

She's Not There

A Play by Ali MacLean

When Rob meets Anna, he think she's the one. When Anna meets Rob, she thinks maybe she can finally be happy. But there is a third party in the relationship that may destroy their union. Every night a shadowy form visits Anna and tries to kill her. This play anthropomorphizes depression and explores how it can devastate a person and the lives of those around them.

CHARACTERS:

Anna Douglas, a woman in her thirties

Rob Asher, A man in his thirties

The Form, a monster

Scott Handler, a man in his thirties

Dr. Salvador, a man in his fifties

Alan Douglas, a man in his sixties

Beth Douglas, a woman in her sixties

Jason Pulaski, a man in his thirties

April Pulaski, a woman in her thirties

Zach, Golfer, Doctor men in their thirties

Amber, Nurse, women in their twenties

*Cast can be doubled up

ACT ONE

Scene 1 - A New York art show

Scene 2 - Anna's apartment

Scene 3 - A beach house

Scene 4 - A mini golf course

Scene 5 - Anna's apartment

Scene 6 - Anna's apartment

Scene 7 - A psychiatrist's office

Scene 8 - A park basketball court

Scene 9 - A psychiatrist's office

Scene 10 - Anna's apartment

Scene 11 - A Manhattan bar

Scene 12 - Rob's apartment

ACT TWO

Scene 1 - A hospital waiting room

Scene 2 - A psychiatrist's office

Scene 3 - A Manhattan café

Scene 4 - A beach house

Scene 5 - Anna's apartment

ACT 1

SCENE 1

(A city warehouse loft. People mill about looking at art work hung on brick walls. It's not a fancy art show, more like one put together by a bunch of starving artists. One man, ROB, looks around. He seems out of place, or maybe he doesn't quite want to be there. He stares at a painting for a moment. Then he notices a woman, ANNA, standing next to him, also looking at the painting. She is a million times more interesting. He makes his move.)

ROB

What do you think?

ANNA

About?

ROB

The painting?

ANNA

It's not supposed to make you think. It's supposed to make you feel.

ROB

Oh. Well, I was raised by wolves, so I don't have feelings.

ANNA

It seems to be a trend in this city. A town full of wolf whelps.

ROB

What does it make you feel?

ANNA

Honestly?

ROB

Of course. I expect complete honesty from everyone I've known for less than five minutes.

ANNA

It makes me feel unaccomplished.

ROB

Why? Anyone could paint something like this. It's just paint splattered on the canvas. It's not like it's a skill, like drawing a picture of a person, or a bunch of trees, or piece of fruit, or something. I mean, I don't know how this (reads painting placard) "Anna" thinks she is going to sell a messy red circle for a thousand dollars.

ANNA

"Ahna".

ROB

What?

ANNA

It's pronounced "Ahna". Like Karenina? My mother loved Tolstoy.

ROB

Oh. Oh God! I'm sorry. Fuck me. Look, don't listen to me. I don't know anything about art. Really. I came with friends, so I'm only qualified to speak on the box wine and cheese cubes.

ANNA

Free cheese is nothing to be ashamed of.

ROB

Actually, I am ashamed. I've eaten too much. Like, way too much for a human being. You may have to call 9-1-1. Is there such a thing as getting your stomach pumped for too much cheese?

ANNA

Naw, I think the body becomes immune to cheese. Like with bee stings. Or lye.

ROB

Yes, I'm sure that's exactly how it works. Listen. Please don't take my critique seriously. I'm an idiot.

ANNA

No, you are probably right. No one here is going to pay a thousand dollars for this.

ROB

God. I feel like I should buy it now.

ANNA
You do?

ROB
Yeah.

ANNA
Will you? It would make up for you hurting my feelings.

ROB
Uhhh, well--

ANNA
They take credit cards.

ROB
Oh. They do. That's great...

ANNA
They can wrap it up and deliver it to your house.

ROB
Okay...really? Okay. Who do I pay?

ANNA
I'm messing with you. I'm not going to make you to buy it.

ROB
Oh, God. I really thought you were serious.

ANNA
I know.

ROB
Cause that would be an expensive apology. Not that you aren't worth it. Or the painting. Because it so...is.

ANNA
If someone not liking my paintings hurt my feelings, I'd be sad all the time.

ROB
I do really feel bad though.

ANNA
Okay, then how about you can buy me a drink.

ROB

Absolutely. Yes. I would love to do that. Anything you want. Under a thousand dollars of course.

ANNA

Well, now that you put qualifiers on it, it's not as special.

ROB

I think you will find that you can get a really good drink in the nine hundred dollar range.

ANNA

I'll order carefully. I don't want you to think I'm after you for your money.

ROB

I think I'd like you anyway, Anna. Even if you were. Are you really named after the book?

ANNA

Yep. I didn't realize until I was a teenager I was named after someone who jumped in front of a train. Thanks, Mom.

ROB

I'm Rob. My Mom named me after Robert Smith. She loved The Cure.

ANNA

Really? You have a cool mom.

ROB

No. My mother has never heard of The Cure. She is not in the same area code as cool. No, I'm just Rob.

ANNA

I think I like you anyway, just Rob.

ROB

Let's go get one of those nine hundred dollar drinks.

LIGHTS OUT.

SCENE 2

(Two weeks later. Rob and Anna in the hall outside Anna's apartment. Anna has a large ice cream cone in one hand and struggles to get her keys out of her bag.)

ANNA

God, that place was so hipster. I think we are now contractually obligated to move to Portland.

ROB

I know. But I read that they have the best ice cream. And you should know this about me. I have a big problem with ice cream.

ANNA

If that is your big problem, you're doing pretty good my friend. My problem is currently this door.

(Anna can't quite get the door open. Rob steps in and opens the door for her. They enter her place.)

ANNA

Oh, thank you. Damsel in distress here.

ROB

You were struggling.

ANNA

I don't normally have to deal with an entire creamery in my hands.

ROB

I told you they were large.

ANNA

No, you said that they had large portions. This is the amount of milk a cow produces for an entire week. It's an embarrassment that they expect us to finish this amount of food.

ROB

I could take it off your hands. If you don't like it, I mean. Give it to me.

ANNA

Get away from my ice cream. This is mine. You already had yours.

(Anna notices ice cream has run down her arm to her elbow and up her sleeve.)

ANNA

Oh, no. Well, I guess I have two options. I can either let my arm be a sticky mess for the rest of our date. Or I can be gross and lick my arm all over.

ROB

I'm waiting to see which kind of girl you are.

(Anna grins and licks the ice cream that is running all over her. She runs her tongue up and down her arm.)

ANNA

Too much?

ROB

No. It takes more than that to scare me away.

ANNA

Good.

ROB

Of course you could have went and gotten a towel.

ANNA

Sure, I could have. But I'm not that kind of girl.

ROB

I'm so glad. I've had a nice day. Again. It's been a long time since I've wanted to spend consecutive days with someone.

ANNA

Me too.

(They kiss. Rob goes to leave, but turns back.)

ROB

Anna. Would you like to go to the shore next weekend? My friends rented a place for a birthday celebration. Beach, barbecues. Maybe even mini golf. I know it is probably soon to go away--

Yes. ANNA

Yeah? ROB

Yes. ANNA

Okay. It's a date. ROB

(Rob kisses her again and exits. Anna throws the rest of the ice cream in the trash. She sits on her couch smiling for a minute.

There is silence. Then, from nowhere, a black form comes from out of the walls, almost as if it came out of the wallpaper or paint. It steps out and stands over her menacingly.

Anna looks up at it expectantly.)

Let me have this. ANNA

(The Form backhands her viciously. She whimpers and curls into the fetal position.)

LIGHTS OUT.

SCENE 3

(Rob and his friend Scott are grilling and drinking beers on a porch. Rob waves to someone off in the distance.)

ROB

They all look like they're getting along. I didn't want to throw her to the wolves, but I thought they'd all like her. At least enough to go swimming together, right? I mean, it's very unlikely they will let her drown. Not that they'd do that, but women are weird to each other sometimes. Maybe I should go down there? In case she feels weird?

SCOTT

Dude. Why are you Woody Allen all of a sudden?

ROB

I'm not. I just want her to have a good time.

SCOTT

So what's the deal with this girl? Anna?

ROB

Scott, I've told you ten times, it's *Ahna*.

SCOTT

Fuck me, *Ahna*. Whatever. What's the story?

ROB

What do you mean?

SCOTT

Come on, Dude? What happened to last spring, 50 dates in 50 nights? I never once saw you bring one of those girls around the group.

ROB

They were the kind of girls you don't bring home to group. She's different. She's it.

SCOTT

She's it? You've only known her for, like, what a month?

ROB

She's just everything that I've been looking for.

SCOTT

Christ, you sound like a testimonial on The Bachelor. What? The girl that I'm fucking right now likes to watch that show. And then when it's over, I make her go home.

ROB

So wrong.

SCOTT

Boundaries. So, what makes you think this girl is any different?

ROB

She just is. It's the way she makes me feel. She's smart, she's pretty, she makes me laugh. She's full of life.

SCOTT

Did she make you join Scientology or something? Is there a cult of Anna?

ROB

Scott, I guarantee you will feel this way some day. About someone.

SCOTT

Christ, I hope not. Look, I'm comfortable. I have a good time. If I get bored, I swipe right. It's super convenient - like Chowhound for ladies. Honestly, some weekends I don't even need to leave my place. Why do you want to get so involved? Look what happened to Jason. He marries April and he is fucking miserable, right?

ROB

Why is he miserable?

SCOTT

Why? Because he got married and had a kid, that's why. Look at him over there. He's waving. Hi. No, we aren't going to save you. You made your bed, Dude.

(Jason enters.)

JASON

You are burning the shit out of that steak.

SCOTT

I'm searing it. Don't worry. Go back to April and the Gymboree, or whatever. Let us handle the meat.

JASON

Seriously, don't fuck up my steaks. I'm trusting you with them.

ROB

It's all good, Jason. And if worse comes to worse we can just order pizza. I'm kind of in the mood for pizza anyway. Aren't you, Scott?

JASON

Aaargh.

ROB

Kidding. It's fine. They're going to be great.

SCOTT

Is that your baby crawling into the ocean?

JASON

What!?

(Jason runs off.)

SCOTT

See? It's like he is obsessed with them. Miserable.

ROB

That's what it looks like when you are genuinely in love with someone, not miserable.

SCOTT

What is that, something from Oprah's book club? You're fucking with me. Right?

ROB

When you know, you know.

SCOTT

What do you mean you know? Know what?

ROB

I kept a list in my notebook at work of things we said to each other. Her cute little sayings.

SCOTT

Sayings?

ROB

Yeah, like she calls me her Manimal--

SCOTT

Stop. Sorry I asked--

ROB

And she says that she didn't fall for me, I tripped her. Haha.

SCOTT

Huh. Poetic.

ROB

I have kept a detailed list of everywhere we went on our dates.

SCOTT

Was this for tax purposes? Or to leave a paper trail in case there was a murder?

ROB

Screw you. No. Because I wanted a record of the girl I was going to marry.

SCOTT

Shut the fuck up. You aren't going to marry this chick. I know you. She's probably good in bed and is just bitchy enough to make you think she is smarter than you, so you think you love her, but in a couple months the shine will wear off and you'll be done.

ROB

I bought her flowers.

SCOTT

Wow. Hold on.

ROB

What are you doing?

SCOTT

Trying to get a wifi signal. I'm putting an ad on Craigslist for a new friend. Cause if you gave this chick flowers, I'll probably never see you again. Until your divorce.

ROB

Oh, shut up.

SCOTT

You gave her flowers. Flowers is serious shit, dude.

ROB

Yes, yes it is.

LIGHTS OUT.

SCENE 4

(Rob and Anna are at a mini golf putting green.)

ROB

I can't believe you've never been mini golfing. You grew up in Maine.

ANNA

It's not like it was a state requirement. Normally stuff like this is against my own policy.

ROB

(mimes writing)

Policy...against....fun. I'm getting this all down.

ANNA

Then again, I've been known to take my own rule book and piss on it.

ROB

Thank God. Otherwise you'd miss out on the wonders of Pirate's Cove Putt Putt. Okay, so let me explain the rules. You take the putter. And you try to hit the ball into the hole.

ANNA

I think I can pick up the general idea.

ROB

Okay. Ladies first.

(Anna swings and misses. She tries again and it moves an inch. She takes aim a few more times, but the ball goes nowhere near the hole.)

ROB

Wow. You're terrible. What is that, like a par nine?

ANNA

I'm actually very athletic. Just not at this.

ROB

Clearly. Don't miss this time. *(Faux golf whisper)* She's lining up the shot. She's checking the wind. She's taking aim. Can she make contact with the ball? The world waits...

ANNA

Stop. I can't concentrate.

(Anna swings hard and misses completely.)

ROB

Ouch. That looked like it hurt! Do you need medical assistance?

ANNA

You're gonna need an ambulance in a minute.

(A small crowd of people waiting has started to form behind Rob. Some begin to get impatient.)

GOLFER

Come on, already! There's other people here!

ROB

Relax, man!

GOLFER

YOU relax!

ANNA

Ugh, why do you hate me, ball?

ROB

Are you talking to the ball now? You're cute. Try hitting it?

GOLFER

Let's go! Christ! My fucking kids want to play!

ROB

Hear that, honey? His fucking kids want to play.

ANNA

I heard! They're lucky to have such a great fucking dad. Does he know that we are playing strip tease mini golf?

ROB

Oh no.

(Anna begins to slip her shirt off her shoulder.)

ANNA

Yes.

ROB

You're gonna run out of clothes really fast.

(Rob picks up the ball and Anna, and carries both to the hole. He puts the ball into the cup. There is sarcastic applause from the crowd.)

ANNA

I suck.

ROB

Noooooo. Yes. Yes, you do. But you are good at other things. I'm sure you're a better artist than that guy.

ANNA

I'm probably a better parent than that guy too. I just hope I get a gallery show before I qualify for the AARP.

ROB

You need to keep at it. You're really good! My Mom even likes it and she is a tough critic.

ANNA

What?

ROB

Yeah. I told my Mom about you.

ANNA

You did? Already? Wow.

ROB

Yeah, I mean, we were just talking, and I mentioned you. And I may have mentioned that I liked you. And how great you were. She asked how she could see your work so I told her to look you up online.

ANNA

Oh God. I am NSFM. Not suitable for moms.

ROB

Yes you are. You're not the little renegade you claim to be. You're sweet, and funny, and Moms across America would love you.

ANNA

You take that back.

ROB

She said, and I'm quoting, she likes your "squares and circles".

ANNA

That's sweet. I just wish it were selling.

ROB

Don't worry. It will.

ANNA

Don't worry. That's like saying don't care.

ROB

No, that's not what I meant at all.

ANNA

Since I was a little kid, I painted because I didn't know how to talk to other people. I'd swing back and forth from thinking I was way too cool for their stupid bullshit, to being terrified that they would target me for being a freaky art kid. Painting was what got me through it. It's all I wanted to do. It still is.

ROB

I get it.

ANNA

Do you?

ROB

I get what you're saying is important to you. I'm not saying that I do what you do. I'm just a guy that processes contracts and stuff.

ANNA

No. Rob. You're more than that. You're like a god damned unicorn. I honestly didn't know guys like you existed.

ROB

Can I be like a Minotaur or something? Instead of a unicorn?

ANNA

Absolutely not. I've always wanted a unicorn. They're precious.

ROB

By precious you mean I'm expensive and priceless? Or dainty and pink?

ANNA

Yes. I saw this movie where this girl in NY becomes an escort and makes enough money to buy a million dollar penthouse. Freelance graphic designer isn't cutting it, so I may switch professions. You are going to have to be okay with this.

ROB

If you can get us a million dollar penthouse, I will look the other way.

ANNA

You're okay with me making the money?

ROB

Sure. Or, if you want to retire from being a high priced call girl, I could start a drug empire.

(Anna notices The Form standing in the crowd.)

ANNA

Maybe you can smuggle in drugs to help people not want to slit their wrists every moment. Something fucking useful. Something that would protect us.

ROB

Uh...Protect us from what?

ANNA

From everything! From dying. Destruction. Murder. A nuclear holocaust!

ROB

Not sure what pill that would be. But I bet Eli Lilly already has the patent.

ANNA

You think this is all a joke. Are you one of those people who just sits there and lets it all happen? If someone was drowning, would you even offer to help?

ROB

What are we even talking about here?

ANNA

Jesus Christ, Rob! Listen to me!

ROB

Why are you shouting?

ANNA

Because you aren't listening!

ROB

I'm listening, alright? Calm down. Everything's going to be okay.

ANNA

How do you know it's going to be okay? Do you have some crystal fucking ball?

ROB

No. I don't. But I am pretty sure there isn't a nuclear holocaust coming in the next few minutes.

ANNA

You don't know. One minute things are fine, and the next, your time is up. You're dead.

ROB

Anna. You're not dead. You're right here with me.

(Anna watches The Form grab a golfer and break his neck, killing him. No one notices.)

ANNA

Oh God! We're all going to die! My skin is going to melt off my bones and I will turn to dust.

ROB

That is not going to happen.

ANNA

You can't promise me. Can you promise me that? Promise me.

ROB

Yes! I promise.

ANNA

Okay...okay.

ROB

What is going on? What just happened? Anna!

ANNA

Nothing. Lets just finish this and get out of here.

(Anna grabs her ball and club and exits.)

LIGHTS OUT.

SCENE 5

(Anna paints a canvas. All is quiet. The Form comes from out of the wall and sits on her bed. It's voice is deep, hypnotic, and powerful and seemingly comes from everywhere. It booms and reverberates throughout the theater.)

Anna pauses and raises her brush to the canvas. She begins to paint.)

THE FORM

No.

(Anna stops. She tries again to paint.)

THE FORM

No.

(Anna puts on headphones to listen to music. The Form is momentarily muted, but then The Form pulls the headphones off her head violently and wraps the cord around her neck. It's voice grows louder.)

THE FORM

You're a fraud. No one wants you or your work. No one wants anything to do with you. You can't make it. You can't make things work. The harder you struggle, the harder it will be for you to breathe when you stop.

(Anna manages to untangle herself and push away. She ignores the voice and goes into the bathroom and busies herself.)

THE FORM

Make yourself busy if you must. The moment you stop moving, you will feel the weight. You are rotten inside and out. You are a useless person.

(Anna runs a tub and gets ready to take a bath. The Form moves toward her. It grabs her by the back of the head and shoves her face in front of the mirror.)

THE FORM

Look at yourself. You can't, can you? You're worthless.

ANNA

I'm not listening to this shit. Good things. Good things. Coffee. I like coffee. Puppies and kittens. And I know I can think of something else. Lou Reed. Lou fucking Reed.

THE FORM

You are nothing.

ANNA

I have good things. I'm grateful I have a roof over my head. I have a job. Some people don't even have jobs.

THE FORM

You do your job poorly. You will be fired and unable to take care of yourself. The weak do not survive. They die.

ANNA

I have someone who cares about me.

THE FORM

If you try to use him as a shield, he will suffer. He is better off without you.

ANNA

No. Rob knows I'm different. My quirks make him laugh. It's why he likes me.

THE FORM

He will see who you really are. How damaged you are. How toxic. He will grow tired of you. You are tedious. You are unlovable. You are a burden. He will leave.

ANNA

No, he won't.

THE FORM

He will go away, like everyone does.

ANNA

You don't know what you're fucking talking about. He's not like all the others. I feel like I can finally breathe. At least I could before you showed up. You Motherfucker.

THE FORM

You don't deserve him. You will hurt him.

ANNA

I would never hurt him. I love him.

THE FORM

You're a liar. You are incapable of love. You don't know the meaning of it. You are dead inside. You might as well finish the job.

ANNA

Stop.

THE FORM

You will die and he will suffer. You know this.

ANNA

Shut up.

THE FORM

You're selfish. You make others suffer. Those who leave go on to live better lives without you. Those who stay are poisoned by your worthlessness.

ANNA

Fuck you!

THE FORM

When you think things are getting better, I will kick the stool out from under you and you will hang and gasp for breath. This planet will die. The people on this planet will suffer, but you deserve to go first.

(The Form grabs Anna by the neck and shoves her, face first into the full bath tub, holding her head under water. She struggles for breath. The Form lets her up momentarily and then plunges her under water again, and again.)

LIGHTS OUT.

SCENE 6

(Anna's apartment. Anna lies on the couch with the Form sitting on top of her. There is a knock at the door. She tries to move the Form off of her which is a struggle. She goes to the door and lets Rob in. He has cold remedies and ice cream. The Form stands in the corner, watching.)

ROB

Nurse Rob at your service. I got ice cream and half of the cold medicine section at Duane Reade.

(Anna goes directly back to her spot on the couch. Rob tuck's Anna into "bed" onto the couch. He sits in the arm chair.)

ANNA

I don't know what I'd do without you.

ROB

Oh, with your looks? You'd eventually find another boyfriend.

ANNA

Yeah, but it would be a very sad week until I did.

ROB

A week sounds fair. How's the patient?

ANNA

Exhausted. Sorry I missed out.

ROB

You missed big time. Jason and April actually got a sitter and came out. I didn't know I could learn so much about baby formula over hot wings. Everyone asked about you.

ANNA

Oh, I'm sure they did.

ROB

They did. They said to say they hoped you felt better.

ANNA

Except Scott.

ROB

OK, you got me. Scott didn't ask about you. He was too busy ducking some chick he humped and dumped.

ANNA

He's a savage. What did you tell them?

ROB

What?

ANNA

What did you tell them was wrong?

ROB

I just told them you were under the weather.

ANNA

Ah.

ROB

What did you want me to say?

ANNA

I guess I'm under something.

ROB

You don't feel warm.

ANNA

Okay, we don't need to do this. Thanks for the ice cream, but really. I'll be okay.

ROB

This has been going on for weeks. If you aren't better by Monday I think we should go to urgent care.

ANNA

That's not necessary.

ROB

Yes it is. You aren't getting any better. You may need antibiotics.

ANNA

Rob, I'm not sick.

ROB

You're not.

ANNA

Not exactly.

ROB

Oh my god. Are you...are you pregnant?

ANNA

No! God, Rob.

ROB

Okay. Easy. It's a valid question, right?

ANNA

I'm not pregnant, okay?

ROB

Okay.

(They sit in silence for a moment.)

ROB

Do you want to maybe get out of the apartment for a bit? Go for a walk?

ANNA

Not particularly.

ROB

They've started putting up the decorations at Macys.

ANNA

Oh, God. That's, like, all the way across town.

ROB

Yes. It would require movement. I don't think they're going to move the displays downtown just for us. I think it might do you some good. Fresh air?

ANNA

Not up to it.

ROB

You're not sick. But you're not feeling well. Or so you say.

ANNA

Or so I say. So now I'm a liar.

ROB

I didn't mean that.

ANNA

So what is with the third degree?

ROB

Anna, come on. I'm just trying to understand what's going on. Are you going to tell me why you didn't want to go out tonight? Or last night? Or last weekend?...If I did something-

ANNA

No, Rob. It's not you, it's me, okay?

ROB

That's always a precursor to a bad conversation.

ANNA

Actually, I don't want to have a conversation about it. At all.

ROB

Do you want me to leave?

ANNA

Do whatever you want.

ROB

No, that's not what I want. I'm trying to have a conversation with you and you're stonewalling me.

ANNA

I'm just tired. Isn't anyone allowed to be tired?

ROB

Anna, you haven't gotten off that couch in days. There's obviously something wrong.

ANNA

Rob, I don't want to talk about it.

ROB

Tell me what's wrong.

ANNA

Seriously, just leave it.

ROB

Anna. I'm not going to leave until you talk to me.

ANNA

Look. I'm just trying to stay on the planet! Okay?

ROB

I--What does that mean?

ANNA

I'm struggling just to muddle my way through the day. So...I took some muscle relaxants.

ROB

Some? How many?

ANNA

A few.

ROB

How many is a few? Are these them? Why are you taking muscle relaxants?

ANNA

If I relax everything, then I can't move. If I can't move, then I can't make bad decisions.

ROB

What bad decisions are you going to make Anna? Anna?

(A low rumble is heard in the distance. Anna can't figure where it is coming from.)

ANNA

The problem is, my body is limp, but my brain is still whirring. A million miles a minute. Never stops. My brain is always noisy. I can't make it shut up. Every movement I make is being watched. Then He seeps out of the walls and He tackles me flat.

ROB

Who? Jesus Christ, Anna. You're starting to scare me.

ANNA

Yeah, you and me both.

ROB

I think I should call someone.

ANNA

No! Rob. Okay. I have to tell you - I wasn't sure when to, or how really, because I was sure you'd freak. And I wanted you to stick around so I didn't tell you, but that is selfish. But I have to tell you. I get really low sometimes. Like really depressed.

ROB

That's all? God, Anna. I thought you were going to tell me you had bodies buried under the floor boards or something. We all get a little low. Look. I know you've been disappointed about the gallery stuff, but things will get better. Really. Tomorrow we can go see a movie. Dinner. Whatever you want, okay?

ANNA

No, Rob. You're not listening. It's not disappointment. Disappointment is momentary and this? This can't be solved by a lite beer.

ROB

Okay, I never drink lite beer.

ANNA

I'm not joking. You don't get depressed for a day and then it's done. It's not a 24 hour bug. That's not how this works. I can't move. I can't breathe. I feel like I'm going to die. It scary, Rob. It eventually scares everyone around me.

ROB

Anna. Listen to me. You have so much going for you. You are gorgeous. You have a great job. You're talented. You have an apartment thousands of New Yorkers would kill for. No, I mean they would probably murder you if they knew it was rent controlled. And I'm crazy about you, and I'm great. Well, pretty good. My friends give me three out of five stars. You have no reason to be depressed.

ANNA

You have no reason to have allergies. Why do you have allergies? You don't have a cat.

ROB

That...that makes no sense.

ANNA

It makes perfect sense. With your logic. Why would you fucking say that?

ROB

I'm sorry. I'm just trying to help.

ANNA

I take pills for this. Medication. Took them. I stopped a while ago.

ROB

Why did you stop?

ANNA

Because. Because I felt better than I have in, I don't know, ever? Since I met you, it was like this thing never existed at all. Like I was cured. I suddenly get why people like Disney and shit. But then it slowly started to creep back in. And seeing you didn't fix it anymore.

(A clap of thunder is heard.)

ROB

But what is causing it?

ANNA

I DON'T KNOW. It could be a sad story about a dog dying, or the bodega is out of my favorite yogurt, or because it's Tuesday.

(A couple drops of something fall from the ceiling on Anna. She looks up, distracted. Rob doesn't feel anything.)

ROB

Anna, I'm sorry that you are sad. I get sad sometimes too. Everyone gets sad. I promise you that it will blow over.

(The Form laughs at this. It booms loudly. Anna looks over at The Form. Rob doesn't react.)

ANNA

You can tell somebody you're drowning, but if you are telling a fish, they're not going to get it.

ROB

Okay, so I'm a fish in this scenario?

(A light rain begins to fall on them. Anna notices it. Rob does not.)

ANNA

Yes. You're a fucking fish. Fuck, I wish I was sad. Sad is a paper cut. This is a cancer. This is being buried alive.

It's like I'm in the water and it's fine, but the wind picks up and the waves get choppy. I'm treading water, trying to duck them but they keep hitting me in the face hard. I look at people on the beach, people like you, but no one notices that I am struggling. I'm yelling for help, but no one hears me. I start swimming for shore, but the waves get bigger and knock me under. I'm dizzy and I don't know which way is up, or which way to swim, and my arms are getting too tired to keep moving. So I start to sink. I open my mouth to yell for help again and it just fills up with water. No one hears me. And I'm alone. I'm dying and I'm fucking alone.

ROB

You aren't alone. I hear you. We will figure this out together. Okay?

ANNA

Okay.

(The Form walks over to where Anna and Rob are sitting and stands behind Anna. Thunder booms again. The rain intensifies over Anna.)

LIGHTS OUT.

SCENE 7

(A Manhattan doctor's office. Rob enters to find Dr. Salvador, a psychiatrist, sitting at his desk.)

ROB

Hello? Dr. Salvador?

DR. SALVADOR

Yes. Come in.

ROB

Hi. Rob Asher.

DR. SALVADOR

Have a seat.

ROB

Here? Or over there? Where do you want me?

DR. SALVADOR

Anywhere you are comfortable...

ROB

Okay. I'm new to this. I mean being in a therapist's office. Not sitting in a chair. Obviously. Haha. Okay. I'll stop talking now.

DR. SALVADOR

That's kind of the point.

ROB

The point of what?

DR. SALVADOR

Being here. You're supposed to do most of the talking.

ROB

Oh. Right.

DR. SALVADOR

So.

ROB

So.

DR. SALVADOR
What brings you here today?

ROB
Pills.

DR. SALVADOR
Pills?

(Rob reaches into his pocket and pulls out the bottle of muscle relaxants and a few other pill bottles.)

ROB
Yeah.

DR. SALVADOR
Do you think you have a problem?

ROB
Yeah. The problem is my girlfriend takes these and I don't know why. Or if she should be taking all of them. And you prescribed most of them. So I am here to ask you why and what I should do. If anything. Because when she takes them, she's like a zombie. But she insists if she doesn't, she will be "drowned in blackness."

(Dr. Salvador reaches over and take a bottle reading it.)

DR. SALVADOR
Anna Douglas. You know I can't discuss another patient with you. There is patient-client confidentiality.

ROB
Doctor. Come on. I know you prescribed her most of these. But I know you didn't give her these muscle relaxants, which she is taking like Flintstone vitamins.

DR. SALVADOR
I can't discuss Anna Douglas with you. But hypothetically, if I were helping a patient I would not be prescribing muscle relaxants or other recreational drugs. Those could interfere with treatment. It could be very harmful.

ROB

No shit. She is convinced that something is out to get her, and talks about it bordering on a tin foil hat way? And she is using this to numb herself into a vegetative state.

DR. SALVADOR

Does she know you are here?

ROB

No.

DR. SALVADOR

That seems like it could be a betrayal of her trust.

ROB

You make it sound like I am spying on her or something. I just--I want to help. Like you said, I think she is doing herself harm. Isn't that what you guys take an oath on? Do no harm? I'm not an expert in emotions or anything, but I know when something is wrong. I just don't know what to do for her, exactly.

DR. SALVADOR

Why didn't you ask her directly?

ROB

She doesn't want to talk about it. She doesn't really want to talk about any of this. It makes her angry. Furious, actually. She claims I don't understand. Then she yells at me. Then she cries. Then she takes more of these. It's a little Sid and Nancy. You know, if Sid were a pacifist who wears wheat colored cardigans and glasses.

DR. SALVADOR

Is that how you see yourselves?

ROB

Well no, not exactly. I'm exaggerating. About me being like a murderous dead punk rocker.

DR. SALVADOR

Ah. You're joking.

ROB

Not about the wheat colored cardigan. Obviously.

DR. SALVADOR

Do you do that a lot?

ROB

What?

DR. SALVADOR

Deflect with humor?

ROB

I--I don't know? I just meant...because I was wearing a cardigan and...nevermind.

DR. SALVADOR

So the comparison of your relationship to a volatile pair of junkies was inaccurate.

ROB

Yes. I was exaggerating. But not about her situation. She's really...she's not herself.

DR. SALVADOR

Do you think you can fix her?

ROB

Oh. I see. Are you analyzing me now?

DR. SALVADOR

I might as well. I am billing you for the hour.

ROB

Thanks. Look, I thought you could help. That's a hell of a lot of pills for a small woman. I don't know what to say to make her feel better. And I don't know what is making her so sad.

DR. SALVADOR

You seem to feel responsible for her happiness.

ROB

Aren't I? In a way? I'm her boyfriend. Aren't we responsible to make the people we love happy? I thought that was part of the whole package. You love someone, you want to make them happy.

DR. SALVADOR

That's a tall order. A lot to fulfil. Especially when you can't control another person's thoughts, feelings, or brain chemistry.

ROB

Well, I can look out for her at least.

DR. SALVADOR

Tell me about your mother growing up.

ROB

No, let's not get into the whole mother thing. This isn't about me. And my relationship with my mother is just fine, thank you very much.

DR. SALVADOR

I see. And your father?

ROB

They're divorced.

DR. SALVADOR

Do you have any type of relationship with him?

ROB

I lived with my Mom growing up.

DR. SALVADOR

I see.

ROB

I saw my Dad every other weekend. Mostly.

DR. SALVADOR

Would you say your father was removed from your day to day life?

ROB

Well, yeah. I mean, I could call him, or whatever. But I'd just talk to my mom most of the time. It was easier. Because we were living in the same place.

DR. SALVADOR

So you were the man of the house? You looked out for your mother?

ROB

My Mom was fine. The two of us were fine. I'm a well adjusted guy, okay? I have a job. I have friends. I have a girlfriend. I floss. Four out of five dentists recommend me. Anyway. This is about Anna. God, I should have known you were going to turn it around on me.

DR. SALVADOR

You are hyper focused on Anna.

ROB

Because she is the one who is in need of help! What am I supposed to do? Just let her be sad?

DR. SALVADOR

Situational sadness and clinical depression are two very different things. One is an external situation that affects you. Depression comes from within. So while your brain can feel good about a loving relationship, someone else's brain has the ability to ignore anything good. It will seek out the catastrophe and latch onto it.

ROB

I've had relationships that you could fairly and accurately call a catastrophe. Anna and I aren't a catastrophe. It's like nothing I've ever felt before. You know I was born color blind? I never told her because I figured it'd be 'game over' to an artist the minute I said it. But ever since I met her I feel like I can see all the colors.

DR. SALVADOR

So there was a point where you never knew beyond the muted colors. But now you have a new perspective?

ROB

Yeah, I guess you could say that.

DR. SALVADOR

Perhaps you are color blind to Anna's situation.

ROB

What's that supposed to mean?

DR. SALVADOR

It means that there is something that you may not understand because you have never experienced it. It is a sensory experience that you have never encountered that she goes through. You can be bewildered by it. You can get angry. You can try to empathize. Or you can try to fix it.

ROB

D. Column D. Why wouldn't I try to fix it?

DR. SALVADOR

How do you fix seeing a color that someone else doesn't see?

ROB

I'm not following.

DR. SALVADOR

Perhaps Anna is experiencing emotions on a color scale that you and I don't see. There are advantages to it. It makes her a more sensitive human being. The world needs more of those. But there are disadvantages too. The vulnerability and depths it can take someone to can be overwhelming.

ROB

Well that's what needs to be fixed.

DR. SALVADOR

That's not your job. The question for you is how are you going to react to it? How are you going to be one half of this relationship, when there is this added element.

ROB

I don't know.

DR. SALVADOR

That's okay. You don't have to figure it all out right away.

ROB

Some days are good. And then some days she gets so dark. The way she talks? It's freaking me out. It seems sometimes like it's life or death. I'm afraid she means it. It's not life or death. Is it?

DR. SALVADOR

I can't answer that.

ROB

I'm at a total loss here.

DR. SALVADOR

If you want to help her you can be patient with her and just listen.

ROB

That doesn't seem like it's enough to keep her happy. Or alive.

DR. SALVADOR

Why don't you leave that responsibility to Anna. And her doctors?

ROB

That's the best advice you have?

DR. SALVADOR

On this subject? Yes.

ROB

Okay. Thanks for the talk, Doctor.

(Rob begins to exit.)

DR. SALVADOR

You aren't going to finish the session?

ROB

No, I'm good.

DR. SALVADOR

Then I'll see you next week.

ROB

Sorry?

DR. SALVADOR

You should come back. My expert opinion? You're more than a little neurotic.

LIGHTS OUT.

SCENE 8

*(SCOTT waits on a basketball court in the park.
Rob rushes in.)*

SCOTT

You said you were coming today. Dude, I've been waiting since, like, eleven.

ROB

Sorry. I know, I know.

SCOTT

You've missed basketball three weeks now.

(Scott hurls the basketball at him.)

ROB

I know. Saturdays are one of my only days to spend with Anna.

SCOTT

Ugh.

ROB

Things have been going well the past few weeks and when things are going well I want to soak it up.

SCOTT

I don't need the details.

ROB

Hold on. Let me catch my breath. I ran all the way here. Fifteen blocks.

SCOTT

Take a fucking cab like a human being, you plebeian. You're all red, and sweaty and shit.

ROB

You're sweaty too.

SCOTT

Yeah, because I played basketball. I ran. On a court. Not down Avenue A or some shitty street in the East Village with bums and Pizza Rat cheering me on. Wait, turn around. What the fuck are you wearing?

ROB

What? It's a sweatshirt?

SCOTT

It's a hoodie. With a skull on the back. Are you in a teenage emo band now?

ROB

Shut up. It's Anna's. She thought I might get cold if I stayed out here too late.

SCOTT

Does she hold your dick when you piss too?

ROB

Scott, I don't want to alarm you, but you can come off as a bit grating. Has anyone mentioned this recently?

SCOTT

Fuck you. You're so whipped. She might as well be your mother.

ROB

What the fuck is that supposed to mean?

SCOTT

You're like, disappearing. You're not going to end up marrying her, so my guess is she's a fucking animal in the sack.

ROB

First of all, don't talk about her like that.

SCOTT

Ooo. You are in an emo band.

ROB

Second, why don't you think I would marry her?

SCOTT

She's not your type.

ROB

Not my type?

SCOTT

Come on, man. Do you really see yourself spending the rest of your life with some Village lesbian art freak? You date girls who treat the arrival of the new Restoration Hardware catalogue like a bank holiday.

ROB
She's not a lesbian.

SCOTT
Sure she is.

ROB
I'd know if my girlfriend is a lesbian, Scott. I'm the one having sex with her.

SCOTT
They all say that until the bitch leaves them for someone named Carol.

ROB
How are you such an expert?

SCOTT
I know lesbians.

ROB
Like who?

SCOTT
My dog is a lesbian.

ROB
Your dog licks it's crotch. That doesn't not make her a lesbian. Dogs do that.

SCOTT
Yeah, so do arty chicks from the East Village.

ROB
Oh Christ. This is so stupid.

SCOTT
Don't say I didn't warn ya.

ROB
What is your deal, Scott? For the past two months, you've been a real prick about her. Why don't you like her?

SCOTT
What do you mean?

ROB
I don't know, you seem to come up with a bunch of crazy excuses of why I shouldn't be with this woman.

SCOTT

I don't know. Just a vibe I get.

ROB

A vibe? Since when are you a vibe type of guy?

SCOTT

It's nothing, man. Knock yourself out. Marry her if you want. I don't care.

ROB

It seems like you do, though.

SCOTT

No, 'you do you', man.

ROB

Gee, thanks.

SCOTT

But if I were you? I wouldn't forget my friends. Not for this girl. I think you're gonna need us.

(Scott grabs the basketball away from Rob and shoots it. It goes in.)

LIGHTS OUT.

SCENE 9

(Anna is in session at Dr. Salvador's office.)

ANNA

I keep dreaming that my apartment building burns down.

DR. SALVADOR

How does the fire start?

ANNA

Duh. I start it.

DR. SALVADOR

You purposely start a fire.

ANNA

Yeah. I torch the place.

DR. SALVADOR

Why?

ANNA

Because. I need to get all the horrible shit out of there. The cockroaches that run rampant. The ugly walls and the evil that comes through and yells at me. It's cleansing.

DR. SALVADOR

But you are burning up the good things too. Neighbors, pets, antiques, love.

ANNA

Well, in my dream, it seems like the only way. The only way to get out is to go through the flames.

DR. SALVADOR

Even if you are starting them? Are you trying to destroy the good things in your life?

ANNA

No. I am trying to save them. Him.

DR. SALVADOR

I see. Is Rob in the fire?

ANNA

Sometimes. He isn't meant to be. I set it before he gets there.

DR. SALVADOR

So he's sort of an innocent bystander.

ANNA

Yeah. And then he comes in and gets burned.

DR. SALVADOR

Is that how you see the two of you?

ANNA

Ugh. I don't know. I'm done trying to interpret my stupid life through some dream B.S.. It's not going to make a difference. How long have I been coming here?

DR. SALVADOR

I'd have to look up the exact date, but--

ANNA

It seems like a million years. And I'm still fucked up. I need to get better. These meds aren't working. I need you to step it up and make me better.

DR. SALVADOR

I'm glad that you have an active interest in getting better, Anna. I know you realize that it's not just me that can create this. You have to do the heavy lifting.

ANNA

You have methods. Drugs. Why can't you come up with something that works? Jesus fucking Christ? Why doesn't anything work?

DR. SALVADOR

The combination we have you on has been known to be very effective--

ANNA

In what, lab rats? I can read studies and percentages online too. What's the plan when it isn't effective? What if every night there is something clawing at me that I can't control and I can't be better?

DR. SALVADOR

You seem agitated that things aren't happening in a certain time frame.

ANNA

For the first time in my life I have a reason to be good. Rob needs me to be better. I'm trying and I can't. I'm in love and yet I still wonder what it is like to wake up and not feel dread. I still wake up thinking things are shit and will never get better.

DR. SALVADOR

Let's imagine a scenario where you are completely well.

ANNA

Please. I don't need more pop psychology games. This is like dime store crap.

DR. SALVADOR

I am trying to get a sense of what your picture of better is.

ANNA

Not this. I'm a mess. I'm useless. I'm full of tiny little tears and cracks.

DR. SALVADOR

And you think you need to be a certain way for this relationship?

ANNA

Would you date someone who was like me? Weeping at nothing? Lying in the fetal position on the floor? Yelling at him for doing nice things?

DR. SALVADOR

What did he do that was nice?

ANNA

Rob saw kittens for adoption the other day. He tried to get me one.

DR. SALVADOR

That was nice.

ANNA

No, I do NOT want a cat.

DR. SALVADOR

Why not give it a try? It might be a good change. Everyone should own a pet at least once in their lives.

ANNA

I've had a cat before when I was, like eleven. Little black one. Siouxie.

DR. SALVADOR

Didn't you like having her?

ANNA

Sure. But I only had her for a short time. While I was at art camp, my mother gave her away.

DR. SALVADOR

Why did she give the cat away?

ANNA

Because the cat was my responsibility and I chose art camp over the cat.

DR. SALVADOR

That seems extreme.

ANNA

Choices in life are hard.

DR. SALVADOR

But was it your choice? She gave her up while you were away. Did she tell you she was going to do that?

ANNA

No.

DR. SALVADOR

Then she didn't give you the choice.

ANNA

She said if I stayed home that summer, then she wouldn't have given Siouxi away. So it was my fault.

DR. SALVADOR

Essentially, she punished you for going to camp. For going to study art.

ANNA

No, she just didn't want to take care of a cat. And I don't either anymore. I can barely take care of me. Why would I bring an innocent life into all this?

DR. SALVADOR

You don't see yourself as an innocent in this scenario? Rob is innocent. The cat is innocent. But you aren't. Do you think your depression is somehow deserved?

ANNA

No. That's not what I meant. I just mean that someone like Rob doesn't deserve to be tainted. I'm defective and messed up and full of holes. And every time I have one of these bad bouts it rips me wide open. I don't know how to patch it up.

DR. SALVADOR

You're doing it. You're here. You're going through therapy. You're taking your medications. You are talking about it. You want to make this work--

ANNA

If I fail at this, I'm not the only one who gets obliterated. He will too. I don't think I can handle that.

DR. SALVADOR

Why don't you focus on yourself and let Rob take care of Rob?

ANNA

Because Rob has no fucking idea what he is getting into. He still thinks that this is some temporary mood that will blow over. He thinks if maybe I get more sunshine or exercise... like the endorphins are gonna kick in and suddenly my brain will be healed. You know he had his friend April call me and invite me to a yoga class?

DR. SALVADOR

That sounds like it would--

ANNA

A yoga class. A fucking yoga class? That's like a band aid for a bullet hole.

DR. SALVADOR

What do you think would work? What would make you better?

ANNA

I don't know, you're the fucking doctor!

(Anna pauses.)

ANNA

Some days I think: if only I could make the world go away. Then it wouldn't matter if I felt safe in it or not. It wouldn't matter that I can't sleep, or that I feel like a failure, or that I've made a hundred mistakes in my life that I can never fix.

DR. SALVADOR

What would happen if the world went away?

ANNA

It wouldn't be able to terrify me or stalk me. I could finally be in charge. I could say fuck you. Fuck you when it has it's hands around my throat and wont let go. I could just...Sometimes I think...I think could just kill myself before it kills me. I'd be in control. At least I have that ace up my sleeve.

(Anna pauses again.)

ANNA

But. I'd never do that.

DR. SALVADOR

I am going to prescribe you a new medication called Abilify.

ANNA

What's that?

DR. SALVADOR

It's an anti-psychotic.

ANNA

Psychotic. Well, we're finally calling a spade a spade.

LIGHTS OUT.

SCENE 10

(Anna stands in the kitchen staring into space. She is in the middle of making coffee, but has stalled out on the process. Rob wakes and comes out of the bedroom.)

ROB

Coffee. Excellent. Did you want to go out for breakfast? Anna? Hello?

(Rob approaches Anna and places his hand on her shoulder. She jumps.)

ROB

Anna.

ANNA

What?

ROB

Breakfast?

ANNA

Sure.

ROB

Where were you?

ANNA

Nowhere.

ROB

You were on another planet. Planet Anna.

ANNA

Can we not? I don't have the energy.

ROB

Okay. You okay? You sleep alright?

ANNA

Rob, I haven't been to bed yet.

ROB

What? You went to bed with me.

ANNA

Then I got up and paced back and forth for seven hours.

ROB

What's wrong?

(The Form reveals itself to having been sitting in the kitchen this whole time.)

(The Form pulls a heavy metal chain from out of the wall.)

ANNA

Nothing, Rob. It's just another day in paradise.

ROB

You need to talk to me about these things.

ANNA

I'm really not in the mood for this today.

ROB

Maybe you need a change of scenery.

ANNA

Like where?

ROB

We could go away somewhere. I will take my vacation days. Take a long weekend and go somewhere sunny with palm trees and a beach. That would do you some good.

THE FORM

Tell him.

ANNA

I did an internship when I was in school. I worked at the Getty out in LA. Sunshine every day. I woke up with palm trees and a pool outside my window in winter. And I cried every day. Do you know how ashamed you feel when you're sad at a pool party in California? You can take me out of this room, but you can't take me out of here.

(She points to her head.)

ROB

We need something to cheer you up. Something to focus on other than this. It says online that distractions for people suffering from depression are a good idea--

ANNA

You're new to this, okay. You don't know what it's like and you can't solve it by going on to WEB MD a couple of times.

ROB

I'm trying to help you but you shoot down everything I suggest. I want to figure this out.

ANNA

You can't stop me from getting sad, Rob. I'm sad, okay?

ROB

Then talk to Dr. Salvador. Take more meds if you have to.

ANNA

You hate the meds. You say they make me spacey.

ROB

Well, they do. But if that's what you need to do, then do it. I will take you to his office. I will sleep next to you while you adjust. Whatever you need.

(The Form grabs Anna's ankle and clamps the chain around her, tethering her to the wall.)

ANNA

Stop. Stop being so fucking accommodating. It's getting on my nerves.

ROB

How do you want me to be? Completely unsympathetic? Should I tell you to snap out of it? That didn't go over very well when Jason tried it.

ANNA

Jason is an asshole.

ROB

He's not. He just doesn't understand what you are going through. None of them do.

ANNA

And neither do you.

ROB

Wow. Okay. But I'm trying, Anna. I'm really fucking trying.

ANNA

Rob, just thinking about trying hard to be happy for you, to pretend all the time, makes me even more sad. Like bone tired sad.

ROB

You shouldn't have to pretend.

(The Form puts the chain around Anna's neck.)

ANNA

I am pretending. God, I can't fucking breathe. I'm holding my breath and pretending everything is okay. It's all a fucking lie. This. Us. My life. IT'S A FUCKING LIE!

ROB

For the past three days you've acted like everything was fine when apparently it wasn't, so I guess I can't read you at all.

ANNA

I am always acting like things are fine. It hasn't been the past three days, it's been the past three decades. I'm really fucking good at it. You don't know me, Rob. And you shouldn't know. If you actually knew what was going on in here you'd be terrified. Repulsed. I would repulse you.

ROB

No, Honey. That's not true.

ANNA

Yes it is. If you knew half of the things I think about and don't tell you? There aren't the right words to tell a person that you want to disappear off the earth. See? That look on your face. That's why I can't tell you. You look so hurt and disappointed, like I've deeply wounded you.

ROB

Because you break my heart when you talk like that.

ANNA

Well that's how I feel, Rob. I should be honest about how I feel, according to you. Right? Complete honesty?

ROB

We are going to get you through this. We are a team, remember?

ANNA

Yeah, well teams get beaten.

(The Form pulls back on the chain.)

THE FORM

You are going to die. It's going to happen. It's meant to be. Will he watch?

ANNA

Look. You are wasting your time here. We just aren't a match.

THE FORM

Your medicines can't save you. Dr. Salvador won't save you. This one won't save you.

ANNA

You can't save me.

THE FORM

Succumb to it. Just end it. You are all alone. The way you are meant to be.

ANNA

It's not meant to be. This isn't some cute story where you marry the girl and play Pictionary with Jason and April and bike in the park on weekends. I'm not her.

THE FORM

Soon you won't exist.

ANNA

That girl doesn't even exist. I hate that shit. The fact that you like that shit makes me sick.

THE FORM

Whatever you cling to, the day will come when none of that matters.

ANNA

I mean, none of it matters, Rob.

ROB

You matter. To me.

ANNA

Well, you don't matter to me.

ROB

Bullshit. You don't mean that.

THE FORM

Try to hide. I will be there, as loud as thunder.

ANNA

Hear me loud and clear: I mean it.

THE FORM

You can try to hide with him. I will live. With him.

ANNA

No!

ROB

No, what? Hello?

(Anna pauses, glaring at The Form. Rob looks over in it's direction.)

ANNA

No. I mean it, Rob. Why the fuck would you think that we are right for each other? Go find some Kewpie doll that writes for a fashion magazine who carries a dog in her purse or something.

ROB

That's what you think I want?

ANNA

Sure. Some normal chick. I'm sure you'd love that. It'd be a relief. For the both of us.

THE FORM

You can go hide at hospitals but I will be there. Staying alive is so exhausting.

ANNA

This is fucking exhausting. Do you hear me? You are exhausting. So lets just end it. Because you don't matter to me.

ROB

I don't know what's going on with you? But I know this isn't you talking.

ANNA

Who else would it be? Just leave me alone. The way I wanted to be.

ROB

I think you're having a reaction to the new drug. Let's just calm down and I will talk to you after you have talked to your therapist.

(The Form yanks back on the chain again.)

ANNA

It won't change anything. My therapist can't make me love you.

(Rob is quiet for a moment.)

ROB

OK. If you wanted to hurt me you succeeded. Now what?

ANNA

Maybe you should just go.

(Rob exits. Anna falls to the floor gasping. The Form stands over her.)

ANNA

I can't breathe. I can't breathe. I'm going to die.

THE FORM

Yes. You are.

LIGHTS OUT.

SCENE 11

(Rob sits at a bar in his street clothes, getting drunk. Scott arrives in a suit, fresh from work.)

SCOTT

They let you out of your gerbil cage early?

(Rob doesn't answer.)

SCOTT

Is it casual athleisure Wednesday at your office? Or did you change into your least impressive clothes in the bathroom?

ROB

Shut up, Scott.

SCOTT

Hey, you may not care how you look, but I have to sit next to you. It scares away the talent.

ROB

You don't have to sit next to me. In fact, I'd prefer it.

SCOTT

Ooo, big talk from Pig Pen.

ROB

You don't even have to talk to me. How about that? There's a whole bar, Scott. Go sit over there.

SCOTT

Who shit in your Frosted Flakes this morning?

(Rob signals the bartender.)

ROB

Another Dewars. Two of them.

SCOTT

Actually, I'll get a Stoli neat.

ROB

Both the Dewars are for me.

SCOTT

Okay. What did the Princess of Doom do now?

ROB

A, who says there is anything wrong? And B, who says it's about her?

SCOTT

Oh, I don't know, Rob. Because you're double fisting scotch while wearing sweatpants?

ROB

They're comfortable.

SCOTT

Don't ever be that comfortable.

ROB

And this is exactly why I wanted to drink alone. I can't talk to you.

SCOTT

Dude. I asked you what's wrong. You didn't answer me.

ROB

Maybe I just want to drink, Scott.

SCOTT

I've known you my whole life, Rob. And despite the fact that you can be a bit fussy--

ROB

Fussy?!

SCOTT

Yeah, like a border collie. You know what I mean. Other than that, you're a pretty even keeled guy. I mean, you don't mope about shit. I've never seen you get mad. You weren't even upset when the Rangers lost the playoffs last year.

ROB

I'm supposed to get upset about that?

SCOTT

Shout at the TV, talk trash, throw a beer can with the rest of us? You didn't even react at your grandfather's funeral. You led a pick up game of tag football at the wake.

ROB

Kids deal with death in different ways.

SCOTT

We were seventeen.

ROB

Scott, what's your point?

SCOTT

My point is, you're not an emotional guy, exactly, but since this girl has come on the scene, you're always one step away from eating a pint of ice cream out of the carton. It's not a good look on you, man.

ROB

I'm sorry you are unable to experience being in love, Scott. It must suck for you. But you androids aren't built like we humans are. Tough break.

SCOTT

Oh, right. I don't have feelings.

ROB

Not to my knowledge.

SCOTT

Why, because I don't let every girl I meet walk all over me?

ROB

Because you won't let any girl you meet spend more than a long weekend with you. You don't understand shit, okay?

SCOTT

Come on, Dude. There's always a solution. Whatever your chick trouble is, I got you. What is it with her? She want you to last longer?

ROB

Fuck off, Scott.

SCOTT

What? Possible scenario. No? Okay. She doesn't like being tied up? She got baby rabies or something? She catch you looking at some other piece of ass and go girlzilla on you?

ROB

Fucking bite me.

SCOTT

Ohhh, is that the problem? She bites? Personally, that's a deal breaker for me. But it's amazing what some guys will put up with these days. She gnawing on your knob?

ROB

What is wrong with you?

SCOTT

What's wrong with you is the question? Because I can't think of a single good reason why you'd let this chick give you a personality transplant. Unless it's sex related.

ROB

No, it's not fucking sex related.

SCOTT

You sure? Because I get the feeling you lived a life of mediocre lays until this carnival ride came along and now she's got you by the balls and wont let go. Am I right? Huh?

ROB

No! She wants to die, Scott. She talks about killing herself. Ending her life. And I have to just watch her spiral out of control because I've done everything I can think of, but I can't help her.

(Scott is silent for a moment.)

SCOTT

Heavy.

ROB

Yeah. I wish our problem was having a baby. Or jealousy. Or sex. Not trying to keep her alive.

SCOTT

Dude, that's too much. You can't take that on.

ROB

I have to. I love her.

SCOTT

No, man. You gotta love yourself. Get out of that situation.

ROB

I can't just leave. She's all messed up. I don't think you understand depression, Scott. I don't think you have really experienced living with it day in and day out.

SCOTT

I don't understand? My mother was fucking Bi-polar.

ROB

What?

SCOTT

Yeah. Never knew which Mom you were gonna get. Cool Mom who would make you dinner, or Freaked The Fuck Out Mom who would rage at you and then lock herself in her bedroom all day. Good ole Karen.

ROB

I saw your Mom all the time. She never--

SCOTT

You saw cool Mom.

ROB

I'm sorry. I didn't notice it.

SCOTT

No, you didn't.

ROB

I guess there weren't a lot of examples of it while we were growing up. So I don't have a grasp on how to handle it now.

SCOTT

Dude, there were so many examples. Jessica Goodman?

ROB

What about her?

SCOTT

Almost killed herself. Tenth grade.

ROB

What are you talking about?

SCOTT

Don't you remember? She went to that party with the lacrosse team and they all fingered her and told everyone, and then she was like the Jersey Turnpike Pariah?

ROB

God, those guys were pricks.

SCOTT

Yeah, well, she drank half a bottle of Windex and her parents pulled her from school.

ROB

No. No, she went on the Spanish trip.

SCOTT

No, you dope. She left school. Transferred to some special school for fucked up kids.

ROB

I had no idea.

SCOTT

You aren't very observant, are you?

ROB

I guess I just see the good in people.

SCOTT

Yeah, well, sometimes that doesn't help them.

ROB

When I met Anna I had no idea she had this hanging over her. She was cool, and bright, and funny--

SCOTT

I could have told you.

ROB

Oh right. You knew.

SCOTT

We all knew. Jason, April, Tammy, Zach. We met her that weekend at the beach house and things were copacetic, but then, anytime she came around there was this tension. And of course you were doing your fussy thing, working double time to keep everything cool.

ROB

You got the wrong impression. She's a dynamic and warm person, it's just--

SCOTT

I've seen her eyes go dead. (He snaps) Changes the temperature in the room. I watched my mom do that my whole life.

ROB

You noticed this. You thought that one day she might get like this, and you didn't tell me?

SCOTT

Would you have listened to me? "Oh Scott. You're just jealous". "Oh Scott. You don't understand because you're just a pussy hound."

ROB

Well, the second one.

SCOTT

Fair.

ROB

I just want her back. The Anna I met.

SCOTT

How do you know that's really her? She could've been faking it. People like her lie about what's really going on inside. You think you're getting the person but they aren't there.

(Scott looks at Rob and sees his comment land.)

SCOTT

I'm not telling you anything you don't already know.

ROB

What should I do?

SCOTT

This isn't your problem, Dude. Don't let it fuck you up.

ROB

Well, it kind of is my problem. She's my girlfriend.

SCOTT

See? There is your solution. There will be carnage. Get out before the hammer falls.

LIGHTS OUT.

SCENE 12

(Rob is in his bed. There is a loud knock at his door which startles him. He goes to answer the door. Anna barges in, wet, and paces.)

ROB

Anna. What are you doing? It's late.

ANNA

It's 11:00, Rob. In New York City, that's considered dinner time.

ROB

Come in. You're all wet. Is it raining?

ANNA

Very observant.

ROB

Okay. You came all the way across town late at night, sorry, at dinner time, to-what-be sarcastic?

ANNA

No.

ROB

Okay. Then, you have the floor.

ANNA

I wanted to tell you. I'm leaving.

ROB

Leaving where?

ANNA

You, Rob. I'm leaving you.

ROB

Right. Okay. I'm going back to bed. There's towels in the cabinet. Dry off and meet me in there.

ANNA

I'm not kidding. Why aren't you listening to me?

ROB

Because, Anna, you do this. You get scared about something and you come up with ways to sabotage the good things in your life and I am one of them.

ANNA

I'm not scared.

ROB

Oh, yes you are. You're fucking terrified. Your whole life is based on fear. You're afraid that the one thing that could break this spell of your unhappiness would force you to live differently. Then you wouldn't get to be the sad girlfriend. The depressed girl. Would you? Then you'd have to have actual dimensions, and shit. You'd have to live a life with levels of joy. Maybe try at things. Imagine that.

ANNA

Fuck you.

ROB

That's right. I'm the problem.

ANNA

Fuck you! You have no idea what it's like.

ROB

You're right. I don't. But I know what it's like on this end. And it's no picnic over here either.

(Anna clutches at her stomach.)

ANNA

I fucking hate you.

ROB

No, you don't. That's a lie and you know it.

ANNA

It's true. I hate you and your mediocre job and this apartment and your weak attempt at jokes. I hate how hard you try to be nice all the time You're nice to everyone. It's so fake. You don't understand anything about me.

ROB

Okay. What don't I understand? What do you need? For me to constantly entertain you? Do you need dangerous excitement at a high-wire, shark week level?

Heroin binge parties and snuff films? Do you need to be on the brink of death to feel alive? Do we need to be cutters together?

ANNA

You're a real asshole, you know that? I said you were nice. I take it back. You're fucking cruel. You don't understand emotions. You're not capable. You're not deep enough.

ROB

I'm not deep enough? You don't think what you go through doesn't cause me pain? You don't think I can feel sadness?

ANNA

Nope. Not like I do.

ROB

No. And you can't feel happiness the way I do. So we both have something the other doesn't. But at least I try to understand what you are going through. Can you just try to be happy? I dare you to try that. I dare you to not wallow in this misery that you wear like a fucking costume. I dare you to try to get better.

ANNA

I just want to be rid of you. That would make me happy. That and going into a deep, deep sleep. I want to close my eyes and sleep forever.

(Anna wraps her arms around herself and slumps against the wall.)

ROB

You'll get that eventually. Everybody does. But what kind of coward wants it right away? What kind of ungrateful girl wants to sleep forever when others don't have a choice. You have a choice. You can wake up and go for a walk on the High Line, or order noodles from Hunan Palace, or just wake up and do nothing. Stay in bed all day. Listen to records with me. I'm not saying living with this cloud hanging over your head isn't hell. And I'm not saying the hard stuff is easy to tackle. Taxes, creditors, heartbreak, disappointment, failure. It sucks. But the shitty stuff is the price of admission. You get to be here on the planet. And there is always something that makes it worth it. I wake up everyday no matter how bad shit in the world is, because you are something worth waking up for. Stay awake Anna. Okay?

ANNA

I...I can't.

ROB

Jesus Christ. I don't know what more to say to you then. I really don't.

ANNA

No. I can't stay awake. Rob. He was so loud. I just had to make sure I could drown him out. Make sure I could sleep.

ROB

What?

ANNA

I just needed silence.

ROB

What did you do?

ANNA

I had to make sure this time. See? It's all going to be okay now. He's not here anymore. He's gone!

ROB

Anna! What did you do?!

ANNA

I got rid of him.

(Anna collapses onto the floor.)

LIGHTS OUT.

ACT 2

SCENE 1

(Rob sits in a hospital waiting room, head in hands. Anna's parents, a patrician New England couple arrive. A nurse passes through and the man stops her.)

ALAN

Excuse me. Can you give me an update on Anna Douglas?

NURSE

Nothing yet. I will check with the doctor.

ALAN

Thank you.

ROB

Sir? You must be Mister Douglas.

ALAN

Yes?

ROB

I'm Rob. Rob? Anna's boyfriend.

ALAN

Oh. Forgive me. We aren't usually given access to Anna's inner sanctum.

ROB

I see. She never mentioned me?

BETH

I wouldn't take it personally. We get updates from her here and there, but it's usually an invitation to come see a painting hanging somewhere.

ALAN

I'm Alan. This is my wife, Beth.

ROB

Hello. So, you are the one who likes Tolstoy.

BETH

Sorry?

ROB

Anna told me you named her for Anna Karenina.

BETH

Oh, she likes to cling to that. I told her once in passing I thought about naming her after the book and she never let it go. Truth is I just liked the name.

ALAN

You did have your nose stuck in that book on more than one occasion.

BETH

I've read a lot of books more than once, Alan. I like to read a lot. Is that some sort of crime?

ALAN

No one is saying it is, Beth.

ROB

It's a good book.

ALAN

A bit dramatic from what I remember. I wanted to name her after my late mother.

ROB

What was your mother's name?

ALAN

Joy.

BETH

Well, Alan, time has proven that she isn't a 'Joy'. Wouldn't you say?

ROB

Mr. And Mrs. Douglas. I want to do anything I can to help Anna. I just don't know what to do.

BETH

Your guess is as good as ours. We tried for years with her. We took her to doctors. She saw therapists. The best we could find. It wasn't cheap, I might add.

ALAN

She wasn't like this when she was younger. She was a happy little girl.

BETH

That's not true. She was always a bit morose. With the black clothes and the art.

ALAN

I just thought she was expressing her individuality.

BETH

Girls that age like pink and rainbows. They don't read comic books about ninjas.

ALAN

I always encouraged her to be herself.

BETH

Maybe that was the problem, Alan. Being herself is what got us to this point. Because she is a danger to herself.

ALAN

What do you want me to do, Beth? What more can I do?

BETH

Nothing, I suppose. She's an adult. She will do what she wants, eventually.

ROB

And that's just fine with you?

BETH

Excuse me?

ROB

You're just going to shrug it off? Chalk it up to free will? Wait for the dreaded phone call?

BETH

Listen, Rob is it? I'm sure my daughter is fond of you, in her own way, but you're new to this. I've dealt with it my entire life. She's my daughter. So pardon me if I don't seem more surprised by what is transpiring here today.

ALAN

We've been through a lot.

ROB

Don't you mean *she* has been through? I know it isn't easy, but she is the one with the illness.

ALAN

Frankly, this is hard on us. We're older now--we're far away.

BETH

What is it you expect us to do? Since you're such an expert in this.

ALAN

Beth--

BETH

No, Alan, I want to hear from this guy who has known her for five seconds. What do you think we should do for her? Hmm?

ROB

I'm not saying--

BETH

Let me tell you how this goes. It seems like she gets better. She doesn't get better. She won't ever get better. She's just not a healthy person. I've told her this for years. I told her she shouldn't be out there in the world trying to lead a normal life. She isn't normal. She isn't capable of it. But she doesn't listen to me. So we can let her live her life, or commit her. We've tried both.

ROB

Jesus. Have you tried compassion?

BETH

Are you really one to judge us? How do we know that you haven't caused this relapse. What did you do to cause this episode?

ROB

Me? I didn't do anything to hurt her. I love Anna.

ALAN

So do we.

BETH

We loved her long before you did. But sometimes you have to face facts. If this is what she wants, she'll eventually do it.

This conversation chills Rob a bit. There is uncomfortable silence. It is broken when an ER doctor enters the waiting room.

ALAN

How is she?

DOCTOR

She is stable. She's sleeping now.

ROB

Hi, Doctor. Could I possibly have a word? Can I see her?

DOCTOR

We recommend no visitors for the first 24 to 48 hours.

ROB

Doc, I brought her in. I wasn't sure if I'd ever see her again. I've been sitting on the cold floor over there for twenty four hours, my insides like acid. At least let me look at her face.

DOCTOR

I can't let the whole family go in there. And you're not even family.

ROB

Believe me, I am more family to her than they are.

DOCTOR

I can't let you do that. It's the rule. So, I'm going to check on her now. In room 12 B. Then I am going on my break. Downstairs.

ROB

Thank you.

*(Light change. Rob enters the hospital room.
Anna cries out when she sees him.)*

ANNA

No. Please don't look at me. You must hate me. You should hate me.

ROB

It's okay. It's okay.

ANNA

No. I'm so sorry. I'm sorry I put you through this. I hate myself. I'm sorry I came over and yelled at you and broke up with you. I'm sorry I left you to deal with all this.

ROB

Shhh. Stop.

ANNA

I'm sorry I'm this way. I don't want to be this way.

ROB

Just focus on getting better. Okay? Your parents are out there.

ANNA

Oh God. No! I don't want to talk to them.

ROB

They drove down from Maine.

ANNA

I don't want to see them. Please? Promise me? I can't face them right now.

ROB

Okay. I can probably hold them at bay. Your father at least. Your mother is a bit more of a handful.

ANNA

So you've spoken to them.

ROB

Yes. And I'm sorry.

ANNA

For what?

ROB

Just, because. I'm sorry you feel so bad that this is the answer. And because I couldn't do anything. Because I can't seem to do anything for you. To help you.

ANNA

Rob. You do help me.

ROB

No, Anna, I'm not sure that I do.

ANNA

Even if you don't want to be near me because I'm broken, I want you to know that I love you. I know I'm ruining everything. But this isn't me. You have to understand that. I have a flu inside my brain that tells me to die.

ROB

Maybe you are normal, Anna. I think you've been told that you aren't. You've been told that you are something you aren't and you believe it.

ANNA

You think this is normal?

ROB

No. But maybe everything around you wasn't normal.

ANNA

I have been afraid of letting you see me like this. It's why I tried to get rid of you. But I really do need you. I need you to say it's going to be okay. Please. Please say that. Tell me everything is going to be okay.

(Rob pauses.)

ROB

I can't tell you that. I don't know if it is. I don't know.

ANNA

Then lie to me.

ROB

Anna.

ANNA

I promise I will get better. It's just some days my brain tricks me. It tells me I'm worthless and better off dead. I know it doesn't sound logical, but when it tells me to die, it all makes sense. I don't want to scare you. Please don't cry. You crying breaks my heart. I'm trying to get better I swear. I'm trying to be your pretty, happy girlfriend again. I can be her again. Just don't leave me alone.

ROB

Anna. I want you to be better. But not for me. For you.

ANNA

I want to for both of us.

ROB

I think, maybe, I need to give you the space to do that.

ANNA

No.

ROB

The doctors here can help. And if you need more care, there are places that can really help you. I'm not helping.

ANNA

Please don't leave me alone.

ROB

I need to let people like Dr. Salvador help you.

ANNA

You're a coward.

ROB

You're right. I can face pretty much anything. But I can't watch you kill yourself.

ANNA

I won't. I won't do it again. Just swear to me that you will stay with me.

ROB

You always have my support. You can always call me.

ANNA

I can't believe you're abandoning me.

ROB

I'm not. I'm just giving you space. I want to make sure you don't get sucked back down into that well of doom.

ANNA

You want to make sure that you don't get sucked down with me.

(Rob doesn't say anything for a moment.)

ANNA

I wish I could go back and fix all of this. I want for it to be like it was before.

ROB

I want for you to get well.

LIGHTS OUT.

SCENE 2

(Anna, still in her hospital clothes, is in a session with Dr. Salvador. She stares out the window.)

DR. SALVADOR

It's good to see you up and about.

ANNA

Yeah, great. Another spring and I get to spend my days in this crazy bin.

DR. SALVADOR

The sooner you make progress, the sooner you will get day privileges.

ANNA

Progress. Is that what you scribble about on your little note pad? The amount of crazy that comes out of my mouth?

DR. SALVADOR

Do you think you're crazy?

ANNA

You do. My parents do. Rob does. The greater metropolitan area does. Otherwise why would I be here?

DR. SALVADOR

Does our opinion matter to you?

ANNA

I could give a shit about my parents. I'm pretty much just a stain on their carpet that they need to apologize to their Rotary Club friends for. Have been for years. Luckily L.L. Bean makes those fabulous little toss rugs you can throw right over any imperfection. Voila. Problem solved.

DR. SALVADOR

You really think that is what they feel about you? They came down to see you.

ANNA

They came to lecture me. To tell me how much I've ruined their life. Guess what? Samesies guys. The feeling is mutual.

DR. SALVADOR

What about Rob?

ANNA

What about him?

DR. SALVADOR

You mentioned he thought you were crazy. He was here to see you too.

ANNA

Yeah. And then he dumped me. I think he just wanted to make sure I was alive. Absolve his guilt. Then exit, stage left. As fast as his legs would carry him.

DR. SALVADOR

He brought you in here. Don't you remember? He slept on the floor of the hospital waiting for you to wake up.

(Anna pauses.)

ANNA

He just got tired of me being such a fucking wreck all the time. I tried to warn him. I tried to tell him how bad it gets. I don't think he believed me.

DR. SALVADOR

You and Rob are two different people with different coping skills. He seems to care about you a great deal.

ANNA

Not enough.

DR. SALVADOR

People can be shocked by a thing like this. Perhaps it takes time.

ANNA

Oh, I don't know. I think I may have sacred him off for good. My specialty.

DR. SALVADOR

When you are better perhaps things will be different.

ANNA

I don't know. I can't see past the blackness when it has it's hands around my throat.

DR. SALVADOR

Can we talk about this blackness you mention?

ANNA

No.

DR. SALVADOR
Why not?

ANNA
I can't. I can't speak about it.

DR. SALVADOR
Is it hard to describe?

ANNA
Oh, no, I can describe it all right. Every fucking detail. It's just not safe to talk about it.

DR. SALVADOR
You don't feel safe?

ANNA
I'm not safe and neither are you.

(Dr. Salvador writes in his notebook..)

ANNA
That was the wrong answer, wasn't it? You scribble more when it's the wrong answer. I can tell by the look on your face.

DR. SALVADOR
I'm not judging you, Anna.

ANNA
Well maybe you fucking should. Am I so fucked up that I can't ever be with someone? Is this really is going to destroy me?

DR. SALVADOR
What happened the night you came here?

ANNA
What do you mean?

DR. SALVADOR
Lets talk about the night. Why you took those pills.

ANNA
No thanks. Rather not.

DR. SALVADOR

I'm afraid we are going to have to address it.

ANNA

You already know what happened. You read the report. I took as many pills as I could shove into my mouth. They pumped my stomach, etc. Etc. And here we are.

DR. SALVADOR

You scared everyone pretty badly.

ANNA

Not badly enough though, right? I didn't get it done. Did I?

DR. SALVADOR

I find it interesting that you went to Rob's house after you took the overdose. Why did you do that?

ANNA

I don't know. Guess to say goodbye.

DR. SALVADOR

Or maybe to stop yourself from dying? Maybe you didn't really want to die, Anna.

ANNA

Oh yeah? Why did I take all those pills then? You don't get it? It seems to be the only way I can feel better. The only way to stop the blackness and the noise and the pain is to stop everything.

DR. SALVADOR

If that were the solution then there would be no medicine. You have to give the medicine time to work, Anna.

ANNA

Right. Which one? Effexor? Or what am I on now? Abilify? Wellbutrin? Before that I was on Zoloft and before that Prozac. And now I get a good mainline of Lithium too. All these chemicals swirling around in my head. They dull the shit for a while. But I can tell its still there underneath. It's just like it gets stuffed down in the well, but I'm skating on top of it. Eventually I'm gonna fall in, Doc.

DR. SALVADOR

The drugs have helped before, yes?

ANNA

What do you mean?

DR. SALVADOR

This isn't your first attempt. You tried to hurt yourself before. But you eventually felt better.

ANNA

I don't know if that was the drugs or just growing out of a really awkward teenage phase. I mean what high school kid doesn't want to kill themselves? Right?

DR. SALVADOR

But you tried it. You must have been very depressed to do that. Do you want to tell me how?

ANNA

Knife.

DR. SALVADOR

You cut yourself with a knife.

ANNA

Yeah.

DR. SALVADOR

Where?

ANNA

At school.

DR. SALVADOR

That's pretty violent and extreme.

ANNA

It could have been, but I didn't know what I was doing.

DR. SALVADOR

What do you mean?

ANNA

The way you cut. The blade. I should have used a different knife. I just used my little knife. The one I had on me.

DR. SALVADOR

You carried a knife with you in school?

ANNA

Yeah. I just felt better having it on me. Plus I wanted her to know I was getting use out of it.

DR. SALVADOR

Who?

ANNA

My mother. She gave me the knife. For my birthday.

DR. SALVADOR

Your mother gave you a knife as a gift. When she knew you were a depressed teen?

ANNA

She thought it would keep me safe.

DR. SALVADOR

And did it?

ANNA

I guess not.

DR. SALVADOR

Anna. Do you want to be better?

ANNA

Fuck you, Doc. You know I do.

DR. SALVADOR

Your actions a couple weeks ago say differently.

ANNA

Okay. You're right. I'm tired of this shit. I'm tired of ending up in here. I still hear a voice telling me to kill myself. So why should I fight? I just want to unzip this body and step out of it and breathe.

DR. SALVADOR

How would that work?

ANNA

You want me to explain it to you?

DR. SALVADOR

Yes. I will entertain this idea from start to finish. If you were going to leave your body. If you were going to successfully off yourself, how would you do it? What is the plan?

ANNA

Well, I'd get up. Probably early because there would be a lot to do. I'd have a latte from my favorite cafe. A mocha. I like those. I'd put on Transformer - that's a Lou Reed album? He was a singer--

DR. SALVADOR

I know who Lou Reed is.

ANNA

Okay, okay, you wanted me to set the scene. So I'm listening to Lou Reed. I'd write some letters. Some explaining. Some absolving. Some not.

DR. SALVADOR

And would you send these letters?

ANNA

No. Let them find them. When they come to find me.

DR. SALVADOR

Where will you be?

(The Form appears standing in the large window frame. Anna is transfixed by it..)

DR. SALVADOR

Where will you be, Anna?

(Anna gets up and walks to the window. Dr. Salvador, suddenly nervous, gets up and walks a few steps behind her. Anna stands in front of The Form. There is a stand off.)

ANNA

Gone.

(Suddenly she pushes The Form, hard. The Form silently falls off the ledge and slips from sight, falling several stories below. No impact is heard.)

ANNA

I'm not there.

LIGHTS OUT.

SCENE 3

(Several weeks later. Anna and Rob are at a Manhattan cafe.)

ROB

You look well.

ANNA

Thank you. I feel well. Like things have turned a corner.

ROB

Good. Happy?

ANNA

Am I?

ROB

Yeah.

ANNA

Oh, you know me. I'm still not sure my body understands "happy" on a cellular level.

ROB

I've seen you happy.

ANNA

Well, happy adjacent maybe. It's like I've never actually been to "happy" but I know what it looks like from seeing pictures.

ROB

So, when we were together it was all pretend?

ANNA

No. That's not what I meant. You know how much you mean to me. I fell in love with you. Finally my heart beat my brain. So that's hopeful.

ROB

That's something at least.

ANNA

Are you doing okay? I wrote a few times, but--

ROB

Work has been busy. I got a promotion.

ANNA

That's fantastic, Rob!

ROB

Well, it's just a small one. More like more work for almost the same money, but I get a shiny new title. New business card. You want one? I have hundreds of them. I won't run out of them before I retire.

ANNA

Sure.

ROB

There you go.

ANNA

Impressive. Nice thick card stock.

ROB

Yeah, I guess.

ANNA

No, Rob, that's great. I am happy for you.

ROB

Happy. Huh.

ANNA

You know what I mean.

ROB

Well, seeing as it's not your baseline, either the medications are finally working, or it's just a figure of speech.

ANNA

My medications are working. I'm different, Rob. I feel like I am on top of this.

ROB

Better living through chemistry.

ANNA

Yeah. You know, one of the things I kept talking to Dr. Salvador about was: which is the trick? Love or depression?

They both make me feel wildly out of control in different ways. So who is really me? The one that felt really good after meeting you? Or the me that is sad and thinks my life is worthless? The one who loves you is real, Rob. The depression, that's the part that isn't me. I know that now.

ROB

Well, at least you learned something.

ANNA

Yeah. Look, I know I fucked this up. I didn't handle it well. And it hurts me to know that I may have ruined a chance to be the person in your life.

ROB

Anna, you're better now. That is what is important.

ANNA

Yes. But you are important to me. That institution I was in? It's a hellhole. Seriously. Like horror film style flickering lights and cracked linoleum. Cuckoo Nest shit. But the whole time I kept thinking 'you need to work through this. You have someone wonderful out there and that is something to live for'.

ROB

That's a lot of pressure. To be something to live for.

ANNA

I don't mean it that way. I mean that I love you. And it is important for me to be healthy for you. To be happy. Because I want to be with you.

ROB

Anna.

ANNA

I fucking miss you, Rob.

ROB

I miss you too.

ANNA

So? Don't you want to be with me?

ROB

I think...I think sometimes there is a window. And sometimes you pass it. I think we passed our window. You know?

ANNA

Our window.

ROB

Our window of opportunity. You know--

ANNA

A window. Of course.

ROB

Why is that funny?

ANNA

No, it makes sense.

ROB

It's not that I don't care about you, Anna. I do. A fucking lot. I just think maybe it's better if we just remember the good times we had. Before there are too many bad ones.

ANNA

Well, you know what they say. You can't put your arms around a memory.

ROB

I can't put my arms around you if you're dead either.

ANNA

Wow.

ROB

It hurts, Anna. Seeing you - what you did. It hurt me.

ANNA

I know. I'm sorry. I was sorry the moment I looked at you, but it was too late. I'm so much better now. Really. But I can't change what I did. Or hurting you.

ROB

Don't worry about me. Just worry about yourself.

ANNA

I'd like to worry about both of us. Can I do that? Can I be the one to worry about us for a change? Let me. Please?

ROB

Anna, I can't just jump back in.

ANNA

No. Right. I get it.

ROB

I'm sorry.

ANNA

No. I'm sorry. You're a good man, Rob. I wish I could have lived up to that.

ROB

Friends?

ANNA

Always.

(Anna gets up and kisses him on the cheek.)

Sorry we missed our window.

(She exits.)

LIGHTS OUT.

SCENE 4

(Rob is at the beach house with Jason, April, and Zach. April prepares drinks and snacks while holding the baby. Rob sits off to the side drinking and not really participating in the conversation.)

JASON

There's no way they will trade him.

ZACH

Yeah they will. Free up the cap space.

JASON

You're high. He's the best receiver they have.

ZACH

I'm telling you. It's a fire sale. My prediction? Unrestricted free agent.

APRIL

Honey? Could you help me with these drinks?

JASON

Rob? You had him on your fantasy team. What do you think?

APRIL

Jase--I'm balancing a tray of gin and a small monster here.

JASON

Sorry, sorry honey. Which should I take.

APRIL

Dealer's choice.

JASON

Drinks.

APRIL

Noah, your daddy chooses alcohol over you. But don't worry. We can find you a good therapist so you don't end up a mental case.

(They all freeze after April says this, and look over to Rob.)

APRIL
Sorry, Rob. I didn't mean to--

ROB
Why are you apologizing to me?

APRIL
I know you've been--

ROB
Talk about whatever the hell you want to. Don't fucking tiptoe around me.

APRIL
I'm gonna go put him down.

(April exits with the baby.)

JASON
She wasn't thinking, Rob. Pregnancy brain.

ZACH
Wait. Are you guys?

JASON
Yep. I probably should have let her tell you. Shit. Now, I'm in trouble.

ZACH
Cheers, man.

(Scott enters from outside with a girl, Amber, in tow.)

SCOTT
What are we all excited about?

ZACH
April is pregnant.

SCOTT
Oh shit. What are you gonna do, dude?

JASON
It wasn't an accident, Scott.

SCOTT

Sorry. I've been saying that to friends my whole life. Now it's uncool all of a sudden.

JASON

Not all of a sudden. People tend to have babies once they leave college, hit their twenties and thirties. They get married, start families?

AMBER

Yeah, like before they turn eighty?

SCOTT

Look what a kid does to you, Amber. Jason looks like he's eighty.

JASON

Guess I need to moisturize like you, Scott.

SCOTT

You're beyond lotion. You need to get some of that Botox shit.

AMBER

Don't listen to him, Jason. He doesn't mean half the things he says.

ROB

Yes, he fucking does.

SCOTT

He speaks. You breaking your vow of silence today?

ROB

Fuck you, Scott.

SCOTT

Fuck you too, Dude.

AMBER

Hey, Rob.

ROB

Amber.

AMBER

Did you have a nice time at dinner? Last week?

ROB

Sure.

AMBER

I was just asking. Cause Kelly says she never heard from you.

SCOTT

Amber--

AMBER

I'm just asking.

ROB

What are you just asking, Amber? Did I call your friend? No. Did I go out with her that night, have dinner, take her home and fuck her? Yes. Am I planning on calling her? No.

SCOTT

Brutal.

AMBER

It's not funny, Scott.

SCOTT

No. Of course it's not.

AMBER

You're rude, Rob. Show a little respect, you know? Just treat women with a little respect.

ROB

You think I need to treat women with respect? I'm going by the Scott Handler playbook. You've been around for, what, two weekends and you think you know everything? Amber, hate to break it to you, but Scott's produce has an expiration date.

SCOTT

Knock it off, Rob. Don't be an asshole.

SCOTT

Try to have a little class, Rob.

ROB

Class. I'm surprised you could find another girl in New York City that you haven't fucked. Or are you now making your way through the boroughs?

ZACH

Whoa. Okay. Time out, guys.

AMBER

I don't have to listen to this.

ROB

You're right, you don't. You can leave.

JASON

Rob. Get a fucking grip, okay?

SCOTT

It's cool, Jason. Let him do his thing. He needs to rage at me? He knows I can take it. Get it all out, Dude. Go on. No? Nothing else? Okay. Amber and I are going to go for a walk on the beach.

JASON

We're grilling at six.

(Scott and Amber exit. April re-enters from the bedroom with a baby monitor.)

APRIL

He will not fall asleep. Where are they going?

JASON

For a walk.

APRIL

Again? Damn. Can't believe I'm about to say this, but I think he really likes her.

ROB

It won't last.

APRIL

Why? Why do you say that, Rob?

ROB

Because. People don't change. They tell you who you are when you meet them. Scott isn't going to change.

APRIL

I don't know. People change all the time.

ROB

Not really.

APRIL

Sure they do. You think I imagined myself married with a kid? But I met Jason and that changed.

ROB

You don't really change for another person.

APRIL

You did.

ROB

Whatever.

APRIL

No, Rob, you have definitely changed. She changed you. Whether you like it or not.

JASON

And not for the better!

APRIL

Jason, watch your sports. I meant for the better. You're in a rut now, but--I'd never seen you really invest in anyone before. I was beginning to think that maybe you were just one of those people who don't really go too deep. You worked for the weekend. Followed your routine. But when you met her you became this guy who went at life instead of letting it happen to him. And you were happy.

ROB

Yeah, well, it didn't last.

APRIL

If you were able to love her this deeply, you will again.

ROB

Thanks, Yoda. I'll remember that.

JASON

Jesus, Rob. She's trying to help you. Look, Dude, I'm sorry you had to see Anna like that. I can't even imagine--

ROB

Yeah, because you weren't there. None of you were. Let me help you imagine: You're standing there and you watch the person you love collapse on the floor, foaming at the mouth--

ZACH

Shit, can we change the subject? This is a barbecue.

ROB

Sorry if Anna's suicide attempt is ruining your Heineken, Zach. You guys didn't even come to the hospital. You all fucking ghosted her when she needed people the most.

JASON

What were we supposed to do? What were we supposed to say to her? It's not like she got her tonsils out.

ZACH

We didn't even know if she could have visitors--

ROB

You didn't even ask.

JASON

Come on, man. You're being a fucking hypocrite. You were barely there yourself.

ROB

Fuck you.

JASON

Look, I know this was a nightmare to go through? But going on four weeks now, you've been a total dick to everyone around you. We're all trying to be cool, you know?

ROB

Thanks for 'being cool', Jason.

JASON

April, just leave him alone with his beer.

(Jason and Zach move outside to start the grill.)

APRIL

We're sorry we didn't go see her, Rob.

ROB

Whatever, doesn't matter now.

APRIL

And I'm sorry you haven't heard from her.

ROB

Oh, I've heard from her. She got out of the psych ward a month ago.

APRIL

She contacted you when she got out?

ROB

Yeah. She called me. We met for coffee a couple weeks ago.

APRIL

You didn't say anything about that! That's great. Right?

ROB

It doesn't matter. Like I said, people are the same.

APRIL

Don't you miss her?

ROB

Of course I fucking miss her. But it doesn't matter. I can't make her better. I can't do anything but just be in love with her and watch her suffer.

APRIL

That's what you do, Rob, if you love someone. You sit with them through the hard shit. It's why I'm sitting here with you. I can count on my fingers the friends and family I love, who I'd lay my life on the line for. Not many people. You're one of them, Rob.

ROB

That's nice of you, April.

APRIL

I'm not saying it to get some reaction. I am saying it so you will think about those people in your life. How many people do you actually care about? Who is worth it to you?

ROB

...She is.

APRIL

There you go. So if you have a chance, what's stopping you?

ROB

Because what she did--it didn't hurt just her. It hurt me.

APRIL

People hurt each other, Rob. Jason and I almost broke up dozens of times. He can be a massive idiot. But life is better with him than without him. Can you live with what happened in order to have her in your life?

ROB

It's complicated, April.

APRIL

Really? Cause to me it seems sorta simple. You can stay mad, you can stay hurt, or you can be with her. What do you want?

ROB

Number three. I want her.

LIGHTS OUT.

SCENE 5

(Rob enters Anna's apartment with a carton of ice cream. The door is wide open. It is quiet and most of the items have been removed.)

ROB

Anna? You left the door open. Anna, you gotta lock this thing. We're not in Maine.

(Anna's father comes out of the bedroom with some clothes and books that he puts into a box.)

ROB

Mr. Douglas. Hi.

ALAN

Rob.

ROB

Is Anna here?

ALAN

No, Rob. She isn't.

ROB

Oh. (Pause) Did she go out?

ALAN

Rob. Anna's gone.

ROB

I don't understand.

ALAN

She's gone, Rob.

(Anna's mother comes out of the kitchen area with some items to pack.)

BETH

Oh, it's you. I was wondering if you were going to dare show your face.

ROB

She's gone--I don't understand.

BETH
Yes you do. You understand.

ROB
What? I don't--

BETH
Anna's dead.

ROB
No. No. I brought her ice cream and if she doesn't eat it it's going to melt.

BETH
We don't want it. You can throw it right in the trash.

(Rob doesn't move.)

ROB
She might want it later.

(Beth grabs the ice cream and tosses it in the garbage. Rob tries to keep his composure but crumples.)

BETH
She's dead. She died. Last Sunday.

ROB
I didn't know. No one called me. No one told me. I could have--

BETH
What? What could you have done? Deal with the coroner? Order the floral arrangements? Stop her?

ROB
...How? How did it happen?

ALAN
Neighbor said he saw her in the window and then she--slipped.

ROB
But..I saw her. A couple weeks ago. She was good.

BETH
Apparently she wasn't.

ROB

No. No, she was good. Really good. She was wearing red lipstick and her scarf thingy with the fringe. She was hopeful. She told me she was on top of it.

BETH

She lied.

ROB

No. I saw her. She said had turned a corner. I believed her. They believed her. Why did they let her go from the hospital if they believed her? Why didn't they keep her in there?

BETH

She didn't want to be in the hospital. She didn't want to be anywhere, obviously. That's why she ended her life.

ROB

You really don't get it. She wasn't trying to end her life. She was trying to end the pain.

BETH

Well, perhaps she would have been in less pain if she felt she had something to look forward to.

(Rob realizes this is aimed at him.)

ROB

I'm getting the feeling you think this is my fault.

BETH

You were supposed to be looking out for her. You supposedly loved her.

ROB

I did. I do. We just decided not to be together.

BETH

You both decided? Or you decided she was too much trouble?

ROB

Look, I've been in Anna's life--was in her life a lot more than you were recently--

BETH

Maybe that's why she finally decided to kill herself.

ROB

Fuck! God. I now know why she felt the way she did. You really have a knack, you know? For making someone miserable.

BETH

Please. I am not responsible for her misery. She set this up herself. She moved to this vicious city. Chose a profession that is nothing but rejection--

ROB

Right. It's the profession that rejected her.

BETH

She didn't kill herself when she was living with us.

ROB

But she tried. She tried several times. And what did you do? What did you do to help her?

BETH

I can't fix her. I told you like I told her. Her brain chemistry didn't work. She was born defective.

ROB

She's not the defective one.

BETH

What did you say to her when you last saw her? Think long and hard. It could be what sent her over the edge.

ALAN

Okay. Enough! Both of you. What is fighting going to do? It won't bring her back.

ROB

Oh God. I'm so sorry, Anna. I'm sorry.

BETH

It's too late for sorry. Isn't it? What good does it do? It's done. Alan? Finish packing up? I can't be here anymore. I'll be in the car.

ALAN

Fine.

(Beth exits.)

ALAN

Are you going to be okay?

ROB

No. I don't think so.

ALAN

Well, I don't know who to call for you. So...

ROB

Mr. Douglas? I'd like to keep her paintings, if that would be all right.

ALAN

You're welcome to the lot of them. We weren't going to take them. We've got everything we are taking in here.

ROB

She really was talented.

ALAN

I don't know much about these things.

ROB

Well, she was. I loved her very much, sir. You have no idea how much.

ALAN

I can't stop thinking of how cold she must have been.

ROB

Sorry?

(Alan points to Anna's apartment window.)

ALAN

Out there on the street. She was there lying on the street for a while. It was cold.

ROB

I don't think she could feel it.

ALAN

Maybe you're right. At least now she is in a better place.

ROB

How do you know? That she is in a better place?

ALAN

I just believe she is.

ROB

That must be comforting.

She's free now.

ALAN

But what about the rest of us?

ROB

(Alan doesn't say anything. He picks up the box and exits out the door.)

Rob picks up Anna's slip that was left hanging on a chair and holds it.

Rob sits on the couch, staring at the window Anna jumped from and slowly melts down.

The Form slips through the walls and walks towards Rob. Rob, startled, looks up at it.)

Hello, Rob.

THE FORM

LIGHTS FADE

END OF PLAY