for you.

(She crosses to him)

I got us tickets to the new play, tonight.

ISOBEL

(excitedly, as she hugs him)

How did you know I wanted to go to that?

ROY

I know everything.

ISOBEL

I love you! But haven't you already seen it?

ROY

Yeah, but plays are no fun to go to without you. What are you doing after school?

ISOBEL

I don't have any plans... do you?

ROY

I think I'm meeting someone.

ISOBEL

Really, who?

ROY

You.

ISOBEL

I'll make sure you keep that date. But I have to go back to class. I'll see you after school!

ROY

I can't wait!

(They hug quickly and ISOBEL crosses down-left to her desk. ROY exits right. He re-enters almost immediately. He is angry as he calls offstage. He slowly crosses the stage as he is yelling.

ISOBEL tries to engross herself in a book but has difficulty doing so. She looks over at him discreetly every so often.)

Fine, I've already seen it anyways! Forget about making other plans. Actually, forget about seeing me again! *(Pause— next line as an afterthought)* And I hate Garth Brooks!

(to himself)

Bitch!

(calling offstage left)

Hey Janine, what are you doing tonight?

ISOBEL

(speaking as she writes)

What would you do if I told you how I feel?

If you blew me off, would I ever heal?

What could you do if I confessed myself to you?
When you realized you're all I'm holding onto?

(She folds her paper up, and puts it in her briefcase. She begins to cross up right as ROY crosses down left, looking preoccupied. He bumps into her, and her briefcase, improperly fastened, spills its papers all over the floor. He hardly notices he has done so, and strides offstage)

ISOBEL

Sorry. I'm sorry. I'm so sorry, Roy.

(ROY says nothing. When he is gone, ISOBEL flops down in her pile of papers and cries. She begins to compose herself as she scribbles out a few words onto a sheet of paper.)

ISOBEL

(angrily, between tears)

– you're so pathetic
– you make me sick
– i can't think about you
 without crying
– i can't make you change
– i can't control you
– i can't tell you what to do

which sucks because you're me.

(She breaks down again. Finally she picks herself up as ROY enters)

ROY

(alarmed)

Isobel! Where have you been?

ISOBEL

(sniffling, hiccoughing)

I've been waiting right here for you... Roy.

ROY

What's wrong?

ISOBEL

Nothing. I'm OK now.

ROY

No, what is it?

ISOBEL

I've just been thinking how what we have is almost perfect.

ROY

Almost perfect?

ISOBEL

Yes. Almost perfect except for that real life keeps butting in. Almost perfect except for that we can't stay like this forever, Roy!

ROY

Why not?

ISOBEL

I'm trying to make you into something you're not, Roy. There's no way anyone could be as perfect as I see you. And there's no way anyone as perfect as you could be legitimately interested in someone like me. It just doesn't work that way, Roy!

ROY

Isobel, you are perfect.

ISOBEL

I'd like to believe you. I try to believe you. But I sometimes it's really... *(starts crying again)* ... really hard to make myself believe you when I know you're so.... unbelievable....

ROY

Don't cry baby, I'll get you some tissue.

(ROY exits. ISOBEL begins to gather up her papers, then stops and writes on one, speaking angrily as she writes)

queer obsession

intangible mirage

faroff untouchable

pleasurable fantasy is

pain unquenchable

relentless agony

truth is worse than death

lies anestheticize

(She pauses. Her frustration vents itself, and she lets out a loud, tormented cry)

scream!

(Another pause.)

Why does it suck so much

(The last line is scribbled down, almost as an afterthought.)

(ROY enters. He looks uncomfortable when he notices she has been crying. He looks around for a way to get out of it, but finally he guiltily goes to help her. When he does he tries to stay as far away from her as possible and avoid eye contact.)

ROY

(obviously not meaning it)

I'm sorry if I made you spill all your... stuff....

ISOBEL

It's okay... Roy.

ROY

Let me help you.

ISOBEL

Thank you.

(ROY begins scooping up her papers and stuffing them in her briefcase, when he notices one with his name on it. She tries to grab it but he pulls it away)

ROY

(startled)

This has my name on it.

(ISOBEL is too shocked to speak. She tries feebly to take it away. He looks at the next paper.)

This one has my name on it too!

(He reads through it clumsily, questioningly. She tries to pick up papers as if it doesn't really matter to her.)

“Roy.

Your voice to my ears is perfect

Your flawless mouth can speak no evil,

Your every movement leaves me speechless

When you walk I study your every step

I keep astride with you in the hall

If only to watch you turn the corner

Everything fades so gently away

When you confidently stroll my way

Roy.”

(Leafing through other papers)

Oh my God! Is this about me?

(ISOBEL is still speechless. She has stopped gathering papers and simply looks distraught.)

Hey, my picture?

(ISOBEL flinches. He reads the back of the picture, incredulous and angry.)

“To Janine. I hope to get to know you more this year. You’ve always been my favorite cheerleader.”

(Fuming) Where did you get this?

ISOBEL

(standing up, shrinking back)

I... found it on the ground. Outside.

ROY

I can't believe this! Who are you? Why are you stalking me?

ISOBEL

My name's Isobel...

(crying)

...and I'm not stalking you. I'm sorry!

ROY

(pushing her, yelling)

What's wrong with you?

(ISOBEL trips over her briefcase and falls to the ground. It bursts open again, and all the papers ROY stuffed in it come flying out.)

ISOBEL

There's nothing wrong with me!

ROY

Then stop stalking me!

ISOBEL

I'm not stalking you!

ROY

(backing away)

Just stay away from me, freak!

(ROY exits)

ISOBEL

(quietly)

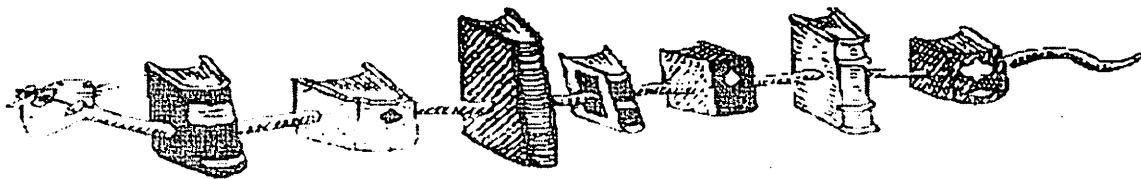
I'm sorry.

(Stage blacks out)

200 Miles to Tonopah

by

Cam Johnson



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Character Descriptions

- Kevin** - A twenty-four year old who lives in New York City. He is travelling to visit his friends who live in Los Angeles, California. Personality-wise, he is an easy-going guy. He generally gets along with his friend Mark, but on this road-trip, has been getting fed-up with him. He is generally a level-headed individual, but sometimes gets panicked when he loses control of a situation.
- Mark** - A twenty-five year old who also lives in New York City. He also has friends in Los Angeles, and was more than happy to get a chance to visit them. Although he takes things more serious than Kevin does, they usually get along. He is a rather negative person.
- Bellman** - The manager of The Hotel is a very strange person. He is always very serious in his duties.
- Barkeep** - The Hotel's bartender is a bit more sociable than the bellman, but is just as mysterious. He has an ironic aura around him.
- Angela** - A guest at The Hotel. She is 28 years old, and at one time was a very outgoing person. She is now rather withdrawn.

200 Miles to Tonopah

AT RISE: Lights up on a very old, yet elegant, hotel lobby. There is a bar L with several barstools, and a hotel desk R. On the hotel desk are two books: one huge and overflowing with papers, and one extremely thin. There are two chairs C pointing downstage with a side table between them. The lobby entrance is located DR, the bar entrance is UL, and the door to the rest of the hotel is UR. KEVIN, 24, and MARK, 25, enter DR. KEVIN is carrying a road map of Nevada. They look around the hotel, and speak with hostile, bickering tones, indicating that their argument has gone on for some time previous.

* Note: The original cast and director positioned the BELLMAN near the theatre entrance in the lobby before the show began. He asked the audience entering to sign in, and then read out several of the names during the show.

MARK: Well, this is just great. Just perfect. Look at this place. It's a wonder this building has electricity - I seriously doubt that there's a working phone in here.

KEVIN: Of course, they have a phone. It's a hotel. All hotels have telephones.

MARK: Yeah, well, with our luck, probably not this one.

KEVIN: Would you lighten up?

MARK: Lighten up? How am I supposed to lighten up? Anyway, you're the one who got us stuck here in the first place.

KEVIN: For crying out loud, Mark...

MARK: 'Don't worry, we've got enough gas to make it to Reno', you said... 'We don't need any, we'll be fine for another two hundred miles', you said. 'We'll make California before nightfall', you said!

KEVIN: I *said* I was sorry, okay? I made a mistake. Anyway, I think we must have gotten turned around somewhere. We should have hit Tonopah a few hours ago, but we haven't passed anything man-made since this afternoon...except for this hotel.

MARK: So what's the problem? (Indicating the map.) Just figure out where this hotel is, and you'll figure out where WE are.

KEVIN: I would, but I don't even know what this hotel is called. Did you catch the name of it?

MARK: All it said on the door was 'The Hotel'. (He shakes his head.) What the hell kind of name is that? 'The Hotel'?

KEVIN: We're just lucky that we managed to stall our way into this place's parking lot.

MARK: Lucky, huh? If you call this lucky...(He looks around the lobby.) Look at this place, it's so...old.

KEVIN: (KEVIN walks up to the desk and rings the bell.) Look, you should be happy that we made it here instead of being stuck in the middle of the desert. (He rings the bell again.)

MARK: Have you looked around, Kevin? We *are* in the middle of the desert. This hotel is *in* the middle of the desert. Do you know what it's going to cost to get a service station to send someone all the way out here with some gas?

KEVIN: (Sighs.) No, I don't.

MARK: A lot, Kevin, it's going to cost a lot. And last time I checked, we didn't have any money in the "Kevin Screws Up And Gets Us Lost" fund.

KEVIN: Lay off, Mark. I said I was sorry. (He rings the bell again.)

MARK: And I say, we're broke. Do you have your wallet on you?

KEVIN: Nope, left it in the car.

MARK: (Under his breath.) Of course...(Louder.) I'll go and get mine – this little detour is gonna cost us a fortune. You can deal with whoever's in charge. (He exits UR.)

KEVIN: Fine...(He rings the bell again. Nothing. He turns around, slowly taking in the lobby, and with his hand still on the bell, rings it again. Still nothing. He rings the bell several times in succession. When his gaze is DL, the BELLMAN enters silently UR. He is wearing a black suit. He ignores KEVIN, and instead soundlessly looks through the larger book on the desk. After a moment, KEVIN rings the bell again. The BELLMAN looks up.)

BELLMAN: You rang, sir?

KEVIN: (Startled, he whirls around.) Whoa...hey...uh, yeah, listen, do you have a phone here I can use? (The BELLMAN stares at KEVIN, giving no response.) Our car ran out of gas, and we just managed to steer it into your parking lot. (Pause. Still no response from the BELLMAN.) And...we need to call a gas station to send someone out here with some gas...(Pause. No response.) So...can I use your phone? You have a phone here, right? (BELLMAN stares at KEVIN for another moment, then turns back to the book.)

BELLMAN: We do have a phone, sir, but it is for staff use only.

KEVIN: Look, mister, we're really desperate. We're on our way to California, and we really need to get going...

BELLMAN: (Interrupting.) I would be much obliged to make the call, sir. If you will excuse me. (Exits UR.)

KEVIN: All right...then. Much appreciated. I'll just...wait right here. (He awkwardly looks around for a seat, eventually walking over to the bar and sitting down on the middle stool. After a moment, MARK re-enters DR.)

MARK: (Sarcastically.) So? Did you talk to the maitre d'?

KEVIN: Yeah...he's a strange guy. He's going to call a gas station for us.

MARK: Well, that's just wonderful. Maybe he can call us a bank while he's at it – we're gonna need a loan after this charming diversion.

KEVIN: Would you stop worrying about money?

MARK: That's easy for you to say. You didn't meticulously plot out every little financial detail for us on this road trip. I'm telling you, Kevin, we do not

have enough money to get to Los Angeles! (KEVIN sighs, frustrated. He stands and walks over to MARK DC.)

KEVIN: Mark. Listen to me. It is not a big deal. I have some extra money, and we're under-budget on our food expenses, anyhow. (At this point, the BARKEEP silently enters UL wearing a dress-shirt and dress-pants - an upper-class bartender's uniform, but not as formal as that of the bellman. He notices the boys, looking mildly surprised. He begins wiping the countertop, intently watching the two boys, who don't notice him.)

MARK: (He speaks increasingly louder.) That's not the point. When we left New York, you promised that we would be in L.A. within a week! It's been a week and a half, we're not even in California, and we're stuck in the middle of the desert without any gas!

KEVIN: Will you relax? We're going to be fine! You really need to calm down...

MARK: You know, I would never have agreed to this if I had known what kind of a...(The BARKEEP clears his throat, and the two guys, startled, turn around.)

BARKEEP: May I interest you two in a drink while you wait? (The two boys look at each other, hesitantly.) On the house, of course.

KEVIN: Uh...(Looks expectantly at MARK, who, after a moment's consideration, nods.) Yeah, sure. Why not? (The BARKEEP immediately pulls out two wineglasses, and fills them with red wine.) I'll have a beer.

MARK: Me, too. (KEVIN notices the drinks already being filled.)

KEVIN: ...or whatever's handy. (He walks L and sits down on the centre barstool. MARK shrugs, walks over, and picks up his drink.)

MARK: Thanks.

BARKEEP: You are most welcome. Now, if you do not mind my asking...what brings you two this far out into the middle of...

KEVIN: Nowhere? (The BARKEEP gives a slight grin and a shrug.) We're on a road trip to visit some friends of ours in Los Angeles. We left New York just over a week ago, and we hope to hit L.A...

MARK: (Mutters.)...last Tuesday.

KEVIN: (Looks at MARK, rolls his eyes, then continues.)...within the next few days.

BARKEEP: (Nods.) I see.

MARK: (He looks around the lobby.) This sure is a strange place...how old is this building?

BARKEEP: Oh, I do not know the exact age...but it has been here for a long time. Sometimes, it seems like it has been here forever.

KEVIN: We didn't see any other cars in the parking lot - we weren't even sure if you were open.

BARKEEP: Yes, well, we're always open.

KEVIN: Yeah, but I was wondering...why?

BARKEEP: (A pause.) Because we never close.

KEVIN: (Another pause, as he looks at the BARKEEP, confused.) No, I mean why aren't there any cars in the parking lot? It sure looks like a big hotel, but you don't seem to have any guests...

BARKEEP: Oh, we have plenty of...guests. (He speaks with a mildly sinister tone.) There are always people checking into this hotel. Otherwise, we wouldn't be in business, now, would we? (He smiles ironically at the boys.)

KEVIN: (Glances at MARK, then replies, with an air of discomfort.) No...I guess not.

BARKEEP: (He resumes his upbeat manner.) But do not worry, we have plenty of rooms. You are lucky that we were not expecting any guests tonight. You two are quite the surprise.

MARK: What do you mean, 'not expecting any guests'? (Scornfully.) You mean you need a reservation to stay in this place?

BARKEEP: Of course. This is a very popular...establishment. (A beat.) However, we always have a few extra rooms that we keep unoccupied, just in case we are required to entertain any unexpected visitors.

KEVIN: Well, you don't need to worry about us. We're just here to use the phone, and as soon as we can get someone to come and fill us up with gas, we'll be outta here.

BARKEEP: (Laughs lightly.) Oh, 'outta here'. Mmm...yes, of course. (He chuckles to himself, as if remembering a private joke, and continues wiping the countertop. MARK and KEVIN exchange a glance. MARK not-so-subtly makes a circle with his finger next to his head - 'he's crazy'. KEVIN shrugs, and turns back to the bar. After a moment, the BELLMAN enters UR, and begins rifling through the same book on the desk. MARK notices him, and walks over to KEVIN. He taps his shoulder and points at the BELLMAN. KEVIN gets up and walks over to the desk while MARK and the BARKEEP watch, the BARKEEP rather intently. KEVIN clears his throat, but gets no response from the BELLMAN. He does it twice more, with no response. Finally, he reaches over and rings the bell once. The BELLMAN looks up, regarding him as if for the first time. He speaks identically to their previous encounter.)

BELLMAN: You rang, sir?

KEVIN: (Awkwardly.) Yes, hi...did you...ah...make the call?

BELLMAN: (A beat.) The call, sir? To whom would I call?

KEVIN: I asked you to call earlier...a gas station? Remember? (After a moment's pause, the BELLMAN goes back to looking down at the book and rifling through it, as before.)

BELLMAN: We do have a phone, sir, but it is for staff use only.

KEVIN: Yes, I know, that's why I asked you to make the call for us. So we can get our car filled with gas? Because we've run out? So we can get going? (He stares at the BELLMAN for a moment, after which the BELLMAN speaks.)

BELLMAN: I would be much obliged to make the call, sir. If you will excuse me. (As he exits UR, he gives a look to the BARKEEP, who nods and exits UL at the

same time. KEVIN stares at the door the BELLMAN exited through while MARK walks over.)

MARK: I thought you said you already talked to him.

KEVIN: I did! I...I did! At least, I thought I did...(He turns around, and notices that the BARKEEP is missing.) Hey, where'd he go?

MARK: (Turns around, and shrugs indifferently.) Ah, who cares...what a couple of weirdoes.

KEVIN: (Still looking at the bar.) Oh, come on. They're not that bad. Just a little...eccentric.

MARK: Yeah, and I'll bet that's what they said about Jack the Ripper, too... (The BELLMAN enters UR. After a few moments, the BARKEEP enters silently UL, unnoticed by the boys, and continues to wipe the bar while watching the proceedings. As before, the BELLMAN rifles through the book. KEVIN and MARK look at each other, both miming a conversation to get the other to go and talk to him. Finally, KEVIN walks up.)

KEVIN: Excuse me, but...(Before he can finish, he remembers the previous two times. He tentatively rings the bell, and the BELLMAN looks up.)

BELLMAN: You rang, sir?

KEVIN: (Sighs.) Did you call the gas station?

BELLMAN: (A beat.) Why would I call a gas station, sir?

KEVIN: Oh, for the love of...

MARK: (He walks over to the desk.) Okay, this isn't funny anymore. We really need to get going as soon as possible. (Pause. No response. MARK speaks angrily, and KEVIN, somewhat embarrassed, holds his head.) Do you speak English? I said, we need to get going. (Another pause.) Where is the phone?!

BELLMAN: We do have a phone, sir, but it is for staff use only.

MARK: (He takes a breath, and speaks slowly at first, but with increasing frustration.) Let me explain something to you. This is an emergency. We are stuck here, in the middle of the desert, without any gas. We are supposed to be in Los Angeles. You know, L.A.? Disneyland? Palm trees? The ocean? We were supposed to be there three days ago, but my directionally-challenged friend here screwed up, and now we're lost! So I will tell you again: we need to use your phone so we can get the hell out of here! Now where is it?

BELLMAN: I would be much obliged to make the call, sir. If you will excuse me.

MARK: (He closes his eyes, and makes fists with his hands – he's at the end of his rope. The BELLMAN exits UR, and after a few moments, MARK takes a deep breath and opens his eyes.) Okay, you stay here, and I'll go find a phone. (He exits UR.)

KEVIN: Mark, maybe we...(Sighs.) Never mind. (KEVIN gives his head a shake, and sits down in the right-most chair, sipping his drink. After a few moments, ANGELA, 28, enters UR. She is wearing older, lightly-dirtied clothes. She looks at KEVIN with uncertainty before sitting at the bar.

KEVIN notices her, and discreetly tries to observe her. The BARKEEP greets her.)

BARKEEP: Good evening, Ms. Kennedy. May I interest you in a drink? (The BARKEEP immediately pulls out a glass and begins pouring it full of red wine.)

ANGELA: Yes, please. (She watches as he empties the bottle into the glass, then takes a sip.) I see that new guests have arrived.

BARKEEP: You are correct, though we were not anticipating any. Our two newcomers are completely unexpected. (The BARKEEP exits UL with the empty bottle. KEVIN, seeing the BARKEEP leave, thinks for a moment before putting his drink on the table and going up to her.)

KEVIN: Excuse me...? (Startled, ANGELA nearly spills her drink. She spins around.)

ANGELA: Uh...(Stammers)...yes?

KEVIN: Hi...are you staying here for the night?

ANGELA: Sort of...yes, you could say that.

KEVIN: Oh, good. My name is Kevin, by the way.

ANGELA: (Pause.) Angela. I'm...Angela. It is...nice to meet you.

KEVIN: Likewise. For a moment, I was afraid you were another staff member. Have you noticed that they're a little...well...odd?

ANGELA: Uh, yes, I guess so...(ANGELA, looking panicked, turns away. There is a pause, and KEVIN, confused, turns awkwardly away. ANGELA closes her eyes and thinks for a few moments, then turns back to him.)

ANGELA: Can...I ask you something?

KEVIN: Hmm? Oh, yeah, sure.

ANGELA: (Carefully phrasing her question.) Have you...checked in yet?

KEVIN: No, we haven't. We're not actually staying here for the night - my friend Mark has just gone to call a gas station. Our car ran out of gas, and we just managed to roll it into the parking lot before it died.

ANGELA: Oh. (MARK re-enters UR.)

KEVIN: Did you call the gas station?

MARK: (Eyes ANGELA warily.) I tried, but I didn't get any answer - they must be closed. We'll have to try again in the morning.

KEVIN: So...we're stuck here for the night.

MARK: Apparently so. I bet you wish you'd stopped for gas now, don't you?

KEVIN: Oh, Mark...

MARK: You'd think that by agreeing to use my car on this road trip, you would at least take some of my advice when driving it.

KEVIN: We agreed to drive alternating days...

MARK: Fine - it was your day to drive, so what? How many times did I say, "We need gas, Kevin...pull over, Kevin..." And did you listen to me? Noooo. You just HAD to keep on going, with FULL KNOWLEDGE that we were going to be in the middle of the desert by nightfall.

KEVIN: Mark, I'm through arguing. Let's just go back to the car and get some sleep. Okay? (The BELLMAN suddenly enters UR. He stands at the desk.)

MARK: Whatever. (They start to leave, but stop as the BELLMAN starts to talk.)

BELLMAN: We have many vacancies at the moment, sir. There are two rooms available, if you would like to spend the night.

KEVIN: Oh, thank you, but I think we should just sleep in the car...

BELLMAN: Free of charge, of course, sir.

KEVIN: Well, that's very kind, but I don't think that it would be a good idea...

MARK: What are you talking about? (To the BELLMAN.) Of course we'll take them.

BELLMAN: Very good, sir. I shall prepare the rooms immediately. If you will excuse me...(He immediately exits UR. KEVIN calls after him, but to no avail.)

KEVIN: No, wait, we're not going to...(Realizing that it is futile, he turns to MARK.) Are you insane? I don't want to stay in this place - it gives me the creeps.

MARK: (Angrily.) Well, you know what, Kevin? I've been sleeping in that car for a week, and there is no way that I am going to again if I have the chance to sleep in a real bed.

KEVIN: Fine, see if I care. I'm sleeping in the car.

MARK: Fine. (MARK takes keys out of his pocket, and throws them at KEVIN. KEVIN turns and exits DR. MARK stares after him, then shakes his head. After a moment, ANGELA speaks.)

ANGELA: Um, excuse me?

MARK: Yes?

ANGELA: Hi...um, listen, you, ah, need to go. Now.

MARK: (A beat.) Excuse...me?

ANGELA: I really think that you should go out and sleep in the car.

MARK: What are you talking about? Did Kevin put you up to this?

ANGELA: No, it's just that...(The BELLMAN enters UR.)

BELLMAN: The room is ready, sir. (He looks at ANGELA as he opens the larger book on the desk, then turns back to MARK.) If you will just sign in.

MARK: Sure thing.

ANGELA: Mark, please, you don't understand...(The BELLMAN turns and gives her a penetrating stare, and ANGELA goes silent.)

BELLMAN: (Interrupting.) That will be quite enough, Ms. Kennedy. (To MARK.) Right here, sir. (MARK turns his head to look at ANGELA, but the BELLMAN forces a pen into his hand. MARK signs the book, still looking at ANGELA. The BELLMAN slams the book shut, and MARK simultaneously reverts his gaze back to the BELLMAN as his facial expression goes blank. They stare at each other for a few moments.) Please follow me, sir. (He exits UR, and MARK follows him. ANGELA looks off after them, and shakes her head.)

ANGELA: (Puts her head in her hands, and speaks softly.) Damn. (After a few moments, KEVIN comes storming in DR, startling her.)

KEVIN: I am getting sick and tired of this stupid place! (He goes up to the desk and rings the bell angrily several times.)

ANGELA: What? What happened?

KEVIN: The car, that's what happened. When I find out who did it...

ANGELA: What, Kevin? What about the car? (KEVIN turns, and speaks angrily.)

KEVIN: It's gone! The car is gone! The parking lot is empty! Someone has stolen our car! (He rings the bell several more times. ANGELA closes her eyes for a moment, before speaking quietly.)

ANGELA: Your car wasn't stolen. (KEVIN slowly turns around.)

KEVIN: What did you say?

ANGELA: I said that your car wasn't stolen. It was parked.

KEVIN: Parked...

ANGELA: When you first came in here, you probably asked the bartender about the hotel, right? You asked if there were any guests staying here. Right?

KEVIN: Yes, actually...how did you...?

ANGELA: And let me guess - he replied, 'Oh, we have plenty of guests', which struck you as odd, since the parking lot was completely empty. Right?

KEVIN: Well, yeah, but that doesn't explain anything.

ANGELA: Yes, it does. This hotel has hundreds of guests, and the parking lot is very small. So whenever anyone checks in, they have their cars parked.

KEVIN: (Thinking it over.) Have...their cars...parked...where? (ANGELA is silent.) Have their cars parked where, Angela? Where is the car?

ANGELA: (After a moment, she blurts it out.) It's gone.

KEVIN: (After a beat.) I don't need this. (He rings the bell several more times, and the BELLMAN enters UR and walks behind the desk.)

BELLMAN: You rang, sir?

KEVIN: Yes, I want to know where my car is.

BELLMAN: (After a beat.) Car, sir?

KEVIN: Yes, my car. It was parked out front, and it's gone now.

BELLMAN: I'm afraid I don't know of which car you speak, sir.

KEVIN: Come on, it's the VW that was parked outside.

BELLMAN: I see. (He begins rifling through the book, again. After a few moments, KEVIN shakes his head and rings the bell.) You rang, sir?

KEVIN: (He speaks slowly, through gritted teeth.) Where. Is. My. Car.

BELLMAN: Car, sir?

KEVIN: Yes, 'car, sir', it's a blue Volkswagon, and it was parked outside less than twenty minutes ago, and now it's gone.

BELLMAN: The car has been parked, sir.

KEVIN: Fine. Then get it 'unparked' so I can get out of here.

BELLMAN: I am afraid not, sir.

KEVIN: Why not?

BELLMAN: Because, according to the insurance papers therein, the car belongs to one Mark Hall.

KEVIN: Yeah, that's the one. I'm sleeping in it tonight, and I need it brought to the front of the hotel.

BELLMAN: Well, sir, I am terribly sorry, but only the car's registered owner is able to have it brought out. However, if you require a place to stay, we have many vacancies at the moment. There is a room available...

KEVIN: Look, if you won't give me the car, will you go and get Mark down here so HE can get me the car?

BELLMAN: (After a beat.) Mark, sir?

KEVIN: Yes. My friend, Mark.

BELLMAN: I am afraid that I do not know anyone named Mark, sir.

KEVIN: Yes, you do. He came in here with me...(No response.) You just put him up in a room.

BELLMAN: We have many vacancies at the moment, sir. There is a room available, if you would like to spend the night. Free of charge, of course.

KEVIN: Yes, I know...

BELLMAN: (Interrupting.) Very good, sir. If you will just sign in. (He opens the larger of the books on the desk to the very last page.)

KEVIN: No, I mean...(Sighs.) Can you please tell me where Mark's room is?

BELLMAN: I'm afraid that I do not know any 'Mark'. Sir.

KEVIN: This is ridiculous! You just said you had his car parked...and look! (He grabs the sign-in book, and looks at the last page.) See? 'Mark Hall', with today's date.

BELLMAN: Hmm...let's see. We have...(He reads several of the audience names out.) ...ah, yes, here we are. Mark Hall. He has checked in.

KEVIN: Then let me see him.

BELLMAN: (After a beat.) I am afraid not, sir.

KEVIN: Why not?

BELLMAN: Because, sir, he has checked in.

KEVIN: Well, bring him down here, and he can check out! (He indicates the check-out book.)

BELLMAN: Check out, sir?

KEVIN: Yes, check out. All he has to do is come down here, and sign out in your book. That's it. (He picks up the book.)

BELLMAN: Perhaps you ought to take a look at the check-out book. (KEVIN sighs, and leafs through it.)

KEVIN: (A beat.) There aren't any entries.

BELLMAN: Precisely, sir.

KEVIN: What do you mean?

BELLMAN: Why, sir, that no one has checked out. (Out to the audience.) Ever. (He turns back, and he and KEVIN stare at each other for a moment.) I have some other matters to attend to. When you wish to go to your room, please sign in and ring the bell. (He exits UR. KEVIN watches him leave, and after a moment, speaks to himself.)

KEVIN: What kind of place is this? (ANGELA, who has been watching, begins to speak.)

ANGELA: It's like I've been trying to tell you...it's not a normal hotel.

KEVIN: I can see that.

ANGELA: No, you don't understand...

KEVIN: Well, if you don't like it, why don't you leave?

ANGELA: Because I can't! I'm stuck here! YOU'RE stuck here!

KEVIN: I am not stuck here. I can leave any time I want.
ANGELA: That's what you think.
KEVIN: Excuse me? (He shakes his head.) Okay, if I'm stuck here, then who's keeping me here? That creepy bellman and his oddball bartender? They are going to stop me from leaving?
ANGELA: They don't need to stop you...you can't leave. Neither can Mark. (The BARKEEP enters unnoticed UR, and listens to the conversation.)
KEVIN: Yes, he can, and yes, I can. As soon as I find his room, we are getting out of here. (He begins to walk UR.)
ANGELA: Kevin, you don't understand. Mark is gone.
KEVIN: (Turns around.) No, he's not! He's right upstairs! He's...
BARKEEP: (Interrupting.) I believe that the lady is correct. (KEVIN and ANGELA both turn around, startled.) Your friend Mark has checked-in.
KEVIN: (Looks back at ANGELA, and speaks sarcastically.) Thought you said he was 'gone'.
ANGELA: Gone, checked-in, they're the same thing. (KEVIN turns from ANGELA in irritation and speaks to the BARKEEP.)
KEVIN: Look, there are only two things I want right now: to get Mark, and to get out of here.
BARKEEP: (Shrugs.) Mark has checked-in. And guests who check-in never check-out. (He picks up the two wine glasses which KEVIN and ANGELA have drunk, and exits UR. KEVIN speaks after he leaves.)
KEVIN: All right! Then all I want is for ME to get out of here.
ANGELA: I already told you, you can't.
KEVIN: Oh, come off it. I can leave whenever I damn well feel like it. So can you. Is the door locked? Are we physically stuck here? And anyway, if (Mimics the BELLMAN.) 'guests who check-in never check-out', why are you here?
ANGELA: I'm...an exception. I never really checked-in. I refused. (Pause.)
KEVIN: What do you mean? How long have you been here, anyway? (This catches ANGELA off-guard, who thinks for a moment before responding.)
ANGELA: What year is this?
KEVIN: (A beat.) What does that have to do with anything? How can you not know what the date is?
ANGELA: It has to do with everything. It's weird, but time doesn't seem to have any meaning here. (A beat.) What year is it? What's the date?
KEVIN: (Sighs.) The date is August third. (ANGELA looks at him.) 1998.
ANGELA: (ANGELA closes her eyes for a minute, thinking, then speaks slowly.) It was over a year ago that I was driving home from a weekend in Las Vegas. It said on the radio that there had been an accident on the main highway, so I decided to take a short-cut. That wasn't such a smart idea - I ended up getting lost, and worse, I got a flat tire. When I went to change it, I found the spare was flat, too. So I started walking. After an hour or so, I ended up here. The bellman offered me a room, free of charge, of course, until morning. I was about to take it, when something weird happened.

KEVIN: Something weird?
ANGELA: A man walked into the hotel and went right up to the desk. The bellman handed him the sign-in book. The man signed it, then walked right away down that hall.

KEVIN: So? Nothing so odd about that - he was probably just a guest...
ANGELA: But they didn't say anything! At all! The bellman and the guy were both completely silent - it was like they were reading each others' minds or something. And right after he left, the bellman turned to me and said, "Now, miss, how about that room?" and acted like nothing ever happened. But that's not the worst. The creepiest thing is...when the guy first entered, I said 'hello' to him - just wanted to be friendly, right? And he turned to me, and just looked at me...and...

KEVIN: (Now intrigued.) And what?
ANGELA: And...his face...it was all white, and his eyes were all bloodshot...and his arms were all scraped up, like he'd been in an accident.

KEVIN: An accident...
ANGELA: After that, I was too creeped out to do anything, so I refused to sign-in for a room. Smartest choice I ever did...I ended up spending the night in one of the chairs. The next day, I tried calling for a taxi, but I could never get through - the line was either always busy, or nobody picked up, no matter who I called. Some other people checked in...but, like the man, they never, ever said anything.

KEVIN: So...you think...
ANGELA: I don't know what I think...but the most logical explanation I can come up with is...well...the afterlife.

KEVIN: The afterlife.
ANGELA: Yes. I think...this hotel is the afterlife. Where people, at least some people, go when they die.

KEVIN: Oh, come on! That's the craziest thing I've ever heard! And anyway, if this is the afterlife, then why are we here? I'm not dead, Mark isn't dead, and you don't seem dead.

ANGELA: I think it has something to do with checking-in, and going into a room. I didn't check in, so I'm safe - I've been sleeping most nights in this lobby, and spending most of my time wandering the hotel. And you haven't checked in. Yet.

KEVIN: Then what about Mark...
ANGELA: I don't know...all I know is that I've never seen anyone again after they've checked-in.

KEVIN: (Pause.) You said that you wander around the hotel...
ANGELA: Yeah - I'll tell you one thing, this place is huge! I've been wandering around here for...for a year, I guess, and I still haven't been to every wing. And there's a reading room on the second floor, and a couple other areas that I can get into. The hotel rooms are all locked, though.

KEVIN: And you've never talked to another guest?
ANGELA: Nope, not until you and your friend walked in here.

KEVIN: So why do the staff let you wander around here?

ANGELA: I don't know. I never see anyone else - staff or otherwise - in any other parts of the hotel. The bellman and bartender only seem to hang around here; I don't know where they disappear to when they leave. (KEVIN thinks for a moment, then speaks after a pause.)

KEVIN: I'm sorry, I don't buy it. This hotel is just a nice little place in the middle of the desert that you and I both managed to stumble upon. This hotel is not the afterlife. Did I see a white light before I came in here? Do I hear an angel chorus singing? I thought St. Peter was supposed to welcome us to Heaven at the Pearly Gates...and that bellman is definitely not St. Peter.

ANGELA: (Quietly.) There is an alternative to the Pearly Gates...(KEVIN shoots her a look, and she talks quickly.)...and anyway, I don't think this is a definite heaven or hell...I think it's more like purgatory.

KEVIN: Purgatory?

ANGELA: Purgatory, you know? Limbo?

KEVIN: Never heard of it.

ANGELA: Yeah, well I have. My grandmother was a devout Catholic. Purgatory is supposed to be the indeterminate state where most people go after you die.

KEVIN: You mean you don't go straight to...

ANGELA: No, I don't think so...it's not so much as a fate to be trapped in purgatory, but more of an transitional place. In the spiritual world, I guess it's sort of like a...(She looks around the hotel lobby.)...waiting room. (KEVIN starts to glance around, too, quickly catches himself and shakes his head.)

KEVIN: (Disbelievingly.) No way. Uh uh. You know what? I am going to march into the nearest town I can find, rent a car, and drive back out here to get Mark.

ANGELA: You'd never last that long, one person in the middle of desert. And besides...I've already tried to escape. It...didn't work.

KEVIN: Oh, yeah? Why not?

ANGELA: It was about a month, I think, after I first got here. I asked the bartender for a bottle of that red wine stuff they always serve. He's actually a pretty nice guy, a lot different from the bellman. Then I headed out in the middle of the night into the desert.

KEVIN: Yeah? And?

ANGELA: And...I got back here.

KEVIN: You mean you turned back?

ANGELA: No! I walked for the rest of the night, following the road for almost four hours...and I saw a building in the distance. I was so excited, I ran towards it...but it was here. It was The Hotel.

KEVIN: Are you sure you didn't accidentally get turned around in the night?

ANGELA: Positive. But at the time I wasn't sure, so the next night I tried escaping again. This time I went the opposite direction, heading right into the middle of the desert...and the same thing. I ended up back here.

KEVIN: That's ridiculous.

ANGELA: That's what I said, but I'm telling you - it just all leads back to this hotel. The only alternative I can see is waiting in the desert until...well, you know.

KEVIN: (After a pause, he shakes his head in disbelief.) I just don't believe it. This is all ludicrous. I am going to give one last shot at getting Mark to come down here, and then, I am leaving, with or without him. (He marches up to the desk and rings the bell. The BELLMAN enters immediately.)

BELLMAN: You rang, sir?

KEVIN: Yes, I did. I want you to go and get Mark Hall, that guy you just checked in a few minutes ago, and bring him down here.

BELLMAN: Mark Hall is very comfortable in his room, sir. I have no reason to disturb him.

KEVIN: Well, you'd better, because we're getting out of here!

BELLMAN: (After a beat.) I...believe that leaving here would be most unwise. I would highly recommend staying in one of our rooms...

KEVIN: No. The answer is no. I don't want to stay in this hotel one more minute. I am leaving.

BELLMAN: I...am afraid that you cannot.

KEVIN: Like hell I can't! Watch me!

ANGELA: (Stands up.) Kevin, please, it's no use...

KEVIN: (To BELLMAN.) Tell Mark that I'll be back tomorrow morning in a cab to pick him up. (He exits DR. ANGELA looks from the door to the BELLMAN, and finally runs off DR after KEVIN. The opening chords of 'Hotel California' begin playing softly in the background. The BELLMAN stares at the door, and after a few moments, the BARKEEP enters UL.)

BARKEEP: What happened to our visitors?

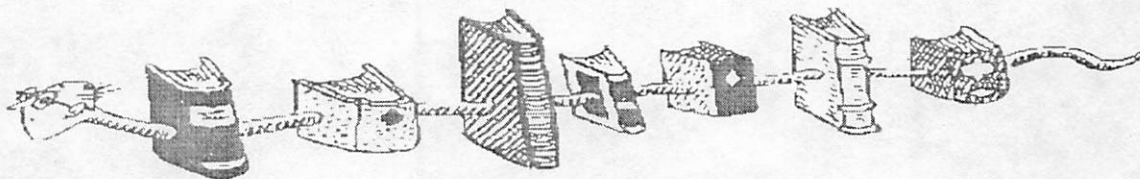
BELLMAN: They decided to...take a walk. (There is a pause.) Please prepare a drink for our guests. They will be returning shortly, and will be very thirsty. (He looks off towards the door.) Perhaps then they will be more willing to sign-in.

BARKEEP: (Nods.) Yes, sir. (He puts two clean wine glasses on the bar, and fills them with the red wine. After a moment, the lights - and eventually the music - fades.)

Something's Wrong with Ophelia!

by

Regan Eby



Caution: Professionals and Amateurs are hereby warned that "Something's Wrong with Ophelia!" by Regan Eby is subject to royalty. It is protected under Copyright Law. Inquiries regarding performance rights and royalties should be directed to: Regan Eby at 3702 12th St., Vernon B.C. V1T 3S9. The fee for a single production of this play will be \$15.00.

Something's Wrong with Ophelia!

By Regan Eby

Characters:

JEN - the Stage Manager

ARTHUR - an actor, plays HAMLET

GRAYSON - an actor, plays CLAUDIUS

MAEVE - an actor, plays OPHELIA

Lights up on the backstage-left area of a small theatre production of HAMLET. The set shows the back of the set of HAMLET, through which there is one entrance onto the "stage". JEN, the stage manager is standing next to her booth, which is really just a desk and chair with a clip lamp covered in a blue gel, and a scrim-covered opening at eye level when seated. She is talking on headset to the house manager and biting her nails. ARTHUR enters at some point during her first line.

JEN: It certainly doesn't help the situation... Well, thanks anyway for letting me know...
No, there really isn't anything we can do. It's just better to know, I think... Right.
Thanks again, Al.

ARTHUR: What was that about?

JEN: *(startled)* Oh, hi Arthur. That was Al from Front of House.

ARTHUR: What did he say?

JEN: I never would have thought that one day I'd consider this bad news, but...

ARTHUR: But what?

JEN: We just sold out for the rest of the run.

ARTHUR: Oh no.

JEN: Yeah. *(pause)* You're worried.

ARTHUR: Well, aren't we all?

JEN: Worried doesn't even begin to describe it. But I meant, you're more worried than the rest of us, aren't you?

ARTHUR: Maybe. Except for Maeve. Have you seen her tonight?

JEN: Yes. *(bites another nail)* She looked like death warmed over.

ARTHUR: And burned on the bottom.

JEN: Mmm-hmm

GRAYSON enters, knitting.

GRAYSON: I can't believe this. This whole situation is desperately improbable, yet it's happening to us!

ARTHUR: You know, it could almost be funny if it wasn't so serious.

JEN: Funny in someone else's theatre company, maybe.

GRAYSON: Be merciful to the competition, Jen. You can afford to. Our little production of Hamlet has been very well received.

JEN: Too well. We've sold out.

GRAYSON: Oh no. As we lose Ophelia.

JEN: Right. It really seems just a little too neat. Actress playing Ophelia blanks out entirely one night early in the production. Can't remember what she's saying or doing.

ARTHUR: Just stares at the stage lights for a full ten seconds. God, that's an eternity. Again and again, too.

GRAYSON: It's okay, Arthur.

JEN: You've been able to carry through so far.

GRAYSON: There was a reason you got the part you did. You make a pretty good Hamlet, (*teasingly*) and you're great at improv.

ARTHUR: (*sarcastically*) Thanks. Shakespearean improv. It's what I've always wanted to do. But you know, I think it was the stage lights that really did her in... She keeps saying how they look like eyes...

JEN: Well, 6x12's are like that.

ARTHUR: I'm not sure what she's thinking, but anything that reminds her of an eye now reminds her of the audience, and she starts to panic. I don't quite know what the matter is.

JEN: You probably know her the best of us. Do you think she'll be able to finish the run?

ARTHUR: I don't know. She's completely shaken up. (*doubtfully*) Maybe if she can get through a show without it happening again she'll be able to. But I don't know. I'm not a psychiatrist or anything. I'm not even that experienced as an actor. You can probably guess as well as I can.

Call light on JEN'S headset flashes.

JEN: What? Okay. I'll be up in a minute. (*to ARTHUR and GRAYSON*) I have to go meet the Fire Marshall. What a time for him to arrive.

JEN exits.

GRAYSON: Arthur, I know you're worried. It might be better if you try not to think about her so much.

ARTHUR: Eh?

GRAYSON: I've seen a couple of actors crack up before and it's not pretty. You don't want to be personally involved.

ARTHUR: Grayson, How can you say that?

GRAYSON: Experience, I'm afraid.

ARTHUR: Do you think it's that bad?

GRAYSON: I couldn't say, but there's something wrong with that girl.

ARTHUR: I wish there were something I could do to help. I feel as though it's partly my fault that she's in trouble, because after all it is Hamlet who is responsible for Ophelia's insanity... not that Maeve is actually insane.

GRAYSON: No, don't take that on yourself, Arthur. You're not Hamlet, just like Maeve is not really Ophelia. There are forces that affect Maeve which have nothing to do with the play. You're a professional actor; you should know that. You have to remember it. All we need is a disturbed Hamlet who can't hold Ophelia's scene together any longer.

ARTHUR: You're right, Grayson. After all, if plays were real, you'd be an incestuous usurper and murderer. But then again, Maeve is playing Ophelia...

ARTHUR and GRAYSON exit, as a very preoccupied MAEVE enters.

MAEVE: You will NOT forget that line. You will not forget that line. You will not forget that line. My honour'd lord... *(long pause)* My honour'd lord... My honour'd... My honour'd... *(pulls out script and reads along)* My honour'd lord, *(gulps)* you know *(gulps again)* right well you did, and

ARTHUR enters.

ARTHUR: Maeve?

MAEVE: *(loses concentration, tries to start again)* My... honour'd lord... What's next? What comes next? Oh, I can't forget it again... My honour'd...

ARTHUR: Maeve! Calm down. Breathe.

MAEVE: Breathe? I can't remember my line and I'm not even on stage! I know I'm ruining the production. How can I breathe? I can't remember my line!

ARTHUR: Take a deep breath. Think about something far away from this theatre.

MAEVE: I can't...

ARTHUR: Think about something you enjoy... Think about the time you went canoeing in New Hampshire with bare feet and no life jacket. Remember how peaceful that was. Think about the mirror surface of the lake and the ripples fanning out from the canoe, and the plink of the drops from the paddle, and the rings spreading out from them...

MAEVE: *(relaxes for a moment, and sighs, but tenses again)* The canoe leaked, and I got such an awful sunburn. Oh!

ARTHUR: What?

MAEVE: Summer stock theatre... in New Hampshire... That day...

ARTHUR: Don't think about that!

MAEVE: I'm never going to be able to see a play again, and that was such a wonderful play. But how could I watch?

ARTHUR: Maeve...

MAEVE: What play was it? I was in the audience, what happened? Maeve, what play did you see when you went to summer stock theatre in New Hampshire after you went barefoot canoeing?

ARTHUR: Stop doing that to yourself. Pull yourself together and try to relax. For the sake of the show.

MAEVE: Arthur, don't! I can't think about the show!

ARTHUR: I don't know what to say, Maeve. Can you just relax for the next ten minutes? Go back to your dressing room, and listen to music, or something. Get yourself calmed down, and don't think about going onstage. You'll never make it there in this state, anyway.

JEN enters.

JEN: Hi, Maeve. How are you tonight?

ARTHUR: I'm taking her back to her dressing room.

JEN: Not good?

ARTHUR: I hope she'll make it if I can get her to relax.

JEN: Do your best.

ARTHUR and MAEVE exit.

JEN: (on headset) Fifteen minutes to show time. Is everything okay up there, Sam? Lise? Great. No, it was the Fire Marshall. I had to show him the fire extinguishers. I know it's not, but Front of House were all busy. Not the most opportune time for him to come, I agree. Yes, everything's fine. Well, everyone except Maeve. Yeah. I'll get back on headset to let you know. I'm going off now.

GRAYSON enters.

GRAYSON: Well, I think Arthur may actually have Maeve calmed down.

JEN: She was in pretty bad shape a few minutes ago when she was back here. Arthur practically had to carry her away back to the dressing room.

GRAYSON: Yet hope remains while all the company is true, as Galadriel said. She meant a different kind of company, but it still works, doesn't it?

JEN: You and your quotes. If you didn't quote Tolkien at least once a show and knit ferociously, I'd think you were heading down the same route as Maeve.

GRAYSON: I take that as a compliment. Well, knitting keeps me calm. It has ever since I started during my first production of Hamlet back in, let me think... '72. *(holds up knitting)* See? It's a Fair Isle Gansey. Knit entirely in the round. No seams to sew up. So don't worry about me. As long as I can knit sixty stitches a minute I know I'm sane.

JEN: Thank goodness. I'm terrified that Arthur will become so concerned about Maeve that he'll actually start blanking out like her.

GRAYSON: I hope not.

JEN: He likes her, you know. He's never said it in so many words but he obviously does.

GRAYSON: Yes, well, are you really surprised? This is a pretty tight company.

JEN: I suppose it is. I guess right now I'm worried that it's too tight. Well, you'd better go and get ready to start.

GRAYSON exits. JEN taps her fingers on her desk for a moment before switching on her headset and pushing the call button.

JEN: *(on headset)* So everything's fine up there? I just asked that? Sorry. Everything's okay on stage as far as you can see? How's the audience? I can't help it. *(bites a nail)* Mmm, yeah. Oh yes, I was. *(takes the nail out of her mouth)* Now is not the time to cure me. Sam! I can't help being worried. Oh, forget about me falling apart! What about the cast? They're the ones the audience sees. Of course I remember the duck! How could anyone ever forget the duck? But if the head of the duck gets blown off who's going to care about its feet? Oh. Was I ranting? Sorry. I'm just worried. *(pause)* Thanks for the encouragement, Sam. Yeah, I guess it'll be okay. Oh yeah, and it's about five minutes until we start, so make sure everything's ready. Yeah, all right.

JEN walks around, checking the props tables and scribbling a few notes in her notebook.

JEN: *(on headset)* The house is in? You've closed the doors? Then can we start now. Well, it's a little early. Okay. Is everything ready in the booth? Great. Do I have everyone for the first two scenes? Then, stand by everyone. Stand by house lights fade and intro music... and go!

Lights fade to blackout, except for JEN's clip lamp and some LED's marking the entrance. After a few seconds they fade up again on the same scene.

JEN: Stand by lights two... and go... Stand by sound three...

Lights fade partly to indicate the passage of time. As they fade up again, GRAYSON and ARTHUR enter.

JEN: How's Maeve?

ARTHUR: She's okay, for the moment. I've mostly got her calmed down, but you might have to have a little talk with her before her first scene.

JEN: Okay. You're on guys. Break a leg. Stand by and... go!

GRAYSON and ARTHUR exit through "stage" entrance.

JEN: *(on headset)* That's true, Lise. So far so good. One scene down, though, and Maeve hasn't gone on yet. Me neither. I can't wait until the run of this show is over. Oh, I know, theatre's stressful but I've never had to deal with anything like this before. No more talking now. This isn't high school theatre.

MAEVE enters.

JEN: Are you okay now, Maeve?

MAEVE: *(takes a deep breath)* I think so.

JEN: Thank goodness for Arthur the stand-in therapist.

MAEVE: *(manages to laugh a little)* How big is the audience tonight?

JEN: Well, it's sold out.

MAEVE: (*hugging herself*) I think I'll manage. (*shakes her head*) Look at me. I've got stage fright like a little kid in a school Christmas pageant. It's just the thought of everyone watching me. They're all just waiting for me to forget, or screw up, and they'll devour me. (*with increased agitation*) I'll fall apart and they'll devour my pieces...

JEN: Maeve, don't be so hard on yourself. This is just a play. If anything goes wrong, it's not the end of the world. Some people in the audience might be a bit disappointed, but they know you're human. Everyone makes mistakes. You'll do fine.

MAEVE: (*getting nervous again, and repeating JEN*) Fine. You'll do fine. Fine. Fine.

JEN: That's right. Now, you're on. Just relax.

MAEVE: Oh...

JEN: Go on. Do your best and no one can expect anything more from you.

JEN gently guides MAEVE toward the "stage" exit and pushes her out. Lights fade partly to indicate the passage of time. They fade up again as ARTHUR enters from "stage" entrance to the sound of applause.

ARTHUR: Well, it's intermission.

JEN: She made it through the first half. Maybe she'll pull through.

ARTHUR: There's still the second half.

JEN: But the first half is where she usually loses it.

ARTHUR: Yes, but in her state it could happen anywhere.

JEN: I just want this show to be over.

GRAYSON enters with MAEVE.

GRAYSON: I'm afraid I just found her outside her dressing room.

MAEVE is notably silent.

GRAYSON: I decided it was time to introduce her to the therapeutic benefits of knitting.

JEN: She doesn't look all that upset.

ARTHUR: Jen, you keep talking like she isn't here.

JEN: (*instantly contrite*) Sorry Arthur. It's just...

ARTHUR: I know, it's hard. But that doesn't help.

JEN: I'm really sorry.

GRAYSON: What I'm worried about is the fact that she really doesn't seem to be here at all. It's like she's got shell-shock.

JEN: The second half... can she...

ARTHUR: (*turns suddenly on JEN*) Shut up about the second half, will you? Look at her! What if it's even worse than it seems? What if this show is destroying her?

ARTHUR exits at a run. JEN stands stunned for a minute, then puts down her headset and follows ARTHUR. GRAYSON looks after them for a moment, then turns his attention back to MAEVE who is still standing, dazed. He picks up his knitting and holds it up in front of her.

GRAYSON: Well, now it's time for old Grayson to play therapist. According to my theories, knitting is the most relaxing thing there is to do. Do you know how to knit?

MAEVE shakes her head.

GRAYSON: Then just watch. See? I pull the wool through the stitch like this, and slide it off the needle. So each stitch moves from needle to needle. Back and forth. Back and forth. And listen to the sound of the needles clicking together. It's the most peaceful sound in the world.

MAEVE begins to relax and even smile a bit, but tenses again as ARTHUR and JEN enter. They have obviously apologized to each other, but are still acting cold toward each other.

JEN: Are things all okay back here? Maeve, are you all right? We've got to start now. Arthur, make sure Maeve gets around to the other side, will you? She enters stage right for scene five.

ARTHUR and MAEVE exit. GRAYSON moves to stand next to the "stage" entrance.

JEN: *(on headset)* Ready up there? Great. Stand by house down and intro music... and go.

Lights fade to blackout, except for the clip lamp and LED's. After a few seconds they fade up again. GRAYSON exits through "stage" entrance during the blackout.

JEN: *(on headset)* Okay, Sam. Stand by lights thirty-five and...

Lights fade partly to indicate the passage of time. They fade up again on the same scene.

JEN: *(on headset)* Can anyone see Maeve? No, I haven't seen her since she went on for her last scene. No, don't. You haven't got time for that. We've got to run the show too. I'm just a bit worried, that's all. I usually see her coming off afterwards. No, just keep your eyes open for her, okay? *(chews a nail)*

ARTHUR enters.

JEN: Arthur?

ARTHUR: What!

JEN: Never mind. I'd better not tell you.

ARTHUR: Tell me what?

JEN: You don't need to hear it right now. I'll tell you after. Anyhow, you're on again. Stand by... aaaand go! Stand by lights forty-seven ...and go! *(on headset)* We're almost through, girls. Yes, thank goodness. I'm still worried, though. She made it tonight, but I've got a very nervous cast on my hands. I hope you can't tell from the booth, but Arthur's practically beside himself and that's not a good state for an actor to be in. That was a disgusting metaphor, Sam. Oh, I can't deny that it struck a deep chord, but... Well, I'm going to subside into silence for the rest of the scene. Okay.

Lights fade partly to indicate the passage of time. They fade up again on the same scene.

JEN: Stand by lights fifty-eight and sound forty-nine, same go.... Aaand go!

Lights fade to blackout, except for the clip lamp and LED's. There is a sound of applause. After a few seconds lights fade up again on the same scene. JEN sinks back in her chair and passes her arm over her forehead. After a minute, ARTHUR and GRAYSON enter.

JEN: Now I've got to talk to you both.

GRAYSON: What's the problem?

JEN: I don't know where Maeve is.

ARTHUR: What?

JEN: She's been missing since the end of her last scene.

ARTHUR: Why haven't you done anything?

GRAYSON: Well, at least she made it through the show.

ARTHUR: Barely.

JEN: Arthur, I'm sorry to raise this subject again, but I hope she'll be all right for the rest of the run. As Sam on Lights so graphically put it, right now this show is hanging as precariously as a six-year-old's snaggly front tooth

GRAYSON: With luck, it will stay attached for just as long, if you know what I mean.

JEN: It's no joking matter. Maeve simply has to pull through. I mean, there's no understudy and... Well, it's just too bad. She was rightly hailed as an excellent Ophelia. Oh, that sounded terrible.

ARTHUR: Don't... use the past tense like that. It sounds like she's dead... or something. *(pause)* Don't you think it's time someone went to look for her?

JEN: Probably past time. I should have sent someone sooner.

ARTHUR: Oh no! I just had an awful thought!

JEN: What?

ARTHUR: The catwalk!

GRAYSON: You don't think?

JEN: Arthur! You shouldn't do things like that to yourself.

ARTHUR: I can't help it.

JEN: You have to last out the run of this show too, you know.

ARTHUR: I know. It's just this terrible play. I wish it wasn't so... suggestive. It seems to be escaping its confines and extending beyond the blackouts... It's... Well, just think of the 'holding a mirror up to nature' speech. In it, Shakespeare states metaphorically that the play is a mirror of nature, and I begin to think that, in the strange and psychotic case of Hamlet, either nature or the mirror is very uneven. And the way Hamlet seems to be twisting my life, I think it's the mirror that's distorted.

GRAYSON: Very logical.

ARTHUR: But right now I just want to find Maeve.

JEN: Well-

ARTHUR: So I'm going to search.

ARTHUR exits, closely followed by JEN and GRAYSON. Stage stands empty for a minute, before ARTHUR re-enters and paces back and forth twice, before MAEVE enters in a state somewhere between a daze and a panic.

ARTHUR: Maeve? (*MAEVE makes no response*) Maeve! (*ARTHUR shakes her by the shoulders*) Maeve! Where have you been?

MAEVE: What happened?

ARTHUR: What?

MAEVE: What just happened?

ARTHUR: You mean right now?

MAEVE: Yes, whatever I'm doing?

ARTHUR: What? Maeve, you've been wandering around for the last half hour!

MAEVE: I have?

ARTHUR: But you made it through the play. What's wrong?

MAEVE: I can't remember a thing! You tell me that I just acted two hours of Shakespeare without knowing it?

ARTHUR: You must have known what you were doing. You didn't make any mistakes or forget your lines or anything.

MAEVE: I just performed a play without knowing it! (*bursts into tears*) What's wrong with me? Oh, what's wrong?

ARTHUR: Don't! Don't! Everything will be fine. The main thing is you know you can get through the play.

MAEVE: How can I act if I don't know I'm doing it? What's wrong with me?

ARTHUR: Maeve...

MAEVE: (*becoming hysterical*) The audience! They're tearing me apart!

ARTHUR: (*chokes out something inarticulate*)

MAEVE: Three hundred seats times eighteen shows times two eyes a seat all pulling me apart watching! All watching Ophelia going nuts fall apart... Ophelia... Ophelia... hold a mirror up to nature and watch yourself live your part... (*pushes ARTHUR away and collapses, sobbing*)... enter during the blackout...

ARTHUR kneels to gently touch MAEVE on the shoulder.

ARTHUR: Listen to me. You're going to be fine. I'll take you away from the theatre and no one will watch you any more. I won't let anyone make you act ever again. Just calm down.

MAEVE: *(stops crying and looks up blankly)* Is the play over?

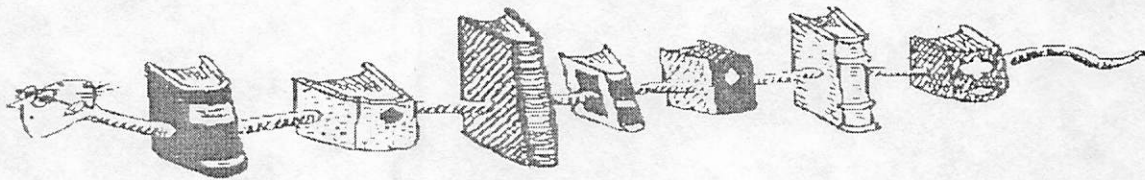
ARTHUR: Yes, Maeve. It's over.

ARTHUR picks MAEVE up in his arms and carries her offstage. Lights fade to black.

Another One Bites the Dust

by

Laurie Forman and Kristine Trsek



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Another One Bites the Dust

Laurie Forman and Kristine Trsek
Directing and Scriptwriting 12
Langley Secondary School
January 2002

Note from the Playwright:

Our ideas for the script came from our dance background and love for music. The music we picked for the play sets the mood and inspiration for the piece. Although movement is suggested in the play it would be subject to other directors interpretation and music choice. The movement in this play is described in general terms, however, we have choreographed very specific dance and movement sequences for our own production.

Angel: Main Character, addicted to drugs, 17 years old.
Trent: Angel's boyfriend.
Girl 1 & 2: Angel's friends from school.
Dream Girls: Representation of good and bad.
Ensemble: Ten people

*Setting: At crowded party on a Saturday night.
Loud music is playing. (SQ #1)*

Low lights of different colors come up on the stage. There is a bench on one side of the stage and a chest of drawers on the other side of the stage. There are clumps of people talking loudly and having a good time. The music being played is faced techno style music. The lights are low except for the spotlight that follows one girl around the stage. She moves from group to group, everyone seems to know who she is. She stops at the first group and takes a sip of someone's drink. She walks over to the next group and takes a drag of another partygoer's marijuana. She beings to stumble to the other groups and takes a pill and a snort from one person in every group. Angel stands centre stage and the rest of the room goes dim except for her and her spotlight, then puts a handful of pills (drugs) into her mouth and grabs someone's drink and gulps it down. As her high becomes stronger she starts hallucinating and the music that has been heard throughout the party stops and slower music begins to play. (SQ #2) With the new music fading in and the people in the room begin to imitate the slurred music and all dance together in unison. Through the mess of random words the group is whispering, the words become clearer and clearer.

POT... LSD... CRACK... and so on.

Soon everyone is whispering Angel at random as they dance in unison. Suddenly Angel falls back and is caught by the people behind her. As she falls back the whole crowd says "Dust" at once. The lights change and Angel is lifted from the ground and her body goes limp. Her body is moved in a wave above everyone

and she moves in strange ways. Suddenly Angel is lifted straight up and vomits. Covered in sweat she lays on the ground shivering, and everyone goes back to his party, as if nothing had ever changed or happened.

Lights cross fade two girls are talking as they put their books into their lockers. The rest of the ensemble splits down the middle to create the illusion of a hallway.

Girl 1: Hey did you hear what happened to Angel at Mickey's party?

Girl 2: No what?

Girl 1: She did some messed up stuff

Girl 2: Again? That's no big surprise! Is she all right?

Girl 1: I haven't seen her today.

As the girls talk Trent, Angel's boyfriend, over hears the conversation.

Trent: What happened to Angel? What did she do?

Girl 1: Well you know she was at Mickey's and you know....

Trent: *(looking confused)* what happened?

Girl 2: *(smiles at her friend)* You know how she is at parties!

Trent: Well have you seen her today? Where is she?

Girl 1: We haven't seen her, Sorry.

(SQ #3) Music starts as Angel slowly scuffs down the hallway looking tired, and unkept. Every one seems to know who she is and she tries to smile and wave at each person, but all her attempts are very slow and drawn out. Trent runs over grabs Angel's arm and pulls her across the stage to a bench. A spotlight focuses in on the couple. The music is still on but is very quiet. As the lights around dim, the students still go about their day at school, not paying any attention to the couple.

Trent: Angel where were you on Saturday?

Angel: *(trying not to look into his eyes)* I told you I was at my grandma's.

Trent: *(sarcastically)* So when did your grandma move in with Mickey?

Angel looks nervous.

Trent: Why do you feel you have to lie to me?

Angel: I know you don't like hanging out with people like that. We've already talked about it before.

Trent: I just want to keep you safe. I don't want anything to happen to you, and if that means dealing with Your 'ideas' of fun, well then it doesn't matter. I just want to be with you. Just promise you won't lie to me anymore.

Angel: I promise.

Trent and Angel hug. By this time the people that were behind them have left the stage. As the couple sit in silence Angel hears whispers from side stage.

“Angel and Trent sitting in a tree K-I-S-S-I-N-G”

The “s” sound is slurred and drawn out.

Angel: What??

Trent: I didn't say anything.

The voices start again.

“ First comes love then comes marriage then comes the crack baby in the baby carriage.”

Angel: *(almost in tears, she jumps up)* Who the Hell is over there?

Trent: What is your problem.

Angel: I'm going to find whoever said that and kick their ...

Trent: *(concerned look on his face)* Find who What are you talking about? Are you feeling ok?

Angel: I'm fine but I'm going to....

Trent: *(stands)* Angel there's no one around! Calm down. Now come on lets go to class.

Angel: *(still huffing and puffing)* What day is it?

Trent: It's Monday and we have math first.

They walk away, Angel turns one last time to search for the voices. The lights dim as music comes up and A bedroom scene is set up center stage. Angel walks in and sits on the bed, and a spotlight lights her bed She pulls out a math textbook and paper out of her bag and opens the book. She's very fidgety and nervous, All she wants is a fix. She starts tapping her foot, scratching her head and licking her lips. As she becomes More and more frustrated she begins to think out loud.

Angel: $3y$ to the power of 10 times x should equal... I don't know! When am I ever going to use this any ways!!! Augggh!

Angel throws the book across the stage in frustration. She puts her head in her hands and begins to rub her it aggressively. (SQ #4) Music with children's voices is heard and stops when whispers from the side of the stage are heard. One voice is heard counting to 10. Another voice is counting backwards from ten and the third voice is calling out numbers from 1 to 10 in random order. Angel looks up in fear and then jumps under her covers and puts a pillow over her head. From under the pillow you can hear Angel saying:

Angel: No, no, no..... Why don't you just leave me alone?

The voice are continuously growing louder and louder. As Angel struggles to ignore the voice she continues to fidget under the covers.

People dressed in black enter the stage from different sides of the stage holding white numbers from one to ten that are glowing with a black light. The floating numbers dance around the stage. Angel peers out from under the pillow and sees the numbers floating around her room. She sits up with a scared smile on her face.

Angel: Oh god.

Just then the phone rings, the numbers leave the stage and the lights go up. The phone rings again, Angel tries to compose herself and reaches for the phone.

Angel: Hello?

Across the stage the light goes up and there stands Trent on the phone.

Trent: Hey it's me.

Angel: Oh hey, Trrrrrrrrrent.

Angel shakes her head to tries and regains herself.

Trent: You just wake up?

Angel: Huh... no I was just homework doing. I mean math yeah math homework.

Trent: Yeah, its killer isn't it?

Angel: Yeah it's driving me crazy.

Angel looks under her bed for the numbers.

Trent: So this Friday movies ok?

Angel: Yeah, sure, whatever.

Trent: Are you sure you're all right?

Angel: Yeah I'm fine. I just can't deal with this math homework anymore.

Trent: Maybe you should just get some rest. I'll see ya tomorrow okay?

Angel: That's a good idea. I'll see you tomorrow.

Angel gets off her bed and the lights come up and the stage is filled with people again. The two girls are sitting on the bench eating their lunch and talking. The people on stage stand around the bed to hide it.

Girl 1: Wow that shirt is so cute! Is it new?

Girl 2: Yes, I got it last night at the mall.

Girl 1: Hey look, here comes Angel. If someone needs a new look it's her!

Girl 2: I know she tires hard but she just never pulls it off.

Girl 1: Shush she's coming over here.

Angel walks over to where the two girls are sitting.

Angel: Hey you guys what's the newest gossip?

Girl 1: Oh there's not much new.

The two girls try not to laugh

Girl 2: *(Trying to change the topic)* Hey Angel. Are those new pants?

Angel: No.

The girls stand in silence looking very uncomfortable.

Girl 2: So Angel what's up with you anyway? I mean like you used to be cool but now your just a ... a well you know...

Girl 1: A junkie!

Angel: What are you talking about? You guys don't know anything about me!

Girl 2: You can get help you know... There are councilors and doctors that can help you kick it.

Angel: Did I ask for your help? What makes you think there's anything wrong? I'm fine ok! Maybe you two little busy bodies should mind your own business!

Girl 1: You never minded us before when we would talk about everyone else!

Girl 2: You've changed you know that? All we are trying to do is get the old Angel Dust back... But maybe you should go hang out with all your little pot head junkie friends!

Girl 1: We don't need you.... No one does!

Angel: Trent needs me, I'll see him tonight at the movies it's better than your pathetic little social lives.

Girl 2: Don't forget to sniff a line before you go. Hahahahahaha

The girls rub their noses as they leave stage.

Angel kicks the floor in anger. As she leaves she wipes a tear from her eye.

Every one surrounding the bed moves off stage. Angel goes and sits on her bed as the light changes and the rest of the stage goes dark except for the spotlight around Angel's bed. She reaches into her purse and pulls out some make up. Angel tries to apply her makeup in her mirror but is obviously reacting from with drawl. Angel starts to become very edgy and can't control where she is putting her make up. She gets really frustrated and can't sit still. She rubs what make up she has on off of her face. A spotlight suddenly appears on the chest of drawers and Angel looks up, she very sweaty. She goes to stand up but her legs fall out from under her. She tries again and this time she slowly makes it over to the drawer that is lit up. Almost in tears, she opens the drawer and takes out a little bag of powder. She takes her math book and places the powder on the book. She takes a card out of her purse and shapes the powder into five thin lines. She bends her head as if to sniff the powder. She looks up and out into the audience and shakes her head. She puts the book on the floor and when she sits back up she falls back onto her bed. The lights fade to all red.

Angel's Dream Sequence:

(To run the entire length of the song)

As the lights fade to red, music starts to play (SQ #5). Angel's rolling back and forth in her sheets as she starts mumbling and whimpering. She leans over the bed and vomits; as she wipes off her mouth she sees two figures coming from side stage, one dressed in black the other in white (a representation of bad and good). The black figure runs over to Angel and puts his arm around her as if they are old friends. He walks her over to the bench and they stand on it. Angel looks at him and smiles as he whispers in her ear. "Bad" looks down at "good" who's dancing on the floor low to the ground as if some force is chaining her

down. Angel's expression changes as she realizes something is not quite right, then changes her attention to the white figure below who has begun dancing with more power. The black figure tries desperately to whisper once more in her ear, but Angel keeps brushing him aside. As he does this, the white figure grabs his hand and throws him to the floor. Angel looks in awe as the white figure stands face to face with her affectionately touching her face. In anger the black figure pushes Angel onto her bed and she lies down and starts tossing and turning. As Angel keeps rolling around on her bed the two figures continue to dance against each other. Challenging each other back and forth. Each figure has moments of victory and defeat. As the volume increases the black figure knocks the white figure on his back. The black figure reaches out and grabs the others neck. He strangles the white figure violently until she lays limp in his arms. As the white figure is being strangled Angel is rolling under her sheets violently, kicking and muffled noises are heard. When the white figure lays limp Angel does too, and the Black figure looks up and smiles to the audience. The lights blackout, except for the spotlight on her bed and the figures then exit the stage (the music fades out and new music begins to play (SQ #6) as the lights dim). Once they leave the stage the full lights come up, and there's a knock at her door. A voice is heard from off stage.

Voice: Angel, Trent is here to pick you up for the movie.

Angel doesn't move. Her sheets are wrapped up around her neck and face. As the lights slowly dim the music that is on grows louder and continues on throughout the blackout.

Curtain.

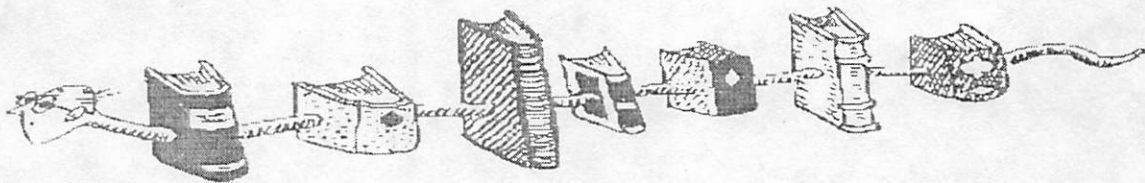
C.D. songs

- 1: Can Can (Moulin Rouge)
- 2: Hannibal soundtrack
- 3: Matthew Good Band
- 4: Tripoli (Matthew Good Band)
- 5: The Wall (Pink Floyd)
- 6: Another one bits the dust

He's Dead for Godsake

by

Jessica Elliot



Caution: Professionals and Amateurs are hereby warned that "He's Dead for Godsake" by Jessica Elliot is subject to royalty. It is protected under Copyright Law. Inquiries regarding performance rights and royalties should be directed to: Jessica Elliot at 5211 Weldon Ave Box 607., Summerland B.C.. The fee for a single production of this play will be \$10.00.

CHARACTER LIST:
(16 Characters. 9 males & 7 females)

ALEX: Cracks jokes all the time and gets in trouble. Semi-serious, and has an in-depth personality.	(Romeo)
MONIKA: Fun and energetic, Alex's good friend.	(Benvolio)
MARC: Alex's best friend. He's very crazy and spontaneous.	(Mercutio)
MS. EMILY: English teacher of students. She is very sweet and caring of her students.	(Juliet)
CHRIS: The Bully. Jealous of Alex, wants everything he has.	(Tybalt)
ROSE: Beautiful, affectionate girl that Alex falls in love with.	(Juliet)
FREDDY: Good friend's with Alex.	(First Citizen)
PATRICK: Wants to be like Freddy	(Romeo's friend)
PARIS: Wimpy and can't stand up for himself.	(Romeo's friend)
DAIN: Dumb and not very likeable.	(Gregory)
ERIK: Smart and likes to make people feel insignificant.	(Sampson)
ASH: Monika's friend- has a lot of attitude	(Capulet)
JESS: Bossy and annoying.	(Nurse)
SHEA: Shy and soft-spoken. Likes Alex.	(Rosaline)
MOM: Stern and well spoken.	(Lady Capulet)
MR. GREEN: Principal- very plain and stern	(Father Capulet)

SCENE 1:

(Kids Enter from all doors of the theatre, talking, carrying books & backpacks- placing them on the stage. Hanging out, Ms. Emily enters)

MS. EMILY

All right class ...*(noise from the students, they ignore her)* CLASS! Its time to start...*(continued noise)* CLLLASSSS! *(She yells)*

(Students quite down, pull up block, sit down. Chris, Erik, Dain, Jess, Ash and Rose sit on one side and Monika, Marc, Patrick, Paris, Freddy and Shea on the other side. Horseplay)

Here's your monologue marks back. *(Passes them around)* I just wanted to say that they were amazing. All of you did really well, especially Jess and Monika. Good job girls! *(Jess and Monika glare at each other)*

MARC:

(Stands up and waves his hand in the air) How come I got twenty out of fifty on my monologue!

MS.EMILY:

Marc, You only wrote your monologue!

MARC:

Oh crap. That's what I forgot!

PARIS:

Idiot! *(Shoves him)*

MARC:

(Shoves him back) Shut up, I had a doctor's appointment!

MONIKA:

Sure you did *(shakes her head and laughs)*

MS.EMILY:

All right, as you know, every year our Drama class puts on a play. I've spent hours looking for the right play that would suit this class, and finally I've found one.*(kids come closer)* We are going to do Shakespeare's Romeo & Juliet. *(Some groan, others happy)* The most beautiful love story around *(guys groan, girls smile)* BUT, it's also a tragedy of huge proportion *(guys cheer, girls groan)* So, what do you guys think?

ALEX:

(Burst through theatre doors, papers from binder are everywhere. Runs up the stairs and trips and more papers go flying.) Uh... sorry for being late. Mr. Smith, well, he.. I got in trouble in English class, and he kicked me out, cuz my goldfish bowl spilt on my essay last night, and then my cat ate my fish... and then we had to take my cat to the vet. So then I was sitting in Mr. Green's office, just minding my own business, when a huge tornado came and picked me up off the ground and took me to Kansas where I met Toto and Dorothy ...*(cut off by Ms. Emily)*

MS.EMILY:

Some how I'm not buying your story, Alex. But I will give you credit for your imagination. Take a seat please!

ALEX:

(Puts his backpack down, pulls up a block) no, really though. I met the wicked witch.

MONIKA:

(Smacks Alex on the shoulder, whispers) shut-up!

MS.EMILY:

Well Alex, since you decided to grace up with your presence I'd like you to stand up in front of the class and tell us a little about William Shakespeare.

(Alex uneasily stands up; all his classmates turn to him smiling)

ALEX:

Uh... well. He's a guy *(laughs)* who.... wrote some plays. *(Gets frustrated)* Who is this guy anyway and why is he so famous? He's dead for god-sakes! I mean, really... He was UGLY! Think about it! He probably had no dates...I suddenly feel bad that he's six feet under. *(Laughs, sits down)*

CHRIS:

(To Erik) What a slacker!

ERIK:

I know... he's a total loser.

MS. EMILY:

Chris, Stop talking about other people- if you haven't noticed, I have ears! *(Smiles, Monika puts hand up)*

MONIKA:

(Glares at Chris & Erik) I think everybody knows that Shakespeare was a lover of great proportions; I mean... take our school play for example. Romeo & Juliet- the perfect love story. They fall in love, and they die together. Happy and content!

ALEX:

(Aside) Did I miss something?

JESS:

(Turns to Monika...) Yah, but they still died. And it's a tragedy, not a 'Love story'. Get your facts right *(gives Monika an evil glare)*

MARC:

(Makes a cat scratching gesture) What a bag!

PARIS:

I know!

MS.EMILY:

Jess, Monika, cool it! *(Rolls her eyes)* I'll be back in two minutes; I have to go photocopy some scripts. Behave! *(Exits down right)*

MONIKA:

(Watches Ms. Emily leave) You know what Jess, I have the facts straight- I already know Romeo & Juliet *(Unclips binder, pulls out highlighted pages. Turns to students & waves the notes above her head)* I have notes and they're even color-coded!

JESS:

(Grabs them from behind her & flips through them pretending to be interested. Sarcastically says under her breath.) WOOWW... color-coded! *(Passes papers to Chris)*

CHRIS:

(To Monika) You really are a suck-up! *(Laughs and passes them to Dain)*

(Laughs and passes them to Erik)
DAIN:

ERIK:
 Ha!

MONIKA:
 Hey! At leased I get my homework done!

CHRIS:
(To Erik) Teachers pet!

MONIKA:
(Tackles Erik to ground, choking him) You creep monkey!!!

(Alex pulls Monika off Erik. Ms. Emily walks back in. Alex calms Monika down)

MS.EMILY:
(Aside) This is why I don't like Wednesdays, I swear I'm losing it! *(To Chris)* Chris... please excuse your self from the theatre and make your way to Mr. Green's office, he will be happy to see you! *(Smiles in a sly way)*

CHRIS:
(Evil glare to Monika/her friends. Picks up his backpack and exits theatre doors)

MONIKA:
(Under breath) Idiot! *(Gives Alex high-five)*

MR.EMILY
 Well, here are the scripts *(hands them out)* put your name on them *(hands out sticky labels)*

FREDDY:
(To Alex) Can I borrow your pen?

ALEX:
 Yah, after I'm done with it.

MARC:
 Use mine *(throws Freddy pen)*

MONIKA:
 This is so cool. I can't wait to audition!

ALEX:
(Sarcastically to Freddy) Yah, me too!

MONIKA:
 Give me a break! It's actually really interesting!

ALEX:
(Sarcastically) Never would have thought!

MARC:
 Me neither. Auditioning is a waste of time because I'm already the star of the show! *(Jumps up, flexes his muscles)*

MONIKA:
 I'm sure!

MS.EMILY:
 Shall we start? *(Exits right, Enters with Shakespeare book and sits down. Starts to read Romeo & Juliet, trying to get the attention of her class)* "Two households, both alike in dignity, in fair Verona, where we lay our scene, from ancient grudge break to new

mutiny, where civil blood makes civil hands unclean" (*Alex sticks up his hand*) Yes Alex?

ALEX:

I don't get it!

MS.EMILY:

Have you ever had an enemy?

ALEX:

Yah, I've had one (*Looks across to Chris*) why?

MARC:

(*Whispers to Alex*) The Montague's and the Capulets...Romeo and Juliet, their families were enemies!

ALEX:

Oh. I get it now. (*Terns to Ms. Emily*) Never-mind (*laughs*)

MS. EMILY:

(*Clears her throat*) "From forth the fatal loins of these two foes A pair of star-cross'd lovers take their life; Whole misadventure piteous overthrow's Do with their death bury their parents' strife. The fearful passage of their death-mark'd love, And the continuance of their parents' rage, Which, but their children's end, nought could remove, Is now the two hours' traffic of our stage; The which if you with patient ears attend, What here shall miss, our toil shall strive to mend" (*Pauses*) Romeo & Juliet is a mixture of hate, love, jealousy, confusion and power. This combination of emotions is intense and sometimes unfair, but it makes for a perfect play!

ALEX:

(*Sticks up his hand in confusion. Ms. Emily nods toward him*) So... this guy writes poems and the occasional book...(cuts off)

MONIKA:

Plays (*correcting him*)

ALEX:

Whatever... really though, what is he trying to do, bore us? I think he wrote plays just so teachers have something to torture their students with!

MS. EMILY:

(*Laughs*) You just have to look at it the right way, observe it, and live it.

MONIKA:

Yah, look at it from every angle!

ALEX:

(*Sarcastically*) Well I'm looking at it from all angles and I still don't understand!

MS. EMILY

Let me ask you something. Have you ever been in love, Alex? Has one woman taken your breath away, or touched your heart like nothing else? Has your reality been shaken at the sight of her beauty?

ALEX:

(Moves uncomfortably in his chair) Well, I wouldn't know, I guess... I mean... *(stutters, blushes. Chris's friend laugh at him)* what is the importance of this? Shakespeare is a bore; I don't have time for this!

MS. EMILY:

You think love is 'boring'?

ALEX:

Well, NO... love is ... its... *(Stutters. Looks around nervously)*

SHEA:

(Interrupts Alex) It's different, is that what you mean? *(Flashes Alex a sly smile)*

ALEX:

(Turns toward Shea) Yah, different. Love is different. *(The bell rings, kids get up)*

MS. EMILY:

Sit down! Sit down; I forgot to give you your assignment. I would like each of you to think of how Shakespeare is related to situations in your life and how characters in Romeo & Juliet are similar to the people around you.

PARIS:

I don't know any characters in this play!

MS. EMILY:

You should know enough about the characters to do this assignment!

MONIKA:

When do we start Romeo & Juliet?

MS. EMILY:

In performance class after school today! And about the assignment- observe Shakespeare, and live it, you'll be amazed at what you'll find!

(Students & Ms. Emily exit. Alex is alone, packs books and walks around a block, trips and falls. He swears & looks around. Gets up feeling awkward. Notices Ms.Emily forgot the Shakespeare book- ignores it, walks toward up left-stops-turns around, drops bag & walks toward It the book. Sits down in her chair, flips though the book. At first skeptical, but then interested, stops to read. Theater door opens, Ms. Emily enters, unaware of Alex. Alex closes the book and throws it in his bag)

MS.EMILY

(Reacts to the sound of the closing book) Oh hi Alex, I'm surprised you're here. Considering your not one to 'hang out' in the theatre.

ALEX:

Yah, oh.. Look over there!!! *(Ms. Emily looks. Alex kicks backpack to the other side of the stage)* must have been my imagination again. Sorry about being late today. My gold fish didn't really die.

MS.EMILY

I figured that *(looks suspicious)* Were you looking for something in particular, or...*(Moves towards Alex)*

ALEX:

Uh... I was looking for..some.. Scotch-Tape! *(Laughs nervously)*

MS.EMILY

And what were you planning on taping? *(Sits down, arms crossed. Alex walks backward and kicks his backpack. The book of Shakespeare falls out and opens)*

(This next scene must be done in a very cheesy and soap opera way. Alex is so much in love with Ms.Emily that he is oblivious to his actions and has a very stupid look on his face. He's acting like a schoolgirl on her first date. Ms. Emily is doing the same)

ALEX:

(Jumps up on a block without realizing it, this scene and words have taken over his body) But, soft! What light through yonder window breaks? It is the east, and Juliet is the sun *(kneels down, outstretches his hand to Ms. Emily looking around)*

MS.EMILY:

(Puts hand on her face) Ay me! *(Runs over in front of Alex with big strides, ignores him. looks off in the distance)*

ALEX:

(Looks around the room searching for her) She speaks *(Falls off the block-rolls on his stomach facing the audience, head in hands)* O, speak again, bright angel! *(Looks desperately in love, playing with papers on the ground and caressing them, very feminine)*

MS. EMILY:

(puts hand around her self, comforting herself) O Romeo, Romeo! wherefore art thou Romeo? *(looks around with puppy-dog eyes, whimpering)*

ALEX:

(An aside, jumps up, smiles at audience) Shall I hear more, or shall I speak at this? *(Shrugs his shoulders. Confused)*

MS. EMILY:

(turns toward Alex:) What's in a name?

ALEX:

(overwhelmed at her sight-yells excitedly) I take thee at thy word! *(Jumps off stage and scoops Ms. Emily off her feet. Goes to leave & kicks the book closed-drops Ms .Emily. Alex does a double take at her- he figures he was dreaming- continues talking)* what do I want to ask you? Well. Uh.... Aw crap. Never mind.

MS.EMILY:

Ok. Now will you excuse me? I have to get marking that test on Theatre terms you wrote last week... I hope it's worth reading, because the last test, well, frankly.... It stunk!

ALEX:

(Pauses) Stinking is good *(face lights up with hope)* Stinking is better than failing, right?

MS.EMILY:

(speaking while talking, exiting up left) We'll see. Goodbye, And don't get into trouble *(points at Alex)* I'm watching you!

ALEX:

(Pauses in confusion. Picks up the book carefully of the ground and places it back in his bag. Walks toward Theatre door, lights fade out on stage. Blackout!)

SCENE 2:

(Hallway -students enter doors of theater. Cuddling each other in the middle of the hallway. a lot of noise-improvised dialog. Alex enters from stage left carrying a lot of books- Shakespeare book on top- he can't see in front of him. Toward center stage and a kid knocks Alex over. Books go flying- his backpack hits the ground. students laugh at him as he tries to pick up his books)

ALEX:

(embarrassed) SO what? Shut up! At least I don't look like you! (Points to a kid by his locker, kid gets angry & Monika holds him back)

DAIN:

Hey Alex, what's this? (Walks over to Alex and try to grab the Shakespeare book, Alex grabs it firsts holding it)

ALEX:

It's none of your business- that's what it is!

DAIN:

Let me see! (grabs the book and it falls to the ground- opens up- Alex and his friends freeze)

ERIK:

Let us take the law of our sides; let them begin.

DAIN:

I will frown as I pass by, and let them take it as they list.

ERIK:

Nay, as they dare. I will bite my thumb at them; which is a disgrace to them, if they bear it. (Bites his thumb and sticks it in the air, waves his butt around)

PATRICK:

Do you bite your thumb at us, sir?(turns to Marc)

ERIK:

I do bite my thumb, sir (cheeky and laughs. Gives high fives)

PATRICK:

Do you bite your thumb at us, sir?(mad he walks up to Marc's face)

ERIK:

(aside to Chris) Is the law of our side, if I say ay?

DAIN:

No! (slaps him on the back of the head)

ERIK:

No, sir, I do not bite my thumb at you, sir, but I bite my thumb, sir. (friends laugh & mumble) Draw, if you be men. (students draw weapons. text books, pencils and scissors) Gregory, remember thy swashing blow (smacks a text book over Patrick's head. Students start fighting)

MONIKA:

(from the back - breaks up the fight) Part, fools! Put up your swords; (everybody stops) You know not what you do! (laughs- grabs Marc's & Patrick's weapons- throws them off stage)

CHRIS:

(walks to the middle to meet with Monika) What, art thou drawn among these heartless hinds? (turns in a circle to show power) Turn thee, Benvolio, look upon thy death. (Monika turns, Chris draws a pencil to her neck and Monika draws a ruler)

MONIKA:

I do but keep the peace: put up thy sword! (*friends surround Monika and Chris's friend do the same to him*)

CHRIS:

(*Spits on her shoe*) Have at thee, coward! (*Drops his pencil and punches her in the face*)

(A huge fight occurs. The friends of Monika and fight against Dain's friends in a huge battle, people are killed and injured, screaming and rage. This will be very elaborate and huge. All the people will be letting out noises and blood on the ground People throwing punches left and right, very gory, and very real)

ALEX:

(*aside*) Help me!!! (*Somebody punches him. Alex crawls on the ground toward the book. Somebody grabs his legs, pulls him back to fight. Two girls kick the book. Alex closes the book and Dain is standing right over him and Monika*)

DAIN:

(*Turns around in a circle, confused- pushes Erik down. Everybody backs off Dain, they all look at each other in confusion and fright*)

MONIKA:

(*is crouched down low & starts to crawl. Grabs her backpack and exits, Alex follows- Dain notices them*)

DAIN:

(*points off stage toward Monika and all students run*) Get her! (*Lunges toward her but trips and falls. Exits*)

SCENE 3:

(*Monika enters from stage left running and Alex runs behind her, grabs the Shakespeare book off the ground, ducks behind a bush*)

MONIKA:

(*Drops her books*) Crap! (*Kneels down & picks her books up*) I'm so stupid! ARGGG... my English homework... ruined! Ms. Emily is going to kill me!

ALEX:

(*Step out behind the bush*) I HOPE SHE DOES! (*Jumps back*)

MONIKA:

(*Turns around*) Who's there! (*She laughs*) Is that you Alex?

ALEX:

Uh.. no

MONIKA:

(*Steps forward, leans over to look under another tree*) Where are you! Arggg ...you're always playing these stupid games!

ALEX:

(*Laughs*) Thanks for the show!

MONIKA:

(Stands up, grabbing the back of her skirt, spins around) HEY!

ALEX:

(Jumps out from behind the bush and back again) I'm over here!

MONIKA:

(Turns toward his voice) I'm trying to find you, Shut up!

ALEX:

Right! You really are not that smart, are you? *(Laughs)*

MONIKA:

(Springs up straight!) I wouldn't be talking. Whose homework do you copy? *(Puts hands on hips)*

ALEX:

(Defensive) That was only once, and I had to study for two exams that night... I needed your help!

MONIKA:

I never heard a thank you! *(Walks towards the bush)*

ALEX:

Thank you.

MONIKA:

That's better. So what's up with you and that Shea girl? Did you hear her in English class? *(Imitates Shea)* You mean different, Love is different!... OH Alex! *(Makes- out with an imaginary person)*

ALEX:

Stop it ok... geez, maybe she's a nice girl.

MONIKA:

Huh? *(Moves closer to the bush)*

ALEX:

Never mind *(steps out from the bush- Monika doesn't notice him)* Question: do you take pride in chasing away ALL the potential WOMEN in my life? Do you?

MONIKA:

(Looks around confused) I guess you could say that, *(laughs)* but I wouldn't call her a woman!

ALEX:

(Steps behind her) Shea's far more of a woman than you could ever be!

MONIKA:

GRRR (swings her arm -Alex ducks. Alex grabs her by the waist and takes her to the ground. Monika knees Alex in the balls. Monika lands on Alex and his backpack hits the ground. The book falls open to the Benvolio and Romeo scene about Rosalyn) Good-morrow, cousin! *(Hugs Alex and gets on her feet. Offers a hand and helps Alex up)*

ALEX:

Is the day so your...? *(Wipes his brow-staggers a bit)*

MONIKA:

(Checks her watch- laughs) But new struck nine! *(Slaps him on the back he staggers)*

ALEX:

Ay me! (*Smacks his forehead- sits on the ground*) sad hours seem long!

MONIKA:

(*Kneels beside Alex*) What sadness lengthens Romeo's hours?

ALEX:

(*Disappointed*) Not having that, which, having, makes them short!

MONIKA:

In love? (*Jumps back in surprise*)

ALEX:

(*Turns around*) Out-

MONIKA:

Of love? (*Laughs*)

ALEX:

(*Begins to walk away*) Out of her favor, where I am in love! (*Walks to down right*)

MONIKA:

(*Aside. puts a finger up*) Alas that love (*points to Alex*) so gentle in his view should be so tyrannous and rough in proof! (*Makes a discussing face*)

ALEX:

(*Looks off in the distance*) Alas, that love, whose view is muffled still. (*hears Monika laughing*) Dost thou not laugh?

MONIKA:

(*Runs over to Alex and gets on one knee, hand on her head*) No, coz, I rather weep!

ALEX:

(*Concerned, hand on Monika's shoulder*) Good heart, at what?

MONIKA:

(*Stands up and puts hand on her heart*) At thy good heart's oppression!

ALEX:

(*Pushes Monika away*) Why, such is love's transgression. Grief's of mine own lie heavy in my breast (*thumps his chest*) Farewell, my coz. (*Walks down left*)

MONIKA:

(*runs after Alex and blocks his exit*) Soft! I will go along; An if you leave me so, you do me wrong!

ALEX:

Tut (*pushes Monika away*) I have lost myself; I am not here; This is not Romeo, he's some other where (*tries to exit again*)

MONIKA:

(*Grabs Alex's hair and sits him down on edge of stage*) Tell me in sadness, who is that you love?

ALEX:

(*Tries to pull Monika's hand off his hair*) What, shall I groan and tell thee?

MONIKA:

Groan! (*Sees Alex is in pain and lets go, laughs*) Why, no. But sadly tell me who!

ALEX:

(*Turns to her secretly*) In sadness, cousin, I do love a (*pauses and leans closer*) woman.

MONIKA:

I aim'd so near, when I supposed you loved. (*laughs*)

ALEX:

(*Pats Monika on the leg*) A right good mark-man! And she's fair I love! (*Smiles*)

MONIKA:

A right fair mark, fair coz, is soonest hit (*grabs chest like an arrow struck it and falls to the ground*)

ALEX:

(*gets up and plucks the arrow out of Monika chest and throws it away*) Well, in that hit you miss: she'll not be hit with Cupid's arrow and, in strong proof of chastity well arm'd!

MONIKA:

(*Surprised and jumps to her feet*) Then she hath sworn that she will still live chaste? (*Disgusted*)

ALEX:

She hath!

MONIKA:

(*Walks to Alex, hand around his shoulder*) Be ruled by me; forget to think of her!

ALEX:

O, teach me how I should forget to think.

MONIKA:

(*Puts two fingers to his eyes*) By giving liberty unto thine eyes; examine other beauties (*points out to audience and nudges Alex*)

ALEX:

(*Daydreams about Shea and shakes his head*) Farewell: thou canst not teach me to forget.
(*Exits left*)

MONIKA:

(*Yells to Alex*) I'll pay that doctrine, or else die in debt! (*Walks back to pick up Alex back pack and trips over the Shakespeare book. She pauses for a bit, lifts her head up and looks around. Gets to her knees and shakes her head and notices her homework still on the ground. Picks it up and looks at her watch*) Time flies! (*Looks around*) Where did Alex go? (*Packs her backs pack and takes Alex's too*) I can't believe he has fallen for Shea! What an idiot! I told him so, all that boy does is get in trouble. He never pays attention in class cuz he too occupied with HER! How is he ever going to do those scenes in acting class? (*Exits up right*)

SCENE 4:

(*In a cafeteria. Students enter from different directions screaming, yelling. Food fight. Alex enters from stage right- gets hit in the head with a banana. Shakes it off, picks it up throws it across the room hitting Chris in the head. Chris gets pissed off. Alex ducks. Somebody yells "MR. GREEN!" and all the Students get back in their seats. Mr. Green pops his head in the door and then leaves. Students resume to normal. Alex sits beside Monika*)

MONIKA:
(Turns to him) Hey cutie! What's up?

CHRIS:

ALEX:
(Sarcastically) I love you too Alex

MONIKA:
(Grabbing his crotch) I'm hurting!

ALEX:
 What happened? *(Laughs)*

MONIKA:
 I went to the doctor today...

ALEX:
 What for *(concerned)* are you ok?

MONIKA:
(Fake and exaggerated) I can't have sex anymore...

MONIKA:
 So nothings changed then! *(Laughs at her own joke)*

ALEX:
 Do you remember when you kicked me in the codpiece! It's your fault! *(Puppy-dog eyes)* I can't have kids anymore!

MONIKA:
 And you were having them in the first place? *(Laughs)*

ALEX:
 Well. No. Never mind...

MONIKA:
(Out loud) GUESS WHAT EVERYONE! Alex is pregnant... I know it's hard to believe. But it's true!
(Puts her hand on his stomach) Is it a boy or a girl? *(Laughs)* Sorry Alex, just had to do that!

ALEX:
 Ha HAA... very funny Monika. Later. *(Walks off and sits at a table)* Hey guys. How's it going? *(Pats one guy on the back)*

FREDDY:
(Nasally voice) Uh.. Alex. If you haven't noticed... this is the 'nerds' table....

PARIS:
(Pushes his glasses up) Yah... uh... we play chess and stuff...*(snorts)*

PATRICK:
 Yah *(snorts & laughs)* chess and stuff. Good one Paris *(slaps him on the back)*

PARIS:
 Just kidding. What's up?

ALEX:
 Nothing. You? *(Sits down)*

FREDDY:
 Not much

PATRICK:
 Lunch times suck! And the food is crap!

PARIS:

Quit your whining!

ALEX:

The food's not that bad *(Rose catches his attention. Alex is enthralled with her beauty and zones out)*

PARIS:

(Talks to Freddy and Patrick) who's that?

FREDDY:

I'm not sure.

PARIS:

I think she's the new girl *(leans in to whisper)* She's a Hottie!

PATRICK:

Shut up Paris! *(Slaps him in the back of the head)*

(Freddie, Patrick and Paris watch Rose. Monika interrupts their thinking and yells to Alex from across the room)

MONIKA:

HEY ALEX! *(Picks up his bag, slams it on the table)* YOU FORGOT YOUR BACKPACK LAST PERIOD! *(Goes through his backpack, picks up the Shakespeare book)* AND I FOUND THIS COOL BOOK, I WANTED TO READ IT... COULD I? *(Walks over to Alex)*

ALEX:

Whatever you do: Don't open it!

MONIKA:

Wow. ... Sorry. Are you ok? *(Hand on shoulder)*

JESS:

He's hiding something! *(Silence)*

ASH:

YAH! *(Grabs the Shakespeare book from Monika)* You stole this from Ms. Emily, didn't you?

MONIKA:

(Turns to Jess) Why don't you leave him alone?

JESS:

(Gets in her face) Why don't you keep your mouth shut?

MONIKA:

I don't have too

JESS:

Well you should *(closer)*

ASH:

Do it Jess.... Get in her face!

ALEX:

(Jumps over table, parts Monika and Jess) quit it you guys! This is stupid. Give me the book. *(grabs the book from Jess)* Get out of here!

ALEX:

(Sits down, book on the table) Damn girls.

MONIKA:

They think they're god's gift to the world! *(Sits down beside Alex)*

PATRICK:

Yah, tell me about it!

Like you know anything about women!

FREDDY:

I DO SO!

PATRICK:

From whom? *(Laughs)*

PARIS:

Your mom! *(High five to Freddy)*

PATRICK:

Nice one!

MONIKA:

(Looks at book) So... Alex. You read a lot of Shakespeare?

FREDDY:

ALEX:

No. And I didn't steal that! I don't know what Ash is talking about!

PATRICK:

Sure *(laughs)*

PARIS:

(Laughs) You don't know anything do you?

MONIKA:

Well, there's one thing that I know *(mad)*

FREDDY:

What's that? *(Interested)*

ALEX:

(Under breath) Shut-up!

MONIKA:

Alex's likes Shea! *(Turns to Alex)* Why don't you get on with your life! Really... She's not worth your time!

PATRICK:

Yah, Monika's right. You'll find someone else

PARIS:

You mean Shea in our Drama class?

MONIKA:

Yes, you idiot!

ALEX:

(Watching Rose and day dreams) I'm completely over her, trust me!

FREDDY:

(Hand on the Shakespeare book) May I? *(Snaps his fingers in front of Alex's face)*

ALEX:

I wouldn't be doing that if I were you!

FREDDY:

(Slides the book toward him) What's the harm? *(Opens the book)*

(Lights go dim. Students are moving set and setting up for a party-laughter and talking. Improving lines, grabbing masks. Enter on stage dancing. Lights come up; Alex is standing down right with Monika. Rose is dancing with a guy)

ALEX:

(Grabs Monika's collar-points) What lady is that, which doth enrich the hand of yonder knight?

MONIKA:

I know not. *(Shrugs shoulders, walks off)*

ALEX:

(Walks toward Rose) Did my heart love till now? Forswear it, sight! For I ne'er saw true beauty till this night. *(Goes to dance with Rose, another lady takes his hand-he dances)*

CHRIS:

(Chris turns around, rage. Aside) This, by his voice, should be a Montague!

DAIN:

(Walks up to Chris) Young Romeo is it?

CHRIS:

'Tis he, that villain Romeo! *(Monika holds him back)*

MR. GREEN

(Grabs his collar) Go to, go to; you are a saucy boy:

CHRIS:

(Backs off) I will withdraw *(throws mask down, exit stage right)*

(Alex walks towards Rose, pulls her away from the guy. She's surprised & intrigued. Brings her to the edge of the stage, sit down together. He turns to her with loving eyes)

ALEX:

My lips, two blushing pilgrims, ready stand To smooth that rough touch with a tender kiss *(leans in to kiss her)*

ROSE:

(Hand on his face, pushes him away- backward somersault) Good pilgrim, you do wrong!

ALEX:

(Jumps to floor. gets on knees) Then move not! *(Grabs her arm and kisses up to her neck until they are face to face)*

ROSE:

(Looking disturbed and slaps him. Pause to think) hmm... have my lips! *(Pulls Alex in her lap and kisses him)*

(A middle-aged woman walks on stage, starts dancing with ease. Paying no attention to her daughter Rose)

ALEX:

(Fall off the stage, gets up & leans towards Rose) Give me my sin again! *(Kisses her)*

ROSE:

(Wipes lips, gives Alex a smile) You kiss by the book *(giggles)*

JESS:

Madam! *(No response)* MADAM! *(Walks up behind Rose)*

MOM:

Your mother craves a word with you! *(Hands on hips)*

ROSE:

(Lets go of Alex's hand, runs toward her mother)

ALEX:

What is her mother? *(Turns to Jess)*

JESS:

Her mother is the lady of the house! *(Hands on her hip)*

ALEX:

Is she a Capulet? *(Jumps on the stage, grabs Jess)*

JESS:

(Pushes him away, walks off)

ALEX/ ROSE:

(Aside) My only love sprang for my only hate.

(Mother drags Rose off stage left. Alex gets up and goes to Monika)

MONIKA:

Away, begone; the sport is at the best. *(She's drunk. Grabs his arm, pulls him off stage)*

ALEX:

Ay, so I fear; *(follows)*

MR. GREEN

(Grabs Alex and Monika) Nay, gentlemen, prepare not to be gone; We have a trifling foolish banquet towards!

(Pulls Monika and Alex to center in a dance sequence. People having fun and drinking. The dance ends. Alex and Monika are drunk. Stumbling around trips on the book and close it while holding each other in a drunken grasp. Everybody stunned then back to normal. Brush it off and exit. Students clean trays, bell rings-exit)

SCENE 5:

(Theatre- blocks around the stage. Alex runs through theatre doors, late for class- remembers he doesn't have theatre. He starts to enjoy the empty theatre. Puts on headphones, starts to sing quietly, starts to dance, jumps on the blocks. The cord to his Walkman pops out, he stops and looks embarrassed. Jumps off the blocks and puts his Walkman down. Talks to the audience)

ALEX:

I'm not usually like that. I guess I do really stupid things without really realizing it until it gets the best of me. Makes sense, I guess. *(Looks around)* I wonder where everyone is? Its not like Monika or Marc to be late for Drama...wait, maybe I don't have Drama. Aww crap, another period wasted because of the lack of brains... oh well! *(Smiles)* At least I can keep dancing, cuz nobody is watching, except you guys... actually, feel free to watch! Enjoy, kick back *(stops, thinks)* Wait, why am I even talking to you? You're just an audience, it's not like you REALLY think I'm Alex... or do you? No, to you I'm just a character with stupid friends, and a stupid wardrobe *(pulls at his jeans)*... but you know what? You're wrong! *(Points and laughs)* Sorry, I shouldn't have flipped out there..uh... as I was saying, there's a lot more to me than what meets the eye. It's not what I wear or how I walk, its what I don't say, and don't do because I'm too scared to discover it...that's what counts.

(Chris enters from Theatre doors; Alex runs off left. Chris pauses and runs after him. Marc & Monika enter)

Theatre doors)

MARC:

That History test was hard! Did you get the last question?

MONIKA:

Yah, the answer was Hitler

MARC:

Oh. That's his name...

MONIKA:

Failed?

ALEX:

Yah, I definitely got that one wrong. *(Stops, looks around)* Are we early or something?

MONIKA:

Have we EVER been early? *(Laughs)*

MARC:

You're right. Where is everyone then?

MONIKA:

I don't know! Maybe they forgot?

MARC:

Well, lets just leave! *(Goes to leave)*

MONIKA:

(Looks on stage, notices Alex's backpack) Alex is here, and he left his backpack!

MARC:

(Sees Chris's binder) And Chris was here too!

MONIKA:

I can't stand him!

MARC:

(Walks up on stage) Me either! - Let's sit and wait for them to come back, wherever they went.

MONIKA:

Alright *(walks on stage, doesn't notice the Shakespeare book on the ground. Trips over it, lands on the ground)* I pray thee, good Mercutio, let's retire! *(Wipes sweat off forehead)* The day is hot, the Capulets abroad- And, if we meet, we shall not scape a brawl *(punching the air)* For now, these hot days, is the mad blood stirring!

MARC:

Thou art like one of those fellows that when he enters the confines of a tavern claps me *(throws weapon to the ground)* his sword upon the table and says 'God send me no need of thee!' *(Laughs)* And by the operation of the second cup draws it on the drawer, *(stabs the ground)* when indeed there is no need!

MONIKA:

Am I like such a fellow?

MARC:

(Pats her back) Come, come, thou art as hot a Jack in thy mood as any in Italy!

MONIKA:

(Runs up to Marc) And what to?

MARC:

Nay, wilt quarrel with a man that hath a hair more *(pulls his hair)* or a hair less, in his beard, than thou hast! Thou wilt quarrel with a man for cracking nuts, having no other reason but because thou hast hazel eyes: what eye but such an eye would spy out such a quarrel? Thy head is as full of quarrels as an egg is full

of...*(Monika places a hand on his mouth)*

MONIKA:

An I were so apt to quarrel *(nunches the air)* as thou art, any man should buy the fee-simple of my life for an hour and a quarter!? *(Hears the Theatre door, Chris enters)* By my head, here come the Capulets!

MARC:

(Walks down stage) By my head, I care not!

CHRIS:

(Erik, Dain and others. Talks to them) Follow me close, for I will speak to them *(places a foot on stage)* Gentlemen, good den: a word with one of you.

MARC:

(Laughs) And but one word with one of us? *(Looks at Monika, walks toward Chris)* Couple it with something; make it a word *(closer)* and a blow.

CHRIS:

(On stage) You shall find me apt enough to that, sir, an you *(pokes him with dagger)* will give me occasion.

(Chris and Marc's friends enter and take sides)

MARC:

(Grabs dagger, flips it toward him) Could you not take some occasion without giving?

CHRIS:

Mercutio, thou consort'st with Romeo,-- *(Marc cuts him off)*

MARC:

Consort!*(laughs- whips out ruler)* here's my fiddlestick; here's that shall make you dance *(sticks it to his throat)* 'Zounds, consort! *(Friends laugh at Chris. Points his dagger to Marc's stomach)*

MONIKA:

(Getting concerned holds back -Marc gets in between) We talk here in the public haunt of men: Either withdraw unto some private place, Or else depart; here all eyes gaze on us! *(Looks around, Marc and Chris back off)*

MARC:

Men's eyes were made to look, *(does a circle)* and let them gaze; *(walks to Chris's face)* I will not budge for no man's pleasure, I!

(Alex walks through stage doors and on stage)

CHRIS:

Well, peace be with you, sir *(pushes Marc away, walks toward Alex)* here comes my man *(face to face)* Romeo, the hate I bear thee can afford No better term than this,--thou art a villain!

ALEX:

Villain am I none; therefore farewell; I see thou know'st me not. *(Walks away)*

CHRIS:

(Calls after him) Boy, this shall not excuse the injuries That thou hast done me; therefore turn and draw!

ALEX:

(Turns around) I do protest, I never injured thee, but love thee better than thou canst devise, till thou shalt

know the reason of my love: And so, good Capulet,—which name I tender as dearly as my own,—be satisfied.

MARC:

(Tries to distract, calling Chris on) O calm, dishonourable, vile submission! Tybalt, you rat-catcher, will you walk?

CHRIS:

(Turns around, evil grin) What wouldst thou have with me?

MARC:

Good king of cats, nothing but one of your nine lives; *(Draws dagger to his throat)*

CHRIS:

(Draws his weapon to Marc's stomach) I am for you!

ALEX:

(Puts a hand on his shoulder) Gentle Mercutio, put thy rapier up!

MARC:

(Turns to Alex, hands him his backpack, jacket and hat. Turns to Chris) Come, sir, your passado *(throws his weapon to ground, steps closer to Chris, Chris punches Marc in the face. They fight and the sides cheer on. Alex is upset)*

ALEX:

(Grabs Monika) Draw, Benvolio; beat down their weapons! *(To Alex and Chris)* Gentlemen, for shame, forbear this outrage! Hold, Tybalt! *(Marc hits Chris)* good Mercutio! *(Marc high-fives his friends. Chris takes dagger from his friend and stabs Marc. Chris exits right. Friends run off.)*

MARC:

(Collapses, Alex catches him. Marc's holding his side) I am hurt. *(Yells off stage)* A plague o' both your houses! *(To Alex)* I am sped. *(To Monika)* Is he gone, and hath nothing?

MONIKA:

What, art thou hurt? *(Laughs)*

MARC:

Ay, ay, a scratch, a scratch; *(gasps)* marry, 'tis enough *(Alex holds him closer)*

ALEX:

Courage, man; the hurt cannot be much! *(Uneasy laugh)*

MARC:

No, 'tis not so deep as a well, *(laughs)* nor so wide as a church-door; but 'tis enough, 'twill serve: ask for me to-morrow, and you shall find me a grave man. *(Laughs, grabs Monika's hand, yells)* A plague o' both your houses! *(To Alex)* Why the devil came you between us? I was hurt under your arm.

ALEX:

I thought all for the best

MARC:

(Grabs Monika's hand) Help me into some house, Benvolio, Or I shall faint. *(Yells with left strength)* A plague o' both your houses! They have made worms' meat of me: *(gasps)* I have it, And soundly too: your houses *(dies)*

MONIKA:

(Checks pulse and puts a hand on Alex's shoulder) O Romeo, Romeo, brave Mercutio's dead! *(Monika sees Chris enter)* Here comes the furious Tybalt back again! *(Carries Marc off stage)*

ALEX:

Alive, in triumph! and Mercutio slain! *(Walks to Chris)* Now, Tybalt, take the villain back again, That late thou gavest me; for Mercutio's soul Is but a little way above our heads, Staying for thine to keep him company: Either thou, or I, or both, must go with him! *(Draws his weapon)*

CHRIS:

Thou, wretched boy, that didst consort him here, Shalt with him hence! *(Draws his weapon, they fight. Alex kicks weapon out of Chris's hand!)*

ALEX:

This shall determine that! *(Chris- lands on ground, Dies)*

MONIKA:

(Runs on stage, swings Alex around) Romeo, away, be gone! The citizens are up, and Tybalt slain!

ALEX:

(Smacks his forehead) O, I am fortune's fool!

MONIKA:

(Pulls him off stage) Why dost thou stay? *(Friends re-enter. Monika pushes Alex off stage)*

FREDDY:

Which way ran he that kill'd Mercutio?

JESS:

(Grabs Monika) Tybalt, that murderer, which way ran he?

MONIKA:

There lies that Tybalt *(points to Chris)*

JESS:

(Gasps and pulls Chris off stage left)

PARIS:

(Grabs Monika) Up, sir, go with me; *(exit left)*

(Alex is left alone. looks around desperately. Monika enters again, dragging Marc, exits down left. Alex gets mad, walks over to the book and closes it)

ALEX:

(Yells off stage) Marc? *(To audience)* Are you ok? Did any of you get hurt *(to himself)* This is nuts! *(yells)* Monika? Marc?

MONIKA:

(Enters from stage left) Yah, Alex. What's up?

ALEX:

Are you slain?

MONIKA:

(Confused) Am I what?

MARC:

(Enters from stage right) Hey Alex, how's it going?

ALEX:

(Confused) Marc! *(Runs up to him, holds his chest)* Where's the blood? And the zounds? *(Freaking out)*

MARC:
What are you talking about?

ALEX:
And Tybalt, who slain you (*pretends to stab himself*) They have made worms' meat of me: (*copies Marc's lines, looks at Alex & Monika*)

MONIKA:
Someone's been practicing. I didn't know you were so smart! (*Laughs*)

ALEX:
Practicing? IT HAPPENED!

MARC:
(*To Alex, concerned*) Should I call the nurse?

ALEX:
(*Into a daze*) Juliet's nurse? (*Smiles*) Juliet!

MONIKA:
Oh boy...

CHRIS:
(*Enters from down left*)

ALEX:
(*Stands up, gets mad*) Now, Tybalt, take the villain back again! (*Runs toward Chris*)

CHRIS:
Don't even think about touching me! (*Pushes him away*)

MONIKA:
(*To Marc*) Grab him!

MARC:
(*Runs toward Alex, holds him back*)

MS. EMILY:
(*Enters from theatre doors, watches*)

ALEX:
(*To Chris, still in a trance*) Villain am I none; therefore farewell; I see thou know'st me not!

MONIKA:
(*Runs to Alex, slaps him across the face. He falls to the ground. She helps him up*) I'm sorry, Alex. I had to hit you- You're going insane!

ALEX:
What? (*Looks around*)

MS. EMILY:
(*Claps her hands, walks on stage*) Bravo Alex, bravo- you need to tone it down just a little, and Monika, could you run in faster when you stop Alex?

MONIKA:
Yah, sure. I missed the cue.

MS. EMILY:
Thanks for being early today...

MARC:
No problem...

ALEX:
(*Confused*) What's going on?

MONIKA:
If you haven't noticed- we're practicing! And stop messing around!

PARIS:
Two weeks until performance Alex! (*Mumbles*)

FREDDY:
Idiot!

MARC:
Are you all right? You look a little pale! (*Walks toward him*)

ALEX:
No, no...I'm fine, (*aside*) I think. (*To Marc*) What just happened?

MONIKA:
You're acting like you haven't done this before! Give me a break! You haven't forgotten your lines already, have you?

ALEX:
I'm not sure? (*Confused*)

PARIS
(*Under breath*) Great, just great!

ALEX:
It's like he's a part of me now.

MONIKA:
What?

PARIS:
Who? (*Confused*)

ALEX:
Shakespeare!

FREDDY:
Did you get any sleep last night?

ALEX:
No you guys! (*Yells*) LISTEN! Something has happened to me.

MONIKA:
You've forgotten your line that's what happened! (*Walks off stage right*)

ALEX:
I guess I have. (*confused*)

MONIKA:
Are you going to be ready to do this in two weeks?

ROSE:
Yah Alex, you're my Romeo, and if you don't have your lines, were both screwed!

ALEX:
I'm Romeo?

MARC:
(*Shakes head, sighs*) Yes you idiot!

ALEX:
(*Walks down stage. Aside*) I'm Romeo?

MS. EMILY:
YES! You did the best audition out of the whole class- and you really took the drama assignment seriously.

ALEX:

(Aside) I guess I did.

MS. EMILY:

Now lets do Act 2, Scene 2. Alex and Rose down stage and everybody backstage. Places everyone!

(Students move into their places, lights go off and back on)

ROSE:

Three words, dear Romeo, and good night indeed. If that thy bent of love be honorable, Thy purpose marriage, send me word to-morrow

JESS:

(Offstage) Madam!

ROSE:

(to Jess) I come, anon.—*(to Alex)* But if thou mean'st not well, I do beseech thee-

JESS:

Madam!

ROSE:

(Aggravated at Jess) By and by, I come:—*(to Alex)* To cease thy suit, and leave me to my grief: To-morrow will I send

ALEX:

So thrive my soul--

ROSE:

A thousand times good night! *(Runs off stage)*

ALEX:

(Looking lost) A thousand times the worse, to want thy light. Love goes toward love, as schoolboys from their books, But love from love, toward school with heavy looks

ROSE:

(Runs back, whispering) Hist! Romeo, hist! O, for a falconer's voice, To lure this tassel-gentle back again!

ALEX:

(Lost-thinking he's dreaming) It is my soul that calls upon my name:

ROSE:

Romeo!

ALEX:

My dear?

ROSE:

(Grabs his hand) At what o'clock to-morrow Shall I send to thee?

ALEX:

At the hour of nine.

ROSE:

I will not fail: 'tis twenty years till then *(kisses him)* I have forgot why I did call thee back.*(laughs)*

ALEX:

Let me stand here till thou remember it.

ROSE:

I shall forget, to have thee still stand there, remembering how I love thy company. *(Hugs him)*

ALEX:

(Parts and holds her hands) And I'll still stay, to have thee still forget, Forgetting any other home but this.

ROSE:

(Pushes him away) 'Tis almost morning; I would have thee gone! Good night, good night! Parting is such sweet sorrow, that I shall say good night till it be morrow *(runs off- exits down right)*

(All the students clap backstage and come out laughing and joking)

MS.EMILY:

Excellent jobs you guys. *(walks to Alex and Rose)* My worries and stress are finally gone. It will be an excellent performance! Now everybody get out of here! Take all your stuff. Oh, and have a good weekend! And study your lines! *(Exits down right)*

(Students grab their backpacks and exit through the stage doors- talking and joking around)

ROSE:

Good job Alex, see you on Monday... Romeo! *(Smiles, picks up her backpack, exits stage doors)*

(Alex is alone; he looks around smiling, talks to the audience)

ALEX:

I guess some things in life can't be explained. Its almost like mysteries are put in your way as barriers to solve. I wasn't really sure what my purpose was, but now, I think I know. I make people laugh, its what I do, and I'm good at it. I've also discovered that *(opens Shakespeare book ,turns to a page, reads)* "There are more things in heaven and earth than are dreamt of in your philosophy." Hamlet said that to Horatio. I wish somebody told me that when I was ignorant and stupid! *(Laughs)* I guess I have a lot more to learn than I planned on! In the beginning I thought Shakespeare was a loser, but now, I think he's alright. *(Looks up)* I have to give it to you- you've helped me out, and even though you wore high heels, and never took a bath, I've got respect for you *(pauses, to audience)* I guess a good thing never dies, eh? *(Smiles up above, picks up his backpack and exits stage doors)*

THE END