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Almost a Man: A Collection of Short Drama

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Tyler Fruge
Dr. Brett Hursey
English 600

Almost a Man: A Collection of Short Drama

The purpose of this thesis is to examine through drama the concept of manhood and what our culture defines as being a man. Manhood is what my characters struggle to achieve, but they fall short of their goals due to issues of co-dependency, immaturity, and refusal to give up control; they are well-composed and obedient externally, yet struggle internally. My characters were brought up and raised in a setting with inarguable demands, explicitly on what to believe, how to behave, and what is and isn't acceptable. They've never been taught/told it's okay to say "I'm not sure if I agree with you." In my opinion, an important part of a boy's journey to manhood is when he chooses what to believe, how to behave and what he believes is and isn't acceptable. I also explore men's feelings of repression, the desire for identity, and the opportunities for choices.

I use a variety of writers as models: David Mamet, Ernest Hemingway, Quentin Tarantino, along with Jonathan and Christopher Nolan. While not all of these storytellers explore coming-of-age narratives, they all explore different types of masculinity. I believe they write the type of men my characters want to be: strong, independent, and well-defined—they are writers who have helped me better understand my characters and why they want what they want.

Almost a Man: A Collection of Short Drama

Tyler P. Fruge'

A Thesis in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for a Masters of Arts in English.
Longwood University, April 2014

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Almost a Man: A Collection of Short Drama

By

Tyler Fruge'

Longwood University

April 2014

Dedication

For my roommate Andrew Baker – for his friendship, tutelage, and above all, patience.

Acknowledgements

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Conversations We Never Have

Conversations We Never Have

Lights come up center stage on a kitchen table with a cutting board, a piece of fruit halfway sliced, a small cutting knife, and a mixing bowl with various fruits. HILLARY (a woman in her fifties wearing a morning robe) is holding a cup of coffee up stage left. JACK (a man in his twenties wearing a nice business suit) is cutting fruit into a mixing bowl.

JACK

Bananas first, oranges second, kiwi third...then...um...is there another tangy fruit other than oranges?

HILLARY

White grapes, sweetheart.

JACK

Right! White grapes and then blueberries...blueberries? Shoot.

HILLARY

Baby, what's wrong?

JACK

I forgot to buy blueberries. I know how much you like them.

HILLARY

I don't care, sweetheart. This breakfast is all about you.

JACK

And I want this breakfast to be perfect, Mama. I think we have some precut pineapples in the fridge. Would they be okay?

HILLARY

Whatever you want, sweetheart.

JACK

Perfect! Let me just finish cutting these bananas...

JACK cuts slowly.

One...two...three...

HILLARY

Do you want any help?

JACK

No Mama, I'm fine. Four...five...six...

HILLARY

(Sarcastically) If it takes you this long to finish, we'll be eating fruit salad for supper.

JACK

I'm making sure each slice is consistent.

HILLARY

Sweetheart, does it even matter?

JACK

Yes it does, Mama. Presentation is important. It's how you get what you want.

Pause.

HILLARY

I got a wedding invitation in the mail this morning.

JACK

Really? From who?

HILLARY

From the mama of one of your old classmates—Alex Duhon.

JACK

The one who beat me up in high school...

HILLARY

Yeah...that Alex Duhon. *(Quickly)* I bump into his mama at church on Sundays.

JACK

He didn't beat me up right away, you know? At first, he just asked me if my shirt was pink. I told him no, it was violet.

HILLARY

That boy's just plain dumb. I mean, how can't you tell violet from pink?

JACK

From there, one thing led to another. At lunch, my name was "Sissy." By the end of the day, it was "Cocksucker."

HILLARY tightly embraces JACK from behind.

HILLARY

Which is why I tore up his wedding invitation and threw it in the trash. You know I got a call to the principal's office that day. He said that's what happens when you let your son wear a pink shirt to school...I should've slapped his face and pulled you out. I'm sorry I wasn't there, Baby.

JACK

Don't apologize, Mama. I love you.

HILLARY

I love you too. I never liked his mama anyway. Maybe I should've slapped her instead. I might go do that next Sunday.

JACK

(Laughing) No—don't do that. I appreciate the thought though.

Pause.

HILLARY

I'm just so proud of you and your first job.

JACK

Thanks.

HILLARY

My little boy is a man now.

JACK

Mama, I need to concentrate please.

HILLARY pulls away from Jack, and places the cup of coffee next to him.

HILLARY

I made you some coffee.

JACK

You should have let me make it.

HILLARY

Don't worry, it's just the way you like it...

JACK

Is it?

HILLARY

Two tablespoons of cream, one teaspoon of sugar.

JACK

Thank you.

Pause.

HILLARY

You know who was on TV the other day?

JACK

Who's that, Mama?

HILLARY

That Jake Gyllenhaal.

JACK

Oh yeah?

HILLARY

Now there's a good looking man.

JACK

Yeah he's hot.... I mean, he's certainly handsome.

Pause.

JACK

Sorry, that didn't come out right.

HILLARY

No sweetheart, don't apologize! It's okay to say a man's handsome—he's got that gorgeous brown hair.

JACK

His hair *is* great.

HILLARY

And those beautiful blue eyes...I'm starting to have hot flashes thinking about them.

JACK

He's got that really sexy beard now, too.

Pause.

JACK

Anyway, thanks for the coffee, Mama. But...I need to concentrate on what I'm doing here.

HILLARY

You're not wearing a tie today?

JACK

I haven't decided on one.

HILLARY

Which one were you thinking about?

JACK

Well, I really like the Paisley tie...the one with the purple swirl...

HILLARY

Yes—that's perfect.

JACK

But...I think I'm gonna go with the standard blue—it just looks more professional. Yeah, it's the one Kyle got me for my birthday.

HILLARY

Kyle?

JACK

Kyle's this guy...*friend*...I met in my apartment complex. Anyway, he's the one who bought me the blue.

HILLARY

The blue one is boring.

JACK

Yeah, but it's professional.

JACK starts cutting another piece of fruit.

JACK

One...two...three...

HILLARY

So, did you call this "Kyle" yet? Maybe you should show him your office.

JACK

I'm gonna call Emily later—we're gonna do lunch together.

JACK continues cutting.

Four...five...six...

HILLARY

Baby, I think you should call Kyle over instead. He sounds like a nice "friend."

JACK stops cutting.

JACK

This slice is way too fat.

HILLARY

Jack?

JACK

Sorry. Kyle's a great *friend*. But I think I should go to lunch with Emily.

HILLARY

Alright—I mean, if you're *really* sure...

JACK glares at his finished slices.

JACK

This orange slice is ugly. You know what, I'm starting over.

JACK grabs another orange.

JACK

Listen, it's my *first* day, Mama. I want to make a good impression.

HILLARY

Impression?

JACK

It's important the office sees me together with Emily—not Kyle. Otherwise, they might start...assuming things. I don't want that.

HILLARY

That doesn't matter...

JACK

Yes, yes it does. It's all about presentation, Mama. I told you that.

HILLARY
Honey, not everyone's Alex Duhon.

Pause.

JACK
I don't want to talk about it.

HILLARY
(*Sighs*) Does Emily *want* to go to lunch?

JACK
Yeah...I mean, I think so.

HILLARY
Did you ask her?

JACK
I'm going to.

HILLARY
She might already have plans today.

JACK
She's usually free.

JACK picks up a slice of orange.

JACK
Awful.

HILLARY
Call her.

JACK
What?

HILLARY
Call Emily.

JACK
Why?

HILLARY
To see if she's free.

JACK
I told you—she’s usually free...

HILLARY
Jack...

JACK
Okay! Okay!
JACK pulls a cellphone out of his pocket.

JACK
(Dialing number) I’m telling you, she won’t mind.

HILLARY
You never know.

JACK
(On the phone) Hello? Emily? It’s Jack! I know... Yeah, it *has* been a while... Kyle’s great. Yeah, he’s been amazing and understanding and...

HILLARY
Supportive.

JACK
(Eying HILLARY) And supportive. Look, Emily... I was calling to see if you wanted to have lunch today?

Pause.

JACK
Oh... Oh I see. That’s, that’s great... Is he nice?

HILLARY
I’m sure he’s nice.

JACK
Well, I’m really happy for you. Yeah... yeah we should go on a double-date sometime. That would be great. Cool. Talk to you soon. Bye.

JACK hangs up.

HILLARY
I told you.

JACK

Please don't rub it in.

HILLARY

You can't make assumptions, baby.

JACK

I just thought she wouldn't guess Kyle and I were...together.

HILLARY

But you two spend a lot of time together?

JACK

Oh yeah, he's always taking me to these great restaurants. You know, I never tried Vietnamese food until I met him. He's got me hooked on it now. The other week we split a big bowl of PHO...it was delicious! It's like this big bowl of meat, vegetables, spices, sweetness, and tanginess. The best part is Kyle's got a homemade recipe for it. He's gonna make me some next week...

HILLARY

Jack, I meant you and Emily...

JACK

Oh! Well, we haven't really talked in over a month. But I'm sure she knows I've been busy. I mean, she's busy too...

HILLARY

But, you're not too busy to see Kyle...

JACK

Look, he's my *friend!* Stop interrogating me...

HILLARY

I'm not interrogating you. I'm just *suggesting* you take your lunch break with Kyle...

JACK

But...

HILLARY

But what?

JACK

But what if...what if people at work start talking?

HILLARY

Does he make you happy?

JACK

Well...I mean...yeah. Yeah, he does.

HILLARY

Then call him.

JACK

Okay.

JACK reaches for his phone and dials.

JACK

Hello? It's me. Hey...yeah I had fun last week too. Listen, do you want to have lunch today? Yeah, sure—I'd love to show you around. One o'clock? It's a date. Cool, I'll see you then. Bye.

JACK hangs up.

JACK

Are you happy now?

HILLARY

Are *you* happy?

JACK

Yeah. (*Realizing*) Yeah, I am.

HILLARY

Jack, you said presentation is important. Stop “presenting” yourself, and start *being* yourself.

Pause.

JACK

Well, I should go and get ready for work.

HILLARY

Don't forget your tie.

HILLARY pulls the Paisley tie out of her pocket and hands it to Jack.

They exchange a long look.

BLACKOUT

Prom Dates, Dresses, and Dads

Prom Dates, Dresses, and Dads

Lights come up on a center stage dining room table with several bags of pretzels, Tostitos chips, and cheese dip. MOLLY (a girl in her mid-teens wearing a pink prom dress) is seated arms folded at one end of the table, while MICHAEL (a man in his late forties wearing a police uniform) is seated at the other end of the table speaking through a walkie talkie. He carries several grocery receipts in his pockets.

MICHAEL

Yeah, the game's still at my house. I'll call you back in a minute, Jack. It's prom night, you know the drill.

MOLLY

Prom is the single most important event of any girl's high school career, Dad.

MICHAEL

I don't care, Molly.

MOLLY

What do I tell my friends?

MICHAEL

You wouldn't have to tell them anything if you weren't being so difficult.

MOLLY

Dad, Steven asked me to go with him...*Steven!*

MICHAEL

That's great. I like him, he's a good kid. You guys'll probably make prom king and queen. I'll be crossing my fingers.

MOLLY

No. No we won't—not in this dress.

MICHAEL

The dress is beautiful. You're beautiful.

MOLLY

That's what you said about my Homecoming dress.

MICHAEL

That one was beautiful too. I still don't see what the problem was.

MOLLY

Dad...it was a Halloween costume from Party City.

MICHAEL

It was on sale for thirty five dollars.

MOLLY

It was a *Disney Princess Costume!*

Pause.

MICHAEL

Well, I wanted you to feel like a Princess.

MOLLY

Really, Dad? There was a picture of Chip and Mrs. Potts—from *Beauty and the Beast*—on the front. I looked like a Disney Brochure.

MICHAEL

Molly, Mom and I are divorced now, so I have to be careful with how much I spend. I only had two hundred dollars left for the rest of that month.

MOLLY

Okay...what did you use the other hundred and sixty five dollars on?

MICHAEL

Household essentials.

MOLLY

Two six packs of Blue Moon, Tostitos, Pretzels, and cheese dip?

MICHAEL

It was Poker Night with the guys.

MOLLY

(Sarcastic) Oh right, that is *so* essential.

MICHAEL

Look—the dress I bought you for the prom was way more expensive than the Homecoming one. And you *came* with me this time. I let *you* pick it.

MOLLY

Yeah, but...

MICHAEL

But what? You look great.

MOLLY

It's pink...I wanted it to be blue.

MICHAEL

Blue?

MOLLY

Yeah—sky-blue. I wanted it to bring out my eyes.

MICHAEL

Well, why didn't you get the blue one? I know they had one.

MOLLY

You said the limit was a hundred and fifty, but that blue dress was two hundred.

MICHAEL

Well...that's life, sweetheart.

MOLLY

We *really* couldn't spend fifty extra dollars?

MICHAEL

Baby, Mom's not here anymore. We have to watch the budget ourselves now.

MOLLY

So I can't buy the dress I want, but you buy all that junk food for you and your cop friends.

MICHAEL

Those are people I work with—plus I deserve to have *some* fun.

MOLLY

(Sighs) No wonder Mom left...

MICHAEL

There won't be any prom night, if you don't watch your mouth.

Pause.

Anyway—the pink looks great on you.

MOLLY

Could you be a little more specific?

Pause.

MICHAEL

Well, you know, it's pink and...and...

MOLLY

And?

MICHAEL

It's got some pretty flower designs...

MOLLY

You don't know what you're talking about.

MICHAEL

It's a nice dress—what else do you want me to say?

Pause.

MOLLY

It's still just three o'clock. Can we just go look at one more dress?

MICHAEL

Our budget was a hundred and twenty, and I've already spent about fifty dollars on game night tonight. Buying another dress isn't an option.

MOLLY

Isn't there a place we could get a discount dress?

MICHAEL

Nope.

MOLLY

What about...Dillard's?

MICHAEL

No.

MOLLY

Macy's must have something? Anything?

MICHAEL

I told you, I'm not buying another outfit. One hundred and fifty dollar dress is enough.

Pause.

MOLLY

I guess I'll have to call Steven.

MICHAEL

Why?

MOLLY

Tell him the whole thing's off.

MICHAEL

Over a dress?

MOLLY

A dress that I just don't feel comfortable wearing.

MICHAEL

Why?

MOLLY

When Steven and I first met, he said the most beautiful thing about me were my eyes.

MICHAEL

Well, that was very sweet of him.

MOLLY

I know. He's the nicest, sweetest guy I've ever met. I really want to look great for him. That's why I want the dress to be blue—I think it'll bring out my eyes.

MICHAEL

Molly, you do have beautiful eyes—but he should be interested in *you*.

MOLLY

He *is* Dad—he loves my eyes.

MICHAEL

No, I get that—but what do you two have in common?

MOLLY

Um...well...let's see...I think...no...maybe...we go to the same school?

MICHAEL

Is that it?

Pause.

MOLLY

(Quickly) Like I said—he likes my blue eyes if we can't get the blue dress, I'll just cancel.

MICHAEL

You're going to really blow off your senior prom because of a stupid dress?

MOLLY

Well, I'm not going to tell *him* it's about the dress.

MICHAEL

Then what *are* you gonna tell him?

MOLLY

I got the flu.

MICHAEL

You got the flu?

MOLLY

Yeah—and I'm afraid I'm contagious—which he'll understand. So, we can pull the plug on this whole prom thing and nobody's feelings will get hurt.

MICHAEL

Know what I think?

MOLLY

No, what do you think?

MICHAEL

I think you're making this a *lot* more complicated than it needs to be.

MOLLY

What else am I supposed to do?

MICHAEL

Oh, I don't know—maybe go to the prom...

MOLLY

Not without another dress.

MICHAEL

Which, again, is no.

MOLLY

Because the bulk of our monthly budget went to snack food.

MICHAEL

Look, I'm the guy who hosts the parties, Molly. I have to be the one who supplies the snacks. I'm sorry you can't always have what you want, but life is about learning to compromise.

MOLLY

Oh speak for yourself, Dad. You never worried about compromising when Mom was still here...

Pause.

MICHAEL

Your Mom left because she was jealous I had friends.

MOLLY

No, Mom left because your friends were more important than her...me...us.

Pause.

I remember the fights over the bills—what you were spending—how little time you were home.

MICHAEL

It was just a few poker nights.

MOLLY

It was more than a few, Dad.

MICHAEL pulls several receipts out of his pocket.

MICHAEL

I guess I don't need this much beer tonight—I'll go bring some of these back.

MOLLY

Awesome, on the way we can stop at Dillard's.

MICHAEL

Whoa there, cowpoke—I didn't say anything about going to Dillard's.

MOLLY

(Sighing) Then it looks like I'm home with the flu.

MICHAEL

No, you've got a dress—a beautiful pink dress—and you're going to the prom.

MOLLY

But, it's not the *right* dress.

MICHAEL

Maybe not but it's good enough for your senior prom.

MOLLY

It's not good enough for Steven.

MICHAEL

Then you deserve *better* than Steven. Listen, if a dress—a *dress*—is what you're counting on to keep him, then he's not worth keeping in the first place. Take it from me—things like your eyes or what you wear or buy won't make a relationship work—that's why I lost your mother...

MOLLY

I know you think it's silly, Dad. But...but it's just that I want him to like me so bad.

MICHAEL

Exactly—you want him to like *you*. Don't *compromise* or anything less, sweetheart.

MOLLY

But...

MICHAEL

And you're right. I need to start compromising too. You're still going to Maria's after-party tonight, right?

MOLLY

Yeah.

MICHAEL

When I pick you up tomorrow—if you can tell me three things you and Steven really have in common—I'll buy a blue dress for your first date.

MOLLY

Really? But what about the budget?

MICHAEL

Somebody else can host poker nights. That'll be my compromise.

MOLLY

And if Steven is only about my dress and eyes then we won't even have to worry about a blue one.

MICHAEL
That's my girl.

A car horn is heard offstage.

MICHAEL
You gotta go.

MOLLY
Love you.

MICHAEL
Love you too. I'll pick you up at ten tomorrow morning.

MOLLY
Sounds good.

MOLLY exits stage right.

MICHAEL pulls out his walkie-talkie, and walks stage right, looking after MOLLY.

MICHAEL
Jack, it's Mike. He's driving a late model Corolla—license plate X60-2467. I'll meet you over on Broad Street after I pick up the night vision goggles.

BLACKOUT

Red or White

Red or White

Lights come up on a beautifully decorated dining table. SHAWN (a man in his early twenties wearing a kitchen apron) is setting dishes on the table. COLE (a boy in his early teens wearing a white undershirt and sweat pants) stands stage left texting on a cell phone.

SHAWN

Dad's plate goes at the head of the table. Mom's goes on the other end. My plate is on Dad's right, Uncle John's plate goes on the left, and...hey...do you think my place should be on Dad's right or left?

COLE

Meh, who cares?

SHAWN

I do, Cole. I need to sit on the side Dad's more likely to talk to.

COLE

Whatever.

Pause.

SHAWN

Well—what do you think?

COLE

Shawn. I. Don't. Care!

Pause.

COLE looks up at SHAWN.

The right side—Dad's right-handed. Happy?

SHAWN

Good observation. So, my plate goes to the right. Uncle John's to the left.

Pause.

COLE

Well—then again...

SHAWN

What?

COLE

Dad *has been* talking about how Uncle John scored some Super Bowl tickets. So, he'll probably stick to him like Velcro.

SHAWN

No. No he won't.

COLE

Shawn. *The Super Bowl!* You sure about that?

SHAWN

I can top that.

COLE

Oh really?

SHAWN

My article—The Dangers of Deforestation...

COLE

What about it?

SHAWN

Published last month!

COLE

For real?

SHAWN

Oh yeah.

COLE

That's awesome, bro! Congrats. I'm really happy for you.

COLE playfully punches SHAWN.

SHAWN playfully punches back.

You know, we should celebrate some time.

SHAWN

We're celebrating today, aren't we?

COLE

Well yeah—but we're celebrating Dad's birthday. I'm thinking we should take some time to celebrate us.

SHAWN

What did you have in mind?

COLE

I was thinking we could do something together. You know— the whole brotherly-bonding thing. A road trip somewhere...the beach, the West Coast, or maybe go fishing...or something.

SHAWN

That would be a lot of fun.

COLE

Yeah man—I think so too.

SHAWN

I just wish Dad hadn't wrecked his car last month—then he wouldn't need a ride to work.

COLE

Couldn't someone else take over for a week? What about Uncle John?

SHAWN

I can't ask Uncle John to do that. He's got two kids to look after.

COLE

I guess...

SHAWN

I'm sorry, Cole. I'd love to...but Dad needs me right now.

COLE

Right, Dad would be hopeless if we weren't here.

SHAWN

I'm glad you feel the same way.

Pause.

COLE goes back to texting.

Time for the wine glasses.

SHAWN exits stage left.

COLE continues to text.

SHAWN comes back with four wine glasses.

Okay, ladies first this time. First Mom...

COLE

Why are you even putting a place for Mom at the table?

SHAWN

Because it creates a positive atmosphere.

COLE

Mom's gone, Shawn. She left—packed up and ran. Setting her a place at the dinner table won't change that.

Pause.

SHAWN

Regardless, I want us to try and still be a family...even if some of us aren't here anymore.

COLE

But...

SHAWN

Cole. Enough. *I* know what's best.

COLE

(To himself) You're just asking for trouble.

SHAWN

So Mom first, Aunt Carla, Me, Uncle John...can you grab two more wine glasses from the kitchen?

COLE

(Sighing) Fine.

COLE exits stage left.

He comes back with three more wine glasses.

COLE

Voila.' You want fries with that?

SHAWN

Stop being a smart ass. Now put them where Sam and Bryan are.

COLE puts one wine glass at the top of the table.

What are you doing?

COLE

Setting glasses for Sam and Bryan.

SHAWN

Who's sitting at the head of the table?

COLE

Sam, I guess.

SHAWN

No. That is Dad's place. Sam and Bryan are over there on the left.

COLE

(Sarcastic) Sorry...

SHAWN

Listen, Uncle John, Sam, and Bryan are all over on the left side. On the right are me, you, and Aunt Carla.

COLE

Fine. Why haven't you put one for Dad yet?

SHAWN

Dad's is different. He gets the biggest glass.

COLE

Dude, you're being a little too over the top. Even for you.

SHAWN

We're throwing him a surprise 50th birthday party, Cole. I want him to remember it.

COLE

Remember it or remember you?

SHAWN

Remember the occasion, of course.

COLE

Then how does your article...never mind.

SHAWN

I'm going to go check on the turkey.

COLE
You do that.

SHAWN exits stage left.

COLE starts counting the glasses.

One, two, three, four, five, six...

SHAWN returns.

SHAWN
It needs another fifteen minutes.

COLE
Dude, you missed a glass.

SHAWN
No, I didn't. I'll get Dad's in a minute.

COLE
You still missed one.

SHAWN
They're six on the table. Can't you count?

COLE
And there're *eight* of us. Minus Dad is seven.

SHAWN
Right—six wine glasses.

COLE
Where's mine?

SHAWN
You're sixteen.

COLE
And?

SHAWN
You get a cup.

Pause.

COLE

I don't want a cup—I want a glass.

SHAWN

You want to drink milk out of a wine glass?

COLE

No, Shawn. I'm saying I want a glass of wine.

SHAWN

Sorry, Cole, can't do it. You're too young.

Pause.

COLE

Why do you always have to treat me like a kid?

SHAWN

Because...

COLE

Because why?

SHAWN

Because I've always had to look after you.

COLE

Because Dad's never here...ever.

Pause.

SHAWN

Look—I don't want to get into an argument about Dad. He's busy with work.

COLE

Nobody's *that* busy. He comes home late, goes to bed, and that's the only time we see him.

SHAWN

Look—he's a single parent, and...and he's busy, that's all...

COLE

He can't spare a few hours a day? I mean...is that too much to ask?

SHAWN

Look—today is about Dad, not you...

COLE

Fuck Dad!

SHAWN

Cole?!

COLE

I mean it! Dad wasn't here yesterday—he's not here now—and he'll be gone again tomorrow...he's never here.

SHAWN

Ok—so he's not perfect, but he still loves us. He loves us, Cole.

COLE

Really? *Really*, dude?

SHAWN

We have a roof over our heads, don't we?

COLE

Where was Dad the day Mom walked out?

Pause.

Exactly, bro. Mom left. She didn't leave a note, never said where she was going, and never even bothered to say "goodbye!" You cried...

SHAWN

I didn't cry.

COLE

Yeah, you did. We *both* did. Where was Dad? Oh, right, I remember...he took the day off from being a *Dad* and retired to the bar. I remember, because he was Stumbles Magee coming home that night. He was so drunk, you had to pour him into bed.

SHAWN

Ok--he didn't take Mom's walking out well...but neither did we.

COLE

But you stayed, Shawn. You always stayed with me—even when Dad wouldn't.

Pause.

Listen, why don't we just stop paying so much attention to Dad? Let's start looking out for us.

SHAWN goes off stage left.

He comes back with an empty wine glass.

He hands it to COLE.

SHAWN

Dad can get his own damn glass.

COLE

Yes. Yes he can.

Pause.

SHAWN

So what kind of wine are you drinking tonight? *(Holding up the bottles)* Red or White?

BLACKOUT

What's Wrong with a Tiger?

What's Wrong with a Tiger?

Lights come up on two chairs, side by side, representing a car. JASON (a boy in his late teens) sits on the driver's side. KELLY (a girl in her late teens) sits on the passenger's side.

KELLY

I just don't see what makes Martin Scorsese so great.

JASON

Kelly, he plays against types.

KELLY

Types?

JASON

Yeah—archetypes.

KELLY

Jason, you're talking to the non-movie buff here. You gotta explain these things a little.

JASON

Sorry...imagine you're taking a picture.

KELLY

Like the ones we took on our first date.

JASON

Well, that's not really where...

KELLY

I'll never forget how much fun we had walking all over downtown and taking those crazy pictures. (*Laughing*) There was that one picture of you picking the lion statue's nose...

JASON

(*Quickly*) Yeah yeah yeah—but...

KELLY

Remember when you took the one of me doing karaoke—I was singing that crappy Katy Perry song—acting out the lyrics. You couldn't stop laughing.

JASON

I know, but can I just....

KELLY

But, I think my favorite was the two of us in front of the giant fountain—the one with the angel on top—it was a beautiful picture. Make sure you email me those...

JASON

Kelly!

KELLY

What?

JASON

Will you let me finish?

KELLY

(*Annoyed*) Fine. What am I taking a picture of?

JASON

Uh...how about a tiger?

KELLY

Alright, I'm taking a picture of a tiger.

JASON

In the picture, what would the tiger be doing?

KELLY

I don't know...eating, I guess.

JASON

Eating what?

KELLY

Raw meat, I suppose.

JASON

Good—that's what you'd expect a tiger to do. But, what if the tiger isn't eating meat but cabbage?

KELLY

A tiger would never do that—they're carnivores.

JASON

That's what I mean by playing against type—a character who goes against what we expect them to do. You know how in famous movies—like *Star Wars* and *Indiana Jones*—there is always this definite hero and villain?

KELLY

Yeah.

JASON

Well, Scorsese does the same thing except he plays against our expectations of heroes and villains.

KELLY

And what are our “expectations?”

JASON

That the hero is always a good guy from the beginning to the end and the villain is the exact opposite.

KELLY

Gotcha.

JASON

Still with me?

KELLY

Yup.

JASON

Good, okay, so part of Scorsese’s voice—his style as a director and a storyteller—is he does two things...

JASON puts his arm around KELLY’s passenger seat.

JASON

He creates flawed heroes and sympathetic villains.

KELLY

Flawed heroes?

JASON

Yeah—people who end up doing good things, but are still flawed as people.

KELLY

I’m confused—why would we root for a hero who does bad things?

JASON

Well, we don’t start off rooting for them but they have this...this redemptive quality to them by the end. For example, remember the movie we watched last week—*Taxi Driver*?

KELLY

The one about the crazy creepy guy?

JASON

Yeah. From the beginning we know Travis Bickle is a psychologically screwed up individual but he develops an admirable quality to him by the end of the film--when he saves Iris.

KELLY

So he can be a sketchy, creepy dude, but still do heroic things.

JASON

Exactly—that's part of what Scorsese does. He shows heroism doesn't just come from morally and socially acceptable people—heroism can be found in anybody...even people we *don't like*.

KELLY

Okay.

JASON

The picture metaphor really helped, didn't it?

KELLY

It did, but—you know—it also reminded me of our third date.

JASON

Interesting—I would have never made the connection between Scorsese and our third date...

KELLY

No! I'm saying you talking about pictures reminded me of our third date...

JASON

Oh, okay.

KELLY

I'm just remembering how you left all those pictures in specific places for me to find—Like they were clues in a scavenger hunt.

JASON

(*Bored*) Oh yeah...that was a lot of fun.

KELLY

Remember—they led me to our favorite place—the zoo. Hey, can we go back to the zoo today?

Pause.

JASON

Sure...but can I say one more thing about Scorsese?

KELLY

(Frustrated) If you really have to.

JASON

Great, so Scorsese also creates sympathetic villains—people you can hate personally but also pity because you learn that, despite the terrible things they do, it's not all their fault.

KELLY

(Uninterested) Okay...

JASON

But the bad guys have to be interesting—that's what makes them compelling. Like in *Raging Bull*, Jake LaMotta is a terrible person; he beats his wife, drives away his brother, and we know he deserves everything he gets by the end of the movie.

KELLY

Are we getting to the pity part soon?

JASON

Yes. You have to pity him by the end because even though LaMotta deserves everything he got, he can't help himself; his flaws are a part of his personality. Scorsese, in all of his films, tries to make you question your concept of morality. Sympathetic villains and flawed heroes are products of the culture they are raised in. That's how you play against type.

Pause.

KELLY

(Quickly) So—ready to go to the zoo?

JASON

Before we decide, let me just tell you how the sympathetic villain can be seen in Scorsese's latest film...

KELLY

Jason!

JASON

What's up?

KELLY

I want to *do* something.

JASON

Me too.

KELLY

Something we can *both* enjoy.

JASON

Me too.

KELLY

Good.

JASON

That new movie with Meryl Streep looks amazing; I thought we could see that...

KELLY

No, Jason—I want us to do something together.

JASON

Going to the movies is doing something together.

KELLY

No, going to the movies isn't a together thing. It's a Jason thing. I thought we could do an "us" thing today.

JASON

Oh.

Pause.

What did you have in mind?

KELLY

For Christ sake, wasn't I just dropping some serious hints about going to the *zoo*?!

JASON

You want to go to the zoo?

KELLY

You weren't even listening—you were too busy talking about your man crush Martin Scorsese.

JASON

Hey! He is not my man-crush.

KELLY

That's not the point, Jason. You never listen to anybody else but yourself. Do you even know what my favorite food is?

JASON

Spaghetti?

KELLY

No, that's *your* favorite food—and we ate it last week.

JASON

That's kind of a trick question, isn't it?

KELLY

What is my favorite color?

Pause.

Ice Cream?

Pause.

Animal?

Pause.

JASON

Tiger?

KELLY

No!

JASON

What's wrong with a tiger?

KELLY

That's not the point...I...forget it. Just take me home.

JASON

Take you home?

KELLY

Yes, take me home.

JASON

Why?

KELLY

Because Jason, you're...you're a...

JASON

What? I'm a what? I'm listening.

KELLY

You're...you're a "sympathetic villain."

JASON

Huh?

KELLY

You heard me--a sympathetic villain.

JASON

I'm not Jake LaMotta. I've *never* smacked you around.

KELLY

But you don't recognize that the things we do are *always* about you.

Pause.

You said we should pity sympathetic villains, because their flaws are just a part of who they are. Well, I feel sorry for you because you can't recognize that the things we do aren't about us.

JASON

It's just that I assumed everybody likes movies and spaghetti and....

KELLY

Jason, stop. If you want us to be together, then we have to figure out something we like to do...together.

Pause.

JASON starts the car.

JASON

Your place is off Moss Street, isn't it?

KELLY

Third house on the right. Guess I'll text Amanda, see what she's up too.

JASON

I was gonna say the zoo is about thirty minutes from your house. Do you still want to go?

KELLY

Jason, don't even bother...

JASON

Well, that's too bad because I have something for you.

KELLY

What?

JASON pulls a scrapbook from underneath his seat.

What's this?

JASON

I took some pictures of our first date and made a scrapbook with them. (*Points at the cover*) I called it, "Our Adventure Book."

Pause.

KELLY

Wait. You got that from the movie *Up*, didn't you?

JASON

I...

KELLY

Didn't you?

JASON

Look, I wanted to make you something, but I couldn't think of anything. So, I watched my favorite movies until something came to mind. When I got to *Up*, I remembered all those pictures and the idea just clicked.

Pause.

Don't you see—the movies made me remember that I love you, Kelly.

Pause.

KELLY

Hey Jason?

JASON

Yeah?

KELLY

Why *don't* we go see a movie?

JASON

Really?

KELLY

Yeah—but nothing Scorsese. I don't do blood and gore.

JASON

No, that's perfectly cool! What would *you* like to go see?

KELLY

A romantic comedy.

JASON

Not my kind of things but, if you want to see one—let's do it then.

KELLY

Thank you.

JASON

But, on the way, can I just explain to you all the reasons why Woody Allen sucks...

KELLY

Jason...

JASON

Just asking.

BLACKOUT

The Point of Having Wings

The Point of Having Wings

Lights come up on a preteen boy's bedroom. Stage right, a poster is taped to a single flat—representing one of the bedroom walls—stating, “Come See Jimmy: The Messenger of God!” JIMMY (a boy wearing jeans, a white undershirt, with angel wings growing out of his back) stands center stage straining.

JIMMY

Come on...extend...flap.

He stops straining.

What's the point of having wings if I can't use them?

JEFFREY (a man in his forties wearing a white shirt—sleeves rolled up—black pants, suspenders, and a boater hat) enters stage left.

JEFFREY

Jimmy, it's time for rehearsal.

JIMMY

(Turning) Dad, I'm really tired today. Can we just take the day off?

JEFFREY

Absolutely not. It's spring break which means a bigger crowd than usual. So no slacking.

JIMMY

(Sighing) Okay.

JEFFREY

Now remember, arms out.

JIMMY extends his arms.

JEFFREY

No, no, no—not at the sides—you're not imitating Jesus on the cross. Stretch your arms towards the audience. Almost like you're giving them a hug.

JIMMY

Dad, that just sounds weird and creepy.

JEFFREY

You're an angel. It works.

JIMMY stretches his arms toward the audience.

And smile. Don't forget to smile...you just arrived from heaven.

JIMMY grins.

JEFFREY

Smile like you *mean* it.

JIMMY forces a big smile.

Good enough.

JEFFREY stands in front of JIMMY.

(To audience) Ladies and Gentlemen! You've read about the Seven Wonders of the World—the pyramids of Egypt, The Great Wall of China, The Taj Mahal, and so many others. But! Ladies and Gentlemen, you're about to see the next Wonder of the World. The heavens above opened a pathway between the pearly gates and our own county. Proof? Proof! Here is all the proof you'll ever need...

JEFFREY moves off to the side. JIMMY stands in place spacing out.

(Whispering) Jimmy, that's your cue!

JIMMY

Oh sorry!

JIMMY steps into position.

JEFFREY

Ladies and Gentlemen, I give you Jimmy: The Messenger of God! Hugs are free, pictures are ten dollars, and it's five dollars for five questions. Ask him anything you want, he'll have an answer. Where is Heaven? Is there a God? What happens after we die? Anything, Ladies and Gentlemen! Step right up and don't be shy!

Pause.

JEFFREY

(To Jimmy) Don't forget your cue!

JIMMY

Sorry, I zoned out for a second!

JEFFREY

Well, be mindful about *not* zoning out.

JIMMY

Can I have a day off soon? I've been at this all weekend.

JEFFREY

Jimmy, this is Spring Break. Spring Break equals money. We can't afford to lose this opportunity.

Pause.

JIMMY

You know, my teacher—Mrs. Boyens—says I'm really good at writing poetry.

JEFFREY

Did she now?

JIMMY

Yeah, she says I have a real knack for it.

JEFFREY

Jim, that's great. I'm proud of you, pal.

JIMMY

So, I was thinking—instead of pretending to be an angel—I could make money by reciting some of my poems for people.

JEFFREY

(Laughing) Jimmy, no one wants to listen to poetry.

JIMMY

Why not?

JEFFREY

Well, to be honest, bud, I don't think they're gonna be listening to the poems. They'll still just be staring at your wings.

JIMMY

Maybe we could try and hide the wings...

JEFFREY

Jimmy, enough. Nobody's gonna pay to listen to your poetry. The wings are what draw a crowd.

JEFFREY squeezes JIMMY's shoulder.

Son, I'm proud of you—I really am. But we have to be realistic. Anybody can pick up a book of poems, but no one—anywhere—gets to see a twelve-year-old boy with magic wings.

JIMMY

Could I at least recite some poems before we show them the wings? Just to show people I'm more than what's growing out of my back.

JEFFREY

If there's time, we'll see.

Pause.

JIMMY

Dad...I don't want to do this anymore.

JEFFREY

Of course you do. It's a calling.

JIMMY

But, I'm not a messenger of God. I'm just Jimmy. I mean, yeah, I have angel wings. But, I can't fly and I don't have visions—heck, I don't even know if there *is* a heaven.

JEFFREY

Son, you have angel wings *growing* out of your back. How can there *not* be a heaven?

JIMMY

But, what if it's not a religion thing...what if it's like a science fiction thing? It could be some kind of new mutation, you know, like *X-Men*.

JEFFREY

Well, either way it's a *money* thing. We can't just have you walking around with angel wings and let it go to waste. I'm already one month behind on the mortgage.

JIMMY

Why can't you just get another job?

JEFFREY

Doing what, Jimmy? It's not like I have a college degree.

JIMMY

There's got to be something—something better than this.

JEFFREY

The best I could do is work at a McDonalds.

JIMMY

Well okay, work there. I don't see the problem.

JEFFREY

That's minimum wage, son.

JIMMY

So?

JEFFREY

Son—do the math, that's seventy-two dollars a day. That's not enough for us to eat or pay off our mortgage.

JIMMY

I'll get a job then. That way, I could help you out.

JEFFREY

What would you do? Who would hire a twelve-year-old boy? Now if you could do something else with those angel wings, there might be a chance.

JIMMY

Dad, we made up the idea they were "Angel Wings." We don't know if that's what they are. They may look like angel wings, but that doesn't mean I'm an angel.

JEFFREY

No one else has to know that do they?

JIMMY

Well, I *know*. And I know I hate it.

JEFFREY

Look, son— the money we make off of your wings helps us out...*a lot*. Whether it's from God or a freak accident doesn't matter. What matters is it helps keep our heads above water.

Pause.

I remember when I took you to the ER, when those wings started growing out of your back. The doctors said you were healthy, you weren't gonna die, but none of them could explain what was happening to you. Then I got the bill and I panicked. I didn't know how I was going to pay for it. But, I started looking at your wings...they looked just like angel wings. You're right, I don't know if they truly are "angel wings." But there are plenty of God-fearing folks out there, Jim—all willing to pay good money for a look at these wings.

JIMMY

So you just lie to them.

Pause.

JEFFREY

You think being a single parent is easy? You have to learn how to survive. I'm not talking about my survival, but *our* survival. I want *us* to survive Jimmy. I do.

JIMMY

I can't be something I'm not. If I'm not an angel, it's wrong to make people think I am. I want to be...

JEFFREY

What? What do you want to be?

JIMMY

I want to be "Just Jimmy." Or even, "Jimmy the Poet."

JEFFREY

"Jimmy the Poet" won't put food on the table.

Pause.

And "Just Jimmy"...won't pay the mortgage, or keep us from going bankrupt—or stop Child Protection Services from taking you away.

JIMMY

Wha...what do you mean?

JEFFREY

Jim, if we lose the house, Child Protection Services could take you away from me.

Pause.

JEFFREY puts a hand on JIMMY'S shoulder.

JEFFREY

I love you, pal. I'm not saying what we're doing is right, but it keeps us together— a family. I don't want to lose you.

Pause.

Do you want them to take you away from me?

JIMMY

I just want to do the right thing.

JEFFREY

Sometimes the “right” thing isn’t the *best* thing. You could tell everyone the truth, but what would that get you? Who would take care of you? Child Services could put you in a foster home—a home where anything could happen. *Anything*.

JIMMY

Dad, you’re scaring me.

JEFFREY

Am I? Good. Cause it damn sure scares me.

JIMMY

You don’t know that will happen.

JEFFREY

Do you know it won’t?

Pause.

JIMMY

No.

JEFFREY

I’ll never do anything to hurt you, Jim. I love you. Anybody can do the right thing, but not everyone can do the *best* thing. I’m your Dad—I want what’s best for you. So, what’s better? Being “Just Jimmy” or “Jimmy: The Messenger of God”?

JIMMY

But “Just Jimmy” can...

JEFFREY

Yes?

JIMMY

He can....he can... (*Turning his back*) I don’t know...

JEFFREY

Exactly. “Just Jimmy” doesn’t sell tickets. “Just Jimmy” doesn’t pay the bills. “Just Jimmy” just isn’t enough to keep us together.

Pause.

JEFFREY

But, Jimmy—the amazing boy with wings—can make people believe he’s a messenger of God...even if he isn’t really one.

JIMMY

But who am I if I always pretend to be someone else?

JEFFREY

A survivor—you’re a survivor. We both are. Your wings—that’s an amazing gift to have. People love you for having wings.

JIMMY

Those people don’t even *know* me. I’m just a freak with feathers to them.

JEFFREY

Whether or not you’re really an angel, somebody or something gave you the wings for *playing* one. You see that, don’t you?

JIMMY

Well....I mean...what about...yes.

JEFFREY

Then give folks something to believe in. They’re standing in line *waiting* to believe.

JEFFREY leads JIMMY down center stage close to the audience.

A spotlight comes up on him.

JIMMY

(To audience) My name is Jimmy and I’m...a messenger of God. For five dollars, I’ll tell you the date of Judgment Day. For ten dollars, I will cure the sick. For fifteen dollars, I can guarantee you a place in Heaven.

JIMMY stretches his arms to the audience.

BLACKOUT

A Place for Abandoned Things

A Place for Abandoned Things

Lights come up on a bare stage with a smashed urn center stage. MAX (a boy in his preteens) hovers over the urn alongside CAITLIN (a girl in her late teens).

CAITLIN

I can't believe you.

MAX

Oops.

CAITLIN

What are you going to tell Dad...

MAX

Not it.

CAITLIN

You broke it!

MAX

Not. It!

CAITLIN

You smashed Mom's Urn, Max! Mom's *Urn!* Jesus Christ...

MAX

Can't we just...get a new one?

CAITLIN

(Sarcastically) Oh, sure Max. Urns are easily replaceable. No big deal. We can go get one for five ninety-five at Wal-Mart.

MAX

Great, when are we going?

CAITLIN slaps MAX on the back of the head.

Ow! Cate, what was that for?

CAITLIN

For being dumb. I wasn't serious.

MAX

Well *sorry* for not catching on.

CAITLIN

You should be. Mom isn't someone you can replace. Do you understand that?

MAX

I guess...

CAITLIN

Then stop being an idiot!

Pause.

MAX

What are we going to tell Dad?

CAITLIN

The question is not we, but you...what are *you* going to tell Dad?

MAX

Do I have to tell him by myself?

CAITLIN

Yes, you do, Max. Remember when you got the F on your report card?

MAX

Yup...in science.

CAITLIN

Right, in science. You needed Dad's signature, but you wanted me to sign it so he wouldn't find out.

MAX

Science isn't my best subject, Cate.

CAITLIN

It doesn't matter, Max—I didn't sign it. You can't just hide from the world when you mess up. We've been over this before. I just don't know when it's gonna sink in for you.

MAX

Well, what are...what am *I* going to tell Dad?

CAITLIN

The truth, obviously.

MAX

Easier said than done.

CAITLIN

It's your fault for being clumsy.

MAX

I mean, I didn't realize it was right behind me...

CAITLIN

Mom! Don't refer to *her* as *it*.

MAX

Sorry. I didn't realize *she* was right behind me. Todd and I were playing catch...

CAITLIN

In the house.

MAX

Right. In the house.

CAITLIN

Why were you playing baseball in the house?

MAX

We were practicing for the game this weekend.

CAITLIN

You seriously thought practicing baseball in the house was a good idea?

MAX

I don't know what to tell you, Cate. I don't *think* about things—I just *do* things.

CAITLIN

Well, next time, think before you leap.

MAX

Can't we just tell Dad we *both* did it?

CAITLIN

No, Max—you have to take responsibility! Do you even listen to me?

MAX

But, I'll be grounded...and Todd and I were gonna go to a concert in a few weeks.

CAITLIN

If you didn't hang out with Todd, this type of stuff would never happen.

MAX

Don't say that, Cate. He's the one who got me into baseball in the first place.

CAITLIN

So he convinced you to throw a baseball *in the house*?!

MAX

No—that's not what I mean. I'm saying he's the one who noticed I was good at baseball. Before Todd, I didn't know if I was good at anything. One day, we started hanging out—I brought a Superman comic book to school—turns out Superman is his favorite superhero. Anyways, he's a catcher on the baseball team and talked me into trying out.

CAITLIN

But, Max, don't you see? Baseball is played *outside*. Not inside where you can break your mother.

MAX

Yeah, I see that now. I wasn't thinking.

CAITLIN

Damn it, Max. That's your problem—not thinking.

MAX

I said I'm sorry.

Pause.

MAX

What should we do then? I mean we can't just sweep it up...

CAITLIN

Her! We can't just sweep *her* up!

MAX

We can't just sweep her up.

CAITLIN

I don't know...shit.

MAX

Wait, I have an idea.

MAX exits stage right.

He reenters with a zip lock bag.

CAITLIN

Max...no...just no.

MAX

Why not—we have to store her somewhere.

CAITLIN

That is so...degrading!

MAX

Would you rather someone accidentally step in her?

CAITLIN

No, but...

MAX

We gotta store her until one of us comes up with a better plan...or Dad comes home.

CAITLIN

Yeah...but...

MAX

Cate!

CAITLIN

Okay, okay—fine. Who's gonna do it?

MAX

Not it!

CAITLIN

What?

MAX

Not it.

CAITLIN

Stop acting like a kid, Max.

MAX

Not it.

CAITLIN

You can't say...

MAX

Not it.

CAITLIN

You're being...

MAX

Not it.

CAITLIN

Who isn't wetting the bed again tonight?

MAX

Not it...

CAITLIN

Ha—got you!

MAX

Damn. Two outta three?

CAITLIN

Shut up and start cleaning.

MAX

Aww....

CAITLIN

Now!

MAX

Fine.

MAX starts to exit stage right.

CAITLIN

Where are you going?

MAX

To get the Dustbuster.

CAITLIN

What?!

MAX

How else am I supposed to clean her up?

CAITLIN

This is our mother—not cigarette butts. Could you be anymore insensitive?

MAX

I'm sorry—I'm just trying to help and I don't see what makes Mom so special.

Pause.

(Frantic) I didn't mean it like that.

CAITLIN

Yes...you did. You want to know what makes Mom so special?

MAX

I know she's special, Cate.

CAITLIN

No, you don't. You just said it yourself—stop trying to deny it.

MAX

Okay...

CAITLIN

Mom's first husband—my father, not yours—was an alcoholic. He'd come home late, drunk...Mom always tried to stop him—she took double the beatings I got. He never loved me—or her—which is why she got us as far away from him as she could.

Pause.

MAX

What was she like?

CAITLIN

She had a beautiful voice.

MAX

Really?

CAITLIN

Yeah, it was soothing—calm—made everything seem better.

MAX

I wish I could have heard it.

Pause.

CAITLIN clenches her fists.

CAITLIN

(Frustrated) Why did you have to smash her urn?

MAX

Cate, I get it. I screwed up. For the zillionth time, I'm sorry.

CAITLIN

No, no you're not. If you knew Mom—if you *really* knew her, you'd be sorry.

MAX

It was an accident, Cate.

CAITLIN

You were *born* an accident.

MAX

Shut up!

CAITLIN

It's true. You're the reason she's not here.

MAX

I didn't mean to.

CAITLIN

You never *mean* to—you just *do*...you always do.

MAX

Cate...why—why are you saying all this?

CAITLIN

Cause I blame you...you getting born killed her.

MAX

Don't! Don't say that!

CAITLIN

She died in the hospital—and all I got was you.

MAX starts shaking.

MAX

Just because I can't remember, doesn't mean I don't appreciate her. That's why I play baseball and hang out with Todd, I don't feel worthless there like I do here. But, I guess—after hearing you and Mom's story—it's official. I *am* worthless...

CAITLIN

Max...

MAX

You're right. It would be better for Mom to be here instead of me. But you know what I hate you too, Cate; I hate that you're here and not Mom. If Mom was here, she wouldn't make me out to be scum of the Earth. If Mom was here, she wouldn't say the things *you* say to me.

CAITLIN

Max...Max, I...

MAX

Mom would love me, and she'd forgive me. But you won't—you won't ever forgive me.

CAITLIN

No—no, that's not true...

MAX

You're an ugly, hateful bitch, and I wish I had Mom instead of you.

CAITLIN

Max...how can you say that?

MAX

I learned it all from you, Cate—every word, every feeling.

Pause.

CAITLIN

What are *we* going to do with Mom's ashes?

MAX

I was going to...wait—we?

CAITLIN

That's what I said, dummy. *We*.

MAX

Well, *we* need to store her someplace safe. That's why I chose the zip lock bag.

CAITLIN

Okay, but let's put her some place respectable.

MAX

What about the fireplace mantle?

CAITLIN

I like that. She'll be under her portrait.

MAX

I still have to tell Dad.

CAITLIN

We'll both tell him.

MAX

But you didn't do anything.

CAITLIN

Yes I did. And I've got to stop doing it. Mom, would want it that way.

Pause.

MAX

I'm sorry, Cate.

CAITLIN

I'm sorry too.

BLACKOUT

Water Works

Water Works

Lights come up on a dining table (center stage) with four chairs. LOGAN (a man in his mid-twenties wearing a well ironed golf shirt and slacks) is sorting through several grocery bags. APRIL (a woman in her mid-twenties, pregnant, and wearing maternity clothes) sits at one of the far ends of the dining table with a pencil in her hand—reading a book of baby names. In her ears are a set of earphones connected to an IPHONE.

APRIL

(To herself) Oooooo, Jasmine. That's pretty.

APRIL removes her earphones.

(To Logan) How do you feel about Jasmine?

LOGAN doesn't hear her.

Logan?

LOGAN

All right, breakfast. First, eggs, milk, juice...refrigerator. Rice Krispies...pantry.

APRIL

Logan.

APRIL throws a pencil at LOGAN.

LOGAN

What?

APRIL

I asked how you felt about Jasmine.

LOGAN

I...um...I don't know.

APRIL

Will you help me out here then?

LOGAN

Can I just finish this first please?

APRIL

(Sighs) Sure.

Pause.

APRIL

How was your appointment with Dr. Vaughn?

LOGAN

Inconvenient.

APRIL

Why?

LOGAN

Because, April, I can't get things done when I go. I can only do certain things during certain times of the day. In the mornings, I get to campus and grade papers. I can only grade five a day, any more than that and I just get pissy.

APRIL

After that, couldn't you...

LOGAN

And then I have to prep for my mid-morning lecture...

APRIL

But what if...

LOGAN

And then I have office hours all afternoon with my students...

APRIL

Uh, I think...

LOGAN

And then by the time I'm done it's almost 4:30...

APRIL

Logan, I get it. It would just make *me* happy, if you met with Dr. Vaughn regularly.

LOGAN

Those appointments get in my way.

Pause.

LOGAN

Crap.

APRIL

What's wrong?

LOGAN

I don't know why I thought this. Okay, so I put the Rice Krispies next to a bag of rice.

APRIL

And?

LOGAN

They're both rice. Does it make sense to put rice—a logical lunch or dinner ingredient—next to a breakfast item?

APRIL

Sweetheart, does it even matter?

LOGAN

Yes. Yes it does.

APRIL

Well, if it bothers you, don't do it. I really don't care.

LOGAN

But you see, then I'm gonna have to take everything out of every cabinet and reorganize everything based on type of meal. It's so frustrating.

APRIL

You need to relax. We're not gonna die if you put Rice Krispies next to the rice.

LOGAN

I just want to make things easier, you know, for the two—soon to be—three of us.

APRIL

But, when the time comes and our new little girl is here, what are you gonna do?

LOGAN

Oh, I see what you're saying.

APRIL

Really?

LOGAN

Yeah, sweetheart, I do.

APRIL

Oh Logan, I'm so happy...

LOGAN

You're saying I should hire an interior designer.

APRIL

(Shaking her head) No, I'm saying I'd like you to focus on the baby. Didn't you promise me we would have a name picked out?

LOGAN

Yeah.

APRIL

So, what happened?

LOGAN

Well, I was going to help until...

APRIL

Until?

LOGAN

Until I remembered I needed to estimate how much our—soon to be—hospital bill would be, which prompted me to go check our latest bank statement, which prompted me to go look at our grocery bill—which I hadn't taken into consideration—which then gave me the idea of categorizing our groceries so they would be easier to find.

APRIL

Okay then, well, how about you focus on only the baby today?

LOGAN

(Disappointed) Okay.

APRIL

Okay?

LOGAN

Okay...okay.

APRIL

(Satisfied) Okay.

Pause.

LOGAN
Can I finish categorizing...

APRIL
No.

LOGAN
But, it's gonna bother me all day if I don't.

APRIL
Too bad, sit down.

LOGAN drags a chair next to APRIL.

APRIL pushes the book towards him.

APRIL
Today is Baby Name Day. For you, it's a national holiday.

LOGAN
You're the boss.

APRIL
Now, I want you to look at this book and tell me which names sound appealing to you...Logan?

LOGAN
Sorry...

APRIL
Eyes on the book, not the kitchen.

LOGAN
Yup.

LOGAN starts reading.

APRIL
How do you feel about the name "Margaret"?

LOGAN
Margaret?

APRIL
Yeah, Margaret. It sounds sophisticated and pretty.

LOGAN
I guess it could work.

APRIL
You don't sound convinced.

LOGAN
It doesn't sound...I don't know...compelling enough, I guess.

APRIL
Compelling?

LOGAN
Well, yeah, I want our daughter to have a name that really stands out...like...

APRIL
Like?
LOGAN looks towards the kitchen.

LOGAN
Like...Lime.

APRIL
Lime?

LOGAN
Yeah, Lime.

Pause.

Or Honeydew?

APRIL
You want to name your little girl *Honeydew*?!

LOGAN
Yeah.

APRIL
(Puts her head in her hands) Oh God.

LOGAN
Wait, I got it—Kiwi!

APRIL

Why Kiwi?

LOGAN

Well, because, you know.

APRIL

No, I *don't* know. Why don't you tell me?

LOGAN

Because I think it sounds...ripe.

APRIL

Ripe? Are you kidding me?

LOGAN

Ripe—she will grow up to be a...fresh...healthy...ripe young Kiwi. But the only way she can do that is...if we know where the kiwis are, so I should go and make sure the fruit is categorized under breakfast...

APRIL

I knew it. You aren't thinking about names—you're thinking about your little "organization project." You know what, forget it, I'll just go and do this myself.

LOGAN

Wait, April...

APRIL exits stage right.

LOGAN starts pacing around the dining table.

LOGAN

Okay, corned beef hash? Breakfast. Well, wait, yes it's traditionally eaten at breakfast but do you *have* to eat it at breakfast? Who's to say you couldn't have it for lunch or dinner? In fact, is it logical to categorize these cabinets by meal times when certain foods could pass as breakfast, lunch, or dinner? Maybe, this requires a fourth category. But, what would I call it?

APRIL stumbles onto the stage, cradling her stomach.

APRIL

Logan, my water broke.

LOGAN

Its okay, we have twelve bottles in the fridge. Hey, for foods that could pass as breakfast, lunch, or dinner, how would you categorize that?

APRIL

No, Logan, listen to me. *My water broke.*

LOGAN tilts his head.

APRIL

The. Baby. Is. Coming.

LOGAN

Oh!

APRIL

(Quickly) Keep calm.

LOGAN

(Panting) Oh God, Oh God, Oh God. We need to leave right now. Oh April, you weren't due for another week...

APRIL

Logan, relax, a week early isn't bad.

LOGAN

What if you die in child birth? What if you miscarry? *(Crying)* Oh God, April the baby is gonna die.

APRIL grabs LOGAN, bringing her head closer to his.

APRIL

Logan, deep breaths.

LOGAN

Yeah.

APRIL

And in...

LOGAN and APRIL inhale deeply.

And out...

LOGAN and APRIL exhale deeply.

You okay?

LOGAN

Yeah, thanks. But, how did you...

APRIL pulls out her IPHONE.

APRIL

I record our Lamaze classes for you, since your mind wanders to other places.

LOGAN

Ah.

APRIL

Ready to go?

LOGAN nods.

APRIL

Don't forget your keys.

LOGAN starts to pat down his pants.

APRIL

On the table.

LOGAN

Right.

LOGAN moves towards the table.

He stops.

He starts messing with the groceries.

APRIL

What are you doing?

LOGAN

I need to finish this first.

APRIL

What?!

LOGAN

It's gonna bother me if I don't. Can I just write myself a reminder, so I don't forget where I was?

APRIL

No.

LOGAN

How about I ask the neighbors and give them a set of instructions?

APRIL

No.

LOGAN

I just...

APRIL

No. Logan, I want you to consider what matters. What *really* matters most. Right here. Right now.

Pause.

LOGAN goes off stage right.

He re-enters with a water bottle and three carry on bags.

LOGAN

I love you.

APRIL

I love you too.

LOGAN grabs his keys.

He begins helping APRIL off stage left.

LOGAN

April?

APRIL

Yeah?

LOGAN

Lime is going to be a beautiful little girl.

APRIL

I'll slap you in the car.

BLACKOUT