Almost a Man: A Collection of Short Drama

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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

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Longwood University

April 2014
Dedication

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

I would like to acknowledge and show my appreciation to the members of my committee—Dr. Steven Faulkner, Dr. Robert Lynch, and the English Department faculty. They’ve pushed me beyond my own limitations and believed in me when I could not do so. I also have to thank my peers and friends whose honest criticisms helped me grow as a writer and a person. Most of all I have to express my sincerest thanks to my thesis director, Dr. Brett Hursey. Not only did he take me on as his thesis student—even though I had little experience in stage writing—but gave me the freedom to find my own voice as a dramatic writer. He is my director, teacher, adviser, editor, and friend. Through him, I have learned more about good storytelling, writing, and characterization than I could have ever hoped for.
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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
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
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 onstage._

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
Could’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
(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

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.

(Emphasis)
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

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

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