

A GLIMPSE INTO MY WORLD: A COLLECTION OF TEN MINUTE PLAYS

HONORS THESIS

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by

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For the readers,

My hope in this world is to reach out to those who are like me. I understand what it is like to live with mental illness. There is a myriad of issues that you may face from day to day.

I'd like to let you know that wherever you are, you are loved. You've made it this far in life, and that is so very important. You are stronger than you think you are. No matter how many obstacles you may face, you are worth it.

I hope that my work can reflect how you feel. I hope that it brings you solace that you aren't alone in this world. Together, we can prove that our illness does not define us.

My heart goes out to you.

Best,

Caytlyn Phillips

## Table of Contents

Abstract...5

Mortified...6

Rot...15

Salon Small Talk...27

In Memory Of...39

Hear Me Out...50

In My Own Head...63

Disconnect...76

## Abstract:

The following plays are a glimpse into the world of mental health. They are based on experiences that I have witnessed firsthand. The purpose of each play is to capture moments among a myriad of different people that have undergone some form of stress. I've found that there are many generalizations about mental health. In my experience, every person is different. My hope is shed light on that idea. Through these plays, I want to show the good, bad, and ugly of each character's struggle. My goal is that the audience will obtain a new perspective on the world and how they view others. The topics that I've selected for this project cover self-harm, suicide, depression, anxiety, grief, and addiction. I felt as though the best way to capture these topics are through ten minute plays. As mentioned previously, each play is based off real-life experiences. I've found that it was extremely important to not create characters completely on an idea. It was essential that each character was fully fleshed out. Meaning, each character had to be completely authentic and true-to-life as possible. Once I achieved this, I believe it helped the way the story was told. It's important to keep in mind that these works will continue to be edited. I find that people are constantly changing, and my writing must reflect that. From here, I wish to continue to grow and spread a message to those around me.

Mortified

Caytlyn Phillips

Ari

Female. Early twenties. Tries to keep her cool, but is secretly struggling.

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*Lights up on a mainly bare stage with a single MICROPHONE STAND. In the background there is a SIGN indicating that it is open mic night. ARI shuffles on stage and stands in front of the microphone. She takes her time getting adjusted and opens the JOURNAL she has in her hands. Smiling sheepishly, she squints at the audience.*

ARI

(Playfully)

Hello everyone! My name's Ari and I lost a bet. Yet another perfect example of why I shouldn't drink, children. Heh. Anyway, so I'm going to be reading you guys some journal entries.

*Clapping is heard from somewhere in the audience. Ari points in the direction she believes the sound is coming from.*

ARI

I'd save your clapping because

*Ari raises the journal and waves it about.*

ARI (cont'd)

I had my mom grab something out of my old closet back at home. There's no telling what's in here, honestly. So I guess, without further ado, here we go boys and girls.

*Ari clears her throat.*

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Dear future me-

ARI (cont'd)

*She breaks from reading and grins.*

What a lovely start.

ARI (cont'd)

*She returns to the journal.*

Dear future me, I hope you're doing awesome! I'm doing super cool! You'll never guess what happened to me today. I swam into the deep end of the pool and mom didn't even notice. Not for a whole maybe two minutes. When I'm a grown up, I'm going to swim in the deep end all the time even though mom says adults don't do that. I'm going to prove her wrong.

ARI (cont'd)

*Ari chuckles and looks up.*

Wonderful stuff, huh? You know, life was more simple back then. I wish I had those kinds of problems now, am I right?

ARI (cont'd)

*Ari feeds off the audience. If they chuckle, Ari smiles and laughs harder. If they are quiet, Ari stares out for a moment waiting for laughter that will never come.*

Anyway, moving on.

ARI (cont'd)

*Ari flips through the journal in an attempt to find another good entry.*

Ah! Here we go. This looks like it's from middle school based off the sloppy cursive.

ARI (cont'd)

*Ari reads.*

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ARI (cont'd)

Dear future me, eight grade is awful.

*Ari nods her head with a grin.*

ARI (cont'd)

Yep. Definitely middle school. This should be fun.

*Ari reads again.*

ARI (cont'd)

I haven't been sleeping well. I keep falling asleep in Mrs. Keller's class. She told me that if she caught me doing it again she would call my mom. I just don't understand what the big deal is. I do all the work. I'm an A student. I'm just so incredibly tired. It's just so hard to focus in class. I do so much better on my own. No one seems to get that. And what's worse is that Kinsey A. keeps telling all the kids that the reason why I sleep in class so much is because I don't have a dad and my mom can't afford a mattress for me, so I-

*Ari stops reading. She laughs nervously and looks up at the audience.*

ARI (cont'd)

We're just going to skip the rest of this one. It's a bit depressing for this venue, don't you think?

*Ari flips through the journal. She skims through different pages. She can't seem to find something that would be appropriate.*

ARI (cont'd)

Um...would you guys please give me a minute?

*Ari continues to fidget. She's visibly upset, but she's trying desperately to conceal*

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

*it. Eventually she stops at a page.*

ARI (cont'd)

Here, this one doesn't seem too bad. Sorry about that, guys.

*Ari reads from the journal.*

ARI (cont'd)

Dear future me, I'm going to be a doctor. Well, we're going to be a doctor, and we're going to save lives. You can't fall short on this one, okay? I know how you are, well, I know how we are. You're going to make mom proud. She's done so much for you; you need to do something for her. You need to go to college for her. You need to do this for her. You can do it. You **can** do it.

*Ari stops reading. She shuts the journal.*

ARI (cont'd)

Can I have a moment? Like, can I stop reading for a moment?

*Ari pauses. Her eyebrows furrowed. She's contemplating her next move.*

ARI (cont'd)

Uh, I didn't become a doctor. Please bear with me, because I know what I'm about to say is going to sound extremely campy. My mother raised me by herself. We didn't have a lot. I mean, I did have a mattress, but we didn't have the same financial security as everyone else. I just thought I could take out loans and pursue something meaningful. It was something that would pay itself off. And I mean, it wasn't just about the money, you know? It was about helping others too. I wanted to help others like me...people who...urgh.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

(beat)

But it was all too much. It was too overwhelming, and I stopped going to class because I was worried about my grades. Funny, though, when you stop attending class you tend to fail.

*Ari sniffles and wipes her nose on her sleeve.*

ARI

In college I finally broke down. I sought after someone, anyone that could provide me some semblance of guidance. However, when I told my academic advisor at school that I had anxiety, she said everyone worries and sent me on my way. But I didn't worry like my classmates did. There's a difference between being stressed for an exam and hyperventilating on your bathroom floor at two in the morning because you're scared of what the next day holds. She also told me it was a stressful major and not everyone could handle it. Luckily I have my outstanding student debt as a reminder that I was one of the few that couldn't handle it.

*Ari picks up the MICROPHONE and paces the stage.*

ARI (cont'd)

And all those other pages, the pages I skipped, they're all filled with the same thing. To be honest, I wasn't truly aware of how long this had been going on. I thought it happened when I moved away for college.

*Ari lifts up the journal.*

ARI (cont'd)

But I guess it didn't. It's only gotten worse. And I'm sorry. I'm sorry if I'm oversharing...it's just...

*Ari runs her hands through her*

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

*hair and takes a deep breath.*

ARI (cont'd)

I've never been able to talk about this and I just can't seem to stop.

*Ari tears up.*

ARI (cont'd)

I just want to feel normal again. Hell, I don't even remember the last time I felt any sense of normalcy. I get told all the time I don't have anxiety. All because I still go to work and take care of myself. But that's because I have to. I have to keep moving because if I stop, even for a second, I feel like I'll implode. I'm drowning and it's like every time I finally have the courage to verbalize how I feel, I get tuned out. Either that, or people compare it with being under pressure for a deadline. It's not the same. I have to carry around a perscription with me everywhere I go in case I feel like I'm going to breakdown. I'm just ashamed. I'm so insanely angry that I can't just feel good on my own. In therapy they tell you that being guilty about it does more harm than good. But I can't help it. God, and I just wanted this to go smoothly too. I wanted this to be a fun night out. I just wanted to function like everyone else around me for once. I wanted to swim in the deep end, but I can't even get out of bed in the morning without planning out my entire day. I can't go outside my apartment without constantly checking in with my body to see if I'm tense. I've lost so many friendships because I constantly cancel plans. So I just stay at home. I watch Netflix. I take multiple showers a day-same goes for naps. I feel so empty and numb and tired. And the best part of it all, the silver lining in this entire mess is that apparently I've been tired since middle school. Maybe even before that. But who knows at this point, right?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

*Ari is shaken. Her fists are clenched and she's short of breath.*

ARI (cont'd)

They tell you to breathe. That it's going to be okay. But I don't know anymore.

*Ari is trying her hardest to not break down. She's avoiding the gaze of the audience.*

ARI (cont'd)

I'm so sorry. I'm so so sorry. I'm sorry.  
I'm...I'm sorry for wasiting your time.

*Ari looks up to face the audience then looks down at her feet again. A long, tense silence. She closes her eyes and takes a few breaths. She calmly walks over to the microphone stand and places the microphone carefully on it. She takes one last quick glimpse at the audience then bows her head and quickly shuffles off stage. The lights illuminate the bare stage for a moment. Maybe soft claps are heard. Maybe harsh muttering. Maybe silence for a moment more.*

BLACK OUT.

END OF PLAY.

Rot

Caytlyn Phillips

Cast of Characters

Ray

Male. Patrick's ex-lover.  
Plays the victim. Still in  
love with Patrick.

Patrick

Male. Comes across as harsh.  
Can't stand Ray anymore. Is  
tired of his ex-lover.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

*Lights up. RAY sits at a TABLE. He's waiting impatiently. Occasionally, he'll look toward the door. He fiddles with his ORANGE JUMPSUIT as PATRICK enters. Patrick sits across from Ray. Ray looks up and smiles sheepishly. Patrick remains stoic.*

RAY

I can't believe you came. I was surprised when I finally heard back from you. So how has it been? I've missed you.

PATRICK

Cut the crap, Ray.

*Ray looks down to his lap. He nervously taps the table gently with his fingers.*

RAY

You didn't have to come, you know? I already know how you feel about me. I just thought that maybe...I don't know. I don't know what I was thinking honestly.

*Patrick sighs.*

PATRICK

I don't know what I was thinking either. I haven't seen you in months. I thought I could come here today and face you.

RAY

Face me?

PATRICK

You know I loved you. I loved you more than I'd ever loved anyone else.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

RAY

I love you too.

PATRICK

No, Ray, loved. I loved you.

RAY

...

PATRICK

And I thought maybe I could still love you after the accident. I tried. I want you to know I tried.

RAY

Not hard enough.

PATRICK

What was I supposed to do? I can't love a murderer.

RAY

I'm not a murderer.

PATRICK

You killed two people.

RAY

It was an accident.

PATRICK

An accident is forgetting to put the milk back in the fridge after you make yourself cereal. An accident is not driving under the influence. You did that on purpose.

RAY

What was I supposed to do? Call you?

PATRICK

(bewildered)

That's exactly what you were supposed to do.

RAY

You had just told me you didn't want to see me anymore.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

PATRICK

You know that I would've come to pick you up.

RAY

You were already pissed when you found out that I had picked up drinking again. That's what put us in this position to begin with.

PATRICK

Don't you dare put this on me.

RAY

I wasn't going to, but now that you've said something, I am. If it weren't for you, Patrick, none of this would have happened. I wouldn't have gone out that night if it weren't for you.

PATRICK

You would've gone out regardless. You didn't give two shits about me at that point. That's why you started drinking again. You were broken far before I came into your life. And now, heh, well now you're beyond repair.

*Ray looks away and mutters under his breath.*

RAY

I don't have to sit here and take this.

PATRICK

No you don't, but you will.

RAY

No I won't.

PATRICK

We both need closure.

RAY

Well this isn't closure. This is you talking at me and making me feel like I'm the bad guy.

*Patrick laughs.*

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

RAY

What? What's so funny?

PATRICK

It's just that you seriously don't get it, do you? You are the bad guy.

RAY

I made one mistake.

PATRICK

Honey, no. You've made plenty of mistakes.

RAY

You're not perfect either.

PATRICK

Maybe I'm not. But then again, I'm not you.

RAY

I don't get why you're so bitter about all of this. This in no way directly impacted you. You're not the one in prison.

PATRICK

No, you're right. I'm not in prison, but you put me through the most traumatic months of my life. My dad had an alcohol problem. I thought I could fix him. I thought that if I were a good enough son he would stop. No matter how hard I tried he didn't.

*Patrick scratches his nose and places his head in his hands. For the first time, his expression softens. He looks at Ray tenderly, and then catches himself. Patrick purses his lips and contemplates what he is going to say next.*

PATRICK (cont'd)

They say you will eventually find someone that resembles your parents in some way. And I found you. I thought I could fix you. I thought that maybe if I sat there and

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

PATRICK (cont'd)

supported you. If I gave you enough love you would put down the damn bottle and actually live. But I was wrong. You can't just fix people. Especially if they don't want your help.

RAY

I did want your help.

PATRICK

But you fell off. You would get your life together and the smallest inconvenience would send you spiraling.

RAY

It's harder than it looks.

PATRICK

Maybe. I wouldn't know.

RAY

I do feel guilty.

PATRICK

Your guilt isn't going to bring them back to life, though. You killed a mother and her unborn child. You left a family broken.

RAY

I know.

PATRICK

How can you live with yourself?

RAY

One day at a time really.

*Patrick rubs his face. He doesn't look at Ray.*

RAY (cont'd)

I wish it would've been me.

PATRICK

Me too.

*Ray gulps. His eyes water. His tongue slides across his teeth*

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

*in his mouth as he tries to hold everything in. He gives up and covers his face with his hands. Now both men are refusing to look at each other. A long painful silence.*

RAY

I think you should go.

PATRICK

I will soon.

RAY

I think you've said enough.

PATRICK

I haven't said enough.

RAY

You haven't spoken to me in months. I've tried reaching out to you as best I can. I've waited and waited for words that never came. You've had plenty of time to say your piece. You pushed me aside though. And I get it. I really do. Out of sight out of mind. Heh...I'd probably do the same thing if I were you. I deserve it. I deserve it all, really. I never thought my life would come to this. I never thought I would be sitting here with you like this. I wanted to marry you, you know? I wanted to start a life with you. I wanted to be your everything and anything. I wanted to quit. I wanted to be so much more.

PATRICK

Then why didn't you?

RAY

Because there's this emptiness that needs to be filled. It's been there for a while now. It's why I started drinking to begin with. It all happened after my brother died when I was 17. I just needed something to forget. I went from wanting a stiff drink to needing it. And when I tried to quit...all the times I tried

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

RAY (cont'd)

to quit...the emptiness just grew. And here I am. I thought I had lost you that night. I didn't want to be me anymore. I didn't want to exist anymore. So I kept drinking. I kept drinking until I couldn't feel anything. Until I was so numb that I couldn't feel anymore. I didn't mean to hurt anyone. I just wanted to stop hurting myself.

PATRICK

Thanks for the explanation.

RAY

It's just been on my mind everyday since...well you know.

PATRICK

I can imagine.

*Ray smiles. Patrick smiles back.*

PATRICK (cont'd)

But it doesn't change anything. You're still a monster. Nothing you can ever say will justify your actions.

RAY

Patrick// this isn't fair and you know it.

PATRICK

//No, you've had your big moment. It's my turn.

*Ray stares at Patrick.*

RAY

It doesn't matter what I have to say, does it?

PATRICK

Frankly, no. But I have one more thought that I need to verbalize before I leave.

RAY

...

*Ray doesn't break eye contact*

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

*with Patrick. Patrick furrows his brows.*

PATRICK

I'll try to be nice.

*Ray tries to crack his neck. He gets comfortable in his CHAIR and crosses his arms.*

RAY

Fine.

PATRICK

Thank you. I loved you. I loved you with all my heart. I wanted you more than anything in the world. The night we had our big fight, I thought what life would be like without you. I didn't like it. But I was stubborn. I didn't want you to know how I felt. Then this happened. The love I had for you quickly dissipated. From a moral standpoint, I despised you. I wanted to see you rot in here. I didn't know why I flipped so easily. How does someone go from loving a person with every inch of their life to...to this?

RAY

I don't know.

PATRICK

Neither did I. And I avoided your calls. Your letters. Your attempts at conversation because it didn't feel right keeping you in my life when I couldn't stand the thought of you. And then it hit me.

RAY

Oh?

PATRICK

You are never going to change. You'll probably get out of here and have a drink. And that drink will lead to another. You'll never learn. Two people died because of your recklessness. Our love was another causality. You can live your life. You can be normal to

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

PATRICK (cont'd)

some extent. That family, the family that you tore apart, won't ever be the same.

RAY

I won't ever be the same. I'm going to change.

PATRICK

I've heard that before.

*Patrick stands up.*

RAY

I'm not perfect. No one is perfect.

PATRICK

You're right. You aren't perfect, and we're all human.

*Patrick tucks his CHAIR in under the table. He looks Ray in the eye.*

PATRICK (cont'd)

But some humans never change. And some humans deserve to rot.

RAY

Is this the last time I'll ever see you?

*Ray is on the verge of tears.*

PATRICK

God, I hope so.

*Patrick closes his eyes and furrows his brows. When he opens his eyes again, he notices that Ray is crying. Patrick sighs.*

PATRICK (cont'd)

Take care, Ray.

*Patrick turns and exits leaving Ray at the table alone. Ray wipes his eyes and looks at his hands. He looks*

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

*at the door one more time and then gets up. He tucks his chair in under the table and exits. Lights remain on the empty table. They slowly dim.*

BLACK OUT.

END OF PLAY.

Salon Small Talk

Caytlyn Phillips

Jean

A bit reserved.

Denise

A little everywhere.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

*Lights up.*

*JEAN sits under a HAIR DRYER and flips through a MAGAZINE. Her peace is interrupted by DENISE who flops down next to her. Denise pulls out a newer edition of the magazine Jean is reading out of her BAG. Denise notices Jean's copy and begins to wave her edition about.*

DENISE

Ugh. They never restock here. I had to start bringing my own material because I got tired of reading the same issue every week.

JEAN

I don't mind. Truth be told, I haven't read this issue.

DENISE

Well, let me tell you, that has been there for months. Anna, my hairdresser, said that they had a free subscription and they didn't bother with subscribing after the trial ended.

JEAN

(amused)

Oh?

DENISE

Personally, I feel like they should've subscribed. Can you imagine coming here week after week and reading the same thing?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

JEAN

I don't mind. Then again, I don't go out much.

DENISE

I was going to say I haven't seen you around here.

JEAN

Figured now is a good time if ever.

*Denise, leans forward in her seat. Clearly ready to gossip.*

DENISE

Oh? Special occasion?

JEAN

(reserved)

I guess you could say that.

DENISE

Oh, Honey, don't be shy. What's a little chit-chat between girls.

*Denise playful taps Jean on the arm with her magazine.*

JEAN

My husband passed away last Tuesday.

*Denise's face falls and retracts in her seat.*

DENISE

I'm sorry. // I didn't mean to offend you//

JEAN

//No, no. Don't apologize. You're fine really. //

DENISE

No, I know when I'm being a jackass.

*Jean smirks slightly.*

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

JEAN

To be honest, this is all a breath of fresh air.

DENISE

Amen. After my husband passed I lost touch with reality. Everybody treats you as if you're this fragile broken thing.

JEAN

My daughter insisted that she come with me to get my hair done. I thanked her but told her that if she followed me out the front door I would ground her from me.

DENISE

Never too old, huh?

JEAN

(chuckling)

Never.

*The laughter between both women trails off.*

JEAN

So, you said your husband passed?

DENISE

Yes ma'am. It'll be a year in February.

JEAN

How do you do it?

DENISE

One day at a time.

JEAN

Figured as much. I was hoping there would be an easier answer.

DENISE

If only.

*The two go back to looking through their magazines.*

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

DENISE

It does get easier, but then it gets harder. And when you least expect it, it comes full circle again.

JEAN

I knew it was coming. The end, at least.

DENISE

That's how it was with Howard. He was diagnosed with glioblastoma.

*Jean looks inquisitive.*

DENISE (cont'd)

Brain cancer. I watched the most intelligent man I'd ever met lose his mind. I knew it was coming, but I didn't want to believe it.

JEAN

At the same time you need to though. Because if he were here, he'd be in hell and you don't want that.

DENISE

Mhmm.

JEAN

I was married to Vincent for forty years, and I don't know what I'm going to do.

DENISE

I thought ten years wasn't a long period of time. It's just a decade. I've lived through plenty of those, but nothing compares to those first few weeks. Hell, I still think I'm going to see him walk through my front door, and I even moved.

JEAN

I didn't even think about that. Maybe I should move. Get some fresh air.

DENISE

It was a bittersweet thing. I went on a total cleanse. I threw out most of our furniture and sold the house.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

JEAN

I couldn't do that though. We raised our babies in that home. The kids would kill me.

DENISE

Screw the kids.

JEAN

I beg your pardon?

DENISE

Screw 'em. You just lost the love of your life. They've moved out and they'll move on. There is no sense in you staying in that home alone in a museum.

JEAN

I appreciate your advice- /

DENISE

/You need to do what's best for you. Don't sell the house. Sell the house. It's whatever. However, don't keep it around because you feel like you have to.

JEAN

(laughing nervously)

This is all moving incredibly too fast.

DENISE

That's life, sweetheart.

*Denise flips a page in her magazine.*

JEAN

So did you ever have children?

DENISE

From my first marriage, yes. I have a daughter.

JEAN

How did she handle everything?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

DENISE

Well, she was a baby when I left my first husband. He wasn't a good man. We had to move back in with my parents at the time. I wasn't much into the dating scene, so when I met Howard my daughter was happy for me. Outside of my daddy she didn't have a father figure.

JEAN

That must've been tough. I know Ava and Jay are devastated. Vincent was able to make it to Jay's wedding, but I know it kills Ava that her dad can't walk her down the aisle.

DENISE

You know what the toughest part is?

JEAN

Being brave?

DENISE

Yes! Thank you. Everyone expects you to be brave.

JEAN

Or that you aren't brave enough.

DENISE

It's like a Cracker Jack bag. You never know what your prize is going to be.

JEAN

Being alone.

*The reality of everything suddenly hits her. Tears start to roll down Jean's face.*

JEAN (cont'd)

I'm trying to be strong for my kids, but I know after the end of week both of my kids will head home. Meanwhile, I'm stuck in a two story prison.

DENISE

I know. It's okay.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

JEAN

No, it's not okay. And you should know it's not okay. You know what I'm going through.

DENISE

That wasn't what I-/

JEAN

/-No. Let me talk. I haven't talked enough. I haven't left the house since Vincent got sick. I haven't gone to work. I've been living off our life savings. Our life savings. But it's not ours anymore. It's just mine. Just like the house. Just like the cars. Everything, after forty years, is mine and mine alone. He's gone and he took a part of me with him.

*Denise rummages through her purse and pulls out POCKET TISSUES.*

DENISE

Tissue?

*Jean nods and politely takes the tissues from Denise.*

DENISE (cont'd)

Feeling better?

JEAN

Not really.

DENISE

Well, it's a start. You can't hold that all in.

JEAN

Mhmm.

DENISE

I wasn't married nearly as long as you. Hell, I didn't even know Howard for half of your marriage. I cannot walk a mile in your shoes, but I can empathize.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

*Denise extends her hand for Jean to hold. Jean smiles half-heartily and places her hand on Denise's.*

JEAN

Thank you.

DENISE

Strength isn't always about putting on a brave face. It's knowing that it's okay to break down.

JEAN

You're too kind. I'm sorry about snapping.

DENISE

No harm, hon.

*The hairdryer about Jean dings. Both look up at it.*

JEAN

I guess that's our cue to wrap up the conversation.

DENISE

I suppose it is.

JEAN

I don't believe I caught your name.

DENISE

It's Denise.

JEAN

I'm Jean.

*They both shake each other's hand.*

JEAN (cont'd)

Believe it or not this is the most I've felt like myself since Vincent got sick.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

DENISE

I'm proud of you.

*Jean smiles and lifts the hairdryer up. She gets out of her chair and exits off stage. Denise watches her leave and smiles softly then returns to her magazine. After a moment passes JEAN enters again with a CELL PHONE in her hand.*

JEAN

I'm not the best at technology, so can you please do me a favor and add yourself to my address book?

*Denise laughs.*

DENISE

Sure thing, sweetie.

*Denise takes the phone out of Jean's hand and adds her number. She then calls her PHONE with Jeans.*

DENISE (cont'd)

My daughter taught me that trick.

JEAN

Oh my! That's so nifty. I wouldn't have ever thought to do that.

DENISE

Kids. Always one step ahead of us.

JEAN

Heh. Yeah. Well, I need to go. I think my hairdresser is getting impatient.

DENISE

All right, Jean. I'll see you around.

JEAN

Sure thing.

*Jean turns to leave. Denise*

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

*calls out to her.*

DENISE

Call anytime. Don't be a stranger, okay?

*Denise chuckles again and goes  
back to reading her magazine.*

BLACK OUT.

END OF PLAY.

In Memory Of

Caytlyn Phillips

Jada

Female. 17.

Imani

Male.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

*Lights up in a small bedroom. JADA is sprawled out on her BED. Her arm covers her face blocking the light from her eyes. CRUMPLED PIECES OF PAPER are strewn about the floor. IMANI is perched on the floor near the foot of the bed. To the side of the bed there is a DESK with a FRAMED PHOTOGRAPH, a NOTEPAD, and a collection of PENS and PENCILS on it. JADA lets out a long groan.*

IMANI

Look, the more time we sit here and procrastinate, the harder it will be.

JADA

I just don't know what to say.

IMANI

Mom always talks about how you're the smart one.

JADA

(sighing)

We both know that's not true.

IMANI

C'mon, Jada, seriously. Get to it.

*Jada reluctantly gets off the bed and moves to her desk. She picks up a pen and writes in the notebook. She talks as she writes.*

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

JADA

I'd like to thank you all for coming. Words cannot express how thankful I am for this community. The help of my fellow classmates has been beyond-

(beat)

This sounds incredibly dry.

*Jada crumples up the paper and throws it on the ground. She leans back in her CHAIR and chews on the bottom of the pen. Imani slowly rises and moves to Jada.*

IMANI

Well, I thought it was off to a good start.

JADA

I can't do this.

IMANI

Jada, you are so much more than you think you are. I mean, what did I always tell you?

*Jada reclines back further in the chair.*

JADA

Imani.

IMANI

No, I'm serious, Jay. Say it.

JADA

(reluctantly)

You're the one I always look up to.

IMANI

And what does that mean?

JADA

(sighing)

That I'm great or something. I don't know. I don't want to get into it.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

IMANI

I'm in your corner. I'm rooting for you. You have the capacity to write the best damn speech anyone has ever written.

JADA

Fine.

*Jada sits upright. She closes her eyes and inhales deeply while rubbing her hands over her temples. Jada drops her hands and stares at the notebook. Imani anxiously watches over her shoulder as she puts the pen to paper once more.*

JADA (cont'd)

Hello, everyone. I'd like to take this time on behalf of my family to express how genuinely...

IMANI

How genuinely honored? Thankful? Thankfully honored?

*Jada intently shakes her head.*

IMANI (cont'd)

Grateful?

JADA

Grateful! How genuinely grateful we are. As you know, we had just moved to Belton when-

*She stops writing.*

IMANI

Jada?

*Jada is frozen.*

IMANI (cont'd)

Jada, listen to me, you got this, okay? We already talked about how good you are with those words. Just write it out. Ride it out.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

*Imani begins to sing and clap behind Jada in an effort to lighten the mood. Jada remains unfazed.*

IMANI (cont'd)

Write it out. Ride it out. You got it. Don't throw a fit. You got this shi-

JADA

Stop.

*Jada spins around.*

JADA (cont'd)

I can't keep doing this.

IMANI

What writing?

JADA

No. Pretending you're really here.

IMANI

...

JADA

You're gone. You've been gone for a year now.

IMANI

Don't say that.

JADA

It's true.

IMANI

Jay...

JADA

I was stupid and dumb and I didn't realize how badly you were hurting.

*Imani avoids looking at her.*

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

JADA

And now you're gone. I can't stop blaming myself for that.

IMANI

You know I wouldn't want you to do that.

JADA

Well you're not really here to stop me are you?

*Imani looks back at her blankly.*

JADA (cont'd)

Didn't think so.

(beat)

I have sat here for the past year reliving that day in my head. Reliving that last message I got from you.

IMANI

It's not your fault.

JADA

I was busy with school. I got so caught up in everything that I didn't take the time to listen to you. When you came to me and told me that you were getting made fun of at school I told you to shrug it off.

IMANI

I didn't tell you everything.

JADA

But I should've known.

*Jada is sobbing. Imani tries to comfort her but backs off.*

JADA (cont'd)

You sent me a text that said that you loved me, and I didn't respond because I was at cheer practice. I thought there was more time. There's not anymore time. There will never be more time. You're gone. You're fucking gone. I remember getting off early

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

JADA (cont'd)

that night. I walked through the front door and yelled up the stairs if you wanted to go get a drink from Sonic with me. Nothing.

*Jada tenses up.*

JADA (cont'd)

I couldn't save you.

IMANI

That's not your job.

JADA

I'm your big sister.  
(beat)  
Was your big sister.

IMANI

Jay, don't say that.

JADA

Oh? What am I supposed to say?

*She walks around the room and picks up a crumpled piece of paper. Jada opens it up and reads.*

JADA (cont'd)

Am I supposed to say that, "I am thankful for your contribution. I know Imani would love the new memorial bench. It only took a year and it does absolutely nothing."

*She picks up another one.*

JADA (cont'd)

Or how about, "My family finds the new memorial bench an astounding honor. Too bad my parents can't stand to be in the same room together for longer than an hour anymore."

*She picks up the one that she read at the beginning of the play.*

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

JADA

No, it should be nicer, huh? But the only way I can do that is to not even think about it. And if I don't think about it, then I'm forgetting you. And I am so incredibly mad it's just too much. I can't do this anymore.

*Jada falls to the ground. Imani calmly walks over to her and gets on her level. Jada rests her hands into her hands. All of her anger melts away into sadness. She cries for a moment as Imani consoles her. After a while Jada composes herself slightly.*

JADA

I miss this so much.

IMANI

I know you do. I miss it too.

JADA

You're just saying that because this is all in my head.

IMANI

No. You know that's not true.

JADA

I don't know what to do anymore.

IMANI

Keep going. Don't slow down. Make me proud.

*Imani smiles softly at Jada.*

IMANI (cont'd)

Let me go.

JADA

I don't know if I'm ready for that.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

IMANI

You can't just sit here like this. It isn't healthy. It's time to move forward. (cont'd)

*Throughout the following interaction, Imani rises and moves to the DOOR.*

JADA

I want you to know I love you.

IMANI

I know.

JADA

I want you to know I'm sorry I didn't listen.

IMANI

I forgive you.

JADA

I want you to know that I'm going to keep going.

IMANI

It's what I would want.

*Jada gets up and moves to the desk. She looks on her desk and picks up the framed picture of Jada and Imani.*

JADA

I'm never going to forget you. I'm never going to forget the sound of your laugh or late night runs to Sonic. You were my best friend. You were so many wonderful things. You could've done so many wonderful things.

*Imani exits.*

JADA (cont'd)

I miss you. I'll always miss you.

*She looks to where Imani was standing.*

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

JADA

But I need to move on.

*Jada sits in the chair with her elbows resting on the table. Her head sinks into her hands. She rubs her face and looks out into the audience. She picks up the pen and begins to write.*

JADA (cont'd)

Words cannot express how truly grateful I am for the donation of the Imani Scott memorial.

*She continues to write as the lights dim.*

*Blackout.*

*End of play.*

Hear Me Out

Caytlyn Phillips

Carrie

*Female. 23. Has dated Allen for a year. Sometimes careless. Always thinks worse case scenario. Has the best intentions.*

Allen

*Male. 24. Has dated Carrie for a year. Compassionate but reserved. Truly a complex person. Has struggled with self-harm since middle school. He wants the best for himself and for Carrie, but tends to get stuck in his own head at times.*

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

*LIGHTS UP.*

*Allen and Carrie sit across from each other in a studio apartment. The two sit in silence. A TV is behind them and a show is paused. Neither Carrie or Allen look at each other. Carrie is curled up with a BLANKET.*

ALLEN

If you're not going to say anything I think I'm going to leave.

CARRIE

I'm sorry. I'm thinking of what to say.

ALLEN

It's just you weren't saying anything.

*He sighs.*

ALLEN (cont'd)

I don't know.

CARRIE

I'm trying to find the right words to say, you know? we haven't really talked about it since/

ALLEN

/It's fine. Just say whatever you want.

CARRIE

No, I'm not going to do that. I don't want to say something and have it come across the wrong way.

ALLEN

Not to be mean or anything, but I think we've passed that point.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

CARRIE

Allen, don't be like that. You know I hate it when you say shit like that.

ALLEN

I just feel backed into a corner here.

CARRIE

You know that's not my intention. I'm sorry.

*Carrie rubs her face with her hands and inhales.*

CARRIE (cont'd)

(exasperated)

God, I don't mean to get defensive it's just- you know what? Don't worry about it. I'm sorry.

ALLEN

Hmmm.

*Silence. Carrie adjusts herself and moves the blanket away from her. Allen watches her shift again and again. Finally, she gets up and walks over to the COUCH where Allen is sitting.*

CARRIE

Can I just...?

ALLEN

Go for it.

*Carrie sits on the couch next to Allen.*

CARRIE

I don't understand. I thought you were doing better.

ALLEN

Mhmm.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

CARRIE

I'm, like, well, confused, really. I don't know what went wrong, and then that makes me feel like it's my fault.

ALLEN

It's no.

CARRIE

Then why did you cut yourself, Allen? Why aren't you talking to me? You haven't done this in months and now all of a sudden you just shut me out and then this.

ALLEN

Stop talking to me like I'm five.

CARRIE

That's not what I'm doing.

ALLEN

Yes, you are. You're talking at me.

CARRIE

Well, how else am I supposed to word it?

*The two look away from each other.*

ALLEN

I shouldn't have told you.

CARRIE

I would've found out.

ALLEN

I guess.

CARRIE

...

ALLEN

Fuck, Car, I'm sorry. That was-I didn't mean for that to come out like that.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

CARRIE

I mean, I snapped at you first. I get it.

ALLEN

Yeah.

CARRIE

But like, seriously, you haven't done this in months, you know? And it's just like I really don't know how to feel right now. It's an odd mix of emotions.

ALLEN

Can we please drop this?

CARRIE

No, we need to have this conversation.

ALLEN

I'd rather not.

CARRIE

What would you rather do then, Al? Because you can't just shut me out. That's not how relationships work.

ALLEN

...

CARRIE

I love you. I need you to talk to me. I'm trying here. Please don't punish me for that.

ALLEN

I love you too. Just...tread carefully, okay?

CARRIE

I'll try. However, a part of me can't help but feel like I'm partially to blame for this. And I keep telling myself that's not the case. It just doesn't feel like it, you know? It's this weird war between logic and emotion going on in my head. God, that sounds so stupid. I just don't know how else to explain it.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ALLEN

If you need to hear me say it, I will. It's not you. You aren't the reason, okay? I don't want you to think like that.

CARRIE

Okay.

ALLEN

But

*Carrie looks down.*

ALLEN (cont'd)

Hey, look, it's...urgh. I promise it's not you, okay? It's something I've struggled with for a long time. We both know that.

CARRIE

You didn't do it when we were friends, but since we got together you've done this twice now. Can you see where I'm coming from here?

ALLEN

I need you to listen to me. Like, really and truly hear me out. It's not that I don't want you to say what you need to say. When we first met it had been about two years since the last time I cut myself. But that doesn't mean I didn't think about doing it.

CARRIE

Then what?

ALLEN

I don't know, man. I just get so fucking low. I have good days and I have bad days. But even on my good days I still just feel empty.

CARRIE

I didn't know it had gotten to that point again.

ALLEN

Because I didn't want you feeling like this. I love you, babe, but fuck. Sometimes it's like talking to a wall.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

CARRIE

That makes me feel shitty.

ALLEN

That's not what I'm trying to do. I'm not good at expressing myself. I'm not used to opening up about this to anyone. I hate these conversations.

*Long, tense silence.*

CARRIE

I know you had a bad experience in the past, but have you thought about going back to counseling?

ALLEN

I get where you are coming from, but that's not what I need right now.

CARRIE

I mean, I just figured it would help.

ALLEN

It would. I'm not saying that going back to counseling isn't an option. I'm saying that because I don't want...nevermind.

CARRIE

No, what?

ALLEN

It just feels like you're pushing me away. And I get that you aren't, and I know you are just trying to help me out. But like, I'm trying to talk to you.

CARRIE

And I'm talking back. I'm giving you some input.

ALLEN

But that's not what I need right now.

CARRIE

Okay, well then what?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ALLEN

This isn't something that's going to be resolved after one conversation.

CARRIE

Then how do we fix this?

ALLEN

I wish you wouldn't put it like that. I'm not broken.

CARRIE

Oh God, no. That's not what I meant. I want to support you. I just don't know how.

ALLEN

Just don't be as prescriptive.

CARRIE

I'm just trying to help you.

ALLEN

Car, I get that. Trust me, I do. But it's like I'm sitting here and my mouth is moving and no one listens. When I was in high school and my mom found out about everything, I was told that I had to go to counseling. It wasn't my choice. Just like I was told to just be happy and not focus on the negative. But that isn't easy. None of this has been easy. And the worst part is that I understand that none of that came from a bad place. My mother wasn't trying to make me feel bad, just like you aren't trying to make me feel bad. But fuck...something's gotta give. And as cliché as it sounds, I just need someone to hold me and listen. And even then, I know it's not going to make everything better, but maybe just maybe in that moment I can feel like a person and not a fucking project.

CARRIE

Allen

*Carrie wraps her arms around Allen.*

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

CARRIE (cont'd)

I don't think you're a project.

ALLEN

I know.

CARRIE

And I don't mean to make you feel like this.  
It's the opposite of what I'm trying to do.

ALLEN

I know.

*They both sigh and hold each other for a moment.*

ALLEN

Car, I love you. I'm not trying to be mean. I just need you to understand where I'm coming from. I need you around. I don't want you to think I don't.

CARRIE

Well, no, you're right. I'm like talking to a wall. You gotta break through that one way or another, you know?

ALLEN

Yeah.

CARRIE

And I love you too. Look, I promise I'll be here for you. I'm going to try and give you what you need. But I want you to talk to me. I can't be here if you don't talk to me.

ALLEN

No, I know. I'll try to be more open. It's just-it's going to be a process.

CARRIE

Well, we'll work at it together. One step at a time.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ALLEN

Thank you.

CARRIE

You're welcome.

ALLEN

I'm sorry if I came across too harsh.

CARRIE

Yeah, well, I'm sorry if I came across as a bitch.

ALLEN

Car, no. That's-no.

CARRIE

Shh. I'm kidding. I'm just trying to lighten the mood.

*Allen rolls his eyes.*

CARRIE (cont'd)

But on a more serious note, you're so much stronger than you think you are. You're so many wonderful things. You're beautiful inside and out even if you don't feel like it.

ALLEN

You're pretty swell yourself.

CARRIE

I know.

*Carrie leans forward and kisses his forehead.*

CARRIE (cont'd)

I think this goes without saying but

*She puts her head on his shoulder and extends her pinky.*

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

CARRIE

We got this. you and me against the world,  
okay?

*Allen smiles and wraps his  
pinky around hers.*

ALLEN

Deal. Now how about we get back to the show?

CARRIE

We literally just had a serious conversation.  
I'm being sweet and you want to go back to  
watching TV?

ALLEN

Well...yeah.

CARRIE

You're a mess.

ALLEN

And you love it.

CARRIE

Shut up and pass me the remote.

*Allen picks up the REMOTE and  
hands it to Carrie. Carrie  
cuddles close to Allen and  
presses play. The TV resumes  
playing whatever show the two  
were watching.*

CARRIE (cont'd)

Hey Al?

ALLEN

Hmmm?

CARRIE

What happens next?

ALLEN

I guess we gotta watch to find out.

*He kisses her forehead.*

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ALLEN (cont'd)

But whatever the case, I think it'll have a  
happy ending.

*Lights out. A moment passes  
with the two silhouetted by  
the glow of the TV.*

*Blackout.*

*End of Play.*

In My Own Head

Caytlyn Phillips

## Cast of Characters

### Person 1

*The part of Person 5 that is unsure of themselves. Wants to do a good job. Is not the bad guy, but falls into the motions because of Persons 3 and 4. Their actions are never meant to offend. They pity themselves and Person 2.*

### Person 2

*The part of Person 5 that wants to believe everything is fine. Glass cannon. Their will is strong but not enough.*

### Person 3

*The part of Person 5 that voices the negative thoughts. The bully. The one that makes Person 5 doubt themselves.*

### Person 4

*The part of Person 5 that affirms the negative thoughts. The second voice that makes all Person 3's words concrete.*

### Person 5

*Not in control of how they feel. Trying to conceal their thoughts (Persons 1, 2, 3, and 4) from the world.*

*Bare stage. Lights up as PERSON 5 ENTERS. They sit off to the side. Maybe they do a small wave. Maybe they rush to their seat. The lights shift to PERSON 1 as they dance to onto the stage. Soft music plays as they move. This continues on for sometime until suddenly their movements become frantic. They become out of breath and lose focus.*

PERSON 1

I don't feel right. This doesn't feel right.  
Why doesn't this feel right?

*PERSON 2 enters with a BOTTLE OF WATER. They hand it to Person 1.*

PERSON 2

You're fine. You worry too much.

*Person 1 takes a sip. They look around the stage. They set the water bottle down.*

PERSON 1

No, I'm worrying for a reason. There has to be a reason. There has to be a reason why I feel like this. Is it hot in here to you?

PERSON 2

(concerned)

No, I'm fine.

PERSON 1

Huh.

*Person 1 tries to pick up where they left off in the dance. Person 2 watches Person 1 sway to the gentle music. Peace resumes for a moment,*

*but is lost again when the music changes.*

PERSON 3

(off stage)

Stop!

PERSON 2

What?

PERSON 1

Why?

*PERSON 3 stands up and reveals that they were sitting amongst the audience.*

PERSON 3

You can't keep doing this. You're out of control.

*Person 3 shuffles through the audience and gets on stage. Person 1 becomes increasingly nervous while Person 2 remains calm.*

PERSON 2

I'm fine.

PERSON 1

You really think so?

PERSON 3

Of course. Don't you see the way they look at you?

PERSON 1

They look at me?

PERSON 2

It's fine. Let them look.

PERSON 1

No, it isn't right. They shouldn't look at me like this. It's not right.

PERSON 2

No, don't let 'em get to you. You are just fine. Keep going.

PERSON 3

How can you expect to keep going when you look like that?

PERSON 1

What's wrong with the way you look?

*PERSON 4 enters.*

PERSON 4

It's not just the way you look.

*They walk over to the water bottle and kick it off stage.*

PERSON 4 (cont'd)

It's the way you act.

PERSON 1

But...I don't get it.

PERSON 2

Guys. Stop this. It isn't funny.

PERSON 3

You're right.

PERSON 4

What's funny is that you think everything is going to be okay.

PERSON 3

Plot twist. It's not.

PERSON 2

Stop picking on me.

PERSON 3

Why?

PERSON 4  
What are you going to do about it?

PERSON 3  
Go to counseling?

PERSON 4  
Take your medication?

PERSON 3  
Or are you just going to live in this world  
of delusion forever?

PERSON 4  
Because we both know that it isn't fine.

PERSON 3  
When was the last time you showered?

PERSON 4  
Didn't you get fired recently?

PERSON 3  
Stop kidding yourself.

PERSON 4  
They already know.

PERSON 3  
And if they don't know already, they will  
soon.

PERSON 2  
Stop it. I said it was fine. It's fine. It's  
okay. Yeah I go to counseling. And so what if  
I'm taking medication right now?

PERSON 3  
Poor baby.

PERSON 4  
You need pills to be normal, huh?

PERSON 1  
I only take them because I need them!

PERSON 2

I take them because it helps.

PERSON 3

No one else needs pills the way you do.

PERSON 1

They're right.

PERSON 2

No, they aren't.

PERSON 1

No, they are! Can't you see that we are losing ourselves?

PERSON 2

We're not losing anything!

PERSON 1

Sleep, appetite, the will to do anything. We're losing all of that.

PERSON 2

It's just temporary.

*Person 1, 3, and 4 say the following at the same time. Maybe they echo off each other.*

PERSON 1

It's been a year and a half.

PERSON 3

It's been a year and a half.

PERSON 4

It's been a year and a half.

PERSON 2

But we're trying. That's what matters.

*The music picks up again it continues to increase in speed.*

Are we? PERSON 3

Or are we just... PERSON 4

Struggling. (softly) PERSON 1

Pretending. (snotty) PERSON 3

Or failing at trying. (matter of fact) PERSON 4

You're self aware enough to know that what you're doing isn't helping your mental health. PERSON 3

But you just keep on doing it. PERSON 4

Day in PERSON 3

And day out. PERSON 4

I just thought...I thought we were okay. We're okay, right? PERSON 2

*Persons 1,2, and 3 shake their heads.*

Is it hot in here or is it just me? PERSON 2 (cont'd)

It's just you. PERSON 3

Poor pitiful you. PERSON 4

What about you? You said that you were hot earlier. PERSON 2

No I didn't. That was you. PERSON 1

All you. PERSON 3

Poor. PERSON 1

Pitiful. PERSON 4

Me. It's always been me. It's always been me. It's always been... PERSON 2

You're friends left you because? PERSON 3

I was too sad. PERSON 2

You got fired from your job because? PERSON 4

I couldn't get out of bed. I called in. PERSON 2

You're losing touch with yourself because? PERSON 1

I've been listening to you. PERSON 2

No. PERSON 3

Guess again. PERSON 4

No, that's it! PERSON 2

So useless. PERSON 3

So worthless. PERSON 4

So unaware. PERSON 1

So what? PERSON 2

*Persons 1, 3, and 4 circle around Person 2.*

Kill yourself. PERSON 3

*Person 1 stops.*

End it. PERSON 4

*Person 4 shoves Person 1 out of the way. The circle around Person 2 gets tighter and faster.*

You're never going anywhere in life. PERSON 3

So why keep trying? PERSON 4

*Person 1 tries to break the circle but is pushed down.*

(pleading)  
Wait. That's not true. PERSON 1

PERSON 2

...

*Person 1 gets up and fights to get in the cricle. Again they are pushed aside.*

PERSON 1

No. No. I was wrong. Don't listen to them.

PERSON 3

Do it.

PERSON 4

I dare you.

*Person 1 stands at a safe distance and shouts.*

PERSON 1

No. Don't. Please don't. You have people who love you. You have people that care about you. You are so important. Please. Please don't.

PERSON 4

If you don't do it you're a coward.

PERSON 3

And you're going to have to live with that.

PERSON 4

Forever.

*Person 3 and 4 quit pacing around Person 2. They hover over them and wait. When Person 2 does not move, Person 3 and 4 laugh. They both exit leaving Person 1 and 2 on stage.*

PERSON 2

I didn't realize I was so stupid.

You're not. PERSON 1

Why do I hurt so bad? PERSON 2

I don't know. PERSON 1

Why do I feel so empty? PERSON 2

I don't know. PERSON 1

PERSON 2  
How do I go on? What do I tell people when they ask me how I'm doing? What do I tell my parents, my boss, my friends? What do I say?

*Person 1 sighs heavily. They look back at the audience. For the first time since the beginning (of the) play, Person 5 is visible under the light.*

You say... PERSON 1

*Both Person 1 and Person 5 speak at the same time.*

It's fine. PERSON 1 (cont'd)

It's fine. PERSON 5

*Lights dim around Person 5. Maybe in the shadows we see Persons 1, 2, 3, and 4. Maybe they are surrounding Person 5. Person 5 forces a smile.*

*Blackout.*

END OF PLAY.

Disconnect

Caytlyn Phillips

Cast of Characters

Maribel

Female. Mid-twenties. Cool. Collected. Mom friend. Sometimes jumps the gun. Means well, but can come across as harsh.

Jack

Male. Mid-twenties. Suffers from depression. At surface level, he appears lazy. However, he is incredibly intelligent and is just going through a rough patch in his life.

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*LIGHTS UP. MARIEL sits in a coffee shop. She occasionally sips her COFFEE while she types away on her COMPUTER.*

*On the opposite side of the stage, JACK sits behind his DESKTOP COMPUTER in his bedroom. While he types, he takes a few swigs of his MOUNTAIN DEW.*

*Though the two are miles apart, they are connected in a chat room.*

MARIEL

Moral of the story is that I have no idea what I'm doing.

JACK

You seem to have it under control.

MARIEL

Says you.

JACK

No, I'm serious. You have a lot going on for you right now.

MARIEL

I guess.

JACK

Don't doubt yourself, kiddo.

MARIEL

I'm 25. I'm hardly a kid.

JACK

It's a figure of speech.

MARIEL

It's a pet name.

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JACK

Okay, maybe it's a pet name.

MARIEL

You're ridiculous. So anyway, what's up in your world.

*Mariel sips her coffee. Jack looks around his messy bedroom.*

JACK

I'm at work. Doing my work thing, you know.

MARIEL

Uhuh. So they let you frequent chat rooms?

JACK

Okay, you got me. I'm at home.

MARIEL

Jack...you were supposed to actually go into work today.

JACK

I know. I know.

MARIEL

You're so lazy. You just need to get motivated.

JACK

I'm not lazy.

MARIEL

From what you tell me you hardly leave your room. Isn't this the third shift you've given up in the past two weeks?

JACK

What if it is? What does it matter to you?

MARIEL

I'm your best friend. It's my job to look after you.

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JACK

So calling me lazy is looking out for me?

MARIEL

It's supposed to light a fire underneath you.  
Get you going. Tough love.

JACK

I don't need tough love, Mariel. You of all  
people should know that.

MARIEL

What's that supposed to mean?

JACK

You've known me longer than anyone. You're  
the only person that's really kept tabs on me  
since I left for college. My mom doesn't even  
check in on me. You know me better than this.

MARIEL

And your point is?

JACK

Are you seriously doing this right now?

MARIEL

Doing what?

JACK

Never mind. Just drop it.

MARIEL

No. What the hell are you getting at?

JACK

Look, Mari, I don't want to get into it.

MARIEL

Well I do.

JACK

Well, you're out of luck.

MARIEL

Jack Rubenstien, if you don't tell me right  
now, I swear I will come up there this  
weekend and get it out of you.

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JACK

Doubt it.

MARIEL

Jack, you're doing the thing that we talked about again. You're shutting down.

JACK

What do you expect? You're constantly making me feel bad when you know that I'm not okay.

MARIEL

This again? Seriously, Jack, I'm just trying to look out for you.

JACK

No you aren't. You know how bad the depression gets and you're just making me feel worse.

MARIEL

Everyone gets sad, Jack.

JACK

I don't want to talk about this anymore. I'm logging off.

MARIEL

Jack don't you dare.

*Jack logs off the computer. He sighs heavily and moves over to his BED. He buries himself underneath the blankets.*

*Mariel is livid. She immediately picks her PURSE off the ground and shuffles through it and pulls out her PHONE. She calls Jack.*

*Jack's PHONE starts vibrating on the NIGHTSTAND. Jack doesn't move. Mariel continues to call Jack. The phone continues to vibrate until Jack gets frustrated and grabs*

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*his PHONE.*

JACK

What?

MARIEL

Don't do that.

JACK

Look, I don't want to talk to you.

MARIEL

Well, I want to talk to you.

JACK

Whatever. Just say what you need to say.

MARIEL

That's not how this works. I talk to you and then you talk back to me.

JACK

Fine.

MARIEL

Okay, so like, I'm sorry that I hurt your feelings, but you need to snap out of this depressive episode. Now, I've tried being supportive and understanding for months, but you haven't gotten better.

JACK

I know.

MARIEL

I tried being nice. I tried nurturing you. I tried coming up there every weekend. I've tried all these things and nothing works, so don't blame me that I resorted to tough love to make this better.

JACK

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MARIEL

And on top of that, have you been going to counseling? Have you been taking your medication? Have you been doing any of the

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MARIEL (cont'd)  
things you've promised me?

JACK  
I may have fallen off a bit.

MARIEL  
A bit?

JACK  
Maybe more.

MARIEL  
Yeah. You have. Look, I don't know what to do, and if you're not going to help yourself, then I don't know what to do anymore. I can't be your friend if you're not going to help yourself.

JACK  
That's not fair.

MARIEL  
It's not fair to me either.

JACK  
Okay, but you aren't the one who hates themselves from the moment they get out of bed, are you?

MARIEL  
No, but/

JACK  
/And you don't constantly feel empty no matter what you do?

MARIEL  
No I don't/

JACK  
/You are okay, aren't you?

MARIEL  
No I'm not!

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JACK

Then what, Mari?

MARIEL

Because it kills me to see you like this.

JACK

Would it kill you to show it?

MARIEL

You're an ass.

*Mariel hangs up the phone and sets it on the table in front of her. She looks around the coffee shop and tries to hide how upset she is.*

JACK

Mari? Mari?

*Jack pulls the phone from his ear and looks at it.*

JACK (cont'd)

Shit.

*Jack calls Mariel. Mariel's phone rings. She picks it up and turns it off. Then goes back to typing on her computer.*

*Jack waits until he hears the voicemail. He exhales and leaves a message.*

JACK

Mari, look, I'm sorry. We're at a disconnect right now and it's my fault. Well, I mean, it's your fault too, but it's mostly my fault. I don't know how to explain it but things haven't been good for me. And I guess the only thing that makes me feel better is talking to you. It reminds me of how things used to be before things got bad. And I get that you've been there for me, but sometimes

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JACK (cont'd)

you just make me feel worse. And then it's like the only solace I have disappears. You know, it really hurt my feelings when you said everyone feels sad? Like, you know it's not the same thing. It's stuff like that that makes me feel almost irrelevant. There's so much more I'd like to say. I want to tell you so many things. I just can't. And it's destroying our friendship and I don't know. I don't know anymore, Mari. Maybe it's best if I just take sometime to work on myself without you in the picture. I guess I'll talk to you when I talk to you. Goodbye Mari. Take care.

*Jack hangs up. He looks at his phone in his hands. He tosses it on his nightstand and buries himself in the covers once more.*

*Mariel hears her phone ding. She picks it up and listens to the voicemail. She goes back to her computer and logs into the chat room one more time.*

MARIEL

You're not online and I don't know when you'll get this message. You know how I am though, always gotta get the last word in. Jack, I'm sorry. I want you to know that you do mean a lot to me. If you need time, I understand. If you need to hear it, I don't think you're irrelevant. I just thought that if I made things appear less than what they were they wouldn't be as big of an issue. My intention wasn't to make you feel worse, but here we are. Take all the time you need. I'll be here when you're ready to talk. Hopefully by then I'll have my shit together too. Talk to you later, Jack. Take care of yourself. Go to work. Take your medicine. Breathe. You are important.

*Mariel logs off again. She*

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*closes her lap top and packs  
up. She exits the coffee shop.*

BLACK OUT.

*End of play.*