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SF PERUSALS

Samuel French Acting Edition

The Healing

by Samuel D. Hunter

SAMUEL FRENCH

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THE HEALING was commissioned and first produced Off Broadway by Theater Breaking Through Barriers (Nicholas Viselli, Producing Artistic Director; Steve Asher, General Manager) on June 22, 2016. The production was directed by Stella Powell-Jones, with dramaturgy by John M. Baker, sets by Jason Simms, costumes by Christopher Metzger, lighting by Alejandro Fajardo, sound by Brandon Wolcott, and props by Charles Bowden. The Production Stage Manager was Anne Huston, and the Assistant Stage Manager was Seth Kieser. The cast was as follows:

SHARON . . . . . Shannon DeVido
DONALD . . . . . David Harrell
BONNIE . . . . . Jamie Petrone
GREG. . . . . John McGinty
LAURA. . . . . Mary Theresa Archbold
ZOE . . . . . Pamela Sabaugh
JOAN . . . . . Lynne Lipton
VOICE . . . . . Lynne McCollough

THE HEALING was developed, in part, through a residency at Space at Ryder Farm.

CHARACTERS

SHARON – Thirties, female. Played by an actress who uses a wheelchair.

DONALD – Thirties, male. Played by an actor with a disability.

BONNIE – Thirties, female. Played by an actress with a disability.

GREG – Thirties, male. Played by a deaf actor.

LAURA – Thirties, female. Played by an actress with a disability.

ZOE – Thirties, female. Played by an actress with a disability.

JOAN – Sixties, female. Played by an actress without a disability.

A VOICE – Male or female, the voice of a shopping channel on the TV.

SETTING

The main room of a small, unimpressive house in a small town in southeastern Idaho, near Idaho Falls.

A couch is in the space, as well as a small TV. Covering almost every surface in the house are small keepsakes and trinkets: cheaply made little statues (of frogs, chiefly), decorations, keepsakes, holiday decorations, etc.

Scattered around the floor are several boxes with packing materials, tape, etc.

A hallway offstage leads to the bedroom and bathroom, a kitchen offstage.

TIME

The present.

AUTHOR'S NOTES

Dialogue written in *italics* is emphatic, deliberate; dialogue in ALL CAPS is impulsive, explosive.

A slash (/) indicates an overlap in dialogue. Whenever a slash appears, the following line of dialogue should begin.

Ellipses (…) indicate when a character is trailing off, dashes (–) indicate where a character is being cut off, either by another character or themself.

For Greg: dialogue that is <u>underlined</u> indicates when he is signing and it is not being translated, dialogue that is **bold** indicates when he is signing and Bonnie is translating. Dialogue that is signed and voiced simultaneously is designated as "simcom." All other dialogue is voiced. Bonnie interprets for Greg as appropriate.

(As the lights go to black, a **VOICE** *fills the theater, mid-sentence:)*

VOICE. – and it's really such a great deal, here if you can see this here – three easy payments of just $19.99 plus shipping. And really this is a keepsake that will last a lifetime, *more* than a lifetime, this is something that can be passed down in your family from generation to generation, you know – it's really just going to become an heirloom, a family heirloom. So, yeah – I'd just get on that right now. And next up we have this lovely –

(The **VOICE** *is suddenly cut off and lights snap on, revealing:)*

(Early evening.)

*(***DONALD** *and* **SHARON** *sit together, both dressed in funeral black. They are both eating cake off of paper plates, watching the TV, which faces upstage. The* **VOICE** *is now playing at a low level on the TV; loud enough that we know it's there, but not loud enough to be understandable.)*

(They watch and eat. Finally:)

DONALD. Who was –…?

(Pause.)

SHARON. Hm?

DONALD. The lady with the red suit, the red pants suit.

SHARON. Oh, that's –…

(Pause.)

I don't know.

(Pause.)

DONALD. Red pants suit, what the hell?

(Silence. **SHARON** *and* **DONALD** *continue to eat, watch TV.)*

(Finally:)

SHARON. She fuckin' called me "Sherry."

*(***DONALD** *snorts.)*

DONALD. *Who was that?*!

SHARON. I don't know.

DONALD. Has anyone ever called you that?

SHARON. Not until today.

DONALD. Who wears a red pants suit to a *funeral*?

(Silence. They eat and watch TV.)

You know when I saw her in the coffin, I was thinking / like –

SHARON. Casket.

DONALD. What?

SHARON. It's a casket, not a coffin.

*(***DONALD** *glares at her.)*

Seriously, I've spent the last three days dealing with all this funeral crap, I know the difference / between –

DONALD. *Anyway* when I saw her in there, for the first time I was like – wait, she had a bump on her nose?

SHARON. What do you mean?

DONALD. Like – I didn't realize Zoe had a little bump on her nose. Until I saw her in the coffin. Casket.

(Pause.)

SHARON. Wait how did you not know that?

DONALD. I don't know, I just never –… I never *stared* at her nose.

(Pause.)

You knew she –?

SHARON. Yeah.

DONALD. So if two months ago I had casually referred to the bump on her nose, you would have been like, "Oh right."

SHARON. Yes, though I'm having trouble imagining what conversation / would have –

DONALD. *Really*?!

SHARON. *Yes.*

(Pause.)

DONALD. Huh.

(Pause.)

It just made me think, like – what else did I miss? There's probably a lot else that I missed. Like – what was her favorite movie? I have *no idea* what her favorite movie was.

SHARON. This cake is making me sick.

DONALD. Stop eating it.

SHARON. No it's *so good.*

(Pause. They continue to watch and eat.)

DONALD. Do you think we could have – done something?

SHARON. No, she –. No.

(Pause.)

DONALD. I didn't know things had gotten this bad for her, if I knew that / she –

SHARON. There's nothing we could have done.

DONALD. I know, I just –

SHARON. There's nothing we could have done. Stop.

(Silence. They watch the TV.)

DONALD. Why are we watching the shopping channel?

SHARON. I can't find the remote, it might be gone. I don't think Zoe ever watched anything else.

(Pause. They watch.)

DONALD. What is that?

SHARON. The –? What they're selling? It's a –… I don't know what it is. Christmas ornament? No.

DONALD. I don't know if we're gonna be able to pack up this place by Tuesday.

SHARON. I know. There's tons of stuff in the second bedroom, too. There's this clown figurine holding an umbrella that just makes me angry for some reason.

(Silence. They eat. The TV plays.)

(Suddenly:)

DONALD. This is terrible to ask and I hate myself for even thinking it, but do you think I could take the riding lawn mower?

SHARON. That's not terrible.

DONALD. Really?

SHARON. No, you're fine. I'm taking the juicer.

DONALD. I just –. I don't know, I thought she wouldn't mind.

SHARON. She wouldn't, just take it. But how are you gonna get it to Boise?

DONALD. Oh. Right. I mean I could –… No, that's stupid.

(Pause.)

How much did you have to pay for the funeral?

SHARON. Don't worry about it.

DONALD. Zoe didn't have any money in her bank account, or –?

SHARON. Some. Not enough.

(Short pause.)

DONALD. I'll chip in, but I'm gonna have to wait for a month / or two –

SHARON. Don't worry about it.

DONALD. They cut my hours *again*, and anyway I –…

(Short pause.)

I'll get you some money.

SHARON. It's okay. Work's been good lately, it's fine.

(Pause. They watch TV.)

DONALD. I didn't realize that she didn't really have – *any* family left.

SHARON. Her uncle was there, the guy from Montana? Anyway I hope he was her uncle, he's taking her ashes, so.

DONALD. He was on something, right?

SHARON. Yes he most certainly was.

DONALD. But yeah, I figured she had *someone*. Cousins, or –. It never really occurred to me that someone could have no family.

SHARON. Yeah I hate that she didn't have anyone here in town.

DONALD. I mean she had Joan.

*(***SHARON** *bristles. Pause.* **DONALD** *looks at her.)*

You're still mad at me.

SHARON. No –

DONALD. Yes you are, you're totally still mad at me –

SHARON. Please, I'm tired, I / don't –

DONALD. She would have shown up anyway, it's a small town –

SHARON. Well you didn't need to *invite* her to the funeral, Donald.

DONALD. I didn't *invite her*, it was just a *courtesy call* to let her know when it was happening –

*(***SHARON***'s phone rings. She takes it out of her pocket.)*

I'm sorry I invited Joan to the funeral, okay? I was just trying to do / the right thing.

SHARON. *(Answering her phone.)* Hey, Marsha. Could you actually give me like another hour or two before you pick me up? Is that cool?

*(***SHARON** *listens.* **DONALD** *starts moving around the space, looking at all the trinkets.)*

Oh.

(Listens.)

Shit. Well, yeah, I –…

(Listens.)

No, it's okay, I understand. Yeah, totally. I'm sure I can find someone. Do you need me to change your flight, or –?

DONALD. What's going on?

*(***SHARON** *waves* **DONALD** *away, listening.)*

SHARON. Really, Marsha, it's okay. I'll see you later. Bye.

*(***SHARON** *hangs up.)*

Shit.

DONALD. What?

SHARON. It's – nothing. My aide has to fly back to Chicago tonight.

DONALD. Why?

SHARON. Her cat sitter's mother died.

DONALD. Were they – close?

SHARON. No, it's not that, it's –. Her cat sitter has to go to Milwaukee so no one is there to take care of her stupid cat, so.

DONALD. Oh.

SHARON. It's okay, I can find someone. I've got a couple people in Denver I use when I'm there, I can probably get someone on a flight to Boise tonight.

DONALD. Sharon if you need someone to help you out, I can –

SHARON. It's fine.

*(***SHARON** *scrolls through her phone.* **DONALD** *starts wrapping up some of the trinkets in bubble wrap and putting them in boxes.)*

DONALD. I mean I've done it before, it's been a while but if you just direct me –

SHARON. It's fine, don't worry about it.

DONALD. You don't need to spend all that money –

SHARON. I have miles, it's fine, just –.

*(***SHARON** *dials.)*

DONALD. Seriously, I don't mind, just tell me what to do and I'll do it. / It's not like I'm doing anything else.

SHARON. *(On the phone.)* Hey, Brendan. Listen – this is gonna sound sort of crazy but I'm out in Idaho right now, near that religious camp where I used to spend summers as a kid? Anyway turns out my regular aide has to fly back to Chicago tonight. Is there *any possible way* that you or maybe Cindy could come out for just a few days? Yeah, starting tonight. It's a little town called Rigby outside of Idaho Falls, I think I could –…

*(***SHARON** *listens.* **DONALD** *continues to pack.)*

You're *sure*?

(Pause.)

No, I understand. Yeah. Okay, thanks, bye.

*(***SHARON** *hangs up.)*

Shit.

DONALD. Sharon.

SHARON. It's okay, I know a few people in Austin, just let me send some texts –

DONALD. *Sharon.*

*(***SHARON** *looks at* **DONALD**. *Short pause.)*

Just let me help?

(A doorbell.)

SHARON. *(Calling out.)* Door's open.

*(***BONNIE** *and* **GREG** *enter.* **BONNIE** *holds a store-bought meat and cheese tray.)*

BONNIE. Hey there.

DONALD. Hey, Bonnie.

*(***DONALD** *goes to* **BONNIE**, *hugging her.)*

BONNIE. *(Simcom.)* We're *so* sorry. Our flight, it –. We're just sorry for missing the funeral.

SHARON. We told you to come yesterday.

BONNIE. *(Simcom.)* I know but we just couldn't find any decent flights out of Spokane, we thought about driving but, you know, the highway this time of year, I was worried we'd get snowed in –

DONALD. It's okay.

BONNIE. Well, we're just –. Anyway, I still can't believe Zoe's gone, I'm in shock!

DONALD. Yeah, it's crazy.

BONNIE. It's just so tragic, it could happen to any of us!

DONALD. Yeah…

(Pause. **DONALD** *and* **SHARON** *exchange a look.)*

BONNIE. These freak accidents, it just –. I still can't wrap my head around it. I feel like she's gonna just walk right in through that door.

DONALD. Sure.

BONNIE. Just right now! Just walk right in, just now!

DONALD. Yeah, well, she –. Won't.

(Awkward pause. **BONNIE** *looks at* **GREG**.*)*

BONNIE. *(Simcom.)* Oh sorry! This is Greg.

GREG. Hi.

SHARON. / Hi.

DONALD. Hey.

BONNIE. *(Simcom.)* This is – Donald and Sharon.

*(***BONNIE** *spells out "Donald" and "Sharon" for* **GREG**. *It takes her a moment.)*

(To **DONALD** *and* **SHARON**.*)* I'm still learning.

GREG. You're doing fine!

BONNIE. *(To* **GREG**, *simcom.)* We shared a bunk together with Zoe, every summer.

GREG. They let you share a bunk with a boy?

BONNIE. He's wondering why they let us share a bunk with a boy.

DONALD. Oh. Well, Joan didn't want me to at first, but she realized pretty quick I was just going to sneak in there anyway.

GREG. Ladies man!

DONALD. Yeah, more like a girly boy.

GREG. Oh.

(Pause.)

I'm sorry.

DONALD. Thank – you?

*(***BONNIE** *looks around at all the trinkets in the room.)*

BONNIE. Wow, there are… There are – a lot more little thingies in here.

SHARON. Yeah, she just kept buying stuff, I guess.

BONNIE. Oh, we got this.

*(***BONNIE** *indicates the meat and cheese tray.)*

DONALD. We actually have a crazy amount of leftovers, maybe tomorrow we should try going to the food bank or something?

BONNIE. Sorry, I didn't think everyone would be gone already.

SHARON. It's almost seven.

BONNIE. I know what time it is, Sharon.

GREG. Is there a bathroom?

BONNIE. *(Simcom.)* Down the hall there, on the right.

*(***GREG** *exits.)*

What are we gonna do with all this stuff?

DONALD. Goodwill, most of it. I'm renting a U-haul tomorrow for the furniture. A lot of it will have to go in the trash –

SHARON. I have a system.

DONALD. Sharon has a system. How was the flight?

BONNIE. Awful. Took three hours to take off, then once we were in the air the woman beside me kept telling me how "inspiring" I was. I'm starving, can I –?

DONALD. Here, I'll make you a plate.

BONNIE. Oh, honey, you don't have to –

DONALD. It's fine, just relax.

*(***DONALD** *goes into the kitchen.)*

(An awkward silence between **BONNIE** *and* **SHARON**.*)*

BONNIE. How – was it?

SHARON. Fine, I guess. It was at this depressing little funeral chapel in Idaho Falls, it was fine.

BONNIE. Well, it was really nice of you to organize it.

SHARON. There was barely anyone there.

BONNIE. Really? I figured that most of the people from her church would be there –

SHARON. They don't really do funerals, remember?

BONNIE. Oh, right.

(Pause.)

SHARON. Charlie Thompson was there.

BONNIE. *No.*

SHARON. Yep. And he *came up to me.*

BONNIE. Ew!

SHARON. I know! He did it in this disgusting way, too, he like came up to me and he was like – "I'm so, so sorry for your loss."

(Pause. **DONALD** *returns with a plate, hands it to* **BONNIE**.*)*

BONNIE. I mean that's not too weird?

SHARON. No it was like the way he said it.

DONALD. Are you still talking about Charlie Thompson?

SHARON. He was being gross.

DONALD. He was not, he was just / trying to –

SHARON. Are you *defending* him?

DONALD. I'm not, he's terrible, he's a loser and he's terrible, but I'm just saying – that one isolated interaction he had with you was *normal*.

SHARON. I can't believe you're defending him!

DONALD. I'm not –! I'm just saying, that taken out of context from the rest of his personality and the history of his life, that one isolated moment in time was not weird or disgusting.

SHARON. I'm sorry but when a twenty-five-year-old counselor makes a pass at a thirteen-year-old camper? That makes *everything* about him creepy. *Every moment of his life.*

DONALD. / Alright, alright.

BONNIE. Is this chicken or pork?

DONALD. Pork?

BONNIE. Ooo…

DONALD. You don't eat pork now?

BONNIE. I've read too many articles.

SHARON. Chicken's worse.

BONNIE. I don't wanna know, I like chicken.

SHARON. They think that like one in every three pieces of chicken is / tainted with salmonella and that's just like people *guessing* –

BONNIE. I don't wanna know I said!

SHARON. – seriously I could show you some videos / online, you wouldn't believe what –

DONALD. / Okay, okay, guys, c'mon –

BONNIE. *(Louder.)* I'm not listening I'm not listening I'm –

(Suddenly, **LAURA** *enters from the hall. She's wearing pajamas and has a sleeping mask around her neck.)*

(She stares at them for a moment. Silence.)

SHARON. Sorry.

*(***LAURA** *stares at them. Another silence.)*

BONNIE. Hey, Laura.

LAURA. Hi.

(Another pause. **LAURA** *exits back into the bedroom.)*

BONNIE. *(Hushed.)* She's *sleeping* here?

SHARON. In Zoe's bed.

BONNIE. In *Zoe's bed?*!

DONALD. The second bedroom is full of crap, she couldn't sleep in there –

BONNIE. *That's still not okay.* We all got hotel rooms. And why is she in bed already?

SHARON. Migraine.

DONALD. *(To* **BONNIE**.*)* I think there's pasta salad, you want that instead?

BONNIE. Yes, please.

*(***DONALD** *exits back into the kitchen with* **BONNIE***'s plate.* **BONNIE** *looks at the TV.)*

Why are you watching the shopping channel?

SHARON. We can't find the remote.

BONNIE. You could just turn it off.

SHARON. Nah, it's too quiet in here.

BONNIE. Oh, and – you had to chip in for the funeral?

SHARON. Yeah, I did.

BONNIE. I'd love to help out – maybe next month?

(Pause.)

SHARON. Sure.

(Pause.)

BONNIE. How's Jim?

SHARON. Tim, Bonnie. His name is Tim.

BONNIE. Right sorry right.

SHARON. We split up.

BONNIE. Oh.

(Pause.)

I'm – sorry?

SHARON. Nah.

BONNIE. Oh, good.

(Pause.)

How's work?

SHARON. Uh – okay. The last couple years have been a little tough, but. Travel is expensive, and it's getting harder to make companies pay for accessible vans and aides to travel with, so whatever.

BONNIE. You travel often?

SHARON. Yeah, work in Chicago has pretty much dried up so I'm on the road a lot. Mostly to the same three or four cities. I've seen more of Tulsa than I ever wanted to, I'll say that much.

BONNIE. And it's –? Sorry, you make like – search engines?

SHARON. I mean I don't *make* them, it's –. It's metadata, it's like – I help to improve existing search engines on websites by creating searchable terms and –. Essentially I get hired by companies to make it easier for their customers to find stuff on their websites. That's basically it.

BONNIE. That's really great. I remember when you told me you wanted to become a librarian, I was like – uh oh!

(Pause.)

SHARON. What?

BONNIE. I'm just saying, this is a lot better than being a librarian.

SHARON. I got my masters in library and information science, Bonnie.

BONNIE. I know.

SHARON. This is in my field, this is information science and / metadata –

BONNIE. I'm just saying it's good you're not a librarian! That's all I'm saying!

*(***DONALD** *comes out of the kitchen with a plate of food for* **BONNIE**. **BONNIE** *stops packing, takes the food.)*

DONALD. Anyone want wine?

BONNIE. Sure.

SHARON. I'm fine.

*(***GREG** *re-enters.)*

DONALD. Greg, you want some wine?

GREG. Sure.

*(***GREG** *follows* **DONALD** *into the kitchen.)*

BONNIE. But the funeral was nice?

DONALD. *(Offstage.)* Yeah, it was fine.

SHARON. It was weird.

DONALD. *(Offstage.)* It was *fine*. Zoe would have liked it, she would have enjoyed it.

SHARON. She would have enjoyed her own funeral?

*(***DONALD** *and* **GREG** *re-enter with wine and solo cups.* **DONALD** *pours wine for everyone.)*

DONALD. I'm just saying it was nice, *God*.

BONNIE. It's weird being this close to the camp. We drove past it on our way here, crazy to see it all abandoned like that. Zoe must've seen Joan in town every so often, that must have been weird.

GREG. Who are you talking about?

BONNIE. *(Simcom.)* I told you about her, she ran the camp.

GREG. The religious lady?

BONNIE. Yeah, the religious lady.

SHARON. Yeah, religious as in telling all of us that if we prayed hard enough Jesus would heal our broken little bodies.

GREG. **If she said stuff like that, why did people send their kids there?**

DONALD. I mean we were the only kids with disabilities at the camp, so I think we got it more than anyone else. And I don't think my parents really knew that Joan was a Christian Scientist, they just thought it was a Christian camp. They were pretty horrified years later when I told them about the stuff Joan said to us.

BONNIE. *(Simcom.)* Yeah, I mean, when Sharon got it shut down, our parents didn't / really –

SHARON. What do you mean I got it shut down? *We* got it shut down.

*(***SHARON***'s phone chimes. She looks at it.)*

BONNIE. Oh, I know, I just meant –. Whatever.

SHARON. *Shit.*

BONNIE. What?

SHARON. It's fine, it's –. I'm just having trouble getting an aide out here.

BONNIE. You don't have someone with you?

SHARON. She had to fly back to Chicago. But I've texted some people, I'll find someone.

BONNIE. One of us can help you out.

DONALD. That's what I said.

SHARON. / No, it's fine –

BONNIE. We've got an extra bed in our hotel room, just stay with us!

SHARON. Thank you, but I / can find someone, it's not –

DONALD. / Why is this such big deal?

BONNIE. Oh don't be silly, it's just a few nights –

SHARON. *It's really fine.*

(Pause.)

Sorry, just –. It's fine.

(A silence. The TV plays.)

DONALD. *(To* **BONNIE**.*)* So, how long have you and Greg been…?

BONNIE. *(Simcom.)* Oh, it's been eight months or so.

GREG. Nine, babe.

BONNIE. *(Simcom.)* Nine. This is our first trip together. Wish it could have been to Key Largo…

GREG. I *love* Key Largo.

BONNIE. Greg really loves Key Largo. He's from North Dakota, so.

*(***BONNIE** *reaches for her wine.* **SHARON** *and* **DONALD** *give each other a look.)*

*(***GREG** *gets up to refill his wine, browsing through some books on a bookshelf.)*

Donald, are you seeing anyone?

DONALD. Oh, no.

BONNIE. What about Rich?

DONALD. Rich from like three years ago? Oh, no, that wasn't anything. I actually sort of –… I mean this is going to sound weird, but I'm sort of – *okay* with not being with anyone right now?

SHARON. Yes, thank you!

DONALD. Yeah?

SHARON. I feel the exact same way, when I finally stopped telling myself over and over and over that I needed to be with someone, I was like – wow, this is nice. I'm gonna watch a movie and not feel terrible about myself.

*(***GREG** *pulls out a well-worn book, starts leafing through it.)*

DONALD. Right?! Once I finally just let go of the expectation, it was so liberating. I mean I'm not saying I'm gonna be single for the rest of my life –

SHARON. No, totally –

DONALD. But right now, I'm just – okay with it!

SHARON. Yes!

BONNIE. Well, I think you'll both find happiness someday. I know you will.

(Pause.)

DONALD. Yeah, I –

(Deciding not to engage.)

Yeah.

*(***SHARON** *sees the book that* **GREG** *is reading. She stops. Pause.)*

(To **SHARON**.*)* What?

*(***SHARON** *moves toward* **GREG**. **DONALD** *and* **BONNIE** *see the book* **GREG** *is holding, they recognize it immediately.)*

SHARON. *(To* **GREG**.*)* Can I see it?

*(***GREG** *looks at* **SHARON**. **SHARON** *takes the book from him. She opens it, leafing through it a bit.)*

(Reading.) "Mind must be found superior to all the beliefs of the five corporeal senses, and able to destroy all ills. Sickness is a belief, which must be annihilated by the divine Mind. Disease is an experience of the so-called mortal mind. It is fear made manifest on the body."

*(***SHARON** *flips through the book.* **GREG** *looks at* **BONNIE**, *confused.)*

DONALD. Sharon, c'mon –

SHARON. Highlights on almost every page.

(Pause. Finally, **SHARON** *closes the book, addresses everyone.)*

I'm gonna do some more work in here and then get started on the kitchen.

(Pause.)

DONALD. Sure. I'll start with the garage.

(To **GREG** *and* **BONNIE**.*)*

If you guys are up for it, there's a ton of stuff to go through in the second bedroom?

BONNIE. Oh, sure.

*(***BONNIE** *and* **GREG** *begin to leave.)*

GREG. What just happened?

BONNIE. Just wait, I'll explain.

*(***BONNIE** *and* **GREG** *exit. Pause.)*

DONALD. You okay?

SHARON. Yeah, I'm –. I'm fine.

(Pause. **DONALD** *leans into* **SHARON**.*)*

DONALD. You told Bonnie that it was an *accident*?

SHARON. No, I –! I just told her exactly what happened. I figured it was pretty clear that Zoe didn't lay down in the snow and freeze to death ten feet from her back door by *mistake*.

(Short pause.)

DONALD. Should we tell her?

SHARON. No, just –. Let her believe what she wants, it doesn't matter.

*(***DONALD** *exits into the kitchen.)*

(After a moment, **SHARON** *starts wrapping up some of the trinkets, putting them in boxes.)*

(A moment of silence. The TV plays.)

(Then, from down the hall, **ZOE** *enters.)*

(She enters carefully, looking around the room. She holds a cell phone in her hand. She goes closer to the TV, turning up the volume. We can now clearly hear the voice on the TV discussing products. **SHARON** *continues packing items.)*

VOICE. – and it really is a wonderful value, it's a –, you know you really can just keep things like this for a very long time, it's something that will really last.

*(***ZOE** *sits down, looking at the TV.)*

And it's really just about a wise investment, because at the end of the day this guy is gonna increase in value and end up being worth a lot more money than three easy installments of $29.99. And that's what makes this product so –

*(***ZOE** *turns the volume back down to the lower level from before. She looks at the cell phone in her hand. Silence.)*

*(***ZOE** *makes a call. She waits as the phone rings on the other end.)*

(Finally:)

ZOE. It's – me? Hi. You didn't pick up. Hi.

(Pause.)

I'm calling to –…

(Pause.)

I had this angel message last week? I was in a crosswalk, the corner of Main and 3rd, and I hear this message – "Dance, lovely, dance." That's all it was. And I had no idea what to think, I had no idea what to make of it, and then all of a sudden out of nowhere here comes this car, this *truck*, and it's blaring right through the stop sign and headed toward me. And all of the sudden, I knew what it meant, I knew what I had to do – I just turned really slowly, really elegantly, took a few steps. I just – danced with the truck. And I glide right alongside the edge of it as it speeds off and I'm in the middle of the intersection and people are asking me if I'm okay, and I –… "Dance, lovely, dance."

(Pause.)

ZOE. *(Cont.)* I just thought you'd like that, you used to love the angel messages I would get. I know you don't like me to talk about them anymore, but I thought you'd like that one. I thought you'd think it was funny, so maybe it was okay to tell you about that one. That's all.

(Pause. **SHARON** *looks at* **ZOE**.*)*

Also, the uh –… The praying isn't working? And I know it's my fault, but I don't know what I'm doing wrong, and my temperature was over a hundred earlier, I'm feeling a little better now but it was over a hundred earlier, and I –…

(Pause.)

I guess I was wondering if you could come? If you can, I know you're busy.

(Pause.)

I love you very much, Sharon. My little healer.

(Short Pause.)

Sorry, I know you don't like it when I –…

(Pause.)

This message is really long sorry.

(Pause. **ZOE** *looks at the phone, then ends the call.)*

*(***ZOE** *exits.* **SHARON** *watches her leave.)*

(The TV continues to play in the background.)

(Then, finally, **LAURA** *emerges from the hallway. She is still wearing her pajamas; she has her sleep mask in one hand. She takes a deep breath, turning off the overhead light.)*

SHARON. How's the migraine?

LAURA. Little better. I just can't sleep.

SHARON. I'm gonna start on the kitchen. You want anything, or –?

LAURA. I'm fine. You know where the remote is?

SHARON. You can change it on the TV.

LAURA. Eh.

*(**LAURA** sits down, watching the TV.)*

*(**SHARON** exits into the kitchen.)*

*(After a moment, **GREG** enters, holding a trash bag. He sees **LAURA**.)*

GREG. Oh –

LAURA. It's fine. I couldn't sleep.

(Pause.)

You're Greg, right? I'm Laura, I don't know if Bonnie told you about me. She said she was bringing someone, a new boyfriend. Nothing like taking a new lover to the funeral of someone your own age, huh?

*(**GREG** indicates that he's deaf. **LAURA** realizes.)*

Oh shit sorry, I completely forgot, I –. Bonnie warned us, I should have –. I mean she didn't *warn* us, she just –. She just mentioned that you were deaf so we could – prepare, or –. Not that we *prepared*, I just…

(Pause.)

I am – *really* glad that you can't hear what I'm saying right now.

GREG. I can read lips.

LAURA. Oh great.

(Awwkard pause.)

*(Then, **GREG** smiles, offers her a hand. **LAURA** shakes his hand.)*

Yes, let's start over! I'm Laura.

GREG. Greg.

(They stand for a moment. Awkward pause.)

LAURA. When I was a senior I did a sign version of "O Holy Night" for an assembly. Or rather, I was forced to do a sign version of "O Holy Night" for an assembly.

*(**GREG** looks at her, confused.)*

You know, it's –. It's a Christmas carol?

(Short Pause.)

It's like…

*(***LAURA** *starts singing/signing "O Holy Night." It's very awkward.)*

O Holy Night, the stars are brightly shining, it is the night of the dear Savior's birth.

(Short pause. **LAURA** *tries to remember the sign for "fall".)*

Um. Oh.

(Resuming.)

Fall on your knees! Oh, hear the angel's voices! O night divine –…

*(***LAURA** *stops, has no idea why she's doing this. An awkward silence.)*

(Finally, **GREG** *smiles and claps politely.)*

Thank – you.

*(***LAURA** *sits down on the couch, rubbing her head. Pause.* **GREG** *goes to her.)*

GREG. You live in Montana?

LAURA. Yep, Montana. Missoula.

GREG. What do you do?

LAURA. I'm an associate professor at the University of Montana.

GREG. Wow.

(Pause.)

LAURA. You're saying "wow" to associate professor at the University of Montana? You have a low "wow" threshold.

GREG. What do you teach?

LAURA. Baltic Studies?

*(***GREG** *looks at her, not understanding.)*

Baltic Studies? Baltic –? It's…

*(***GREG** *indicates that* **LAURA** *should write it down.* **LAURA** *finds something to write on and a pen. She writes it down, shows it to* **GREG**.*)*

GREG. Oh!

LAURA. And – some comp lit, quarter time appointment in comp lit.

*(***GREG** *looks at her, not understanding.* **LAURA** *almost writes it down, then stops.)*

Actually, it doesn't matter. It's mind-numbingly dull.

(Pause.)

GREG. Baltic Studies, that's –…

(Pause.)

I'm surprised the University of Montana has a Baltic Studies department.

LAURA. Well the University of Montana doesn't tend to think it has a Baltic Studies department, either. It's basically just me and a few adjuncts. What do you do?

GREG. Internet start-up.

LAURA. What kind?

*(***GREG** *pulls out his wallet, taking out a business card. He hands it to* **LAURA**.*)*

"We manufacture and sell discount electric toothbrush heads over the internet directly to customers."

(Short pause.)

Catchy.

(Pause. **LAURA** *hands the card back to* **GREG**.*)*

How long have you and Bonnie been together?

GREG. Not long. Nine months.

LAURA. Nine months? That's long, that qualifies as long.

*(***LAURA** *continues to watch the TV. A few moments pass.)*

(Then suddenly:)

GREG. Oh, Latvia!

(Pause. **LAURA** *looks at him.)*

LAURA. Latvia?

GREG. Yeah, Latvia! That's where you're from, right?

(Pause.)

LAURA. Yeah, I was born in Latvia, but I was seven when I was adopted, so I'm not really *from* there –

GREG. Bonnie says you speak Latvian?

LAURA. My Estonian is actually better than my Latvian, so it's really not –

GREG. That's really cool!

LAURA. *(Curt.)* But that's not why I got into Baltic Studies.

(Pause.)

GREG. Oh.

LAURA. I mean it's not –… I just mean that I just happened to have an academic interest in the history and culture of the Baltic States.

(Awkward pause. **GREG** *looks away.* **LAURA** *softens.)*

I don't really – talk very much about being from Latvia. So it's just – weird to be back with a bunch of people who know that about me. I'm not used to it.

(Pause.)

GREG. Have you ever been back?

LAURA. To Latvia? Uh – yeah, I –. I went back once with the university.

(Pause.)

I mean of course I still have some memories of being there, so maybe that –. I mean maybe that ignited my interest, but when I went there it really wasn't about that, it –…

(Pause. **GREG** *looks at her.* **LAURA** *becomes more and more lost in thought.)*

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