

THE BACK SEAT

a contemporary play in two acts

by DREW MOYER

Copyright © September 2016
Drew Moyer and Off The Wall Plays
<http://offthewallplays.com>

ALL RIGHTS RESERVED
REPRODUCTION WITHOUT WRITTEN CONSENT PROHIBITED

Caution: This script is provided for reading purposes only. Professionals and amateurs are hereby warned that *The Back Seat* is subject to royalty. It is fully protected under the laws of the United States of America, the British Empire, including the Dominion of Canada, and all other countries of the Copyright Union. All rights, including but not limited to professional, amateur, film, radio, and all other media (including use on the worldwide web) and the rights of translation into foreign languages are strictly reserved; and any unauthorized use of the material may subject the user to any and all applicable civil and criminal penalties.

THE BACK SEAT

a contemporary play in two acts

CHARACTERS

ANDY, 22.

A soon-to-be-grad from the University of Virginia. Confident, masculine, and peremptory.

GRACE, 21.

Andy's girlfriend. Unassuming and non-confrontational; mature. Also a UVA senior.

EVAN, 22.

Their friend, though Grace's for much longer. Thoughtful, by-the-book, and soft-spoken. Also a UVA senior.

PENNY, 22.

Grace's cousin, a graduating senior from another school. Eccentric, ruled by her anxiety.

SETTING

May, 2014. The interior of a rest stop, eastern Arizona, just west of Winslow. A dusty Plexiglas display of Arizona wildlife, safety tips, etc. is mounted on one side; on the other, a frayed Arizona state flag. The rest of the wall space is taken up by brochure-sized travel maps, bulletin boards with local advertisements, etc. To either side, men's and women's restrooms, split by a water fountain, up-center. Center stage, a large wooden island, meant as a communal bench. As a whole, the room should look as though it hasn't been tended to in some time—dusty, unkempt, abandoned. The action in the play may very well be the rest stop's first visit in several weeks.

SCENE BREAKDOWN

ACT ONE, SCENE ONE.

A rest area in the remote desert of eastern Arizona. Early May, around 6:00 pm.

ACT ONE, SCENE TWO.

Two hours later.

ACT TWO, SCENE ONE.

Just outside the rest stop, 4:00 am the next morning.

ACT TWO, SCENE TWO.

Back inside the rest stop, three hours later.

An Excerpt from Act I, Scene 1

(Full late-afternoon sunlight pours though the empty room. Muffled sounds of talking wafts in from off. Car doors shut. After a few moments, PENNY bursts in through the door.)

PENNY

Gotta pee, gotta pee, gotta pee, gotta pee, gotta pee...

(She power walks and exits into the bathroom. ANDY and EVAN walk in behind her. ANDY leads, but casually checks back on EVAN, as if he were a tour guide.)

ANDY

Yeah dude, you've *always* gotta assume they have a face card. So, it's a face card plus whatever else they have. You got it?

EVAN

(Politely, though tired of hearing it.)

I—Yes, I got it.

ANDY (overlapping)

So let's run it back; let's keep doing it till you feel...

EVAN (overlapping)

Dude, I'm fine with it.

ANDY (overlapping)

Comfortable, is what I was gonna—come on. You really think you're...?

EVAN (overlapping)

Yes.

ANDY

All right. All right, here we go, then; here's a challenge for you.

EVAN

All right.

ANDY (overlapping)

Let's say you have sixteen.

EVAN

OK.

ANDY
And dealer shows a seven.

EVAN
I'll stay.

ANDY (shaking his head)
No...

EVAN
No?!

ANDY (overlapping)
First of all, you should've asked if you had double eights.

EVAN
Since when am I allowed to ask questions?

ANDY (overlapping)
Obviously if you have double eights you should split.

EVAN
Oh yeah, *obviously*.

ANDY (overlapping)
And yes, you can always ask the dealer ques—she *wants* you to win, don't forget.

EVAN
Yeah, I'm sure she'd be thrilled about—like the casino doesn't give her some *bonus*?

ANDY (overlapping)
Anyway, they weren't double eights, so you should hit. Or surrender, if they'll let you...

EVAN
Surrender?! What the...?

ANDY (overlapping)
...But they won't, so you should hit it.

EVAN
Yeah, yeah, yeah—*hit*. Fine. But think about *this* dude. They have a seven? That means anything less than a ten is favorable for me—anything less than a

ten! That's an eight out of thirteen chance! And I'm supposed to pass that up, because they "probably" have a face card? Is that what you're saying?

ANDY (overlapping)

Dude...

EVAN (overlapping)

Is that what you're saying?

ANDY (overlapping)

Getting all analytical isn't gonna...

EVAN (overlapping)

I'm not getting analytical, it's just the simple...

ANDY (overlapping)

Look, the *book* says—and I don't deny all your logic crap but I'm *telling* you...

EVAN (overlapping)

How can a book deny what I just came up with?

ANDY (overlapping)

They're like Harvard grads, dude.

EVAN (overlapping)

Anyone can count—a *preschooler*...

ANDY (overlapping)

They've thought about it, and run all the data.

EVAN

What *data*?

ANDY

The data from the tests!

EVAN

All right, this is bullshit. Blackjack is bullshit, the house is gonna win most of the time anyway—*that's* what the book should tell you.

ANDY

Hey. Don't be so hard on yourself, man. You're just not the gambling type. Who cares? You can still watch—and, hey. You can still drink for free if you're watching.

(GRACE enters with an expensive-looking camera around her neck. She is marveling at the pictures she just took outside.)

ANDY

Hey, baby. How's it look?

GRACE

I mean... it's *gorgeous*, here. Like, if you haven't seen the desert before? It's gorgeous.

ANDY

That's great.

GRACE

Yeah, I mean, some of these? They're just so...

(Not wanting to assume the interest is reciprocated.)

...well, anyway. I'll show you later. What's up?

ANDY

Still talking strategy.

GRACE

Didn't realize it was such a complicated game.

ANDY

It's crunch time, baby! Gotta prepare if you wanna win.

GRACE

How long till we get there?

ANDY

Few more hours.

GRACE (relieved)

Awesome.

ANDY

Your back's killing you, huh?

GRACE

Yeah—if only I were already dead.

ANDY

(He approaches her, flirtatiously.)

Well, you just hang in there, baby. Soon, it's hotel time. Room service, a hot bath...

(He puts his arms around her intimately. GRACE is a hair uncomfortable, mindful of the PDA.)

GRACE

Hey, Evan, did you see there's a vending machine? You were hungry, right?

EVAN

Yeah. Yeah, maybe I'll grab something. Do you want anything?

GRACE

No thanks, I'm good.

ANDY

You sure? When'd you eat last?

GRACE

I'm not hungry.

ANDY

Come on, get something. Here, you know what?

(He pulls out some change from his pocket and gives it to EVAN.)

Get her something, wouldja?

(To GRACE.)

What do you want: chips, pretzels, granola bar?

GRACE (an inaudible sigh)

Granola bar.

ANDY (to EVAN)

A granola bar.

(EVAN heads for the door.)

GRACE (hinting, to ANDY)

Thank you, Evan.

ANDY (appeasing)

Thanks, buddy.

EVAN

No problem.

(He exits.)

ANDY (calling after him)

And some Cheetos for me!

(To GRACE.)

I was gonna say thank you. What's wrong?

GRACE

Nothing. Just tired.

ANDY

That's 'cause you've gotta eat.

GRACE

Yeah, maybe.

ANDY

I'm telling you, sitting in the car all day like that? Your body forgets to tell you, but you gotta eat.

GRACE

Yeah. Probably.

ANDY

You want shotgun for the last leg? That cushion in the back seat is shit.

GRACE

I don't know how much better the front seat is.

ANDY

Well, you'd be sitting next to *me*.

GRACE

Ha. Appealing, but I'd hate to break up the Blackjack talk.

ANDY

Eh, I'm about done with that anyway. He's a lost cause.

GRACE

Hey.

ANDY

I'm *joking*. We're gonna rule the table together, how's that?

GRACE

Better.

ANDY

Plus, you've gotta sit shotgun so they can get some time alone.

GRACE

We can't force it, though, we gotta just... let it happen naturally, you know?

ANDY

It's completely natural. He's a dude and she's a girl.

GRACE

I think they'd feel a little awkward in your car, though.

ANDY

Well maybe we could start things off; make it feel a little more inviting.

GRACE

What, like, you wanna make out? While you're driving?

ANDY

Maybe not make out, but we could do other stuff... you know, so I can keep my eyes on the... *road*... *head* facing forward...

GRACE (laughs)

Ugh, come on!

ANDY

(He playfully moves towards her.)

Just like that one time...

GRACE

Jesus Christ, Andy, we're *with* people!

ANDY

OK, OK. We can wait till the hotel room, you horny freak.

(PENNY enters from the bathroom.)

PENNY

Pee turned into a poop, sorry!

GRACE

Oh! I forgot you were in there.

PENNY

Don't worry, I wasn't listening. Who's a horny freak?

GRACE

Nothing. No one.

ANDY

She was just telling me all the dirty stuff she's gonna do to me in the hotel room, no big deal.

PENNY

Wait, we're not splitting rooms by gender?

(To GRACE, quieter.)

You told me we were splitting rooms by *gender*.

ANDY

Yeah, that's how it'll start out, but after a few drinks I'm sure you guys'll...

PENNY

(Overlapping, getting nervous.)

Oh God...

ANDY

What? Isn't that what you want?

PENNY

Well, *yeah*... but I can't have all this pressure on the situation. I mean, you can't push me out of the nest and expect me to *fly* right away, I have a, a—a whole *checklist* to get through before I feel self-assured enough to sleep with someone I barely know.

ANDY

(As if gently stepping away from a bomb.)

OK, well, if it's not happening then, no big deal. We'll keep it the way it is.

PENNY (to GRACE)

Can't you just find out if he likes me? This would be so much easier.

ANDY

Why don't *you* ask him?

PENNY

Because he's a *nice* guy, and that makes everything more difficult. Nice guys are just... I don't kn—they piddle around. They're all like, "Is this OK? Can I touch you here?" It's like, *yeah*, just hurry up and take my clothes off before I can no longer convince myself you look kind of like Aaron Paul!

GRACE (laughs)

Aww, Jesse Pinkman!

PENNY

I know, he's so cute, isn't he?

(She lets out a "girly" squeal.)

We're gonna have such a good time; I've always wanted to go on vacation with you!

ANDY

It *is* gonna be pretty sick. As long as I can own on the tables, we'll be drinking free all weekend.

PENNY

The tables? Are you kidding? Me and Grace are gonna be at the clubs, dude, where ladies drink free anyway.

(EVAN enters with snacks.)

ANDY

I'd like to see a place where anybody seriously drinks free.

PENNY

No, really! I found at least three or four!

ANDY

On Yelp?

PENNY

No, on that off-brand Vegas hotels app.

EVAN

It's not really granola, but...

ANDY

There has to be a catch. Free drinks?

GRACE

Oh no, this is perfect, I love Clif Bars. How come you didn't get one?

PENNY

Well, it has to be before 11:30.

EVAN

I didn't have any change.

ANDY

Right, before all the horny guys show up.

GRACE

Here, take half.

PENNY

And you have to wear a wet tee-shirt.

EVAN

No, it's yours!

ANDY

What?! No. I'm gonna take a piss and then we're leaving. No one is going to a club like that.

(He exits into the bathroom.)

GRACE (still to EVAN)

Seriously, take half.

EVAN

I'm good, thank you though.

GRACE (smiles)

It's fine, you can share your snack with me later.

EVAN

Oh, wow. Wow—third grade nostalgia points.

GRACE

Hey, if it weren't for you, I never would've tried Dunkaroos.

EVAN

Well. I probably never would've tried celery sticks and peanut butter if it weren't for you.

GRACE

Yeah, why *did* you always trade with me? Dunkaroos are clearly better.

EVAN

I don't know, I...guess I really like celery.

PENNY

Aw, man, now I kind of want a snack.

GRACE

There's a vending machine outside.

PENNY (hinting)

I wish I had some change...

GRACE

Sorry, I don't have any. Evan, do you have any?

EVAN

Uhh, no. Sorry.

PENNY

That's fine... I'll, uhh, see what I can scrounge up in the car.

(She exits.)

EVAN

You knew I didn't have any...

GRACE (overlapping)

I know, I'm sorry...

EVAN (overlapping)

You don't have to be so obvious about it.

GRACE (overlapping)

Do you like her? I know it's weird, her being my cousin and all, but she's so perky and funny and I just thought...

EVAN

It's fine. Don't worry about it.

GRACE

You don't like her.

EVAN

Grace, come on...

GRACE (overlapping)

I know, I know...

EVAN (overlapping)

You don't have to...

GRACE (overlapping)

I know.

EVAN (overlapping)

...make it into this...

GRACE (overlapping)

It would just be so...

EVAN

I know.

GRACE

No, not like that.

EVAN

Like what?

GRACE

Convenient; that's not what I meant.

EVAN

I didn't say convenient.

GRACE

I know, but that's what you were thinking.

EVAN

No I wasn't.

GRACE

It would just be so *natural*. *Effortless*. It's not convenient; it's more like...

EVAN

(After giving her time to answer.)

Convenient.

GRACE

No. There's a better word. I can't think of it right now, but there *is* a better word.

EVAN

OK.

GRACE

Seriously! I'll think of it. I'll tell you as soon as I think of it.

EVAN

OK.

An Excerpt from Act I, Scene 2

ANDY

I don't know how many ways I can make it clear to you. We're not calling Triple A.

PENNY

(She speaks out of bewildered amazement.)

Excuse me? We *gave* you the chance to fix the car. Two hours, we gave you. And you failed. We don't have another option *but* to call Triple A.

ANDY

Calling Triple A never *was* an option, if you didn't hear me the first twelve times.

PENNY

Well then, how the fuck do you plan on us getting out of here?

ANDY

I don't know, OK? I don't. Is that what you want me to say? I don't fucking know yet. Let me think.

PENNY

Thinking time is over! It's time to act! I want a realistic solution, right now!

GRACE (mediating)

OK, let's think about our options. Do we know anyone close by?

PENNY

You mean, closer than a three day drive from Virginia? No, I don't think so!

EVAN

Everyone I know is in Virginia.

GRACE

Me too.

PENNY

(To no one in particular.)

Ugghh!

EVAN

We could wait for someone to drive by.

ANDY

Someone who happens to be a mechanic?

EVAN

Maybe... I'm just trying to think of everything.

GRACE

What about a taxi? We could get a taxi into town.

ANDY

You guys can. I'm not leaving my car here.

EVAN

If we have to come back anyway, it's just a waste of money.

PENNY

But we could leave Andy here! He's obviously so attached to his car; it sounds like the best plan for everybody! I'm not even being sarcastic; I'm totally serious.

GRACE

We're not leaving anyone here.

PENNY

Well then, we're back to Triple A, and, I have to say, as of yet, no one has been able to give me a good reason why we're not doing that.

EVAN

(Resigning to the idea.)

Maybe it *is* an option, man; maybe they wouldn't need to see your license.

ANDY

It gets entered into a database as soon as I make the call.

EVAN

I have coverage. Maybe I could call.

ANDY

The car gets put in the database too. They check it against outstanding tickets, and outdated registration—any type of violation.

PENNY

What are you, like a criminal or something?

ANDY

(Hesitating just a moment.)

No.

Jesus Christ... are you? PENNY

No! GRACE

Oh my God. EVAN
(Shaking his head, to himself.)

Are you kidding me?! PENNY

Penny... GRACE

What the fuck did you do?! PENNY (to ANDY)

Nothing. GRACE

What kind of violation would get him checked against a *database*? PENNY (to GRACE)

It's nothing, it's just this... GRACE

No! I'm not talking to her about that. ANDY (overlapping)

I have a right to know! PENNY

The hell you do! ANDY

I'm being dragged across the country by a *fugitive*; you don't think that *concerns* me? PENNY

I am *not*, a fugitive. ANDY

PENNY

Then what are you?

ANDY

I'm nothing! I didn't do anything!

PENNY

Tell me what the fuck kind of violation, or I swear to God, I am calling the cops!

GRACE

Penny.

EVAN (overlapping)

I don't think there's any need to...

PENNY (overlapping)

No! I fucking will; I won't even think twice about it!

GRACE

We're not calling the cops—do you really think that's a good idea?

PENNY

I don't feel safe with this guy!

EVAN

Calling the cops would definitely *not* be a good idea.

PENNY

What, am I all alone here? Am I the only one in the dark here? You guys both knew about this?

EVAN

I... knew parts of it. I still don't know everything.

PENNY

(She is very scared now.)

Oh my God.

GRACE

Penny, it's not a big deal; if we could just *explain*...

PENNY

(Overlapping, panicking, looking for her anxiety medicine.)

Oh my God. I—Grace, I need my... where is my purse?

GRACE

(Looking frantically.)

Uhh, OK, OK, just...

PENNY

(Overlapping, reaching for her phone in her pocket.)

No, wait, I need to... I'm sorry. I need to call the...

(She heads to a corner of the room, pulling out her phone while she walks.)

ANDY

You're not calling the police!

(She gets to the corner, stops, shakily puts the phone to her ear.)

ANDY

Hey!

(He sprints over to her and tries to grab the phone.)

PENNY

Get away from me! Get *off!*

GRACE (overlapping)

Andy, stop! Just—

(PENNY and ANDY briefly struggle, though ANDY soon gets the upper hand. He takes the phone and keeps it out of her reach.)

PENNY

Give that back; you can't just *take* that!

ANDY

You're not calling the damn cops!

PENNY

I can call the cops whenever I fucking want to, asshole! I'm a fucking *citizen!*

ANDY

You can have this back after you calm down... stop acting like a God damn two year old.

(He puts the phone in his pocket and turns back to the others.)

PENNY

Give that back, right now! I'm not fucking around anymore!

GRACE

You should give it back.

ANDY

After she calms down!

GRACE

She's not gonna call the cops.

PENNY

Fuck that! I'll call them the second that phone hits my hand!

GRACE (to ANDY)

Getting her all worked up like this, it's not...

EVAN

(Overlapping, mediating.)

Maybe if you just tell her what happened, she would promise not to call the cops.

(To PENNY.)

Would you do that?

PENNY

What are you, *bargaining*? I reserve the right to call them anytime I want! And it doesn't have to be *my* phone. The minute one of you goes to sleep, or lets your guard down for one second, *bam!* I'm on top of it; game over!

ANDY

She's a fucking psycho! She should be restrained!

GRACE

OK, Penny? You're never gonna get your phone back if you don't agree to make some compromises here. Can you listen to what Andy has to say?

PENNY

Sure, I'll listen. But if I feel unsafe, I'm calling the damn police.

ANDY

I don't wanna tell her. She'll call them either way.

GRACE

But after she understands what happened...

ANDY (overlapping)
She's never gonna feel safe! This girl would be afraid of a strong breeze!

PENNY
(Coy, ugly, to ANDY.)
What other choice you got?

ANDY
You think I don't understand blackmail?

GRACE
Andy, just tell her. Please. I want this to be over.

EVAN
The sooner we get this out, the sooner we can get back to figuring out a plan.

GRACE
(After a pause, to ANDY.)
OK?

ANDY (scoffs)
Fine. I'll fuckin' tell her. A couple of the lacrosse guys and I went to this party, a couple of months ago. And there was this girl there who was talking to me, and I didn't really think much of it, you know, I'm taken or whatever. So she goes away for a while, and then she comes back a little later on—and I can tell she's pretty wasted at this point. And she starts, you know, hitting on me pretty hard and getting offended when I'm not really, reciprocating, and I kind of—*gently*, nudge her aside to get by her, and her drunk ass falls on the ground and she's *screaming*, saying I abused her and she's gonna press charges! So I leave; I don't think anything of it. And a couple hours after I'd gone to sleep, the cops are knocking on my door, telling me that little bitch told them I—I had *forced* her into... and—and then *pushed* her, aggressively, into the wall when I was done, and that there are bruises up and down her arms and legs to prove it! And the *best* part, the *kicker*, is she's underage, and I'm getting charged with sexual *assault!* How she even got into that party is beyond me. And I have to go to *court*, in June, and since it's a felony charge, I'm not allowed to leave the state until I do. So, yeah.

GRACE
See? It's just crazy and ridiculous. We already had this whole trip planned and didn't want to ruin it.

PENNY
Wow.

EVAN

It's bizarre, really. I mean, I didn't know she had bruises.

ANDY

Probably didn't. Probably fuckin' out of thin air.

EVAN

Well, either you do or you don't.

ANDY

What does that mean?

EVAN

Well, either the cop saw them or he didn't, but it made it onto the report, so...

ANDY

What are you saying?

EVAN

Nothing. It's just, that's probably the only reason she has a case, is all.

PENNY

So... so, you're a felon.

GRACE (a little sharp)

Obviously he didn't do it, so no.

PENNY

It doesn't matter. You're breaking the law; you're breaking the law *right now* by being here, in a different state; that makes you a felon.

GRACE

I would like it if we could all just, get past this, focus on the car, and get back to our trip.

PENNY

I don't want to go to Vegas anymore. I want to go home.

GRACE

Come on.

PENNY

No! I don't feel comfortable with this. I want to go home. I—I won't call the cops; you guys can do whatever you want; just get me out of here. Please.

EVAN

I have an idea. Why don't we check our phones, find a tow service—a private service that will accept cash. We won't have to use our names; we won't have to tell them anything. We get the car towed, get into town, and then we can decide what to do from there. I'm willing to throw in the cash I brought for Vegas.

GRACE

That's a great idea. I'll throw in.

ANDY

Fine.

GRACE

Penny?

PENNY

(A moment of disbelief that they'd ask her for money.)

No, this is a great idea. Just great. I get to give away all my money, so this asshole can dodge the law. Awesome. Here.

(She takes a wad of cash from her purse and slaps it into EVAN's hand.)

PENNY

Just call the fucking truck.

(EVAN pulls out his phone and begins to work.)

EVAN

OK, the closest one is twenty-four miles away. We're really in the boonies. It might be expensive.

PENNY

Awesome.

EVAN (sighs)

Calling.

(Several long seconds pass. EVAN takes the phone away from his ear.)

EVAN

They didn't answer.

GRACE

(Already having realized the reason.)

What time is it.

Eight twenty-three.
 (Realizing.)
 Aw, damn it.

EVAN

They're *closed?!?*

PENNY

Must be.

EVAN

Oh my God.

PENNY

Check the hours.

GRACE

They don't have a website.

EVAN

What about another one?

GRACE

Next closest one is forty miles...
 (Checking his phone.)
 They don't have a website either.

EVAN

Call them.

GRACE

(He dials and puts the phone to his ear and remains listening for the duration of the next section. Several long seconds pass.)

Oh my GOD!

PENNY (wailing)

Would you shut the fuck up?

ANDY

Why don't *you* shut the fuck up! You don't have any room to talk, ever! You're the whole reason we're stuck in this fuck; this is *all your fault!*

PENNY

ANDY

Oh, get over yourself, you fuckin' queen!

GRACE

Stop fighting!

ANDY (overlapping)

You know, maybe it's time you took a look at yourself, a good hard look, and realize the kind of image you're presenting to the people around you. You're a crazy, psycho bitch, and why would anyone want to spend their time with you? They don't!

GRACE (overlapping)

Stop it!

ANDY (overlapping)

And everyone here? Maybe they're just too fuckin' *polite* to say it and you'll fuckin' *thank* me the day you wake up.

PENNY

Go fuck yourself, asshole!

ANDY (overlapping)

But you know what? You probably *won't* wake up. You'll probably end up in a hole somewhere, too fuckin' caught up in yourself to successfully *interact*, with another person.

PENNY (overlapping)

Shut *up!*

GRACE (overlapping)

Andy! Stop!

EVAN (overlapping)

Guys, guys!

(They are silent. The distant sound of a motorcycle wafts into the room. It gets closer, slows down, and idles.)

EVAN

It's a motorcycle.

(Silence while they each register the sound, contemplating what to do. After a moment, PENNY grabs her purse.)

PENNY
I'm going.

EVAN
Maybe he can help us fix the car.

GRACE
Penny, wait. You don't even know
that guy.

ANDY
We need hardware.

PENNY
I don't care! I want to get out of
here!

EVAN
Then maybe taking one of us into
town is a good idea.

GRACE
It's not a good idea! It's not safe!

ANDY
We still can't get the truck till
tomorrow!

PENNY
This isn't safe!

(PENNY crosses to ANDY and holds out her hand,
deliberately.)

PENNY (to ANDY)
Give me my phone.

ANDY
I can't trust you.

PENNY
Give me my *fucking* phone, right now!

ANDY
I can't, trust you!

(The motorcycle is heard revving up and driving
away. PENNY sprints towards the door.)

PENNY
No, no, no, no, wait!

ANDY
(Yelling after her.)
If you tell him anything, I swear to God!

PENNY
(Overlapping, screaming.)
Wait! Please! I'm being held hostage; please help me!

(ANDY slams her phone onto the ground. It shatters. PENNY stops. Silence for a moment. She slowly turns and faces ANDY.)

(Blackout.)

An Excerpt from Act II, Scene 1

EVAN

(After a moment.)

I've been meaning to say it for a while. I know it's been a long time and we never talked about it after, but... well, I still don't know exactly *what*, but it meant *something*, I know that, and I've thought about it. I still think about it.

GRACE

Me too.

EVAN

You do?

GRACE

Yes.

EVAN

You do. Wow. Well, that's great!

GRACE

Yeah.

EVAN

And, umm... and how do you feel about it?

GRACE

(After a pause, with difficulty.)

It's not that I don't... I just haven't really taken the time to...

EVAN

How come?

GRACE

Because this is how it *is*. I'm with Andy, and... I can't. I'm sorry, I—love him.

EVAN

But why?

GRACE

I can't answer that right now, I—I need time to think.

EVAN (to himself)

You shouldn't *have* to think about it.

GRACE

I don't do well under pressure.

EVAN

I—OK. Well, I don't want to pressure you.

GRACE

I love him. I do. I'm... so sorry, Evan.

EVAN

No, I know, I—Look, I'm only saying, if there's any shred of doubt, if there's *anything* that might have some meaning between us, then... I don't know, don't you owe it to yourself to see what that is?

GRACE

Yeah, but...

EVAN (overlapping)

You do. *I* do.

GRACE

Evan... it's not like some walk in the park. It's hard. You said it yourself, how easy it is to wind up like a slave of your own life, or whatever you said—for *convenience*. It's not, just as easy as picking yourself up and saying how you feel, or even letting yourself *think* about how you feel; it's *not*.

EVAN

I never said it was easy. But this is what you do, Grace, you drift along and you're so *passive* about stuff that you never let yourself really... *decide* how you feel.

GRACE (a little hurt)

I'm not *that* passive, am I?

EVAN

Oh, Grace, you're the most passive person I've ever met. Besides me, maybe. You're majoring in Art History, a career that allows you be passionate about creative, emotional stuff that *other* people have done while never having to go there yourself. I think it's an incredible parallel to your personality—and I *like* that about you. I really do, but I also think it can be dangerous.

(Trying a new tactic.)

What would *you* do if you weren't trying to make everyone else happy?

GRACE

(Surprised by the question.)

I... I don't know. I'd open my own art gallery, I guess.

EVAN

OK. Where?

GRACE

I—gosh, I don't know. Paris.

EVAN

And in this gallery, you'd have paintings you loved?

GRACE

Yeah.

EVAN

Talk about them with other people who loved them?

GRACE

Of course.

EVAN

Well, you know, there are *planes*. That could take you to Paris. There are *apartments*, that you could live in. There are *buildings*, I'm sure, that could function as a storefront for your gallery.

GRACE

(She smiles, now knowing what he's up to.)

Evan, I appreciate what you're saying, and you making a good point, but you don't understand what it would mean for me to stop and *question* everything—uproot *everything*, at *this point*.

EVAN

Yes I do. I understand it's terrifying. And I want you to do it anyway—for *you*.

GRACE

You can do it. *You* can do it then, pick up and go to California, learn to surf; you have your degree already; you don't even need to go back.

EVAN

I am. I am doing that.

GRACE

(Not taking it seriously.)

No you're not.

EVAN

I am! I'm literally going to do it; I was planning on getting that bus out of Vegas.

GRACE

No you weren't.

EVAN (defensive)

Yes, I was! I really was. And it has nothing to do with what happened tonight; I don't care about *them*. That's not anything. I care about *you*. And I needed to tell you before I left.

GRACE

Tell me what?

EVAN

You *know!* You said you knew. Even if I'm too much of a wimp to say it out loud, whatever you're thinking, *that's* what that is.

GRACE

I... Evan, I can't *respond* to that right now.

EVAN

Come with me.

GRACE

I—*what?* That's crazy!

EVAN

What's crazy about it?

GRACE

It just is. Getting on some *bus*, Evan? To California? I—I've never even been there.

EVAN

Neither have I.

GRACE

I have family.

EVAN

So do I.

GRACE

I'm not supposed to just...

EVAN (overlapping)

Don't—say “supposed to” like that. It's starting to... like *convenient*. What are you “supposed” to do? That's all relative—it's all *crap!*

GRACE

It's my life, though.

EVAN

It's my life too. And I'm not trying to take anything away from it; what I'm saying is, I'm done with... I'm just *done*. And I'm not saying California is the perfect thing for me, necessarily, but I need to get out of this *current* I'm riding until I can figure out what current I wanna be on. Or if I even wanna be in the water at all. You know?

GRACE

Yeah.

EVAN (overlapping)

I mean, *you*... you've gotta want that too. That's like, basic human... I mean, you've *gotta*.

GRACE

I do want that.

EVAN

You do?

GRACE

Yeah.

EVAN

(Trying to nail it down.)

You *really* do?

GRACE

Yes! Of course I want that—in an ideal world? That sounds great.

EVAN

Then come with me.

GRACE

Evan, you're not getting it. As much as I might like to and as great as it sounds, I can't. I have responsibilities, call them *obligations* even, and I... I mean, what you're asking me to do is *crazy!* All my stuff is there.

Get it shipped.

EVAN

Get it shipped? What, like, here's my forwarding address and just *do* it? Tell *Andy* that?

GRACE

Yeah, tell him that. Didn't you say you owed it to yourself to decide how you really feel?

EVAN

Yeah, but...

GRACE

(She lets out a frustrated sigh.)

Agh...

EVAN

What?

GRACE

My family is gonna be there next week, expecting me to walk.

EVAN

What do you care what they *expect*?

GRACE

Because I *do*!

EVAN

What's really holding you back?

GRACE

That! That stuff. My life!

EVAN

Fuck it. Come.

GRACE

(Another frustrated sigh.)

Agh...

EVAN

Please come.

GRACE

Evan...

Grace. EVAN

No. GRACE

(There is a pause while they both let the word sink in.)

I'm sor— GRACE

(EVAN abruptly pulls in and kisses her. She responds for a moment, then breaks away.)

No... I can't. I'm sorry. GRACE

(EVAN steps back and begins to pace. A few moments pass.)

Evan... GRACE

Do you think he's innocent? EVAN (abruptly, sharply)

What? GRACE

Andy. Do you think he's innocent? EVAN

How could you ask me that? GRACE
(After registering the question.)

I want to know if you think he's innocent. EVAN

Of course I think he's innocent. GRACE (a warning)

I'm just saying, it seems like there are some holes. EVAN

Holes?!

GRACE

Yeah, *holes*; holes in his story.

EVAN

Are you kidding me?

GRACE

What?

EVAN

Goodnight.

GRACE

(She starts to go. EVAN tries to cut her off.)

Wait! You're leaving?

EVAN

Yes.

GRACE

EVAN
(He gently places a hand on her arm.)
Hey. I was just asking.

GRACE
Yeah, well, asking was too much. I mean, seriously? You too? You're supposed to be my—Of *course* I'd believe my boyfriend about something like that! And now I have to... like I'm supposed to *rethink* everything now! You put *doubt* in my head, and it's going to sit in my stomach like a *rock*. *Thank* you.

I...

EVAN

Goodnight, Evan.

GRACE (overlapping)

(She exits. EVAN watches the door close.)

(Blackout.)

An Excerpt from Act II, Scene 2

(A brief pause before ANDY looks back to his phone.
GRACE kneels beside him.)

GRACE

Hey.

ANDY (looking up)

Huh?

GRACE

(She hugs him.)

I love you.

ANDY

I love you too, baby. Is everything OK?

GRACE

Of course. Just happy to see you is all.

ANDY

Well, I'm happy to see you too.

(The embrace ends.)

This has been a great start to my day so far.

GRACE

Yeah?

ANDY

I mean, with the truck on its way, and you, and...

(Opening an email on his phone.)

...check out this email I got from my lawyer yesterday.

GRACE

(Taking the phone from him.)

Oh!

ANDY

Yeah, I wanted to tell you last night, but you were asleep. It's great news. He said it doesn't even *matter* that we were alone in the bedroom; that someone would had to have seen us together or she can't prove anything!

(GRACE doesn't respond, fixated on the word "alone." Her eyes remain glued to the phone.)

So, it's good news!

(She says nothing, stands.)

What's wrong?

GRACE

I, umm... you were alone in the bedroom with her?

ANDY

Well, yeah. I mean, I left something in there and she followed me. We were alone for a second, Grace; nothing happened.

GRACE

Why wouldn't you tell me that?

ANDY

What do you mean?

GRACE

Like you don't think that's something I'd wanna know about?

ANDY

You're acting like I'm lying or something, like I...

GRACE (overlapping)

No, I don't think you're lying...

ANDY (overlapping)

I was never being untruthful.

GRACE (overlapping)

I think you *omitted* something that...

ANDY (overlapping)

Omitted?

GRACE

Omitted. It's when you withhold something that...

ANDY (overlapping, snapping)

I know what it *means!*

GRACE (taken aback)

I... OK. I'm sorry.

(Her head spins.)

I need to... sit down, I think.

ANDY

What, you think I didn't tell you on purpose? To try and keep it from you? Fine, here it is: Grace, I was alone with her in the bedroom, for one second, because I went back in and she followed me. That's it. And I didn't mention it 'cause I didn't think it was an important part of the story. All right? It's so irrelevant that... yeah. It wasn't relevant.

GRACE

I mean, that's great and everything... I just wish you would've *told* me, *then*.

ANDY

Would I lie to you about something like that?

GRACE

Well, jeez, I mean, *yeah*, if you still wanted to *be* with me.

ANDY

Well, *no*, the answer's no, 'cause I would never do anything to *hurt* you.

GRACE

I *guess*...

ANDY (overlapping)

So the question is, whether you believe me or not.

GRACE

(There is doubt in her voice.)

Yeah.

ANDY

(He takes her shoulders.)

No. Do you, believe me.

GRACE

(She works to make eye contact.)

Yeah.

ANDY

OK.

(A pause.)

Look, I'm sorry for all this. I know what it must be putting you through. But it's gonna be over soon, I promise. This guy's good; he's gonna get me out of it. We'll be home free.

GRACE (numb)

OK.

ANDY

OK. You OK?

(PENNY enters from outside.)

PENNY

Good. You're awake.

GRACE

Hey.

PENNY

(Noticing that GRACE is upset.)

Hey yourself. What's wrong?

GRACE

Nothing.

PENNY

(She is suspicious of ANDY.)

OK... Well, in other news, I can't find Evan.

ANDY

What do you mean?

PENNY

What do you mean, "what do I mean." I *mean*, I was just outside; he wasn't.

ANDY

Well, where did he go?

PENNY

What do I look like to you? I just said, I didn't see him.

ANDY

Jesus, the truck's gonna be here soon.

(He jogs off.)

PENNY

Now that *he's* gone. What's up.

GRACE

Nothing.

PENNY

Grace?

GRACE

It's nothing.

PENNY (frustrated)

Oh, come on! Like I don't know you by now? Like it would be such a tragedy to let me in for once? 'Cause you think I'll freak out? If you wanna be all weird and contemplative, fine, but don't act like I'm making something up, like...

GRACE (overlapping)

You're not making it up, Penny. I just don't wanna talk about it, OK?

PENNY

(After a pause.)

Well, why not?

GRACE

I just can't.

PENNY (disappointed)

Fine. You don't wanna talk about it; I get it. But I'm gonna be honest with you, I don't like that guy, if you haven't noticed, and I don't like that you're with him. And I'm gonna be patient about it because it's your decision, but the minute he says something, or *does* something... you come straight to me. Deal?

GRACE

OK.

PENNY

Seriously. I'm worried about you.

GRACE (realizing)

Is Evan really gone?

PENNY

(After a pause, she is suspicious.)

Yeah, speaking of, what were you guys talking about last night? I saw you.

GRACE

Oh, nothing, we just...

PENNY (overlapping)

I doubt it's nothing, if it's something you think he'd *leave* over.

GRACE

(Nailing it down.)

So he's still here.

PENNY

(As if it's obvious.)

Of course he's still here; I just said that so Andy would leave.

GRACE (relieved)

OK.

PENNY (worried)

Grace, what is going on?

GRACE

I have something I need to ask you.

PENNY (confused)

OK? What.

GRACE

Would you still come to Vegas?

PENNY

What?

GRACE

You said, before, that you wanted to go home after we got into town, and, if I asked you, as a personal favor to me, would you still come to Vegas.

PENNY

(After a pause, she is bewildered.)

Yeah, I guess, but...

GRACE

(Overlapping, pleading.)

Just please say you'll come.

PENNY

No—come *on*, you have to tell me why. I—I'm starting to get freaked out over here, and...

GRACE

(Overlapping, breaking down.)

I just—I need to have someone there, OK? I, I—I don't wanna be there with just him; I need to have...

PENNY

(Overlapping, trying to calm her down.)

Whoa, whoa, whoa—hey. Slow down. What do you mean, just him?

ANDY (from off)

Hey! Truck's here!

(ANDY starts to jog in from off, EVAN walking slower behind.)

PENNY

(To GRACE, not really understanding why, but recognizing the need nonetheless.)

Yeah. I'll come.