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SF PERUSALS

Collapse

Allison Moore

WORKING DRAFT / NOT A FINAL VERSION

SAMUEL FRENCH
FOUNDED 1830

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Collapse

By Allison Moore

Characters

Hannah, mid-to late 30s. An attorney. A people pleaser, and a little high strung. Trying valiantly to maintain a positive attitude about everything.

David, late 30s, Hannah's husband. Trying (sometimes successfully) to hide his crippling panic attacks.

Susan, mid-to-late 30s, Hannah's sister. A renegade. After living in LA for many years, she has suddenly returned to Minneapolis.

Ted, about 50. A gentleman-scholar type. Originally from Georgia. Speaks with a slight drawl.

Time
Spring 2009. The middle of the economic collapse.

Place
Minneapolis.

Note
This play was written for a diverse cast.

SCENE ONE

Evening. The condo. DAVID and HANNAH. DAVID wears sweats and a rumpled t-shirt. HANNAH wears a nice blouse and no pants. She braces herself against the back of the sofa, speaking with forced cheer. David stands behind her, eyeing her ass with a look of nausea.

HANNAH
Okay, I know you've always said you're not really interested in anything like this-

DAVID
(covering a wave of nausea)
Uh-huh-

HANNAH
It's a little outside your comfort zone. But, it's just, the past couple of weeks have been pretty, challenging. So I thought, maybe it's time to try something different, you know?

DAVID
Yeah-

HANNAH
And the next meeting is tonight! I mean, what are the chances of that?

HANNAH looks back at DAVID and stops short when she realizes he's having major anxiety. She quickly moves to reassure him.

HANNAH
Oh, God. Are you okay?

DAVID
I'm fine.

HANNAH
If you're worried about the shot, honey, it's not gonna hurt. I promise.

DAVID
Just give me a second.

HANNAH
Lots of deep breaths.

DAVID
I know.

HANNAH
It really doesn't hurt at all.

DAVID
Because I haven't done it yet.

HANNAH
I'm just saying, I've talked to people. Or, I've read about it in the forums online. And everyone says it's nothing, it's just a little pinch. So just mark the spot like they showed you, give yourself a target and-

DAVID
Could you be quiet for a second, please?

DAVID takes a deep breath. Better, until:

HANNAH
Do you want to watch the video?

DAVID
No.

HANNAH
It might make you more comfortable?

DAVID
I'm sticking a gigantic needle in your ass, Hannah. I think it's normal to be a little freaked out.

HANNAH
You're right, sweetie, of course you're right. But we just do the shot this *one time*, and everything works the way it's supposed to, and then we *never have to do it again*.

A real moment of connection. They can do this.

DAVID
Okay.

HANNAH
Okay?

DAVID
Yeah.

SHE turns around, HE starts to prep.

HANNAH
It's all gonna work. I mean, you were there, Dr. Greenwood said there's no reason it shouldn't work.
(HE marks an "x" on her butt with a marker.)
Physically everything is fine, so with a little extra help-.
(HE swabs her butt down with an alcohol wipe.)
And we're both doing what we can to minimize stress, right?
(HE preps the needle. It's big. Lots of deep breaths.)
The meeting tonight sounds perfect. I really think it'll be nice for you to go, just to talk about things, and learn some strategies to deal with, stress, like Dr. Greenwood said. That's the key, for both of us, to just relax, and-
(HE sticks her with the needle, wildly off the mark. It hurts like hell.)
Aaaahhh!!

DAVID
Shit!

HANNAH
Keep going!

DAVID
It's in the wrong spot!

HANNAH
Just push it all the way in!

DAVID
Oh God-

HANNAH
(smiling through her pain)
You're doing great, sweetie! You're doing really great!

HE manages to finish the shot, Hannah stifling her screams. As he pulls the needle out:

HANNAH
Oh thank God.

HANNAH collapses on the sofa as David staggers backwards, a parody of post-coital exhaustion.

HANNAH
See, what'd I tell you? Nothing to it.

DAVID takes a long swig of beer, winces in pain.

HANNAH (con't)
You okay?

DAVID
I'm fine.

HANNAH
(of the beer)
If your stomach is bothering you, maybe you shouldn't-

DAVID
I said I'm fine.

HANNAH
Okay.
(then)
I know that wasn't easy for you. But now it's done, right? We'll just go to the clinic tomorrow, and, "do the deal", and. I really think it's gonna work.

DAVID
(covering his pain)
Uh-huh.

HANNAH
I think it will, I just have a really good feeling about it, don't you?

DAVID
Look, Hannah. I know how much you want this, and how important it is to you.

HANNAH
It's important to both of us, isn't it?

DAVID
It is, it is important --

HANNAH
I mean, after Christmas, you said you felt ready, that you wanted to try again –

DAVID
I know –

HANNAH
I wouldn't have made all the appointments and taken the hormones and done all these shots if you hadn't said-

DAVID
I'm not saying I don't want this!

HANNAH
Okay. Okay.

DAVID
I'm just saying… I mean, maybe this isn't…. um…
(A painfully long expectation.)
All we can do is go to the clinic and hope for the best.

HANNAH touches DAVID, understanding how nervous he is about disappointing her.

HANNAH
I know. I know that, David.
(but then she can't help herself)
I just really think it's gonna work.

HANNAH clears away the fertility stuff as DAVID drinks more beer, winces, then pours some into a dead plant while HANNAH isn't looking.

HANNAH (con't)
I mean, we've done everything right. So, when we get to the clinic tomorrow—oh, I think I forgot to tell you: so, your appointment's at nine -

DAVID
I know.

HANNAH
I won't be there right away, I have a deposition that I really can't reschedule. But the nurse said they need ninety minutes to process your, um, sample, anyway. And the deposition will be quick. So I'll meet you at the clinic at 10:30 for the big event -

DAVID
You already told me.

HANNAH
I know, I just think I forgot to mention—Dr. Greenwood has moved offices since the last time you were there? She's on the sixteenth floor now.

A beat.

DAVID
Okay.

HANNAH
I just wanted to let you know so it wasn't a surprise.

DAVID
Great. She's on the sixteenth floor.

HANNAH
Yes.

DAVID
So I'll just go to the sixteenth floor.

HANNAH
Okay.

DAVID exits calmly to the bathroom

HANNAH (con't)
Sweetie? You okay?
(No response.)
David?

SOUND of puking off stage.

HANNAH (con't)
Jesus.

SOUND of the doorbell. HANNAH pulls her pants on.

HANNAH (con't)
Sweetie, do you need anything? Can I get you anything?

More puking. The doorbell rings again.

HANNAH (con't)
Okay, I'm just gonna see who this is.

HANNAH pulls on her pants as she answers the door. SUSAN stands there with a large suitcase, and a small duffle bag.

HANNAH (con't)
Susan?

HANNAH and SUSAN embrace.

HANNAH
Oh my God, Susan! I had no Idea you were coming!

SUSAN
Hannah, thank God you're home!

SUSAN releases HANNAH, but holds onto her shoulders.

SUSAN
It is so good to see you.

HANNAH
You too.

SUSAN
Really?

HANNAH nods, the sisters share a sincere moment. Then SUSAN pushes HANNAH inside, locking the door behind her.

SUSAN
We gotta get inside.

HANNAH
Come in, come in, I'm just so surprised to see you.

SUSAN
I was afraid I was gonna have to find the building manager and talk my way in.

HANNAH
What's going on? Is everything okay?

SUSAN
It's so good to be back in Minnesota, you have no idea.

SOUND of the toilet flushing.

HANNAH
(calling)
David, sweetie, my sister is here!

SUSAN
Oh God, David's home?

HANNAH
Well, yes, David is home. He lives here.

SUSAN
I know, I was just hoping he'd be out when I came over.

HANNAH
When did you get in?

SUSAN
Just now. I literally just got off the plane—well, off the light rail. The light rail is fantastic, by the way. So clean. And you don't even have to buy a ticket.

HANNAH
What?

SUSAN
For the light rail, I mean. I just got on.

HANNAH
No, you have to buy a ticket.

SUSAN
There was no one checking them.

HANNAH
They, get on at different stops. They come around and check-

SUSAN
Then I would have bought a ticket from them.

HANNAH
They don't sell tickets.

SUSAN
Then I would have just given them the money.

HANNAH
No, if they catch you without a ticket, you get a ticket—I mean a real ticket, like a three hundred dollar ticket

SUSAN
It's a three-dollar fare, Hannah. I'm sure we would have worked something out.

DAVID enters.

HANNAH
David, look, Susan's here. Isn't that a nice surprise?

Beat. DAVID turns and exits.

HANNAH
(to SUSAN)
He's just going to get dressed.

SUSAN
No need to explain.

HANNAH
We weren't expecting anyone, so-

SUSAN
I'm sorry to have "interrupted."

HANNAH
Oh! No, we weren't-

SUSAN
Don't' stop on my account, I am perfectly capable of entertaining myself while you two "finish up."

HANNAH
David's been sick, that's all-

SUSAN
What.

HANNAH
He didn't go to work, that's why he's not really dressed.

SUSAN
What's wrong, what does he have.

HANNAH
Just, headaches?

SUSAN
Thank God. I thought you were gonna say norovirus.

HANNAH
What?

SUSAN
That awful virus that festers on cruise ships? It ripped through our entire organization, *twice*. And when I say ripped through, I mean *ripped through.*

HANNAH
Oh.

SUSAN
And if it were limited to people who were actually on the ship—like our former executive director—that would be one thing. That's what those people deserve for wanting to sail around in a giant Petri dish, polluting the oceans and ravaging native economies. *But then they bring it back ashore.*

DAVID re-enters, still in his sweats.

HANNAH
There you are! You okay?

DAVID
Hi Susan, nice to see you.

SUSAN
Thanks, thank you.

HANNAH
It is, it's so good to see you, Susan.

SUSAN
God, it is so good to see you, too—even you, David. You would not believe what I have been through. I just feel this overwhelming sense of relief being here, it's like: Thank God, I am *home.*

DAVID
Well, our home.

HANNAH
I feel terrible we didn't know you were coming.

DAVID
Your home is in LA.

HANNAH
Did you try to call?

SUSAN
California is fucked. And I mean fucked.

HANNAH
Oh, uh-huh.

SUSAN
I'm talking fucked up the ass kind of fucked—not that there's anything wrong with anal sex. It's a beautiful and loving act, and anyone who says otherwise is a homophobe.

HANNAH
So you came to visit for a couple of days?

SUSAN
We were totally shut down.

Hannah moves to Susan, genuinely concerned.

HANNAH
What?

SUSAN
All our funding was cut.

HANNAH
Oh no, Susan!

SUSAN
Everyone lost their jobs.

DAVID
Of course they did.

HANNAH
That's terrible!

SUSAN
I mean, the budget cuts are beyond draconian. They're affecting essential services. I'm angry about losing my job, but really, my heart breaks, it just *breaks* for all the people we were serving who are now going to have to do without.

DAVID
Didn't you work for a cable access channel?

HANNAH
(warning)
David --

SUSAN
Which provided essential community information and educational programming for hundreds, and even thousands of people sometimes.

HANNAH
Susan, we are so sorry.

SUSAN
I just, I feel so betrayed, and hurt, and angry. I didn't know what else to do. I hope it's all right that I just came.

DAVID glares his own warning at Hannah. She knows there's no good way out of this.

HANNAH
Well, of course it's all right!
(to DAVID)
Isn't it, David? I mean, you're family.
(to SUSAN)
You stay with us for a, *couple of days,* and then-

SUSAN
Harold is taking care of Camille Paglia for me, and he said, "You can't just show up in Minneapolis without any warning." And I said: you don't know my sister.
(then)
God, I have to pee.

SUSAN exits to the bathroom, HANNAH moves toward DAVID.

HANNAH
Okay, obviously I had no idea she was coming –

DAVID
This is not happening.

HANNAH
She's my sister! It's not like she's asking to move in. I'm sure she just needs a couple of days to clear her head and regroup-

DAVID
What am I supposed to do with her here all day long?

HANNAH
(significantly)
You *are* going back to work, aren't you?

An expectation.
SOUND of the toilet flushing.
David knows there's only one acceptable answer.

DAVID
Yeah. Work. Of course.

HANNAH
(softening)
This is temporary. All of this, it's just a couple of bumps. We get though it, and everything goes back to normal, right?

DAVID
Right.

SUSAN re-enters.

DAVID
(with eerie jollity)
Susan, you want something to drink?

SUSAN
Desperately if it involves alcohol.

DAVID
Me too. Hannah? Glass of wine?

HANNAH
Oh sweetie, I can get it.

DAVID
No, I've got it.

HANNAH
No, no, I'll get Susan something. If you just pull out the aero bed before you go?

DAVID
I'll get the bed later.

HANNAH
Well, it's just, it's seven-thirty already.

SUSAN is now unpacking, obliviously taking over their tasteful living room.

SUSAN
I'm not going to bed yet.

HANNAH
(to SUSAN)
No, I know-
(to DAVID)
It's just, you're not even dressed yet, and I don't want you to be late.

DAVID
For what?

HANNAH
For the thing. Remember? The thing, at eight?

SUSAN
What thing?

DAVID
(to SUSAN)
We've got Summit or LaBatt's-

SUSAN
Whiskey?

DAVID
No.

SUSAN
Vodka?

DAVID
No.

HANNAH
You said you were going.

SUSAN
Tequila?

DAVID
We've got some Riesling left over from a couple weeks ago?

SUSAN
Who drinks Riesling?

DAVID
Hannah.

HANNAH
I really don't want anything.

SUSAN
I'll have a Summit.

HANNAH
Sweetie, when we talked earlier, you said you thought it would be nice, to go.

DAVID
Actually, you said that.

HANNAH
Well, okay, I mean, but it would be nice, wouldn't it?

DAVID
Your sister just got here.

SUSAN
Don't stay on my account. I'm not going anywhere.

DAVID
Yeah, you didn't say, Susan—how long are you planning to stay? A "couple of days?"

SUSAN
Oh, at least. I mean, I have to find a job, and who knows how long that will take in this economy.

Hannah's life just got much harder.

HANNAH
What?

DAVID
(cheerfully)
I'll get those drinks.

DAVID exits to the kitchen.

HANNAH
You're moving back to Minnesota?

SUSAN
I'm opening myself up to the universal flow.

HANNAH
That's not really an answer –

SUSAN
Sienna says that in times of uncertainty and fear, the tendency is to close down, when what's actually required is to open up.

HANNAH
All right, I'm just trying to—how long *are* you planning to stay?

SUSAN
I just don't know.

HANNAH
Because we're happy to have you *for a couple of days*, but David and I are not in a position for you to just –

SUSAN
You know, I honestly didn't know what to expect, but David seems *fine.*

HANNAH
He is fine. We're fine. I'm just saying we're not really set up for -

SUSAN
Don't get me wrong, it's great that he's doing so well, it's just surprising.

HANNAH
What does that mean?

SUSAN
Just, after the accident he had kind of a lot of problems for a long time –

HANNAH
It was a little more than an accident, Susan. But he's doing great. He's back at work, mostly—well, I mean not today, obviously. Or really for the past month, but-

SUSAN
See, clearly, mom doesn't know what she's talking about.

HANNAH
What? What did she say?

SUSAN
She just said he seemed "edgy" when she was here at Christmas.

HANNAH
He wasn't "edgy."

SUSAN
I'm just telling you what she said.

HANNAH compulsively straightens the mess Susan has created.

HANNAH
I mean, if he was edgy, you know, it was probably because mom was "dropping hints" about grandchildren the whole time, and then cleaning and reorganizing everything. I'd come home from work and she'd have rearranged the entire kitchen so I couldn't find anything -

SUSAN
Honestly, you're the one who seems edgy.

HANNAH
I'm not edgy! All right, I'm a little edgy. David hasn't been to work, Ithey're cutting staff at the firm, and now *you* show up. It's been a tough week.

SUSAN
(hurt)
Thanks. Thanks a lot.

HANNAH
(realizing)
Susan, I didn't mean it like that.

SUSAN
It's been kind of a tough week for me, too, Hannah.

HANNAH
I know, and I feel terrible about your job.

SUSAN
I know I've always been the family fuck-up, but I thought the one person who might actually want to see me in the midst off all this shit –

HANNAH
I do!

SUSAN
I don't mean to contaminate your perfect life, and your perfect marriage-

HANNAH
I'm glad you're here!

SUSAN
Your perfect job at the perfect law firm –

HANNAH
I'm probably going to get laid off, all right?

SUSAN
What?

HANNAH
I've got clients dropping like flies. It doesn't help that I've had four of them go out of business in the past three months without paying their bills.

SUSAN
They can't fire you for that.

HANNAH
They can downsize me. If clients don't pay their bills, I can't make my numbers.

SUSAN
But it's not your fault if people don't pay.

HANNAH
They're looking for people to cut. I'm not a partner yet.

SUSAN
Those bastards!

HANNAH
It's just the way it works.

SUSAN
The people at the top always find a way to protect themselves. But who's out there protecting us?

HANNAH
I just landed a new client. That should buy me some time.

SUSAN
We should be rioting! Why is there no rioting?

HANNAH
Look, don't say anything to David about all this.

SUSAN
Do not let yourself be silenced, Hannah. That's what they want.

HANNAH
I'm not being silenced. I just don't want David to worry—how long has he been in the kitchen?

SUSAN
We have to speak up!

Hannah moves toward the kitchen.

HANNAH
(calling to him)
Honey, are you okay?

DAVID
Coming through.

DAVID enters balancing two beers and a glass of wine on top of an aero bed box, intercepting Hannah.

HANNAH
You were taking so long I started to worry.

HE passes out drinks to Susan, Hannah and himself.

DAVID
Summit.

SUSAN
Thank God.

DAVID
Wine.

HANNAH
I didn't actually want anything.

DAVID
Summit. Aero bed.

HANNAH
Thank you, for getting that.

DAVID
I'm going to go set it up.

HANNAH
No, sweetie, I'll get it—you really don't have to-

DAVID
Don't worry. I've got it.

DAVID is gone.

SUSAN
I can't see how mom got it so wrong.

HANNAH
Excuse me, for just a second, I need to talk to David –

SUSAN
No, *you* need to relax. I mean, look at me. I just lost my job and my apartment. Do I seem edgy? No.

HANNAH
You lost your apartment?

SUSAN
And you know why? Because I am open. I am open to the flow.

HANNAH
What happened to your apartment?

SUSAN
Gone.

HANNAH
Did you sublet it, or --?

SUSAN
They don't really let you do that when you're evicted.

DAVID re-enters just as this new information lands on Hannah.

HANNAH
You were evicted?

DAVID
Wow. O-kay.

SUSAN
It is okay. I mean, it was completely humiliating in the moment. But it's also liberating. We're trained to think that homelessness is the worst thing that can happen to you. But now: I don't have to be afraid of it anymore.

DAVID
You're saying you don't actually have a home to go back to?

HANNAH
Okay, have you told mom?

SUSAN
I think I've disappointed her enough already.

HANNAH
That is not true! If you would call and explain what happened-

SUSAN
I'm not going to call mom, all right?

HANNAH
She would help you!

SUSAN
Right, with her scare tactics about “living on a budget” and “credit counseling” and ”personal accountability.” She has no faith in me, Hannah. No one has any faith in me.

HANNAH
I do. We have faith in you, Susan. Because you are a smart, capable, *independent* person who can solve her own problems.

SUSAN
Thank you, Hannah.

HANNAH
So. What are you going to do?

SUSAN
The path will be illuminated.

Beat.

DAVID
Well. Cheers.

SUSAN
L’chaim.

THEY clink beer bottles, drink.
DAVID spits some out as he winces in pain, which SUSAN finds hilarious.

HANNAH
Sweetie, don’t –

But David hasn’t actually stopped drinking. He’s guzzling his beer like a kid on a dare. He starts choking, but he won’t give up – *coughing, drinking, choking, drinking. HANNAH starts to panic. SUSAN is oblivious to the tension, enjoying the performance.*

HANNAH
David, stop.
(DAVID does not stop.)
Stop, stop it, just stop!

HANNAH finally grabs the bottle out of DAVID's hand, making a mess. DAVID sputters and gasps for breath, gulping air like a man who's been drowning.

HE hunches over, beer dripping from his chin.

SUSAN
That's what I'm talking about!

SUSAN high-fives David, turning the moment into a triumph. David laughs, wipes his chin as Hannah stews in anger.

looks on, trying to control her anger.

DAVID
Who wants another?

SUSAN
Me.

HANNAH
(to DAVID)
Okay, I <u>really</u> don't think that's a good idea.

SUSAN
It's a very good idea.

HANNAH
The doctor said you should be careful about how much you drink.

DAVID
Your sister just lost her job, got evicted, and showed up on our doorstep with a *very large suitcase*. I think a couple of drinks are in order.

HANNAH
(redirecting the conversation)
If you leave now, you can still make it on time.

DAVID
Hannah –

HANNAH
Even if you're a couple of minutes late. I just really think you should go to the thing –

DAVID
Can we please drop this?

SUSAN
What is this “thing?”

DAVID
Nothing.

HANNAH
It’s just, a gathering, a group of people—very nice people with common experiences who get together to talk.

SUSAN
You mean AA.

HANNAH
No! It’s not AA. It’s just a nice group of people who get together—
(DAVID has exited to the kitchen again. HANNAH turns to SUSAN)
You are not helping!

SUSAN
(deeply offended)
What? What did I do?

HANNAH
He has been sick, all right? So can you please–

SUSAN
You just said he was fine.

HANNAH
Just stop drinking, and stop, egging him on! With the high fives and the –

SUSAN
I am living my truth, Hannah. That is all that any of us can do.

DAVID returns with two more beers

HANNAH
David, can I talk to you for a minute, please?

SUSAN
No, I have something to say. I think Hannah should go to this thing.

HANNAH
What?

SUSAN
The AA thing.

HANNAH
It's not AA.

SUSAN
Whatever. Clearly, David doesn't want to go.

DAVID smiles at his new ally.

DAVID
Thank you.

SUSAN
But it's obviously very important to you, Hannah. So just own that, and go.

DAVID
I think that is a great idea.

HANNAH
What? No!

DAVID
It's perfect.

SUSAN
See?

HANNAH
But it's not my thing, David. It's your thing.

SUSAN
If you go, it'll be your thing.

DAVID
Susan's right.

SUSAN
David and I will stay here, catch up-

DAVID
Have a few drinks.

SUSAN
We'll be perfectly fine.

HANNAH
David, can I talk to you in private please?

SUSAN springs into action, collecting Hannah's things for her to leave.

SUSAN
No, you said it starts at eight, you're gonna be late. Here's your purse.

HANNAH
Honey, the whole point of this was for you to go.

SUSAN
No, the point is for you to go. Answer this calling. Live your own truth.
(suddenly practical)
Do you need a jacket?

DAVID
(offering the jacket)
It's a little chilly out.

SUSAN puts the jacket over Hannah's arm, opens the door for her.

SUSAN
David and I will be fine. So stop worrying and go. Go to this gathering of nice people, and have a great time.

HANNAH, clearly bamboozled and backed into a corner, steps through the door as --

Lights shift.

SCENE TWO

Church basement. HANNAH is still wearing her jacket, holding her purse. SHE lurks in a corner.

TED approaches, unseen by HANNAH.

TED
Next time, you might want to try coming into the meeting.

HANNAH
I'm sorry! I didn't mean to—I was just-

TED
Lurking in the doorway?

HANNAH
No! I really wasn't, I just wasn't sure where I was going.

TED
I could see you hovering out here for the last twenty minutes. I was about to start a pool on whether you'd work up enough courage to actually come in.

HANNAH
I really didn't mean to distract you.

TED
Didn't distract me much, it's just not generally considered polite to eavesdrop on an SAA meeting.

HANNAH
Oh God, I am so sorry.

TED
It's pretty hard to find recovery from the hallway.

HANNAH
No, no I'm not here for that, I just meant-

TED
Plus you can't hear the juicy stuff standing out here. Inside, you get a cup of coffee and a chair, enjoy the show.

HANNAH
I really wasn't trying to eavesdrop. I just, I got lost! I've never been here before, I mean, I'm not even here for me! My husband is the one who was supposed to come-

TED
Uh-huh.

HANNAH
He said he was going to, but then my sister showed up from California. She just showed up, and it looks like she's planning to, to, *move in*. And I love my sister, I do, but she can be a little much? And then David refused to come—not to AA, it's a different kind of support group. Not that there's anything wrong with AA! I think it's wonderful that you're an alcoholic! I mean, okay, that came out wrong. It's probably not wonderful, I'm just trying to say: AA is great, and if my husband were an alcoholic—which I don't think he is, I mean, I worry about his drinking, because he's been drinking a lot lately? But the doctor said that's very common for people with PTSD, it's like self-medication. But I really think the root of the problem is that he just needs to *talk*, to anyone, which is why wanted him to come to this support group. I think it would help him so much, but then Susan showed up, and David wouldn't come, and now they're at home getting *drunk* and I'm here! And by the time I got here it was 8:30, and there were three different meetings going on, and one of them was definitely a group of lesbians so I knew that wasn't it. But I couldn't tell which of the other two was the right group. But I couldn't go home because then David would say, 'See? It was waste of time!' And then he'll never come! And if he doesn't come, if he doesn't get some kind of help, I don't know what I'm gonna do. I just, I can't take it anymore.
(HANNAH is crying.)
So I stood in the hallway, lurking. I admit it. I lurked, I and I'm sorry for that. But I swear to you, I was not eavesdropping. I just, I don't know what to do anymore.

An expectation.

TED
I'm not an alcoholic.

HANNAH
Excuse me?

TED
This meeting that just let out here is an S, AA meeting.

HANNAH
S, AA?

TED
Sex Addicts Anonymous.

HANNAH
(smiling, but backing away)
Oh, I see.

TED
The meeting down the hall is a gambling meeting, I think, so I'm not too sure where your support group might be. Now upstairs, I know, is the women's Al-Anon group. Whether they're all lesbians or not, I cannot attest. But I go to Al-Anon from time to time, and it's a good program. From the little you've shared about your situation, you might find it very helpful.

HANNAH
I am so sorry to have bothered you.

TED
The name's Ted.

HE holds out his hand to shake. HANNAH politely avoids taking it by clutching her purse.

HANNAH
It's nice to meet you. Ted. I really didn't mean to, get into all that.

TED
You've got a lot on your plate, from the sound of it.

HANNAH
I'm just having a bad day.

TED
Happens to the best of us.

HANNAH
Thank you for being so, understanding. I won't take anymore of your time.

TED
Why don't we get a cup of coffee, what do you think about that?

HANNAH
I—um, thank you, but-

TED
There's a little place around the corner.

HANNAH
That's very kind of you, but I really should go-

TED
Now there's nothing sexual in my offer. Not that you're not an attractive woman, you certainly are.
(A beat.)
And, well, now, this is the part where you say I'm an attractive man, and you're sorely disappointed that my intentions are pure.

HANNAH
Um-

TED
Just a little bit of humor there.

HANNAH
Right.

TED
Breaks the tension.

HANNAH
(with a forced laugh)
It sure does.

TED
You just seem like you could use somebody to talk to. Twelve step groups all pretty much operate on the same principles, and you already know I'm a sex addict, so anything you say, I certainly will not be one to cast stones. The diner's got pretty good coffee, decent pie. But, you know, if you want to go home to your drunk husband and crazy sister, that's your choice.

Lights shift.

SCENE THREE

The condo. DAVID and SUSAN. SUSAN is getting drunk. DAVID, not so much.

SUSAN
So here's the plan:

DAVID
All right.

SUSAN
You ready?

DAVID
Lay it on me.

SUSAN
I wait it out.
(An expectation.)
That's it, that's the plan.

DAVID
You "wait it out"?

SUSAN
It's brilliant.

SUSAN starts for the bathroom.

DAVID
Wait, you wait it out, *here?*

SUSAN
Minneapolis is perfect!

DAVID
In our condo?

SUSAN pees off-stage with the bathroom door open, continuing the conversation.

SUSAN *(O.S.)*
I'll find a job, mind my own business, go for walks around the lakes, and when the economy gets better, I go back.

DAIVD
So you are eventually going to go back to LA?

SUSAN *(O.S.)*
Or not. I mean, who knows.

DAVID sneaks over to the dead plant and pours almost a full beer into the pot.

SUSAN *(con't) (O.S.)*
Maybe I'll meet a chunky Minnesota frat boy and buy my own condo—people here are so fat.

SUSAN reappears and catches DAVID.

SUSAN *(con't)*
I just never noticed before—did you just pour beer in that plant?

DAVID
(covering)
What? No.

SUSAN
You did.

DAVID
You want another?

SUSAN
I saw you do it!

DAVID
You're drunk.
(DAVID exits to the kitchen)
You want another one or not?

SUSAN
Yes. No, wait, when's Hannah coming back?

DAVID *(O.S.)*
I don't know. We're out of Summit.

SUSAN
Only because you just poured it out. I really don't think you should do that. Your plant does not look good.

DAVID re-enters with two more beers.

DAVID
Sorry, what's that?

SUSAN
So what's the thing, the AA thing, if it's not AA.

DAVID
Who says it's not AA.

SUSAN
Hannah. She said about four times, "It's not AA."

DAVID
Maybe she was lying.

SUSAN
It can't be AA because you're not an alcoholic.

DAVID
I am an alcoholic.

SUSAN
Bullshit.

DAVID
You don't know.

SUSAN
Alcoholics don't water the plants with their beer.

A beat.

DAVID
I *want* to drink all the time. That should count for something, right?

SUSAN
So why don't you?

DAVID
I have an ulcer.

SUSAN
Oh.

DAVID
Makes it hard to commit. But alcoholism seems appealing.

SUSAN
Totally, but once you're over 30, it's really hard on your skin.

DAVID
But when people know you're an alcoholic, you don't have to explain anything. I mean, you get divorced, lose your job, drive your car into an oncoming bus, and people are just like: well, what did you expect, he's an alcoholic.

SUSAN
Is wine any better than beer?

DAVID
Gives me headaches.

SUSAN
So you just keep going to the liquor store, and opening beers, taking bottles to the recycling –

DAVID
Yep.

SUSAN
But you can't actually get drunk.

DAVID
Nope.

The sadness of this reality hits them both.

SUSAN
Wow.
(then:)
That's got to be driving Hannah fucking nuts.

DAVID
It is. It's driving her crazy.

A beat. THEY crack up at this perfect joke David has devised for Hannah. Their secret.

SUSAN
Oh God, you're so devious! I had no idea!

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