

Gray

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A 10 minute play

By

Kym Fraher

**Carrie:** F, 40's-50's, A power broker, Used to taking charge of every situation, comfortable with bossing everyone around

**Dennis:** M, 20's-30's, Wants to break into the business, eager to prove he'll do whatever it takes, future looks bright for him if he can overcome his innate naiveté

Alex: F, 50's, unspoken role, ingenue, used to the world falling at her feet although this hasn't happened for awhile, perceives herself as a "big deal" despite mounds of evidence to the contrary.

PRODUCTION NOTES

Time and place information goes here, along with anything else that will help the reader understand the script.

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#### ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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CARRIE

Dennis. I'm here. I came as quickly as I could, considering the traffic. Now what is the emergency?

DENNIS

It's Alex. She's locked herself in the bathroom, and I can't get in.

CARRIE

Is she alright?

Knocks on the door loudly.

CARRIE

Alex! Alexandra! Do you hear me sweetheart? It's Carrie. I came over to help you darling. You got Dennis all worried so I came right over. Open the door Sweetie so we can talk. You know I don't like talking to you with a door between us.

No response. CARRIE turns to  
DENNIS.

CARRIE

What in Heaven's name is she doing in there?

DENNIS

I tried to stop her, I really did.

CARRIE

Dennis, you're scaring me now. What is Alexandra doing?

DENNIS

She's dying. (CARRIE gasps) Her hair. Back to it's...natural shade.

CARRIE

By natural, you mean...

DENNIS

Yes. Gray.

CARRIE

What is she thinking?! The Emmy awards are coming up--she can't walk the red carpet with gray hair. It'll be the end of her.

DENNIS

Believe you me, I've already brought up all of the points that you're raising, and more. How she is battling time as is, without practically *inviting* people to not even consider her for parts. But she seems hell bent on sabotaging her own career. I'm just a mess about this.

CARRIE

As should we all be, but I don't understand. Why would she do this today of all days?

DENNIS

She said she was reading an article about Helen Mirren and then she started talking about how great Helen Mirren looks with her natural hair.

CARRIE

But Helen Mirren is ancient! Alexandra is 45 years old, but she can still pass for a much younger woman AS LONG AS SHE DOESN'T HAVE GRAY HAIR.

DENNIS

I know! Don't you think I've already covered this territory?

CARRIE

Well what's she doing in there, exactly? You can't strip color from hair once it's on...

DENNIS

She bought (pause) a box.

CARRIE

(gasps)

A box?! You mean from the store?

DENNIS

Yes. She might as well have bought razors to slit her wrists.

CARRIE

Dennis. I'm surprised with you. You are what, 180 lbs.? She's all of 120 lbs sopping wet and you just let her waltz in there with a haircolor from CVS?

DENNIS

What exactly was I supposed to do, Carrie? Wrestle her to the floor?

CARRIE

Yes, if that's what it takes. You are her assistant, which means you *assist* her to advance her career. Not to flush it down the toilet.

DENNIS

That's why I called you.

CARRIE

Oh, so her manager's the only person she can count on to help her and her career, is that it? I'll remember this when it comes time to consider a raise for you. Or not.

Turns back to the door and knocks loudly again.

CARRIE

Alex. I mean it. You need to unlock this door THIS MINUTE, or...or...I'll kick this door down. I will NOT let you ruin your career like this! I'm your manager but I'm your friend too and I wouldn't tell you this if you didn't need to hear it, but no one wants to look at older women on TV, they just don't. We can argue about why that is, mortality, vanity, what have you, but at the end of the day, no matter how beloved you think you are right now, NO ONE is going to want to turn on their television and see a middle-aged woman staring back at them. NO ONE.

CARRIE

(to Dennis)

Do you know where the key to the locks are in this house?

DENNIS

I don't think there are keys to the locks. Ever since the stalker incident last year, she is a little paranoid about leaving ways for someone to find their way past a locked door.

CARRIE

Well then we'll just have to call a locksmith. I have Jose in my contacts. He's the best.

She begins to text Jose from her phone.

CARRIE

Having a locksmith on call comes with the territory...There. (the phone pings) Okay, good. He'll be here within the hour.

DENNIS

You know, the processing time for those box colors is only/

CARRIE

/for god's sake, I don't want to hear it. This is the best we can do and I'd rather not think about what happens if we are too late.

CARRIE's phone begins to ring. She looks at it, deciding if it's worth her time.

CARRIE

(sighs)

I have to take this. I'm going to step right over there. I don't want to go far in case she decides to give up her folly and come out.

DENNIS

I can grab her if she does/

CARRIE

/please. I trusted you to prevent this in the first place. The last thing I'm going to do is let this continue.

CARRIE walks downstage, stage right, clearly still within range for DENNIS to hear her conversation, but it is also clear that CARRIE isn't concerned whether he overhears or not.

CARRIE

Yes, what? Yes, of course this is me--you called my number, did you not? Didn't mother tell you this? It seems that the doctor thinks that the surgery was only moderately successful, which is to say, not successful at all. He's recommending hospice.

(pause) She was against it at first but I talked to her and told her that if that's all they can do, then that's all they can do. There's no sense resisting. Well, they certainly can't stay with me. But I'm willing to pay to have a private nurse, if that makes you feel any better. Listen, I'm dealing with an emergency here so I can't talk about this right now. I'm sure you all can work out the details. I'll come by when I can. Of course. Good-bye.

She returns to the door.

DENNIS

I didn't mean to eavesdrop/

CARRIE

/Then don't./

DENNIS

/But you were talking so loudly. If you need to leave to take care of some private business, I can handle this situation here, while we wait for the locksmith.

CARRIE

What, like how you handled the beginning of this situation, when Alex walzed past you with a box of grey hair color? No, this is my priority right now and I'm not leaving.

DENNIS

Is your father sick?

CARRIE

(reluctantly)

Yes. Cancer.

DENNIS

I'm sorry. My paw-paw died from cancer, although I was only 8 at the time/

CARRIE

/I really don't want to talk about it.

DENNIS

All I'm saying is that if you want to go be with your family, you should go.



CARRIE

Alexandra is my family. I am not going to abandon her when she needs me most.

DENNIS

Okay. Yea, that's fine.

CARRIE

I do need to go get some water because I'm running the risk of becoming dehydrated and once wrinkles settle in, it's a nightmare getting rid of them.

She begins to walk away but stops abruptly but does not turn around.

CARRIE

Would...would you like some. Water, I mean?

DENNIS

Yea, sure. Hydration is good, right?

CARRIE exits.

DENNIS

(to the door)

Alex. Hey in there. Listen, I don't know if you could hear what we were talking about but it seems like Carrie's family needs her. If you could come out so we can all be okay, maybe she might have time to go visit her dad or something. I know you're a caring person and wouldn't want Carrie to neglect her sick dad, so if you could please just come out...

There is no response. CARRIE returns with 2 tall glasses of water.

DENNIS

She's still not out.

CARRIE

I can see that. Here.

She hands him the water. He takes a sip. CARRIE gulps hers down completely.

DENNIS

Listen. I know it's not any of my business, but I wanted to say that when my Paw-Paw was sick, my dad didn't make a point of visiting him before he died. I don't know if it was because he was scared of death or what exactly was holding him back, but he told me, recently actually, that that was one of the biggest regrets of his life. I don't really know you or whatever, and I don't know anything at all about your relationship with your family, but I do know that death is final--that's it--and you don't want to live with regret.

CARRIE

...

DENNIS

...

CARRIE

You're right.

DENNIS

I am?

CARRIE

Yes. It's not your business.

(She turns back to the door.)

Alex, darling, I took a chance, made a call, and luckily, there was a cancelation, so I made an appointment at Chez Simone for you to get a full day of spa treatment, including a massage, mani-pedi, facial, and of course hair care. But we have to leave right now to make it in time-- You know how rare an available appointment is for that place. It's my gift for you for your Emmy nomination, so hurry up, darling, and get something decent on so we can get going. Chop chop!

The door clicks and ALEX emerges.  
Her hair is wrapped in a towel.

ALEX

Chez Simone? Are you serious?

CARRIE

Yes--I said so, didn't I? Now be a good girl and go get something adorable on so we can go. Traffic is always a horror this time of day, and we don't want to be late.

ALEX

I won't be long!

ALEX shuffles off. DENNIS stares mouth agape as CARRIE pops into the bathroom, re-emerging almost immediately with the boxed hair color, unopened.

DENNIS

I can't believe that worked.

CARRIE

(She shakes the box.)

Unopened.

DENNIS

So it was just/

CARRIE

/A cry for help. Or attention. Same thing sometimes. We won't be needing you for the rest of the day, since she'll be at the spa.

DENNIS

Am I fired, then?

CARRIE

When I was younger, I wouldn't have had a clue how to get her out either, but I guess age, and the experience that comes with it, is good for some things. We'll see you bright and early tomorrow.

CARRIE walks off in the direction that Alex went, leaving DENNIS on stage alone.

THE END