



i'm sorry
for your
trouble

by
aniello
fontano

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The Clifford Odets Ensemble Play 2023
Commissioned by
The Lee Strasberg Theatre and Film Institute

e | aniellofontano@gmail.com

New York Premiere |

The Lee Strasberg Theatre and Film Institute
New York University, Tisch School of the Arts

Directed by Ben Villegas Randle. 2023

for my parents.
for my people.
for chicago.
and as always - for j.f.

WHO

WINDY | 20 - 25 | Female/Femme

Kick your ass tough. And she will kick your ass. And then make you apologize for whatever you did. She's the group's Mom. And Mom is always right. Everyone else rants and raves but what Windy says is law. Always has been, always will be.

SYD | 20 - 25 | Female/Femme/Enby

*Blind in one eye. First language is Spanish. A hard worker and wise far beyond her years. Muscled from lugging boxes around her Uncle Red's deli. Always knows what to say. Hides pain well. Imposing yet kind. **In this script, characters use she/her/hers pronouns when speaking to Syd. Know that these characters would make an effort to call Syd by the correct pronouns, so change them if necessary.*

VINCE | 25 - 30 | Male/Masc

A reformed Catholic. Does blue collar gig work around the city to pay bill. He likes to think he's the group's older brother (which in some ways is true), but he's also kind of like that goofy, smart little cousin you see at Christmas who insists on taking one puff of your blunt on a walk and then eats his styrofoam plate at dinner.

STELLA | 25 - 30 | Female/Femme

Got a culinary degree and took a job as a line cook at a steakhouse downtown. Heavily tattooed. Mostly line-work flowers. She'd fit in with the Chicago hipsters — until one of them mouthed off. Then she'd hit them in the face. Hipsters don't like getting hit in the face. Stella doesn't mind.

JAZZ | 20 - 25 | Female/Femme

Left the neighborhood right after high school to pursue a law degree. Wildly book smart and good hearted, the neighborhood has championed her since she was young. She's a bullet point to-do list for every day of the week. She's currently studying for the BAR exam.

JOI | 20 - 25 | Female/Femme

Alisha's wife. Left the neighborhood to take a tech job in Seattle. Notorious for spreading herself too thin and then crashing head first into a wall of exhaustion. Driven (almost) purely by her head. Really good at solving Rubik's cubes. (It's annoying.)

ALISHA | 20 - 25 | Female/Femme

Joi's wife. Left the neighborhood five years ago when Joi got a tech job in Seattle. Where Joi is led by her head, Alisha is led by her heart. She feels deeply and thinks after that wave has passed. She cannot solve a Rubik's cube. Who the hell wants to solve a Rubik's cube?

RYAN | 20 - 25 | Female/Femme

Left the neighborhood after graduating from UIC with a degree in theater. She moved out to Los Angeles to start her career as an actor, but gave up in favor of becoming an influencer. The group came and saw her do Sarah Ruhl's "Eurydice" at UIC once. Cook cried through half the play. She was spectacular.

ELLIOT | 25 - 30 | Male/Masc

Originally from London. Ryan's boyfriend and a fellow influencer. He worked for his dad's roofing company back home to save up for the move to Los Angeles. He's a blue collar hustler in Instagram wrapping paper. Had he not fallen in love with Ryan, he'd be happy fixing roofs in the LA sunshine.

MICKEY | 25 - 30 | Male/Masc

If Windy is Mom, Mickey's Dad. Openly gay and devoutly Catholic, he views himself as the group's "moral center." No one agrees. He put together the funeral arrangements for his cousin Joe, much to the group's chagrin. Up until recently, he was confident in his beliefs, but Joe's death has left him a bit shaken.

MARY | 20 - 25 | Female/Femme

Mary is the group's Swiss Army Knife. Deeply empathetic, she plays a specific role in all of her friends lives. She serves as a sounding board for Mickey, a mother-figure for Cook, a sister to Windy, and various defined family members to the rest of the group. Whatever you need, Mary will be. And she takes that role seriously.

COOK | 25 - 30 | Male/Masc

Wherever Cook is right now, he's drunk. Not because he's an alcoholic, but because he was a heroin addict. They're different things - he swears. He tries to drown his massive heart in alcohol, but it doesn't work. He feels everything deeply, but puts on a strong face. He's the funniest person you know — until he's not.

ON CHARACTER

These characters are originally from a small, close knit neighborhood in Chicago.

They are urban. They are working class. They aren't from nuclear families.

Their ethnic background, sexuality, and gender identity varies.

*The cast **must** reflect this.*

These characters are not pasty ass, culturally whitewashed suburbanites.

WHERE AND WHEN

CHICAGO

Whatever season it is during the production.

Midnight.

Friday.

Four hours after a Catholic wake.

Nine hours before a Catholic funeral.

ARTHUR'S BAR

A shitty neighborhood dive bar.

Characters enter and exit only through the front door.

A sign above the long bar top reads "Arthur's."

Booze soaked wood countertops, broken stools, stained floors.

The Christmas lights stay up all year - because Mickey is too busy to take them down.

Bottles are either brand new or ancient and dust covered.

There's an ancient piano in one corner and an old juke box in another.

A few small busted tables scattered around for asides.

Upstage is a massive window leading out front.

One orange streetlight lights this space.

*This light stays on the entire show and will not be mentioned
aside from on this page, in this note.*

An unmarked door to an office sits downstage right.

A bathroom door marked "no one cares" sits downstage left.

HOW

RHYTHM

Rhythm in this piece is important and purposeful.

These characters have been best friends since childhood

Their friendlier conversations are lightning fast and familiar.

They jokingly insult each other the way only family can.

This light hearted banter paves the way for slower, heavier, thoughtful conversations.

The following line punctuation will help you:

- | a line is interrupted

. ! ? | a full stop before a response.

***No punctuation** | fast, rhythmic, immediate response*

***Beats** | marked by blank space on the page.*

***Silences** | marked by the word.*

SOUND

Several conversations happen at once during the play.

These simultaneous conversations never stop, only the audience's focus does.

During these asides, the remaining characters should mime conversation, take shots, etc.

These moments are marked as such:

***Characters have AN ASIDE** | the noted characters speak privately.*

***THE ASIDE ENDS** | the noted characters are interrupted or break their aside.*

LIGHTS AND MUSIC

Throughout the play, the electricity in the bar will flicker, go out, or blink to life.

These moments are marked as such:

***THE ELECTRICITY GOES OUT** | lights and juke box music down.*

***THE ELECTRICITY FLICKERS** | lights and music down momentarily, then back up.*

***THE ELECTRICITY BLINKS TO LIFE** | lights and music up.*

ONE LAST NOTE

This play was written to be performed with or without an intermission.

If the production chooses to include one, the appropriate place is noted in the script.

“They lived and laughed and loved and left.”

— James Joyce, *Finnegan’s Wake*

BLACKOUT IN THE THEATER as the audience enters.

Maybe ushers with flashlights show them the aisles.

Maybe there's a gentle flicker of the lights periodically.

Maybe there's small lights marking the aisles.

Point is, the audience enters the world of the play, not the theater.

(There is no "house lights down" moment.)

In the darkness, we hear the city alive.

A bus drives by. A mother yells at her kids to come inside.

Cars splash through pothole puddles. A driver yells "God damn it!" as his axel hits the pavement. Light jazz pours out of a window above. A group of drunk twentysomethings pass.

Then, out of nowhere, we hear MICKEY's voice in the darkness, fumbling with the circuit breaker. We hear click, click, **click**, click -

MICKEY
(offstage)
FUCK ME.

THE ELECTRICITY FLICKERS.

MICKEY
(offstage)
FUCK. OW!

THE ELECTRICITY GOES OUT.

Then... click. Crackle. Blink, blink, blink.

THE ELECTRICITY BLINKS TO LIFE.

Music emanates from the juke box. Something like "I want to see the bright lights tonight" by Richard and Linda Thompson or "Chicago" by Suffjan Stevens plays first - followed by a medley of oldies and similar toned songs.

The music continues (low) until noted.

In the now illuminated bar we see -

WINDY opening and distributing beer bottles.

VINCE putting a matchbook under an un-level table leg.

SYD throwing darts at a crucifix hanging on the wall.

STELLA smoking and reading a funeral card.

They do this for long enough, then -

SYD
Fuck god.

*Syd throws a dart.
Thud.*

STELLA
(sotto)
“The lord is my shepherd, I shall not want -”

VINCE
What’re you sayin’ now?

STELLA
“The lord is my shepherd, I shall not want -”

SYD
The doctors tell Joe she’s in remission, then two months later she dies of cancer, so

VINCE AND SYD
fuck god

*Syd throws a dart.
Thud.*

VINCE
got it.

SYD
People go to church like three times a week and ask god for help or whatever. And those *same* people are still broke, tired, and sick. So

VINCE AND SYD
fuck god

VINCE
got it, got it.

SYD
and Mickey’s got crosses up on the wall of the bar like god ever did anything for any of us. Look at this fuckin’ thing. It’s like he’s staring into my soul.

Syd, Vince, and Windy look at the crucifix.

SYD

Mickey prayed every day for Joe to get better. He lives in the damn church on weekends and spends his weeknights on his knees -

VINCE

Yeah he does -

SYD

And Joe *still* died of cancer. "god's will"?
Fuck god and *fuck* her will.

Syd throws a dart.
Thud.

WINDY

There's limits to that though

SYD

Limits to god's will?

WINDY

Yeah, like nobody blames god for kids being hungry, or war, or sickness -

SYD

Tons of people do

VINCE

True

WINDY

Not Catholics or Christians or Baptists or Buddhists or Jewish people or whatever other religion

SYD

Are Catholic and Christian the same thing?

VINCE

Catholicism is the largest kind of Christianity.

SYD

What?

VINCE

All Catholics are Christian. But not all Christians are Catholics.

STELLA

(sotto)

“He maketh me lie down in green pastures:” -

Windy has finished distributing beers.

SYD

Tons of people blame god for dying kids and cancer and all that bad shit. Hell, *I* blame god for that -

VINCE

You gotta believe in god to blame god

SYD

I believe if there *is* a god, she’s asleep at the wheel

Syd throws a dart.

Thud.

VINCE

I feel bad for Mickey, having his faith thrown back in his face

SYD

You’ve been going to church with him for like a month

VINCE

I’m a *recovered* Catholic

SYD

What’s that mean?

VINCE

It means I still have faith, but I don’t follow organized religion. Eight years of Catholic school left a bad taste in my mouth

SYD

You and a ton of other little boys

“god damn it”s all around.

VINCE

Fuck, Syd -

SYD

Hey man, tell them to stop covering that shit up and I won't have anything to say

VINCE

Hypocrisy runs deep

SYD

"Hypocrisy" huh?

VINCE

Word-a-day calendar

SYD

What was yesterdays word?

VINCE

Hullabaloo

SYD

Lot of fuckin *hullabaloo* around what the bible says is ok

Syd throws a dart.

Thud.

VINCE

True.

WINDY

It was a fucking nightmare for Mickey growing up. He was this little gay kid trying to hide who he was from the world because being gay was a "sin."

The pastor would recite bible verses that pointedly said gay people would burn in hell for eternity. He'd describe the fucking fire and talk about demons and skin melting and torture and all this shit.

And Mickey was just trying to be a kid. Trying to figure out who he was, in a world that wasn't ready to hear it.

VINCE

I remember watching him crawl into himself and cower in the church pew between his dad and Joe. His dad would have his arm around Mickey, singing hymns and praising god and nodding in agreement with everything the pastor said. And Mickey would be holding back tears squeezing Joe's hand 'til she lost circulation.

WINDY

She was the first person he came out to, you know. He told her when we were thirteen. She told him "the world just needs to catch up." And she was right.

She kept him safe and sane until the church changed their mind.

VINCE

Until the church realized gay money is the same as straight money. Sexuality might be a spectrum, but money is money.

SYD

And they love tax free money.

Syd throws a dart.

Thud.

WINDY

But could you imagine if Joe wasn't there for him?

All those years keeping that shit inside while being barraged with hate. At the church, at school, and at home? Mickey's dad was the worst of them all. If it wasn't for Joe, who knows what would've happened. Thank god shit changed.

Vince has leveled the table.

SYD

Tell you one thing that hasn't changed, the service still feels like everybody is clenching a plastic straw in their ass.

STELLA

(sotto)

“He leadeth me beside still waters.”

WINDY

And the food’s terrible

VINCE

“The body of christ”

They all do the sign of the cross.

SYD

And the drinks are awful.

VINCE

“The blood of christ”

They all half-heartedly do the sign of the cross.

WINDY

They need a third thing

STELLA

(sotto)

“He restoreth my soul:”

SYD

What do you mean?

Syd throws a dart.

Thud.

WINDY

Everything comes in threes. It’s the rule of threes. You can’t just have the body and blood of christ, you need a third thing.

What about the muscle of christ? The bones of christ? The fuckin’ kidneys of christ?

Syd stops throwing darts.

STELLA

(sotto)

“he leadeth me in the paths of the righteousness for his name’s sake.”

SYD

And of all the things to turn water into, he chooses a cab

VINCE

You lost me

SYD

The people wanted fucking water cause they were in the desert or whatever, so they wanted water, and jesus was like, “nah nah nah nah nah nahhhh fuck water, have some of this warm ass cabernet” and turned the water into a shitty wine

WINDY

Weren’t they on a boat?

VINCE

Who?

WINDY

The people Jesus gave fish and bread and wine to

SYD

When the fuck did fish come into this?

VINCE

That doesn’t make sense

SYD

If they were on a boat they’d already have enough fish

VINCE

And he woulda turned the whole ocean into wine

SYD

That’d be pretty cool

WINDY

Drunk as shit on the ocean

STELLA

“Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil, for thou art with me.”

*JAZZ enters, rolling a small gem around in her hand.
(She plays with it periodically until otherwise noted.)
Someone hands her a beer.
Maybe there's small “hello” head nods.*

SYD

An ocean of the shittiest cabernet imaginable

STELLA

Wait is it “yeah” or is it “yay”?

“Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil, for thou art with me.”

It feels like it should be “Yay,” right?

VINCE

Yeah

STELLA

Really?

VINCE

Yeah

SYD

Jazz?

JAZZ

Yeah, yeah.

VINCE

If another person says, “yeah,” I swear to god

SYD

You alright?

JAZZ

I'm ok.

WINDY

I've never heard a person sound less ok.

JAZZ

What're we talking about?

SYD

The father, son, and holy ghost

JAZZ

Amen

VINCE

Are you religious now too?

JAZZ

Nah, after my parents got divorced my Dad bought a dog hotel and he's been going to church to pray ever since. Drags me with him every so often.

SYD

Why?

JAZZ

Because he loves me

SYD

No, why go to church to pray?

JAZZ

Cause he spent all his money on a dog hotel

VINCE

A hotel for dogs

JAZZ

Yes

VINCE

Now how the fuck does that work?

JAZZ

Like if you leave town for a while, you can leave your dog there

STELLA

Then why's it spelled like "yeah"?

VINCE

What?

THE ELECTRICITY FLICKERS.

STELLA

"*Yea*, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death." Why's it spelled like "*yeah*"?

VINCE

Depends on which version of the bible you read

SYD

Wait, if it's pronounced "yay" it's "**Yay**, I'm walking through the valley of the shadow of death." Which is fuckin' stupid. Who's walking through the valley of the shadow of death excited and shit?

STELLA

Nobody

WINDY

Not necessarily true

VINCE

The point of the verse is to say you're scared of the valley of the shadow of death -

STELLA

They say the word "of" alot in the bible -

JAZZ

But then it says, "fear no evil"

VINCE

Yeah

JAZZ

You said you're scared of the valley of death

STELLA

I didn't say shit about myself, I'm just reading off the card thing

VINCE

It's saying you're only *not* scared because god's there with you in the valley of the shadow of death.

STELLA

“of”

WINDY

His rod and staff and whatever -

SYD

What's god's rod?

They all look at the crucifix.

SYD

When they say “rod,” what do they mean?

JAZZ

I think they mean staff. Like it's a different word for staff like you'd use to protect you or something -

SYD

“Rod”'s the wrong word though, right?

VINCE

No no no -

SYD

Como qué no?

VINCE

It says his rod AND his staff. So they can't be the same thing. He has both a rod and a staff

SYD

Well “rod” seems like the wrong word regardless

WINDY

“Rod” is always the wrong word.

*JOI and ALISHA enter holding hands.
They grab drinks and sit.
Syd takes the funeral card and looks at it.*

SYD
The photo Mickey picked of Joe is terrible

Stella grabs the funeral card.

STELLA
She looks like a wet puppy

ALISHA
I'm pretty sure they took this during the second round of chemo

Joi grabs the funeral card.

JOI
You can tell because she dyed her buzzcut purple, remember?

JAZZ
Is that safe during chemo?

SYD
I mean she's dead, sooo -

Vince grabs the funeral card.

JOI
They should've used that photo from her showcase

*Yessssssss.
Vince sets the funeral card down.*

ALISHA
The painting one, right?

JOI
Yeah, it's in black and white and she's smiling

ALISHA
She was so good

JAZZ

But didn't she draw? I remember going to some small gallery on the west side to see her drawings?

VINCE

She tried everything

SYD

At one point she majored in theater

VINCE

And then painting

SYD

And then film

STELLA

And then music

JAZZ

Ughhhh the music

ALISHA

She was *awful*

STELLA

She decided to learn piano

ALISHA

And was terrible

WINDY

Then Cook decided to learn piano

ALISHA

And was terrible

JOI

Oh my god, I remember this

ALISHA

They were terrible

STELLA

Were they terrible?

ALISHA

You know what? They were.

WINDY

And then they quit

JAZZ

Quit is the wrong word

ALISHA

Cook quit

VINCE

Cook *always* quits

JAZZ

Joe just got bored

JOI

She just wanted to try everything

SYD

Exactamente

STELLA

She went from piano to...

WINDY

...photography?

STELLA

Yesssss

WINDY

Cause she took those photos of us for a class and -

JOI

Cook cried

WINDY

He looked at the photo she took of him and *Ryan* and cried

JOI

Fuckkk that's right

STELLA

Cause that same week Ryan broke up with him

ALISHA

Cause she was moving to Los Angeles to be an actor

JOI

And he spent three nights crying in the bar

VINCE

Two on my couch

STELLA

One in my closet

WINDY

And then got so drunk that weekend he made out with a
pineapple

VINCE

He cut the hell out of his tongue... it was hilarious.

We see a camera flash outside the front window.

No one notices.

But Joi notices Jazz, rolling the gem around in her hand.

ALISHA

Is he coming tonight?

WINDY

Cook?

ALISHA

Yeah.

WINDY

Definitely.

ALISHA

And Ryan was right behind us with her boyfriend -

JOI

(re: Jazz' gem)

Ok, what the fuck is that?

Everyone looks to Jazz.

JOI
What's with the rock?

SYD
She's rubbin' it.

JAZZ
It's an amethyst gem

JOI
It's a rock.

JAZZ
Amethysts are supposed to bring a sense of calm, peace,
and tranquility into your life -

JOI
You're carrying a rock around with you

JAZZ
It helps me

JOI
Helps you what?

JAZZ
Have... calm, peace, and tranquility

*We see another camera flash outside the front window.
No one notices.*

STELLA
Could you sound a little more convincing?

ALISHA
What's goin' on with you?

JAZZ
I'm... fine.

ALISHA
Fine, and?

JAZZ

And I'm taking the Bar exam next week

JOI

Holy shit!

ALISHA

That's great!

SYD

Congratulations

JAZZ

Yeah

JOI

So what's the problem?

JAZZ

I'm... nervous.

SYD

That's pretty normal

JAZZ

Not for me

SYD

So you're nervous for the first time in your life?

JAZZ

I've been studying for months, I haven't left my room

ALISHA

It's like, the test right?

JAZZ

Yeah

STELLA

That *nobody* passes the first time

JAZZ

People do

STELLA

That's a thing in movies and stuff, that nobody passes the
Bar the first time

JAZZ

Well I want to

ALISHA

You probably will

SYD

Ol' smart ass

JAZZ

I spend eight hours a day studying -

SYD

That's too much time

JAZZ

But I know I'm gonna get the test and freeze up. I'm gonna
screw up and then need to study and take it again -

VINCE

And the rock helps how?

JAZZ

I just need to focus -

VINCE

With a rock?

JAZZ

I haven't slept good in weeks.

I roll from one side to the other and wake up every half
hour. I'll get up and my sides will be sore and my eyes and
mouth are dry and then I'll lay awake for hours before
maybe falling asleep at sun up.

All I've ever wanted is a job I enjoy.

I just want to wake up and be excited to go to work. And it's within reach. *It's right there.* I'm just nervous.

STELLA

I'm with you, my fuckin' job sucks.

WINDY

I thought you loved the restaurant?

STELLA

I'm a *line cook*.

I wanna be a chef. I wanna make my own dishes, and call them "dishes" like a bougie mother fucker. I wanna have people come from all over to eat something I created. I wanna put a quarter sized piece of meat on a big white plate and have people pay hundreds of dollars for it and then give me rave reviews.

My father still works in construction. Fifty two years this year. And he hates it. He hates it, but he's got no choice. He's got no other options. He's never enjoyed a day of work in his life.

If I gotta work as a line cook and fuckin hate my life for a while, to be able to do a job I enjoy. I'm down.

JAZZ

That's not the same thing -

STELLA

Yeah cause once you pass the damn test you're done. I gotta sit in the fuckin' kitchen for years just to get a shot at sous-chef -

JAZZ

I'm alone, Stella. You guys all have each other. You can work on the line and then come here and have drinks with everyone and bitch about work and laugh and make memories and get through it.

I'm out of town, alone. Locked in a room by myself reading these books and memorizing cases. Then I go to sleep, by myself. I don't have the support system -

WINDY

So pick up a phone -

JAZZ

It's not the same -

SYD

So talk to us about it now

JAZZ

I didn't come here to talk about my problems -

VINCE

But it could help -

JAZZ

I don't *want* help. I just... miss you guys. I just miss you and want to take my mind off this tonight.

Please.

STELLA

You're sure?

JAZZ

Yeah. I'll figure it out another night.

Jazz rubs the gem.

STELLA

Alright... well... you keep rubbing your rock -

JAZZ

It's a gem!

STELLA

You know what? You're a gem

JAZZ

Thanks, Stell

STELLA

When I have trouble sleeping I drink hot tea.

JAZZ

I just said I don't wanna talk about it!

SYD

We're talking about sleep, not work

VINCE

I love sleep

JOI

You should try hot tea.

WINDY

Or melatonin

ALISHA

Or a double whiskey, straight

STELLA

Or hot tea with a double whiskey in it

VINCE

A good face mask

ALISHA

Books on tape

WINDY

Books not on tape

VINCE

Books, but as a face mask

STELLA

Church service

WINDY

Not going to church service

VINCE

Church service, but as a face mask

ALISHA

(to Vince)

What's with you and face masks?

VINCE

They remove impurities from the skin, unclog pores, and absorb excess oil, what's not to love?

*We see another camera flash outside the front window.
No one notices.*

SYD

Did the church look different to you guys? Like. Newer?

WINDY

They redid the façade last year.

SYD

How would you know?

VINCE

You're banned from the church

WINDY

I am not "banned" from the church

VINCE

You absolutely are

STELLA

You got kicked out of Sunday school and they told your Dad you weren't allowed back

WINDY

I did not get "banned" from the church -

SYD

You literally shit on the bible

WINDY
I was six years old!

STELLA
It's the bible!

WINDY
It's called toilet *paper*. The bible is fucking paper -

RYAN and ELLIOT enter mid conversation.

ELLIOT
So what time am I posting this tomorrow?

RYAN
11am Pacific.

ELLIOT
Do you have a caption?

RYAN
I already called to have Sonia draft one.

ELLIOT
I feel like this is good. It grounds you.

RYAN
Exactly. "This is where I came from. Look where I am.
Etcetera, etcetera" -

RYAN AND ELLIOT
Etcetera

RYAN
Yeah.

ELLIOT
And you said you were trying to get in touch with your
roots

RYAN
Exactly

ELLIOT

So that'll get us at least Instagram engagement for the next week -

RYAN

No one uses Facebook anyways -

SYD

What the fuck is happening right now?

*Ryan snaps out of it and takes in the room.
Small grins spread.*

RYAN

Hi, Syd.

Ryan hugs Syd.

RYAN

This is my boyfriend, Elliot.

Introductions.

JOI

Joi

ELLIOT

Nice to meet you.

JOI

My wife, Alisha.

A handshake.

RYAN

You met Jazz earlier.

*Jazz hugs Elliot.
Elliot greets the group as they're introduced.*

RYAN

That's Syd, Vince, Stella, and Windy

ELLIOT

(to Windy)

I've seen you comment on Ryan's Instagram

VINCE

Ooooo on Ryan's Instagram.

ALISHA

Oooooo Instagrammmmm.

SYD

Hashtag Gram life.

STELLA

So you went full LA, huh?

RYAN

What does that even mean?

SYD

It means I know you're vegan, you don't have to tell me

STELLA

You look like you're eighty percent quinoa salad

JOI

I don't even know what that is, but it's true

SYD

You look like you eat your chicken "plain"

VINCE

I bet you don't even have dirt under your fingernails anymore.

ALISHA

No one should have dirt under their finger nails, Vince.

JOI

Wash your damn hands.

STELLA

Ryan, you ever think of spending some actual time "where you're from"?

RYAN

I have but the next few months are crazy, we're out of here Monday morning -

SYD

More important question

RYAN

Go ahead

SYD

When we were in Sunday school -

RYAN

Yes.

SYD

I didn't even finish.

RYAN

Yes, Windy got banned from the church

WINDY

You make *one* mistake

JOI

People don't forget

ELLIOT

I'm sorry?

JOI

She shit on the bible

WINDY

I WAS A CHILD

ELLIOT

And it *is* paper

WINDY

EXACTLY

ALISHA

Speaking of mistakes -

JOI

When Windy got bangs in middle school?

WINDY

Is there a reason we're all picking on me right now?

STELLA

Not really

ALISHA

Speaking of mistakes, Cook told me to put my shoe in the casket at the wake, and when I wouldn't he tried to steal it and do it himself

VINCE

I told him not to

RYAN

Mickey was ready to kill him

SYD

Which is bullshit

ELLIOT

He wanted to put a shoe in the casket?

RYAN

So you know our friend Joe who passed away?

ELLIOT

Yes

RYAN

Well since we were kids, Joe would stick something in the casket at every funeral she went to

STELLA

It started with her mom's

ELLIOT

She put something in her mother's casket?

RYAN

We were all around thirteen when her mom died

STELLA

And she was having a really hard time leaving the funeral home after the wake was over

SYD

She was crying hysterically, saying she didn't want to say goodbye to her mom

JOI

So Mickey told her that if she wrote her mom a note and put it in the casket, it would be with her forever. So she'd never *really* be saying a final goodbye.

Cook took a napkin and got one of those promotional pens from the funeral home, and Joe wrote a note for her Mom -

ELLIOT

What'd she write?

JAZZ

Nobody knows.

JOI

But she couldn't walk up to the casket cause she'd been crying so hard and hadn't slept in days

ELLIOT

She was overwhelmed

RYAN

Exactly

ALISHA

So Cook and Mickey carried her

RYAN

One of them under each of her arms

STELLA

And we all walked with her up to the casket, put the note in, and closed it together.

VINCE

And every funeral since then, *every single one*, Joe put something in the casket.

ALISHA

When my grandfather died, she took off her left shoe and tossed it in.

STELLA

She gave my grandma a dollar store pinky ring with a dolphin on it.

JOI

She gave my dad a Led Zeppelin t-shirt.

VINCE

And so on, and so on.

ELLIOT

That's nice

RYAN

Right?

SYD

So Cook thought we should all put something in the casket before they bury her tomorrow.

ELLIOT

Cook is -

JOI

Insane, yes

ELLIOT

Your ex boyfriend

RYAN

Yes

ELLIOT

And we like him?

JOI

We love him

VINCE

He can be a lot.

ELLIOT

This is a lot of information, all at once

RYAN

You're doing great

SYD

So Cook thought we should do the same thing for Joe, just like she did for everybody else.

STELLA

But when we talked to Mickey about it, he said it was against the bible or something. So when Cook tried to do it today, he freaked out.

VINCE

Of course he did -

ALISHA

Where in the bible does it say you can't put a shoe in a casket?

ELLIOT

I feel like that's an understandably unwritten rule.

SYD

Joe did it for everybody we lost, we should do it for her.

ELLIOT

Also understandable.

JOI

Mickey *specifically* made sure it was a closed casket so we couldn't.

STELLA

Which I don't fully agree with.

WINDY

He's just angry right now.

STELLA

We're all angry

JOI

She was our sister

WINDY

She was *like* our sister, but she was Mickey's cousin. His *blood -*

STELLA

Blood doesn't mean shit

WINDY

I know, I know. But this means something to him. All of it. The ceremony and prayers and songs and all that. We're gathering together to say goodbye to a friend. Mickey's making sure she gets to heaven. That's a different level of... something.

VINCE

Belief.

WINDY

Yeah, or responsibility or something. Through the whole wake *we* were sharing stories and eating shitty sandwiches and laughing and smiling and crying. Mickey was standing stone faced at the back of the room making sure everything happened like it was supposed to.

ALISHA

You don't think that's a little weird?

WINDY

What?

ALISHA

The fact that all of us were a crying mess of laughter and tears and he was just kinda... standing there. "Stone-faced."

WINDY

We don't know what's going on in his head.

STELLA

Did you know he's not carrying the casket tomorrow?

ALISHA

Mickey's not?

STELLA

He doesn't want to touch the casket. I don't even think he went up to it today.

ALISHA

That's weird, right? I'm not crazy

JAZZ

So who's taking his place?

STELLA

I think it's like... half of us carry it from the funeral home to the hearse. The other half of us carry it from the hearse to the grave site.

VINCE

(to Ryan)

You guys carrying it too?

RYAN

I am, yeah

JOI

What about Cook?

STELLA

Mickey told him no

RYAN

What?

SYD

Son mamadas

WINDY

Mickey and Cook've been having issues for a while. Joe's death made things worse.

SYD

Which is partly why he was ready to kill him earlier.

VINCE

Cook's been drunk since the night Joe died and today he could barely make it into the church.

ALISHA

When I got to the funeral home he was chugging whiskey and crying on the stoop outside.

ELLIOT

I think I saw him singing something to himself and tapping on his knees, maybe?

ALISHA

That's him.

SYD

I had to physically get him up and clean his face in the bathroom.

VINCE

Cause you're one of three people he listens to.

STELLA

I saw him sneaking drinks out of a flask between prayers in the eulogy.

JOI

Fuck, really?

STELLA

Singing to himself through tears and wiping his nose every two seconds.

WINDY

He's heartbroken.

Silence.

?

WINDY

When he was using heroin, Joe was the one who got him to go to rehab.

She found a kit hidden in his bathroom behind the toilet.
She tried to organize an intervention with all of us -

SYD

But we couldn't find a day when we all could leave work -

STELLA

Broke people problems -

WINDY

So she did it herself.

Joe locked Cook in her apartment and tore him inside out.
She loved him like a brother. We all know he still drinks.
But he hasn't done drugs in two years. Doesn't even smoke
weed anymore.

Joe saved his life. And he couldn't save hers.

He's heartbroken.

Silence.

WINDY

He'll be ok. We just have to give him time and prop him up
a bit 'til then. He'd do the same for -

MICKEY enters, heads to the bar, and pours a drink.

MICKEY

Does anyone know how to fix a fuse box?

STELLA

I can try

SYD

And maybe burn the bar down

Stella flips Syd off.

MICKEY

(to Ryan and Elliot)

Well look who it is.

RYAN
Hi, Mickey.

ELLIOT
Nice to meet you.

MICKEY
You too.
(to Ryan)
Glad you could grace us with your presence.

RYAN
You're welcome.

MICKEY
What're you drinking?

ELLIOT
Beer.

MICKEY
IPA, lager?

ELLIOT
Beer.

Mickey pours Elliot a beer and gives it to him.

MICKEY
Ryan?

RYAN
Do you have a cab?

SYD
Ooooooo

VINCE
"Do you have a cab"

STELLA
"Cabernetsauvignonblanc"

SYD
"Call me a cab with a side of cab-viar"

VINCE
What *is* caviar?

STELLA
Fish eggs

WINDY
Leave her alone

VINCE
LA Ryan is fancy

JOI
LA Ryan drinks with a pinky out

SYD
LA Ryan cleanses her pallet between courses

ELLIOT
That's true

RYAN
Don't tell them that!

ELLIOT
It is though

VINCE
What *is* your pallet?

STELLA
The part of your mouth that tastes things

MICKEY
You're fine. We have one cab, and it's all yours.

Mickey gets the bottle and pours wine for Ryan.

STELLA
So how's being home, nerds?

WINDY
You gotta specify which nerds you're talking about

STELLA
The ones that moved out of the neighborhood

JOI

We're only here a few days, but it's been nice

SYD

Aside from the death, of course

ALISHA

Yeah, kind of a downer

JAZZ

Who's watching the kid?

ALISHA

My mom

JAZZ

That's nice of her

ALISHA

She likes spending time with him.

JOI

She's one of those women who was born to be a grandmother

ALISHA

And with me being an only child

MICKEY

And very... very gay

Mickey holds up a hand for a high five

Alisha sheepishly gives him one.

Joi puts a hand on Alisha's.

ALISHA

And very very gay. She had that older generation thing of, "I'm never gonna be a grandmother."

MICKEY

So she's thrilled

JOI

Exactly

ALISHA

She asked if we wanted to stay here longer

JOI

But I've got to be back in the office Monday.

STELLA

Boooo

VINCE

Stay another week

JOI

I can't spare a week

JAZZ

I'm leaving Tuesday, we could get drunk at the museum
Monday and yell at suburbanites

ALISHA

I wish

JOI

But we really can't. I've got too much work to do this
week, we've gotta get back.

ALISHA

I've been trying to push her to stay, but she refuses

JOI

I don't refuse. I have an insane week.

ALISHA

You work from home like three out of five days

JOI

It's still work

ALISHA

Ehhhh

JOI

I have to clock in online and then they check how many
hours I've worked

SYD

(dripping with sarcasm)

That's good, cause we don't have the internet here

JOI

And I need to be in *my* space, focused

ALISHA

You need a break

JOI

This is a break

ALISHA

This is burying our friend

JOI

We've gotta get back, we can't stay longer

ALISHA

You just need a quiet space to work during the day, and at night we can hang with everyone. Just for a few more days -

THE ELECTRICITY GOES OUT.

The orange streetlight from outside the front window illuminates the room.

MICKEY

God damn it -

A loud crash.

VINCE

FUCK. OW.

MICKEY

Everybody stay still. The fuckin' breaker is out again.
Anybody wanna give me a hand?

Another smaller crash.

Phone flashlights click on.

STELLA

Yeah, yeah, I got you.

*Mickey and Stella head into the office.
The group stays in the dimly lit room.*

JOI
Well... this is fun

RYAN
It's like a sleepover

ELLIOT
Or a horror movie

WINDY
Anything new on your end, Ryan?

RYAN
Busy. Traveling too much

ELLIOT
Not home enough

RYAN
Neither of us are

ELLIOT
But we get to see a lot of the country. Which is good for me.

JOI
Where are you from originally?

ELLIOT
London.

JAZZ
That's hot. That's a hot place to be from.

ELLIOT
Thank you.

*We see a wooden mass push up against the front window of the bar.
No one notices.*

WINDY

Are you an actor too?

ELLIOT

I moved to Los Angeles thinking I would be. Took some classes. Did some theater. But it wasn't for me.

ALISHA

How so?

ELLIOT

I'd get an audition and every synapse in my brain would fire all at once, for days on end. I'd be anxious, thrilled, depressed, excited, and terrified all at once. I'd memorize the sides and then panic -

JAZZ

What's that?

ELLIOT

The script for the audition. I'd memorize it and lose sleep and sweat through my clothes when I did fall asleep and... honestly I just don't love it. I don't love acting enough to put myself through that. I could live without it, you know? And I've always felt if you can live without something, let it go.

VINCE

That's deep.

JOI

So you're... an influencer now?

ELLIOT

You could say that

JOI

So you're an influencer now

ELLIOT

Touché

SYD

What does that entail?

ELLIOT

Taking photos without smiling and drinking terrible tasting green drinks.

ALISHA

Sounds fun.

ELLIOT

There's worse things.

WINDY

How about you, Ryan? How's acting and all that?

RYAN

I stopped too. I'm focusing on social media now.

ALISHA

Why?

JOI

You were so good

(to Elliot)

No offense.

ELLIOT

None taken.

RYAN

I was good for a city college with fifteen actors in it

ELLIOT

She was good

RYAN

When it was between me and one other girl

ELLIOT

We've talked about her getting back out there

RYAN

And I'm not going to

ELLIOT

She won't even go to a theater anymore

RYAN

Because I don't want to

ELLIOT

Because you *do* want to. You know you miss it and -

RYAN

I need to focus on making money. We're trying to buy a house in LA next year. The market is terrible and I'm tired of paying someone else's bills every month. We need to buy a house and start thinking about the future -

ELLIOT

I'm just saying -

RYAN

If I focus on making content and getting sponsorships, we might be able to make it happen.

ALISHA

My girl got sponsorshippssss

JOI

Love a sponsor

SYD

Love a ship

JAZZ

Love *you*

VINCE

Love the awkward, intimate relationship conversation we're in the middle of right now.

Light, awkward laughter.

RYAN

How about you guys, how's the neighborhood treating you?

WINDY

Just like you left it.

We see COOK and MARY out the front window on either side of a wooden mass. But we can't quite tell what it is yet.

SYD

The bank is buying a lot of the buildings

VINCE

Or people are losing them

RYAN

What about your Uncle's deli, Syd?

SYD

Good so far. But the rent is insane.

ELLIOT

That sucks

SYD

It's gotten so high that all the mom and pop stores are being pushed out. It's just us and a couple other small places left. But my uncle won't raise the prices on anything. So -

A bang outside.

SYD

What the fuck was that?

COOK

(from outside)

I got it, I got it

They look toward the window.

JAZZ

What the hell?

MARY

(from outside)

You sure?

VINCE
No fuckin' way.

MARY
(from outside)
I'll get the right side, you keep that one steady.

*Another big bang outside.
All eyes on the doorway.*

MARY
(outside)
If somebody opens the door we'll be fine -

COOK
(outside)
Somebody open the door!

JAZZ
He didn't.

VINCE
He did.

*Vince rushes to the door and opens it.
Everyone looks, pointing cell phone lights at the doorway.*

WINDY
Oh... my... god.

COOK
(from outside)
Left or right!?

MARY
(from outside)
Right!

*Through the front door we see... **a casket.**
A casket on rollers, getting jammed into the doorway.
Cook on one back corner; Mary on the other.
They ram it toward the door -
BANG.
It hits the doorframe.
Nope.*

MARY
I think it's too big!

COOK
That's what your mom said!

SYD
Perdió la razon

MARY
Shut the fuck up, Cook!

COOK
Left or right!?

They pull the casket back again, then ram it forward.

MARY
STOP STOP **STOP** -

*BANG. It hits the door frame again.
This time crushing Vince's finger.
Vince howls in pain.
Windy runs and holds the door open in his place.*

MARY
Try a little to the left!?

Cook and Mary back the casket out of the doorway.

COOK
OUT OF THE WAY!

Cook and Mary rush the casket forward, banging it through the front door and into the bar, settling it center stage.

THE ELECTRICITY BLINKS TO LIFE.

*We see the wood is filled with scratches from the journey.
Reactions from the gang vary.
Windy locks the front door of the bar.
Silence.
Cook drops his hands to his knees and breathes heavy.
Mary doesn't.*

COOK
I...

Cook speaks through exasperated breaths.

COOK
Fuck.

MARY
You ok?

COOK
I'm gonna die. I'm gonna die.

*More deep breaths.
An infectious smile spreads through the room.*

COOK
Guys -

*Huff. Huff. Huff.
Elliot, beer in hand, walks a water over to Cook.*

COOK
It's very heavy.

*Huff huff huff.
He grabs Elliot's beer and chugs it.*

COOK
Who the fuck is this guy?

ELLIOT
Elliot.

COOK
Say that again.

ELLIOT
Elliot.

COOK
One more time.

ELLIOT
Elliot.

COOK
Why do you sound like Mary Poppins?

ELLIOT
I'm... from London.

COOK
That's hot, that's a hot place to be from.

ELLIOT
You must be Cook.

Elliot extends a hand.

RYAN
He's my boyfriend.

Cook doesn't shake it.

COOK
Fuck, I'm tired.

Cook goes to refill the beer glass.

RYAN
Mickey's gonna kill you

Windy and Jazz inspect the casket.

COOK
Fuck him

VINCE
This is over the line man, even for you

JAZZ
jesus christ, Cook, it's beat to hell -

COOK
I'm good at steering -

WINDY
There's cracks in it!

COOK

We're putting stuff in the casket

JAZZ

Oh my god -

SYD

Mickey said no -

COOK

Fuck that

ALISHA

He doesn't want to -

COOK

Yes, he does

VINCE

I dunno about that

COOK

We have to

JOI

Why would you -

COOK

You know this is what Joe would want. Every funeral.
Fuckin' shoes, a lighter, that shitty little ring. It was Joe's
thing.

It was her way of saying goodbye.

It's the right thing to do.

Cook goes to open to the casket.

Vince stops him.

VINCE

Don't do it.

COOK

Come on, man

JAZZ

We have to get it out of here before Mickey gets back

JOI

He's gonna freak the fuck out

COOK

She was my friend -

MARY, SYD, AND ALISHA

- is -

COOK

She *is* my friend. And I love her. We all love her -

VINCE

Mickey's not gonna be happy -

COOK

This is as much for us as it is for him. It's a chance for us to say goodbye to our friend the way she would want us to, to leave a piece of us with her forever, and it's a chance for him to correct a mistake.

ALISHA

What mistake?

WINDY

Cook -

RYAN

Did I miss something?

Windy and Cook share a look.

VINCE

What're you talking about?

Silence.

*Cook wants to speak,
but he won't betray Windy.*

COOK

I love her.

I love my little sister.

And I want one more night with her.

Have my back, please. Let me have -

Mickey and Stella enter from the office.

Mickey takes in the room, then settles on the casket.

He stares at it.

MICKEY

Why is she here?

He shifts his focus to Cook.

MICKEY

Why is the casket here?

COOK

Hold on, hold on. Mickey, now before you get mad -

MICKEY

What did you do?

Mickey lunges at Cook, Syd and Stella hold him back.

COOK

Before you get mad, this is *Joe's* casket -

MICKEY

This isn't a fucking joke -

Mickey looks at the beat up casket.

COOK

Come on, man -

MICKEY

What the fuck happened to it?!

COOK

I had to push it through the door

MARY
and it got a little banged up -

MICKEY
Before that!

COOK
I was pushing it down Taylor Street

MARY
and it fell in that pothole the city won't fix -

MICKEY
BEFORE THAT!

COOK
I had to go out the side door of the funeral home

MARY
which is way too small

so we turned the casket on its side -

MICKEY
START WITH THE FIRST THING. START WITH THE
FIRST FUCKING THING YOU DID.

COOK
I woke up this morning and -

MICKEY
TONIGHT!

MARY
I think he means tonight

COOK
I was walking here from my apartment and passed the
funeral home and -

MICKEY
Oh my fucking God -

COOK
We have to put stuff in the casket, Mickey.

We have to.

We don't have a choice.

Silence.

Alisha stares at the casket.

MICKEY

What did I tell you earlier?

COOK

I know, I know. But -

MICKEY

I told you no

COOK

That was before -

MICKEY

I told you no, Cook

COOK

That was before *your* funeral. Before we got to do the funeral *you* wanted. *Which we did*. We sat there and sang and prayed and whatever you wanted for six hours -

MICKEY

You were drunk the whole time -

COOK

And you stood in the back of the room -

MARY

Stop arguing -

MICKEY

What the fuck do you think this is gonna do?

MARY

It doesn't have to "do" anything

COOK

Joe didn't do it because it *did* something, Mick. It was something *she* did. That's what mattered. It was *her* thing. It made her happy -

MICKEY

And it's not right -

COOK

Why?

MICKEY

It's desecration of -

COOK

A fucking box -

Alisha takes off her left shoe.

MICKEY

The box that holds her forever -

COOK

A piece of wood glued together by -

MICKEY

It's what it represents -

COOK

Don't gimme that bullshit -

MICKEY

It's bullshit because it's what I believe?

COOK

Yeah yeah, make it about you again

MICKEY

Don't start with me

COOK

If you wanna say something, say it

JAZZ

Say what?

MICKEY
You don't want that

*Alisha opens the casket.
No one notices.*

COOK
I want this to end

MICKEY
You're lucky you're even here right now

COOK
Say what you wanna say

MICKEY
We're bringing her back to the funeral home

COOK
In an hour

MICKEY
Now

COOK
The cleaning crew shows up at one thirty every morning
before a service. That's one hour from now, Mickey.
Gimme one hour to do this. One hour with her and we'll
bring her back I promise -

MICKEY
No

COOK
Yes

MICKEY
No

COOK
Yes

Alisha puts her left shoe in the casket.

MICKEY
No

ALISHA AND COOK

Yes.

Silence.

Everyone looks at Alisha.

Mickey's blood cools slightly.

MICKEY

What are you doing?

ALISHA

When my grandparents came to this country, neither of them spoke English, so people outside the neighborhood treated them like shit. They'd get dirty looks buying groceries or walking my mom to school or whatever. It's like they were contagious.

My grandpa cracked leather skin from his forehead to his feet. He'd walk two blocks in his worn down shoes and be in pain for days. So over the years he'd learned how to fix his shoes so they didn't hurt his feet. How to make them comfortable. Fix rips, tears, and worn spots.

So once they finally got settled in the neighborhood, he opened a shoe repair shop and started working as a cobbler.

Joi puts an arm around Alisha.

Mickey smiles slightly.

ALISHA

Well slowly, over time, people would come from all over the city to have him fix their shoes. Poor people. Rich people. People born here and immigrants like him.

He got to know them. And they got to know him. He learned English. They learned about him. Shoes were... a thing. His thing.

I don't talk about it a lot. It never really seemed to matter too much. It was a sweet story he'd tell me when I'd come over for dinner. But when he died... that story became everything.

Joe knew that, and gave my grandfather a ripped, low top sneaker when he died.

Cook's right.

We need to do this, Mickey.

Mickey softens, but isn't won over.

MICKY

Fine. If you want to, if *all* of you want to, I understand.

But I'm not doing it. I won't.

*He silently walks to the office door to leave.
But before he can get through it -*

WINDY

Don't leave again, Mickey.

Don't.

Mickey stops.

JOI

(Quietly, to Alisha)

Again?

MARY

She's right. You'll regret it.

*Mickey stares at the door.
Mary and Windy go to him.*

MARY

I know you're hurting, but you'll regret missing this. All of us in one room together, one last time. Drinking. Smiling. Cook falling off a stool. Alisha and Joi making out in the alley. Vince losing to Syd in darts.

Ryan trying to keep up, and throwing up everywhere. All of us together. One last time.

WINDY

Stay here with us. I respect how you're feeling. I understand. But stay here.

Mickey turns and looks at Mary and Windy.

Cook joins them.

Cook, Mary, Windy, and Mickey have AN ASIDE.

COOK

Please, Mickey.

It's the right thing to do.

WINDY

And it's what she would want.

MARY

You know it is.

MICKEY

The cleaning crew gets to the funeral home in an hour?

COOK

Yeah. One hour and I'll walk it back with you.

MICKEY

No.

Silence.

MICKEY

(to Cook)

You don't touch the casket again.

Don't touch it, don't put anything in it. You stay the fuck away from her. You understand?

MARY
That's not right.

WINDY
You know he deserves to be a part of this -

MICKEY
You were there.

We were there the night she died.

He doesn't deserve to give her something. He doesn't deserve to be with her forever. He doesn't deserve to be here -

WINDY
Take it easy -

MICKEY
The whole group wants to do this, fine. They can. But I'm not budging on this. Cook doesn't put a fucking thing in that casket.

MARY
He deserves closure. Just like you do, just like I do, just like Windy and Syd and everybody else. We all deserve to say goodbye. We need -

COOK
Fine.

MICKEY
I mean it.

He does.

COOK
Ok.

Silence.

Cook doesn't touch, look at, or put anything in the casket...

Until noted.

THE ASIDE ENDS.

Everyone is staring at the group.

JOI
The dramaaaa.

STELLA
What's the verdict!?

MICKEY
One hour.

The room celebrates.

Mickey half smiles.

MICKEY
Then we'll walk the casket back before anyone knows any different!

SYD
Yeah yeah yeah

ALISHA
We got it

After a beat, Cook, Windy, and Mary head back to the group.

Mickey doesn't budge.

Mary stops, turns to him, and waves for him to join.

Mickey and Mary have AN ASIDE.

MARY
Come on.

MICKEY

I don't wanna talk to you, Mary

MARY

That's fuckin' harsh

MICKEY

I said it was ok, go be with everyone

MARY

We're friends, Mickey. We're all friends. I see you're upset, and I wanna help -

MICKEY

I don't need help

MARY

You do

MICKEY

I'm fine. They're gonna do whatever the fuck they want, and that's fine with me. I already got my closure -

MARY

Really?

MICKEY

Yeah

MARY

Ok, so what about Cook?

MICKEY

What about him?

MARY

It's wrong of you to not let Cook be a part of this. He needs to heal. We all need to heal -

MICKEY

He doesn't deserve to heal -

MARY

I'm a little fuckin' angry with you right now too, you know that?

And I'm here talking to you because you need a friend right now, to help you get through this. You need me here to help you -

MICKEY

- No I don't -

MARY

- And right now, Cook needs *you*. You're the only one who can tell him it's -

MICKEY

This is why I don't want to talk to you -

MARY

You're gonna have to let it go, you know that, right?

MICKEY

I *know* the person I loved most in the world, my little cousin, my best friend, *is dead*. That's what I know. And as far as I'm concerned -

MARY

Your anger is gonna rip you apart -

MICKEY

Why are you even here, Mary?

Why would you help *him*? Why bring the casket here? Why drag this out any longer? Why do this to -

MARY

Because we need this. All of us. We need tonight -

MICKEY

I know what I feel. I know what I feel and what I think and what I needed to do to get through this. And I've done it. I'll do this for them, but *I'm* done.

MARY
No, you're not.

They stare at one another.

SYD
Excuse me.

Mary and Mickey look.

SYD
Doin' ok over there?

Mary and Mickey share a look.

MARY AND MICKEY
Yeah.

THE ASIDE ENDS.
Mickey heads back to the group.
A beat later, Mary joins him.

SYD
We gotta put the casket on the bar

MARY
Oh boy

MICKEY
We are *not* putting the casket on the bar

MARY
Sounds like we are

STELLA
You got what you wanted. We're done in an hour, right? So you gotta give us some stuff now

JOI
Lean in

ALISHA
Enjoy the moment

JAZZ

Besides, it'll look better up there anyways

RYAN

More official

ALISHA

True

JAZZ

Exactly

Syd, Jazz, and Joi grab sides of the casket.

JAZZ

Come on, Cookie.

Cook looks at Windy and Mary.

MARY

Don't look at me.

Mickey glares at Cook.

Cook sees.

COOK

I'm good. I fuckin' pushed that thing all the way over here.
I could use the break.

JAZZ

Mickeyyyyyy?

MICKEY

No way. You guys wanna do this, you're doin the leg work.

JAZZ

Boooooo -

ELLIOT

I can help.

STELLA

I'm in.

Elliot grabs another side.

Stella and Vince join them in lifting.

The six of them lift the casket onto the bar top.

***The casket is placed so we never see the inside of it.*

Windy pours shots.

Mary sits at the bar.

JAZZ

jesus christ this thing's heavy

VINCE

How'd you get it all the way here

COOK

I hit a lot of stuff

MARY

You hit everything

COOK

I hit most of the things between the funeral home and here

They set the casket down on the bar top

WINDY

(re: the shots)

Help yourselves.

Everyone but Jazz, Mary, Joi, and Mickey grab a shot off the bar.

They raise glasses if they have them.

Mickey doesn't.

They all turn and look at him.

WINDY

I mean, you've been such a pain in the ass today, you don't have a choice.

Mickey grabs a shot and raises it.

WINDY

To Joe.

*They drink.
Elliot dry heaves.*

COOK
Don't die

VINCE
I'm not lifting another casket

ELLIOT
What was that?

WINDY
Malört

ELLIOT
It tastes like battery acid

JAZZ
That's why the smart people didn't take one

Ryan dry heaves.

RYAN
I forgot how terrible it is

ELLIOT
It's like drinking piss but the piss is battery acid

RYAN
How did we ever do this

ELLIOT
I'm gonna die

Why would anyone drink this?

ALISHA
Nobody does

JOI
It's reserved for tourists and people who hate themselves

MARY
And birthdays

JOI
Also birthdays

WINDY
It was the first shot we gave Joe on her 21st birthday

ELLIOT
Really!?

Laughter.

JAZZ
Oh my god I forgot about that

SYD
She said she didn't want a chaser

VINCE
Mickey told her not to use a chaser

MICKEY
Lies and blasphemes

MARY
Oh, you're talking now?

MICKEY
I'm not gonna sit here and allow myself to be besmirched

ALISHA
Isn't that past tense?

MICKEY
Besmirch?

MARY
Besmirching?

ALISHA
We are besmirching you

MICKEY
And I won't allow it

MARY

There we go

STELLA

Well Joe took the shot and immediately threw up all over
Ryan

JOI

And Ryan was in the middle of her scarf and black coffee
phase

ELLIOT

I'm sorry, scarf and black coffee phase?

MARY

Sitting in the bar with a book like a nerd

RYAN

I had like *two* scarves -

MARY

Or ten -

ALISHA

That you lived in

JAZZ

You were wearing one indoors, during the summer, on a
Friday night

RYAN

It's called fashion

COOK

It's called heat stroke

RYAN

And I looked great

ELLIOT

I bet you did

Elliot kisses Ryan's cheek.

COOK

You looked like somebody started to wrap a toothbrush in silk shrink wrap, but quit a fourth of the way through

MICKEY

I can't tell if that's a compliment or not

MARY

It's not

SYD

So, she's thin like a toothbrush?

STELLA

Or has a big head like a toothbrush?

ALISHA AND JOI

Or both

JAZZ

Like a toothbrush

RYAN

Oh really?

COOK

Yes. I just said it, so -

*Windy laughs to herself,
then exits through the front door of the bar.*

MICKEY

(to Windy)

No no, just leave, that's cool

RYAN

You do remember where I got that scarf, right?

COOK

The sad store. The store for sad people -

RYAN

You gave me that scarf for my birthday

COOK

I did not

MARY

You definitely did

RYAN

Not only did you give it to me, but it was *your* scarf. You didn't even buy it. You already owned it -

JAZZ

THAT'S TRUE

COOK

That is *not* true

MARY

The more you say it's not true, the more true it sounds

JAZZ

I've got a photo where you're wearing it

COOK

What's it like to lie? Is it fun?

*Jazz looks through her phone.
Mary looks over her shoulder.*

JAZZ

It's here somewhere.

MICKEY

It was Joe's birthday, so we were all here together

MARY

Every one of us in the bar after hours

JOI

And she asked to take her very first shot in the bar, with all of us, way way too late

COOK

And Mickey gave her Malört

ALISHA

She asked for it!

STELLA

Then Joe immediately threw up all over Ryan, wiped her mouth, and asked for a second shot

ELLIOT

Why!?

JOI

Which Mickey gave her

MICKEY

She asked!

ELLIOT

You might be the devil

MARY

Using the word, “might” very loosely

MICKEY

Ha ha

JOI

Isn't the whole thing with being a bartender being able to tell when people have had enough

MICKEY

No

JOI

I feel like that's not true

MICKEY

And I feel like you've had enough

JOI

Nevermind

MICKEY

But she held the second shot down well

MARY

Like a fuckin' champ

RYAN

Because she'd already thrown up her entire body weight all over me

SYD

And she was like six pounds at the time

STELLA

Then she got drunk, kicked everybody out of the bar except for us, and made us drunk sing 'til morning

ALISHA

Isn't the other thing with being a bartender serving people who actually pay for their drinks

MICKEY

I can charge you if you want

ALISHA

Nevermind

JAZZ

I can't find it.

Jazz puts down her phone and starts fiddling with the gem, slowly becoming enthralled with the action.

ELLIOT

(to Ryan)

Wait, you can sing?

SYD

Por supuesto *no*

MARY

She's terrible.

ELLIOT

Give me eight bars

RYAN

Do you even know what that means?

ELLIOT

How 'bout a harmony?

MICKEY

You have no idea what you're talking about, huh?

ELLIOT

Confidence is key

MARY

I like this guy

COOK

Take it easy

MARY

He's handsome, funny, smart -

COOK

She sounds like a cat being violently swung in the air by a ceiling fan

MARY

Just gonna ignore me, huh?

STELLA

She sounds like if you filled a car tire with helium and stabbed it with a cactus

MICKEY

She sounds like if you rub spandex against harp strings while the Chicago Gay Men's choir sings falsetto operatics around you

RYAN

Aren't you *in* the Chicago Gay Men's Choir?

MICKEY

Yes, and I'm a terrible singer

SYD

You're all terrible singers

MICKEY

But we're all hot and try real hard

RYAN

(to Elliot)

Just like you, baby

ELLIOT

Thanks

COOK

Alright, alright, he's not *that* hot

MARY

Yes he is

JAZZ

He definitely is

MICKEY

Absolutely

ELLIOT

I need to visit more often

MICKEY

Anytime you want

RYAN

Get your own

MICKEY

Oh I've got a collection, just none from the UK

STELLA

I want a collection

MICKEY

I want to go to the UK

ALISHA

I want to go anywhere

THE ELECTRICITY FLICKERS.

MICKEY

This fucking fuse box.

RYAN

You guys should visit LA!

JOI

I would rather scrape my left nipple across a sea of thumb
tacks

SYD

Fuckkkkkkk I feel it

RYAN

That was violent

MARY

And unnecessary

JOI

Nothing against you

ALISHA

Obviously

JOI

I just feel like LA's main export is influencers and body
shaming

COOK

LA is mostly rich ladies who got so much plastic surgery
their faces look like Winnie the Pooh's lower back

STELLA

LA is mostly rich men who order for you to assert
dominance, but also only eat unseasoned food

VINCE

Fuck

*The matchbook has popped out from under the table leg.
Vince tries to level the table with the matchbook again.
Mary sits next to Cook.*

VINCE
I hate this table.

STELLA
(to Ryan)
He's been trying to level it all night.

VINCE
I tried once and it didn't work once.

RYAN
Use something else

VINCE
This'll work

STELLA
Oh yeah

JAZZ
Looks like it

VINCE
It's like they made one of the fuckin' legs shorter than the others

JOI
(to Jazz, re: the gem)
You're gonna wear that thing down to a pebble.

JAZZ
Sorry, sorry

ALISHA
What's going on?

JAZZ
I was looking for the *fucking* photo and -

SYD
It's a photo, who gives a shit?

JAZZ

It's just another small thing. Another small thing that I can't fucking do because my brain won't focus and I then I try and fail and am incapable of -

ALISHA

How is this shaking you up this much?

JAZZ

It's important

RYAN

What is?

JOI

She's taking the Bar next week.

SYD

And she's nervous.

JAZZ

It's not just "being nervous". I can't study without shaking. I can't sleep. I toss and turn all day and night. I'm fucking exhausted.

STELLA

So you rub on a rock

JAZZ

I don't wanna get into it -

STELLA

Well we have to.

JAZZ

Why?

STELLA

Because it's effecting you, because you're not sleeping

JAZZ

I don't want tonight to be about me.

STELLA

It's not about you. *It's about us.* And you're "us."

Windy enters, toothbrush in hand.

If Jazz rubbed any harder, she'd cut herself on the gem.

STELLA

You're the smartest person we know

JAZZ

I *was* the smartest person you know

COOK

You still are

VINCE

Low bar, but still

JOI

Who fucking cares if you don't pass the first time

JAZZ

It took me six months of studying just to feel good enough to take it, and if I don't pass I have to wait to take it again. And I have to study all over again and lock myself in my room and have no life and make shit money because I only budgeted for a certain amount of time at the rate I'm getting and -

It's... overwhelming

Silence.

MARY

Life is overwhelming

VINCE

Waking up is overwhelming

STELLA

Look, you got out of here on your own. With nobody's help.

Jazz looks at Stella.

STELLA

You chased happiness halfway across the country without family money or Ivy League parents or help from anybody.

You got every scholarship you applied for and went to law school and worked your ass off. You did that shit. Nobody else.... and *when* you pass the Bar, you get to live your dream. Do the thing you've always wanted to do. And you did it on your own. You're strong, Jazz. Remember that.

Throw that fuckin' thing out.

Jazz smiles.

SYD
Get rid of it

MARY
You don't need it

COOK
I'll take it, I love rocks

SYD
When you're nervous, pick up the phone

WINDY
Call me first

STELLA
Or me

COOK
Shit man, I don't sleep at all. You can call me anytime.

RYAN
Me too.

ELLIOT
I don't know you that well... it'd be weird if you called me.
But I'm open to it.

Smiles all around.

ALISHA
Look, if you pass this time, great. And if you don't, fuck it, get 'em next time.

And we'll be here if you stumble.

But you won't.

Jazz smiles, gets up, and walks the gem over to the casket.

JAZZ
Calm, peace, and tranquility.

*She puts the gem in the casket.
Silence.*

Mary and Cook have AN ASIDE.
*Cook, for the first time, is deep in thought.
Not broken, not sad, but focused.
Something we haven't seen.*

MARY
How're you feeling?

COOK
What'd he say to you?

MARY
It doesn't matter.

COOK
He's never gonna forgive me.

MARY
He will.

COOK
I wouldn't if I was him.

MARY
Don't say that.

COOK
I was just doing what I thought was right.

MARY

I know.

COOK

I don't know how to move forward. I keep playing that night over and over again in my head. Keep replaying conversation and moments... I don't -

I don't know how this ends. Any of it. I don't know what Mickey needs. I don't know what I need. I don't know what you need or Windy or Stella or anybody. I don't. But -

I'm trying.

MARY

I know you are.

COOK

And it's over after this, ya know? The funeral's tomorrow. Next week people will fly back out of town, go back to work, spend time with their families, and I'm just here.

Alone with wherever my mind goes.

MARY

You're not alone.

COOK

I will be.

MARY

But you're not right now.

COOK

Then why does it hurt so much? Why does it feel like I'm trapped in an oven set to high?

Like the walls are always closing in, but never close
enough to kill me.

Is it better if they find out, or if I carry it forever?

Because I don't know if I can.

I don't know if I have it in me.

MARY

Other people know the truth. I know the truth. Windy
knows the truth.

COOK

And what if Mickey's right? What if years from now with
a whole lifetime of experience what if I regret it?
What if it was my fault?

I did the right thing, right?

Did I do the right thing?

MARY

Hey, keep your head up.

Mary puts her hand under his chin.

MARY

Chin up. Look at me.

Cook does.

MARY

You will be ok.

COOK

What if Mickey never forgives me?

MARY

Then he misses out on a really, really good -

THE ASIDE ENDS.

WINDY

(to Cook)

It's good right?!

Cook and Mary look over to Windy, still holding a toothbrush.

MARY

Is she holding a toothbrush?

COOK

She is holding a toothbrush.

WINDY

It's good, right?!

COOK

It's... it's a toothbrush.

WINDY

Joe's toothbrush. She's had it at my house since high school. Every time she slept over she'd use it.

RYAN

We're in our twenties

WINDY

Yes

RYAN

And that toothbrush is from high school

WINDY

Yes

SYD

Que asco

WINDY

How is it disgusting!?

JAZZ

She used the same toothbrush for over a decade?!

WINDY

She never planned on sleeping over. Ever. She'd party too hard or stay too late and not want to walk home

STELLA

She lived next door to you

WINDY

Which is a long walk if you're hammered

ALISHA

Or have little legs

MARY

Or if you're tired

JAZZ

It's like thirty feet!

WINDY

Or if you're in chemo.

Joe was... my constant. One of my constants.

Life is exhausting and unpredictable. Sometimes all you want is to know something will happen, or know someone will be there. And Joe always was. She didn't need to plan it or call in advance or ask for permission. If you didn't see or hear from her for a day or two, you never worried. You knew the second she could, she'd reach out. Or show up drunk on your doorstep.

Then she got sick, and she couldn't be constant anymore.
You didn't know when or if you were gonna see her
again.

So whenever she had stays in the hospital, I'd pack a bag
with shit from her apartment and bring it to her. Just to be
able to see her, to be there for her, like she was for us. I'd
pack deodorant, a charger, books, snacks she liked,
whatever. And this toothbrush. The same one she'd use on
drunken, happy nights.

I'd stuff it all in a bag, and write a dumb joke on the
outside of it. Like she was my kid or something.

And then when she got out of the hospital, she'd drop the
bag on my front stoop. It'd be empty aside from this
toothbrush and a post it note with a really shitty joke.
That's how I'd know she was out and ok.

*A smile spreads through the room.
Windy opens the casket.*

WINDY
How many apples can you grow on a tree?

All of them.

*Windy puts the toothbrush in the casket
and shuts it.*

COOK
I'm sorry... you gave our friend with cancer a ten-year-old
toothbrush to use while she was in the hospital?

The smiles turn to laughter.

COOK

That's just what the hospital wants. They sanitize the fuck out of everything and you bring in a toothbrush that smells like vodka and regret -

WINDY

It's clean!

COOK

What'd she clean it with, bleach? The god damn thing is older than Stella's last girlfriend!

STELLA

That's not true at all

COOK

She probably caught something from the damn toothbrush! Toothbrush killed the cancer but gave her fuckin' dysentery!

JOI

Or, hear me out, it's like a vaccine

JAZZ

How so?

JOI

Maybe the toothbrush had so many viruses and stuff on it, that it actually helped Joe fight off all of those viruses

JAZZ

I don't think cancer is a virus

MARY

I think it's a disease

ALISHA

I don't think any of that holds up

JOI

Neither do my tits, but you love them

MICKEY

Unfair comparison

JOI

How?!

MICKEY

Everyone loves boobs

COOK AND MARY

True

MICKEY

Boobs bring people together

JAZZ

Ehhhhh

MICKEY

I didn't say they were always sexualized. Nobody said that.
I'm just saying everyone likes boobs. Vince likes boobs

VINCE

I do

MICKEY

Joi and Alisha like boobs

ALISHA AND JOI

We do

MICKEY

And you like boobs

JAZZ

Well... I mean... Yeah

MICKEY

I've known Elliot six hours and I know he loves boobs

RYAN AND ELLIOT

True

MICKEY

We know I love boobs

ELLIOT
I didn't know that

MICKEY
Like boobs, *love* dick

ELLIOT
In a purely non-sexual way

MICKEY
Oh no, I love dick in a very, very sexual way

ELLIOT
I meant boobs

MICKEY
Oh, yea. Purely non-sexual

ELLIOT
Man's got a point

WINDY
Joe loved boobs too

MICKEY
Exactly! Guys I'm running for president, this is my
platform

SYD
Joe loved *Stella's* boobs

STELLA AND MARY
True

JAZZ
She'd find you every dress down Friday in middle school to
see what you were wearing

RYAN
Usually something a size too small

STELLA
Look who's talking

RYAN
I still wear a youth large

ELLIOT
And you wear it well

STELLA
True

MARY
Everybody is saying “true” a lot

JAZZ
I’d have homeroom with Joe and she’d stare at you from
across the room

MARY
Who wouldn’t?

JOI
So would I

MICKEY
Guilty

Vince and Cook raise their hands.

ALISHA
I still stalk your social media to see what’s goin on there

STELLA
Awww thanks, I don’t try at all

RYAN
And it’s the most frustrating thing ever

WINDY
Absolutely

RYAN
You know how much I have to pay to have my hair and
makeup and wardrobe done before an extensive shoot?

COOK
No. Why would we know that?

RYAN
I’m just saying you’ve been effortlessly hot since we were
in middle school

VINCE

Maybe don't say she was hot in middle school

Stella unhooks her bra.

VINCE

Just for not getting arrested purposes.

RYAN

You know what I mean, dumbass

COOK

(re: Stella)

What's happening right now?

*Stella pulls her bra out of her shirt,
and walks it over to the casket.
The group smiles.*

STELLA

For my biggest fan.

I love you so, so much.

*Stella opens the casket, puts her bra in, and shuts it.
The group breathes together for a second.
Cook tries to sit at the wobbly table.
Vince blocks him.*

VINCE

If you mess it up, I'll kill you

COOK

I'm just gonna test it out

VINCE

You don't need to test it out

COOK

How you gonna know if it works?

VINCE

It's a table, it works

COOK

I dunno

VINCE

Will somebody do something please?!

SYD

Not my circus

JOI

Not my elephants

COOK

How're you gonna know if it's level!?

VINCE

Nobody sit at this fuckin' table

JOI

That's the only thing you do with tables, but -

VINCE

I swear to god if this thing wobbles one more time

JAZZ

Can I ask a depressing question?

VINCE

I mean... you started already -

JAZZ

You can say no!

RYAN

Not after you pitch it like that

JAZZ

I'm just saying -

MICKEY

Ask the damn question

WINDY
We're all waiting now

JAZZ
What's...

What's Joe going to miss most? Or like... if you could bring her back and tell or show her one thing, what would it be?

SYD
Fuck, that is depressing

VINCE
Shit

JAZZ
I dunno... when Mickey called and said she died... I had years of my life flash before my eyes. Everything Joe'd been there for.... Everything she'd miss.

Silence.
Everyone thinks.

VINCE
I think at some point I'll get married.

COOK
I fuckin' love weddings -

VINCE
Right?

JAZZ
You don't get to just "be happy" ever

ALISHA
Ours was amazing

SYD
Yessss

RYAN
I don't remember most of it

MICKEY
That's cause you micro-dosed *full* doses of mushrooms

RYAN
Well if you guys would've told me -

MICKEY
You were eating *whole* mushrooms

RYAN
I don't do mushrooms and none of you helped

JOI
Why would we?

STELLA
You had an hour-long conversation with a jacket on a coat rack

RYAN
And honestly, I miss him

ELLIOT
The jacket?

RYAN
The coat rack. Jacket was kind of a dick.

Smiles.

VINCE
One day I'll get married. Not in a church, like my parents. Not surrounded by bloody crucifixes and stained glass and relatives I haven't seen since I was a kid. No "til death do us part" and all that. Just... a commitment to each other.

It'll be in a park or something. Some place simple. I'll have one of you officiate -

COOK

- DIBS -

VINCE

- Nope.

Someone sane will officiate and my wife and I will say I love you and commit to each other, and then we'll all get black out hammered and listen to music and dance and sing and be stupid. Really stupid. The kind of stupid you can only be with family.

And then we'll start our lives together, how we want with the support of the family I've *chosen*. *You guys*. And that night, at the start of my new life, my new family, there'll be a person missing.

Joe won't be there.

Which sucks.

Silence.

STELLA

I'm gonna open up my own spot one day.

I'll hire line cooks that hate the job, but love the art. Cooks that show up to work, hustle their ass off, sweat, bleed, and smile through it. Laugh at my bad jokes. But *really* laugh at them. Because when it's a thousand degrees and we're sweating through our shirts and orders are coming in quicker than we can make them and it feels like the world is closing in on us - we're in it *together*. Because we love it. Because there's no place else we'd rather be. And when I open that spot, I'm gonna invite all you degenerates there for a massive opening night party. I'll shake hands and smile at investors and thank them for their support. But really, the people I'll thank, are you idiots.

For everything you've given me through the years. I'll make you fancy ass food and only charge Cook -

COOK

Alright, this is getting out of hand now -

STELLA

And it'll be great. A moment I've worked for my entire life. And we'll be together again. And yeah, Joe won't be there.

I get it, Vin.

Silence.

JOI

Joe never got to meet Jonathan.

We've been trying to visit but never found the time. He's almost five and Joe never got to meet him. I feel bad -

Alisha puts her hand on Joi.

JOI

It just hurts that we didn't, or couldn't, make time to bring him here. We knew Joe was sick -

ALISHA

We tried, but with Joi's schedule

JOI

It's not just my schedule

ALISHA

I'm not saying that.

It's just that you're committed to your work, and we ran into all the red tape trying to adopt Jonathan, then find a bigger home, settle in as a family, raise our son during his earliest years. We tried to come back, but couldn't find time.

JOI

Maybe we didn't try hard enough.

I wish we would've taken more time to enjoy ourselves in those early years. To see all of you when Johnathan was this little ball of wrinkles, rolls, and laughter.

I think Joe would've loved him. She studied every kind of art and was half good at most of them and... Jonathan really loves musicals and opera and ballet

*Joi takes out a small polaroid from her pocket.
Everyone tries to look.*

JOI

He dances to "Giselle" around our living room constantly

STELLA

What's that?

JOI

A ballet

ALISHA

He has no idea what any of it means

JOI

And he trips over his own feet trying to spin

ALISHA

He's deeply uncoordinated, but the passion is there

JOI

And I think over time, he and Joe would've really got along. He could've had this cool Aunt Joe who loved art and music and dance and all the same stuff he loves. I mean, none of the rest of us were artistically inclined -

COOK

Speak for yourself -

VINCE

Ok piano man

COOK

You don't know my life

VINCE

I know you took four lessons and quit cause it got too hard

COOK

One minute you want me to quit things, the next you're telling me to stick with them, make up your fuckin' mind

STELLA

Well one of the things was heroin and the other was piano

COOK

Tomato potato

JAZZ

That's not at all the saying

JOI

Point is, Joe will always be an "idea" to Jonathan. A legend. He'll hear stories and memories and see photos, but he'll never meet her.

He'll never get to see what an amazing person Joe was first hand. Graceful. Talented. Determined.

ALISHA

Mostly coordinated.

JOI

Yeah.

It just... makes me sad. Knowing Joe didn't get to meet our son and we didn't...

I dunno.

Silence.

Alisha puts her arm around Joi, and kisses her cheek.

*Alisha and Joi look at one another;
an unspoken agreement is made.*

Joi gets up and opens the casket.

JOI

Jonathan's first word was plié. Or he just made a noise and it sounded like the word plié. Either way, you would've loved it.

*Joi tears up and she puts the polaroid in the casket.
Alisha, Syd, and Mary hug her hard.
Silence.*

MARY

I wish we all could've grown old together.

We've buried friends. Lost others to sunshine, tall trees, and pastures. (Whatever the fuck a pasture is.) Some people have faded away and others burned out bright. And it'll keep happening. I know we can't be together forever, but -

Fuck I wish all of us could've been 80 years old together, sitting in front of a building in the neighborhood, drinking tea with a shot of whiskey, smoking weed, and grumbling about young people. Watching each other's kids get older. Complaining about them while reminiscing about how we made the same mistakes when we were their age.

All the things you don't look forward to when you're young. Losing touch, then finding one another again. Tripping over memories and stumbling through stories.

Going through those later years together, as a family.

Not the family we were born with.

But the one we *made*.

Together.

Silence.

*Mary walks over to the casket,
puts a hand on it, and smiles.*

COOK

That would've been nice.

Silence.

RYAN

I wish I could've taken Joe somewhere. Anywhere.

MICKEY

She always wanted to travel.

VINCE

I've always wanted to travel.

JOI

None of us have been anywhere.

ALISHA

Traveling is expensive

JOI

Fuck yeah it is

RYAN

I got to go to the Edinburgh Fringe Festival last year.

COOK

What's that?

MICKEY

It's a massive theater, comedy, and music festival

RYAN

And there's performers from all over the world

ELLIOT

Dancing, plays, stand up comedy

RYAN

One person shows

ELLIOT

All this really insane art

MICKEY

I'd love to go

ELLIOT

It's intense

RYAN

And I can't imagine how fun it would've been to bring Joe. She would've loved it. Even if it wasn't Edinburgh. It could've been London to see Elliot's family or Austin or ItJazz or Spain or wherever. We could've taken her anywhere.

But I never thought to call.

I never thought to do anything.

Now I can't.

Silence.

Elliot takes out his wallet, and pulls coins out.

ELLIOT

£1.80.

The bus fare to Edinburgh from our hotel last summer.

He starts toward the casket, but stops.

ELLIOT

(to Mickey)

If that's ok?

Mickey nods.

The group smiles at Elliot.

He walks the coins over to the casket, opens it, and puts them in.

ELLIOT

(to the casket)

I'm sorry for your trouble.

Silence.

Cook stares at the casket, his eyes fill with tears.

He wipes them.

Everyone notices.

RYAN

Cook.

Cook smiles.

RYAN

I know you've got something good -

COOK

No, no -

JOI

This is your thing!

ALISHA

What've you got?

COOK

I don't have anything

RYAN

How do you not have anything?

COOK

I dunno

SYD

It was your idea!

ALISHA

After all this!?

JOI
He's just waiting to go last

RYAN
Ahhhh

ELLIOT
Save the best for last

VINCE
(re: Elliot's accent)
Everything sounds better out of this fuckin' guy's mouth

COOK
Really, I'm good

JOI
You gotta put something in

COOK
I'm ok

RYAN
Mickey, tell him he's gotta put something.

*Mickey is silent.
Ryan checks her phone.*

We don't have a ton of time left here, you gotta come up
with something soon -

COOK
I'm really ok

VINCE
Fuck that

JOI
Put something from the bar in

ALISHA
You and Joe spent every Friday here for years

COOK
I'm good

VINCE

Come on, man. We finally got the stick out of Mickey's ass.

SYD

And it was deep in there.

ALISHA

It *was* your idea.

Silence.

Cook and Mickey share a look.

RYAN

Mickey, tell him to put something in. He's not gonna do it unless you say he can.

Silence.

Mickey stares through Cook.

STELLA

(to Mickey)

...Did you tell him he can't?

Did you tell Cook he couldn't put something in the casket?

Mickey averts his eyes.

STELLA

(to Mickey)

You did, didn't you?

SYD

Are you fucking kidding me?

Mickey puts his head down.

Mary and Windy do the same.

RYAN

You wouldn't

SYD

Of course he fuckin' did

RYAN

Why would you do that?

ALISHA

Mickey, that's terrible

VINCE

That's just like you, you know?

STELLA

Everything's gotta be your way -

MICKEY

That's not it -

ALISHA

After we did everything you wanted today

SYD

Sat through the whole fucking service and prayers and shit

VINCE

All he wants is to leave something with her

ALISHA

That's all he wants, Mickey

Mickey's getting angry.

JOI

She would want that

JAZZ

He took the casket, which is messed up, but look what it's done for us

RYAN

It's been really great

ALISHA

He should be a part of it too

JOI

It was his idea

VINCE
Come on, Mickey

MICKEY
No

Mickey's blood boils.

WINDY
Mickey, calm down -

MICKEY
Stop

MARY
Breathe

MICKEY
No

COOK
I don't need to

STELLA
Yes, you do

COOK
I don't

MARY
You do

SYD
This was your idea

ALISHA
You loved her

JOI
We all did

RYAN
Cookie -

Cook stands up.

MICKEY
Don't fucking do it

COOK
I'm just getting a drink

MARY
Mickey, breathe

Cook takes a step.

MICKEY
Don't go near it

COOK
I'm not

VINCE
What the fuck, Mickey?

Mickey's blood boils.

MICKEY
Don't go near her.

COOK
I'm not, I'm not

RYAN
What's going on?

ALISHA
What's happening?

COOK
I need some water

MICKEY
Don't fucking move.

*Cook takes a step toward the bar.
Mickey gets up and lunges at him.
Elliot and Windy grab Mickey.*

ELLIOT
Calm down, man -

MICKEY
Get off me.

ELLIOT
You've got to calm down -

Cook is frozen.

COOK
I'm not going near her -

MICKEY
Stay the fuck away -

COOK
I am, I am -

MICKEY
Don't do it -

ALISHA
What's happening right now?

JOI
Mickey, what's wrong?

MICKEY
Don't you go near her -

COOK
I'm not

MARY
Mickey, breathe

RYAN
You have to calm down

JAZZ

Take a second

JOI

What's is going on, man?

RYAN

You have to talk to us -

ALISHA

Please

COOK

Mickey -

MARY

Don't -

RYAN

What's happening?

STELLA

Tell us

SYD

Why can't Cook touch her?

Why can't he go near her, Mickey?

Why can't he -

MICKEY

Because he killed her.

Because he fucking killed her.

Silence.

Mickey's body shakes in anger.

Vince and Elliot try to control him.

Cook's heart shatters.

He collapses on the floor.

*Mary and Windy go to him.
The group takes one another in.
Whatever song is on, crescendos.*

Then -

*Click. Crackle. Blink, blink, blink.
Crack, crack, crack.*

THE ELECTRICITY GOES OUT.

******If the production chooses to have an act break,**
this is where it goes.

The longest silence.

*In darkness, we hear Cook cry. Mary and Windy rub his shoulders.
Mickey paces, with Ryan and Elliot blocking him from Cook.
Stella exits to work on the circuit breaker.
The rest of the group sits, staring at one another in darkness.*

MARY
Mickey...

Don't do this.

Cell phone lights click on as the group talks.

SYD
What do you mean?

*Cook gets up and heads toward the front door.
Syd steps in his way.*

SYD
What the fuck is going on?

*Cook tries to get around her,
but Syd blocks him.*

SYD
What happened, Cook?

COOK

Please, let me go -

SYD

I can't let you go -

MARY

Cook, it'll be ok

SYD

Not until we figure this out -

COOK

No, it won't

RYAN

What're you talking about?

COOK

I need to leave -

SYD

Mickey, I need an explanation here

Mickey tries to compose himself.

JOI

What do you mean he killed her? You have to explain -

MICKEY

He killed her -

MARY

No, he didn't -

VINCE

You can't keep sayin' that man, explain yourself -

COOK

Please, don't -

MICKEY

You did -

WINDY AND MARY

Stop it -

MICKEY

You were there

MARY

So were you

WINDY

What did Joe say, Mickey? Remember what she said -

MICKEY

You know what he did

SYD

Somebody needs to explain what the fuck is happening
right now

*Cook tries to get around Syd,
it doesn't work.*

SYD

Cook, stop

MICKEY

Tell them

COOK

No

MICKEY

Tell them or I will -

COOK

She didn't want them to know -

MARY

Don't do this -

MICKEY

I don't care what she wanted -

WINDY

Don't do it -

MARY
Remember what -

THE ELECTRICITY BLINKS TO LIFE.

With the lights on, the group takes in the news.

Everyone is staring at Cook.

Stella returns.

MICKEY
She overdosed.

She overdosed on sleeping pills, prescription drugs, and alcohol, that he gave her.

She fell asleep in the corner of the bar and died.

Cook killed her.

STELLA
(sotto)
What the hell

VINCE
Oh my god

WINDY
It's not that simple

STELLA
(sotto)
jesus christ

WINDY
You know it's not

MICKEY
Cause it is

JOI
That can't be true

WINDY
Tell them everything

COOK

Don't

WINDY

I'm not gonna let him do this to you -

COOK

Remember what Joe said -

WINDY

Joe's not here, you are -

COOK

And I'm doing what she asked -

WINDY

Mickey, don't do this to him. You know the truth -

MICKEY

When I walked out of here she was alive, and the next day they carried her body out the front door. That's what I know

JOI

Cook, how could you?

RYAN

He couldn't

JOI

That's what Mickey just said

ALISHA

It can't be that simple

COOK

I'm sorry

WINDY

Don't say you're sorry

STELLA

How could you do that, Cook?

RYAN

He wouldn't do that, I know he wouldn't do that

JAZZ
Say something

COOK
I'm sorry

WINDY
Stop saying that

Syd takes a step toward Cook.

WINDY
Syd, there's more to it -

SYD
Then explain

COOK
Please, don't -

WINDY
If I don't explain, they're gonna -

COOK
I don't care what they think

STELLA
Don't talk about us like we're not here

WINDY
I have to tell them, Cook

VINCE
Fuck this -

Vince gets up and takes a step toward Cook.

WINDY
Everybody breathe -

ALISHA
Vince, stop

VINCE
We gotta do something -

ALISHA
 (to Mickey)

How do you know he gave them to her?

MICKEY
 She told me

JOI
 (sotto)
 jesus christ

ALISHA
 Joe told you Cook gave her the pills?

WINDY
 That's not -

MICKEY
 (to Cook)
 You gave her a bunch of shit that killed her. You gave her
 so much shit her heart stopped. If you weren't here, she'd
 still be alive. If you weren't here, we'd all be -

WINDY
 God damn it Mickey -

MICKEY
 Oh now you wanna say something? Now you wanna stop -

WINDY
THAT'S ENOUGH.

Silence.

WINDY
 Syd, give him space.

You have to trust me.

Please.

*Syd steps out of Cook's way and sits down.
 Elliot follows suit.*

WINDY

Cook, Mickey, sit down -

MICKEY

You know what, I'm not -

WINDY

Sit, down.

They do.

Silence.

WINDY

The night Joe died, we were here drinking at the bar.

Cook, Mickey, Joe, and a handful of us from the neighborhood. Everything was fine most of the night. Cook pissed off Mickey. Mickey punched him on the shoulder. Joe stoked the flames. Same old bullshit.

Then, around midnight, the alcohol started to hit Cook -

MICKEY

Piece of shit -

RYAN

Stop -

MICKEY

You have no idea what he -

RYAN

Let her speak.

Silence.

WINDY

The alcohol hit Cook, and he started rambling about some secret Joe had. Something she didn't want us to know. He begged and pleaded with her to tell us.

So she did.

She'd been in remission a year when she started to feel sick again. Started to feel... however cancer makes you feel.

She went to the doctor a couple months ago to make sure she was ok

and she wasn't...

It was back again.

This time, she wasn't gonna make it.

They gave her two months. She spent the first month going to chemo, taking pills, and all that stuff they had her do the first two times. But it didn't take. And she didn't tell anyone

MICKEY
except *him*.

*Silence, a few cell lights point to Cook.
His head is in his hands.*

WINDY
That week had been really bad so she met with the doctors again... and they told her it'd gotten worse. It was spreading faster than they thought. They gave her less than a month and told her to get her "affairs in order."

They told her to get her "affairs in order."

So... she had asked Cook -

She can't get the words out.

WINDY
She asked him to -

Silence.

MICKEY
She asked him to kill her.

Silence.

WINDY

She asked him to get her pills that would -

MICKEY

She asked Cook to kill her with sleeping pills and whatever other bullshit he could get her from his drug dealer. She wasn't in her right mind and asked the only person stupid enough to help her kill herself.

And he did.

Silence.

COOK

I'm sorry

MICKEY

Don't you dare -

JOI

How long were you gonna hide this from us?

WINDY

She asked us not to tell anyone.

MICKEY

Because she wasn't in her right mind

WINDY

That's bullshit and you know it

ALISHA

But she told you Cook gave her the pills?

MICKEY

Yes.

JOI

What difference does that make?

ALISHA
Gimme a second

Joi holds Alisha's hand.

ALISHA
Mickey, Cook gave her the pills, and you watched her take them?

MICKEY
No.

ALISHA
Then, I'm confused.

MICKEY
She told me what she planned to do

ALISHA
She told you that night she was gonna take them, but you didn't see her do it?

MICKEY
Yes.

JOI
But you saw her die?

MICKEY
No.

RYAN
If it all happened in one night, and you were there, why did she hide it from you and not them? What are you saying?

ELLIOT
You guys were close, why would she -

MICKEY
Stay out of it -

ELLIOT
You're accusing him of serious shit here. People go to prison for this shit. You're not telling us something, and you need to

MICKEY

We don't even fuckin know you, it's not your place to -

RYAN

But it's mine. Where were you when she took the pills Mickey? Where were you when she died?

MICKEY

I know Cook gave her the pills, I know she took them, and I know -

RYAN

But where were you during the rest of the night? If you didn't see how it ended, how do you know what -

MICKEY

Because I know what I did see and -

WINDY

He walked out on her.

MICKEY

Don't say that.

WINDY

You did, you walked out on her when she needed you.

MICKEY

No, *I didn't.*

MARY

It's the truth.

MICKEY

Don't fucking say that.

MARY

It is, Mickey

WINDY

Joe took the pills in the bathroom and then asked us to stay with her until she fell asleep. She wanted us there when she died.

Mickey refused to believe she took them, screamed at her about how suicide was a sin and she was going to hell, and then fucking left her.

We held her until she died. And he wasn't there.

MICKEY

I told you all how I felt, I told *her* how I felt, and none of you listened.

WINDY

Listening and obeying are two different things, she wanted to go, you demanded she stay, she did what was best for her.

MICKEY

Bullshit.

SYD

(sotto)

What the fuck.

MICKEY

I told her it was wrong, and she didn't care.

WINDY

You told her she was going to hell.

MICKEY

I told her the truth.

WINDY

Your truth.

MICKEY

I begged her not to do it -

WINDY

What the fuck does that matter, Mickey?

MICKEY

I begged her on everything I believe in not to do it. I told her it was wrong, I told her to fight -

WINDY

She'd been fighting for years -

MICKEY

What's a month more, a week more, a day more -

WINDY

A lifetime. That is a lifetime for someone staring into the abyss.

MICKEY

We could've been there for her, I could've been there for her. With more time -

WINDY

She had no control.

MICKEY

So *take* control.

WINDY

SHE DID.

That's what she was doing.

Silence.

WINDY

(to everyone)

We knew Joe since we were kids. And you all *know*, that once she made this decision, it was gonna happen. Nothing we said was gonna make a difference.

It was gonna happen.

I promise you, she was gonna do it no matter what.

*It's true.
They sit with it.*

RYAN
Ok. Ok.

MICKEY
Ok?

RYAN
Give us a second to process this.

*Silence.
People take sips of their drink.
Vince gazes at the table leg.*

STELLA
You really think she was gonna do it, no matter what?

WINDY
Yeah.

Mickey reads people's faces.

MICKEY
You all can't agree with this -

VINCE
I don't think there's anything for us to agree or disagree
with.

It's not about you. Or Cook. Or Windy. It's not about any of
you. It's not about us. It's about Joe. It's about what *she*
wanted, right? What *she* needed.

SYD
 (to Cook)
 What did she tell you?

He thinks, and composes himself.

COOK
 She said she was gonna die. She could feel it.

She researched... fuck, what's it called um... "right to die"
 states or whatever.

JAZZ
 "State sanctioned suicide."

COOK
 Yeah, that. Places that let you peacefully die, by choice,
 you know? But all those places are in other countries, and
 she didn't have the time or money to do it. And she didn't
 wanna tell anybody what was happening. So she asked
 me to help her do it here.

She told me she was gonna kill herself whether I
 helped or not. And she wasn't lying, I swear she wasn't
 lying. I could see it in her eyes.

She was calm, collected. She'd thought about it.

If I didn't help, I dunno what she would've done. It
 could've been violent. It could've hurt her. But it didn't. I
 made sure of that.

She just fell asleep and didn't wake up.

And I -

I don't know if it was the right thing to do,

but I have to live with that.

Not you.

Me.

Silence.

STELLA
You promise?

COOK
?

STELLA
That's what she told you... that's the truth? All of it?

COOK
Yeah.

MICKEY
Bullshit -

COOK
I promise. Mickey, I promise I'm telling the truth.

MICKEY
And why the fuck would I believe you -

COOK
Don't believe me. Believe her. She told you what was happening. She told you everything. But you won't let yourself believe it.

Just because it hurts, doesn't mean it's not true.

Silence.

VINCE
She had less than a month left?

COOK

Yeah.

Everyone sits with it.

They sit with their past, present, and future.

What they know about each other, about the family they've built.

About loss, pain, grief.

About trust, and faith in each other.

About everything.

Syd and Cook lock eyes.

For just long enough.

SYD

Then we've got nothing to talk about.

Mickey's in disbelief.

MICKEY

What?

SYD

She's gone.

STELLA

She made a decision that she thought was best for her.

JAZZ

It's over -

MICKEY

No, it's not

JAZZ

There's nothing we can do

JOI

It was her choice

MICKEY

That she made while sick and depressed and -

ALISHA

But *she* made it

JAZZ

And us being angry isn't gonna change that

STELLA

As much as I wish it could

ALISHA

She had cancer twice. Went through chemo, gained and lost weight

RYAN

Gained and lost hair

ALISHA

But in the end, went out on her own terms.

MICKEY

"Went out on her own terms?"

ALISHA

Yeah

MICKEY

Don't romanticize suicide.

ALISHA

I'm not. *She did.*

And if she's the one looking it square in the face, she gets to decide.

MICKEY

And I'm supposed to move on from that

ALISHA

No one said that.

MICKEY

You all seem pretty quick to move on -

RYAN

Nobody's moving on

MICKEY

It sure fuckin' sounds like it

RYAN

We're never gonna move on from this, Mickey. Truth is, we might feel different tomorrow morning. I might feel different when they lower the casket and throw dirt on it. But right now... right now I've got

Ryan checks her phone.

A little bit of time left to say goodbye to my friend. A friend whose situation I'll never understand. A friend who I have to choose to be angry at, or forgive.

MICKEY

It's not over.

WINDY

Because you won't let it be. Because you won't let yourself move on.

MICKEY

You're all wrong -

WINDY

You're angry

MICKEY

This should've never happened

WINDY

No, it shouldn't

MICKEY

So why the fuck are you saying -

ELLIOT
(to Mickey)
 You're mad you left her.

Mickey turns to Elliot.

ELLIOT
 You're mad you walked out.

Mickey starts to crack.

MICKEY
 Stop pretending like you're a part of this. Stop pretending you have any idea -

ELLIOT
 You're not mad at Cook. Or Windy. You're not even mad at your cousin Joe. You're mad you left when she needed you.

MICKEY
 What the fuck do you know about it?

ELLIOT
 My brother was driving drunk last year and rolled his car. He hit a tree going 89. My parents called and begged me to fly in and see him that night, but I didn't. I was so angry at him... I couldn't stand the thought of looking at him. Being in a room with him.

Mickey focuses on Elliot.

ELLIOT
 He lived through that night, but he was in bad shape. My parents begged me to fly out the following week to see him in the hospital.

I booked a ticket, packed a bag, went to the airport - and sat at the gate for eight hours. I couldn't get on the plane.

I couldn't shake how angry I was. How much I hated him for what he did. I watched planes take off and leave for eight hours, and never got on one.

He died three days later.

I've never felt bad about not flying out to see him the night of the wreck. He was speeding and driving drunk. He could've killed someone. And I was furious. But the second time, my second chance to see him, *my last chance to see him...* that one haunts me.

I should've gotten on a plane. I should've flown to him, hugged him, and told him I loved him. I should've forgave him. Not just for him, but for me. So I wouldn't harbor this pain forever. This anger. We both deserved that. But now, I'll never get that chance.

Anger is poison. It'll take the most important moments of your life away from you if you let it.

I don't know you well.

But I know that much.

*Mickey stares at Elliot.
The cracks within him spread.
He almost breaks.*

SYD
He's right..

MARY
You won't get another chance, Mickey.

ALISHA
You have to take this one.

MICKEY
It's not fair.

WINDY

It's not fair she got cancer. It's not fair it was terminal. It's not fair she had to make that choice. *None of it is fair.* It shouldn't have happened.

But it did.

We can't change that now.

Silence.

Mickey takes a deep breath.

Joi and Alisha walk over and hold Mickey.

A couple other people join them.

JOI

I can't imagine what it was like for you. I can't imagine trying to sift through what you believe, what you think, and what you're feeling. We'll never understand.

But we're here for you.

MICKEY

I don't know how to feel. My brain is a knot. Everything tied together and lit on fire.

I was twelve years old the first time we got to Leviticus in Sunday school.

Leviticus 18:22, "You shall not lie with a man as with a woman; it is an abomination".

Leviticus 20:13, "If a man lies with a man as with a woman, both of them have committed an abomination; they shall be put to death, their blood is upon them."

"They shall be put to death. Their blood is upon them."

I was twelve years old.

But I believed. I believed with every part of me the God who created Heaven and Earth and dogs and food and sunshine and all the things I loved could never hate me. Could never hate me because of who I am. And I worked, every fucking day, to come to grips with the fact that my God loves me the way he made me. I didn't *choose* who I am, I just *am*.

And I've worked hard to build a relationship with God that reflects my beliefs. And I know I won't be judged on based who I am, but what I do. The *choices* I make.

And this, was a *choice*.

WINDY

It was. It was *her* choice.

MICKEY

But I can't believe that. I can't believe it was a choice, because if it was a choice, it was an unforgivable sin, and if it was an unforgivable sin she's then...

But it was. It was her choice. But *fuck* that because she was the best person I ever knew and there's no way she's -

I've done this already. I've felt this confusion and anger and betrayal and sadness and it almost killed me. I don't know if I can do it again.

WINDY

But you got through it.

MICKEY

I got through it because my cousin my best friend my sister got me through it. Because whenever it got too hard I leaned on her and she held my hand and told me, "Chin up, you'll be ok." And this time, I can't do that. I can't do that because she's gone, and she chose to leave.

And you know what the worst part is?

She helped me find a way to believe in my faith and in myself. A way to be unwavering in my beliefs. And the second those beliefs didn't align with hers, I left.

I left her.

Because of what I believe.

What does that make me?

What kind of person does that make me?

During the service today I felt sick. The whole day. I prayed and sang and worshipped as hard as I could - and it made me feel amazing. It made me feel *whole*.

And realizing that made me sick to my stomach.

Looking at all of you gathered around the casket together laughing, smiling, and remembering her while I sat alone in the back of the church. I couldn't look at her or touch her or say goodbye. My heart wouldn't let me.

I just sat there alone. Just like I left her. Just like I deserved to be.

I'm lost.

I don't know what's right.

Silence.

*Syd goes to the crucifix on the wall, and pulls it down.
Maybe there's still a dart in it, maybe not.*

SYD

What was the prayer, the one from the card thing?

MICKEY

Why?

SYD

You're not alone. And I'm sorry we let you feel that way -

MICKEY

It's not your fault -

SYD

Nothing is black and white. You're gonna struggle with this the rest of your life. And we'll never fully understand what you're going through. But we're here for you. We're here to help you get through this however you need to.

Starting with this.

We're right beside you now.

Say the prayer.

Syd brings the crucifix to the casket, and opens it.

SYD

Everybody else got to do what they wanted, this is what I want. So don't be a pain in the ass.

Mickey smiles.

MICKEY

It's got dart holes in it.

SYD

He had holes in him when he died, it's more realistic.

Mickey half smiles.

SYD

Just say the damn prayer.

*Slowly, the group bows their heads
(or whatever they think they're supposed to do).
Vince grabs Mickey's hand (like in church).*

VINCE
Gotta make it real.

Mickey smiles, bows his head, and begins.

MICKEY
The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not want.

He maketh me to lie down in green pastures: he leadeth me
beside the still waters.

He restoreth my soul: he leadeth me in the paths of
righteousness for his name's sake.

Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of
death, I will fear no evil: for thou art with me; thy rod and
thy staff they comfort me.

Thou preparest a table before me in the presence of mine
enemies: thou anointest my head with oil; my cup runneth
over.

Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of
my life: and I will dwell in the house of the Lord

forever.

The group raises their heads.

SYD
Té amo, Joe.

Syd puts the crucifix in the casket, and shuts it.

SYD
Thanks, Mick.

MICKEY

Thank you.

Syd hugs Mickey.

Drinks are refilled.

Seats are taken.

Alisha checks the time on her phone.

ALISHA

Almost out of time. Who still has to put something in?

They look around and try and figure out who's left.

ELLIOT

I'm down £1.80, so

ALISHA

I'm missing a shoe

JOI

I forgot what my son looks like

MICKEY

Ryan?

Ryan smiles.

VINCE

Is it a selfie? Is it a selfie of you with the casket?

RYAN

You're a dick

VINCE

You haven't said no

STELLA

Is it a green juice?

JOI

Is it a selfie, of a green juice, on top of the casket, giving Joe a high five?

ALISHA

Is that possible?

RYAN
Open the casket.

???

RYAN
Cook, go open the casket.

Cook does.

RYAN
Reach behind her right shoulder.

COOK
This feels like a trap

RYAN
Just do it.

*We see Cook digging behind Joe's body.
He looks down, and smiles.*

COOK
God damn it.

*Slowly, Cook pulls out a stained scarf.
Small smiles and laughs spread.*

MICKEY
What the fuck?

JOI
Is that the birthday puke scarf!?

MICKEY
When did you do that?

RYAN
At the funeral home.

MICKEY
Where the fuck was I?

RYAN
Pay better attention.

MICKEY
Are you kidding me?!

THE ELECTRICITY FLICKERS.

ELLIOT
She's not.

MICKEY
And you knew!?

RYAN
He was very invested in me doing it.

MICKEY
I feel so betrayed.

COOK
Son of a bitch.

JAZZ
You beat us all to it.

STELLA
Very impressive, quinoa salad

RYAN
I wasn't gonna let her get buried without a little piece of us,
all of us, with her.

It was the right thing to do.

A moment.
Ryan walks over to the casket.

RYAN
I love you, Joe. Goodbye.

Ryan walks over to Mickey and hugs him.

MICKEY
Thank you.

VINCE

I need a drink.

STELLA

We all need a drink.

RYAN

We've literally been drinking all night.

SYD

I know you didn't emphasize the word "literally" but-

ELLIOT

It sounds like it, right?

RYAN

What the fuck?!

ELLIOT

It does! Even when you don't want it to.

STELLA

L.A. Ryan has "literally" been drinking all night.

JAZZ

"Literally"

RYAN

The worst fucking people.

The group gathers around the bar.

Windy pours drinks.

But Cook doesn't move.

He's in is own head.

Mary goes to him.

Mary and Cook have AN ASIDE.

MARY

You look like shit.

COOK
I feel like shit.

I can't shake the feeling that I dunno.

When does it end? When does it stop hurting? When do I stop crying at night or missing people or feeling incomplete? When does any of it end?

MARY
 It doesn't.

You live. You laugh. You love. And then you leave and keep going.

It never ends. That pain never goes away. That grief never stops. Sometimes loss is permanent. And the more painful the memory, the more vivid it is, the longer it lasts.

Despair will drag you crying and exhausted into the earth if you let it. But *only* if you let it.

Living is an act of rebellion, Cookie.

So you live.

And that's enough.

COOK
 You're so smart.

They smile.

COOK

How do *you* feel?

MARY

How do I feel?

COOK

Yeah. You're part of this too. We all are.

MARY

I feel... warm.

COOK

Warm?

MARY

Like when you wake up in the middle of winter with the covers off you, and you pull them back on. That nearly instant feeling of being warm.

COOK

Why me?

MARY

You're the heart, Cook. You've always been the heart.

It had to be you.

Because no one else could handle it.

COOK
And what if I can't?

MARY
Look around...

*Mary and Cook look to the group at the bar,
laughing and smiling in their (silent) conversation.*

MARY
You already have.

*Mary puts a hand on Cook's shoulder.
He smiles.*

MARY
So...?

Mary walks over to the casket.

MARY
I think it's your turn.

COOK
After tonight, it's over, isn't it?

MARY
Yeah. But what a way to end it.

Cook smiles.
THE ASIDE ENDS as -
Cook gets up, and slowly makes his way to the piano.

*He sits, and adjusts his hands.
 The group at the bar doesn't notice
 until he hits the first key.
 A head turns.
 Another key.
 Another head.*

*Then, Cook starts in on something.
 Maybe, "The Times They Are A-Changin'" by Bob Dylan
 or, "Tiny Dancer" by Elton John
 or, "La Vie En Rose" by (anyone)
 or something else poignant, moving, and piano-heavy.
 (Stevie Wonder, Billy Joel, Elton John, you get it)
 Cook is very, very good.*

*The group watches him in silence for a while.
 Mary smiles, then begins to sing.
 Someone else joins her.
 Then someone else.
 Maybe everyone sings, maybe just a few people.
 Doesn't matter if they're good or bad.
 All that matters is they sing together.
 Through slowly building, joyful tears.
 In this singular moment in time, together.*

*When they finish the song, Cook stands.
 He looks over to Mickey, who nods, giving him permission.
 He walks over to the casket,
 puts a hand on it, and bows his head.*

COOK
 Goodbye.

I love you, Mary Joe.

*Then, he turns and looks at Mickey.
 Mickey's eyes slowly fill with tears.
 The group looks to him.*

MICKEY

I'm not ready -

COOK

And you never will be.

*One by one, the group walks over to Mickey.
They each put a hand on him.
He stares across the bar to the casket.*

MICKEY

Once I do...

I don't -

I don't know how to

COOK

I see her too.

Cook locks eyes with Mickey.

COOK

I see her too, Mickey.

You know I do.

*Cook looks over to Mary, still standing next to the casket.
Mickey does the same.
No one else looks.*

COOK

She's been here all night. She's been here every minute, of every day, since the moment she died. With both of us. Waiting for us to let her go.

You've been talking to her.

But you're not saying what you have to say.

You have to let her go. You have to forgive yourself.

You have to move on.

Mary smiles at Mickey.

His heart shatters.

*She crosses from the casket to the other side of the bar,
face to face with Mickey.*

Silence.

Then -

MICKEY

Mary Joe.

MARY

Cousin.

Silence. For a while.

Mickey smiles through tears.

VINCE

(Quietly)

What the fuck is going on?

WINDY

(Quietly)

I have no idea.

ALISHA

(Quietly)

I think we broke him.

STELLA

(Quietly)

Why are we whispering and encouraging this?

MICKEY

(to the group)

Can I have a minute?

If that's ok...

COOK
Of course.

Cook smiles.

COOK
Who wants to smoke a blunt?

VINCE
I'm very confused.

COOK
I'll explain another time.

VINCE
So we're just gonna leave him here talking to himself?
That's great. Fantastic.

Everyone but Mickey and Mary Joe heads to the front door.

JAZZ
I thought you didn't smoke?

COOK
I don't. I'm gonna get second hand high.

ALISHA
A contact high.

COOK
No, second hand high. Like you're all gonna smoke and
I'm gonna get high.

JOI
Yes. That's called a contact high.

*They're gone.
Mickey is alone with Mary Joe.*

There is no aside, because they're the only ones in the room.

MARY JOE

When my mom died, I was lost.

I was lost and angry. An exposed nerve.

MICKEY

You were a kid.

MARY JOE

So were you.

The morning of her wake, my dad was crying so hard he couldn't tie his tie. And I was standing in the doorway of his room holding my dress.

MICKEY

The same olive green dress you wore to every neighborhood event. It barely fit you. Your legs were too long and your torso was too short. But it was your favorite.

MARY JOE

And then I felt a hand, *your hand*, on my shoulder. You gently moved me aside and walked in his room. He collapsed on your small shoulders and cried.

Then, you straightened him up, pushed his shoulders back, put one hand under his head and said,

MARY JOE AND MICKEY

"Chin up, you'll be ok."

MARY JOE

You tied his tie for him, and walked me to your room. You stuffed me in my almost too short dress, told me that "leggings were back in," loaned me a pair of yours -

MICKEY

I did not own leggings -

MARY JOE

You loaned me your *hot pink, furry leggings*, and let me wear my winter combat boots to the wake. You took care of me. While my dad was healing himself and for years after, you took care of me.

MICKEY

But I couldn't. I couldn't take care of you. I couldn't do enough.

MARY JOE

You did.

MICKEY

And you're still gone.

MARY JOE

And you will be too one day. I promise. No matter how hard you try to live forever, you'll fail. You'll die and be buried. But you'll be remembered.

Remembered by people who love you.

Because letting each other go doesn't mean forgetting. It doesn't mean forever. It means for now.

MICKEY

I should've stayed with you. I should've tried harder to understand. *I'm sorry Mary Joe, I'm so -*

*Mary Joe ambushes Mickey with a hug.
They give each other their weight.*

MICKEY

This is the last time I'm gonna see you, isn't it?

MARY JOE

For now.

*Silence.
Cook cracks the front door open and leans his head in.*

MICKEY

(to Cook)

Come on.

Cook enters.

COOK
Mickey, I never meant to -

Mickey pulls him into their hug.

It lasts a bit.

Then Mary Joe breaks the hug, and looks at Mickey.

MARY JOE
You ready?

Mary looks across the bar to the casket.

Cook does the same.

*Mickey feels a thousand-pound weight land
smack in his stomach.*

MICKEY
I'll never be ready.

Cook gets under one of Mickey's arms.

Mary Joe gets under the other.

And they walk him across the bar to the casket.

When they arrive, Cook opens it.

The three of them look inside.

*Cook reaches next to the casket, gets a napkin and a pen from the
bar top, and hands both to Mickey.*

Mickey looks at Mary Joe.

*He smiles through a destroyed heart and knotted mind,
then scribbles something on the napkin.*

*He folds it neatly,
and puts it in the casket.*

Mickey looks at Mary Joe.

MICKEY
I love you.

So much.

Goodbye, Mary Joe.

They stare.

Silence.

Then -

Click. Crackle. Blink, blink, blink.

Crack, crack, crack.

THE ELECTRICITY GOES OUT.

The rest of the group piles in through the front door.

Cell phone lights click on and point through the room.

Stella rushes to the back office to fix the breaker.

THE ELECTRICITY BLINKS TO LIFE.

Mary Joe is gone.

*Cook and Mickey hang on one another's shoulders
looking down on the casket.*

Stella enters from the office.

STELLA
I'm getting good at that.

WINDY
You good, Mick?

Mickey smiles.

MICKEY
Yeah, I will be.

The group crowds around him.

They all look down at the casket, together.

Mickey puts both hands on the lid of the casket and closes it.

The matchbook falls out again.

VINCE

Fuck me.

Vince tries to place the matchbook under the leg.

ALISHA

(to Mickey)

Hey Mick, is it cool if me and Joi stay with you for a few days? We figured maybe we stay through the middle of the week, but we'd love to not pay for a hotel room if that's ok. Plus we can get drunk and watch 80's rom coms.

MICKEY

Sold.

ELLIOT

We're gonna stay too, but we've booked a hotel room already.

RYAN

I love a high thread count.

ELLIOT

And also she'll take over your bathroom.

RYAN

You're just as bad!

ELLIOT
I have like three bottles -

RYAN
You have an entire face routine

STELLA
Yeah, he does

SYD
And it worksssss

RYAN
Alright, I asked for that.

ELLIOT
We might try and see a play if there's anything up right now

JOI
Oh really?

RYAN
Yeah. Might be nice to get back in a theater. Just to... I dunno.

To see how I feel.

Smiles.

JAZZ
I'm leaving tomorrow morning. If I'm gonna pass next week I gotta buckle down, get some rest, and study.

But if I can't, I'll call.

Smiles.

STELLA

I got nothin. I'm... I'm pretty much where I was an hour ago. Except that -

EVERYONE

You took off your bra

MICKEY

We know.

Vince gives up.

VINCE

Fuck this.

*He pulls the matchbook out from under the leg,
walks it over to the casket,
opens it, and tosses it in.*

STELLA

What're you doing?

VINCE

Not everything needs to be fixed.

Silence.

*Smiles spread through the room.
Windy pulls out her phone.*

RYAN

Is that it? Is that everyone?

JAZZ

I think so -

WINDY

We should get the fuck out of here.

Mickey checks his phone.

ALISHA

What do you mean?

MICKEY

Shit, *shit*

WINDY

We need to go, now -

RYAN

What time is it?

WINDY

Late

ELLIOT

How late?

WINDY

Go to jail for stealing a casket late

JOI

That could be literally any time of day

Others check their phones.

JOI

Fuck someone's going to jail

SYD

Me, Jazz, and Stella will go ahead and stall them

They start out.

STELLA

How're we gonna stall a funeral home cleaning crew?

SYD

I dunno! We'll throw a rock or something

STELLA

What's that gonna do?

SYD

When you hit things with a rock, stuff happens

JAZZ

How often are you throwing rocks at things?

SYD

There's tons of things to throw rocks at -

STELLA

Like what?

SYD

Trains, cars, train cars. Cats that have bad attitudes. People who use the word “literally” figuratively.

Jazz, Syd, and Stella exit.

MICKEY

We gotta get it back on the rollers

The rest of the group gathers around the casket.

ALISHA

Here we go again.

MICKEY

Lift on three. One, two, three -

They lift the casket up and put it on the rollers.

ALISHA

I'll go to the front and watch for potholes

JOI

And I'll also do that because she can't see at night

ALISHA

Yes I can

JOI

No you can't

ALISHA

I have a stigmatism

JOI

You say the streetlights “glow”

ALISHA

Cause they do, they're streetlights!

Alisha and Joi line up at the front of the casket.

RYAN
We'll take the middle.

*Ryan and Elliot line up in the middle.
Vince and Windy line up behind them.
Mickey looks to Cook.*

MICKEY
How about it?

*Mickey and Cook line up at the back.
They push the casket toward the front door.*

COOK
I'll steer.

MICKEY
No, you won't

COOK
I steer just fine!

WINDY
No, no you don't

They get through the front door.

COOK
You have to use your environment

WINDY
That's just hitting things!

They turn up the street.

As they push the casket out of sight -

SYD
Oh shit!

Mickey, ok, so when we were in Sunday school -

MICKEY
Windy shit on the bible and got banned from the church

WINDY
IT WAS ONE FUCKING TIME!

*The casket is gone.
Silence in the space.
For a while.
Then - Click.
Blink, blink.
Crack, crack, crack.*

THE ELECTRICITY GOES OUT.

*In the darkness, we hear the city alive.
A bus drives by. A mother yells at her kids to come inside.
Cars splash through pothole puddles. A driver yells "God damn
it!" as his axel hits the pavement. Light jazz pours out of a window
above. A group of drunk twenty somethings pass.*

A casket is rolled down the street.

It rattles over asphalt and memories.

It hits a pothole.

END OF PLAY.