

CAN'T GET THERE FROM HERE

By Scott Haan

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CAN'T GET THERE FROM HERE

A Ten Minute Dramatic Comedy Duet

By Scott Haan

SYNOPSIS: Rita and Sean are nearing the end of a weekend in New York City, and their flight home is only a few hours away...or is it? When they learn there is a problem with their flight, they have to make other arrangements to get home quickly, but an escalating series of mistakes casts doubt on whether they will ever see their home again. In this story, you'll find it impossible not to laugh at their predicament...because it didn't happen to you!

CAST OF CHARACTERS

(1 female, 1 male)

SEAN (m) Husband. *(45 lines)*
 RITA (f) Wife. *(49 lines)*

TIME: A Sunday morning at 7 a.m. in June.

SETTING: A hotel room in New York City.

SET

On Stage Right is a table with a chair, a laptop computer, a cell phone, and a pen and paper. On Stage Left is a second chair and an open suitcase with clothing (which can be on the floor or on another table or surface, whichever is easier).

PRODUCTION NOTES

If possible, the actress playing RITA should wear a cast or sling on one arm, as a constant reminder to the audience that she is injured. It doesn't matter which arm is "hurt"; the actress can choose based on whichever arm is easier to do without.

Lighting changes to differentiate the story from when the actors address the audience are optional. You may want to do without them for simplicity, and to keep things moving at a brisk pace. If you decide to include lighting changes, use them where indicated, during the longer fourth wall breaks. (They are not necessary for the quick break during the story and at the very end.) If you decide not to do lighting changes, we suggest having the actors walk to the very front of the stage for the fourth wall breaks instead, as close to the audience as possible.

AUTHOR'S NOTE

This is a true story that happened when my wife and I flew to New York for the weekend to see a production of one of my plays. Only a few liberties were taken in order to condense the incident down into a ten-minute play; the most significant is that the last kick-in-the-teeth in the story, the flight being delayed for 24 hours a second time due to mechanical issues with the plane, actually happened when we arrived at the airport and learned this news from an airline kiosk. In the play, everything was kept in the same hotel room so that the story only has one location for easier staging. In real life, it was all I could do to stop from dropping to the floor in the fetal position in the middle of a crowded airport.

PRODUCTION HISTORY

Can't Get There From Here was first presented on June 3-5, 2016 as part of the 10-Minute Play Festival at Civic Theatre of Greater Lafayette in Lafayette, IN with the cast as follows:

SEAN ----- David Dietz

RITA ----- Julie Doan

Director ----- Neil Radtke

Producer ----- Steven Koehler

DEDICATION

To Rhonda, for putting up with me and for convincing me that it might be a funny story
someday.

AT RISE: *At lights up, SEAN and RITA are standing side-by-side CS, facing the audience. Optional: fourth wall lighting.*

RITA: *(To the audience.)* The following is a true story.

SEAN: *(To the audience, pleading.)* Please don't judge me.

End of breaking the fourth wall. Optional: lighting change. SEAN moves to the SR table and sits down, typing on the laptop. RITA sits in the SL chair. She is cradling one arm, which is posed as if it is broken, preferably in a cast or a sling. During the entire show, that arm remains motionless. She is just waking up.

RITA: *(Groggy.)* Mmmornin'. What'cha doin'?

SEAN: Hey, sleepy-head. Just checking in with the flight. We have to be at the airport in three hours. How did you sleep?

RITA: Not great. The pain in my arm kept waking me up again.

SEAN: You know, I figured out your scam with this so-called "frozen shoulder" thing. The doctor's visit, pretending you can't move your arm, throwing up on the plane... *(Pause.)* It's all an act to get me to wait on you hand and foot during this trip, isn't it?

RITA: *(Standing.)* Honey, don't be absurd. I wouldn't do that. Now draw me a bubble bath and give me an hour-long massage. Let's go! Chop-chop!

SEAN: *(Laughing.)* Yeah, I'll get right on that.

RITA rubs one of SEAN'S shoulders with her good hand.

RITA: I am sorry about the timing. I wish this didn't happen during our weekend getaway to New York. It's been a good trip anyway, though, right?

SEAN gives no response; his gaze is fixed on the screen with furrowed brows.

RITA: Hello? *(Testing his attention.)* By the way, I hope you don't mind that I always use your toothbrush to scrub the toilet bowl.

SEAN: *(A million miles away.)* That's great, babe. Huh. This is weird.

RITA: What?

SEAN: It's saying I can't check in until 24 hours before the flight, but it's only about five hours from now.

RITA: Must be a problem with the website.

SEAN: I guess. Let me check the flight info and make sure.

RITA: I can't wait to see the kids tonight. Can't believe how much I miss them after only three days.

SEAN: Me, too. I could be wrong, but I'm starting to think maybe we love them, or something.

RITA: Oh, you're talking crazy. They're monsters. Sweet little m—

SEAN: *(Eyes wide, at the screen.)* No.

RITA: What?

SEAN: No no no no NO! WHAT?!

RITA: What's going on?

SEAN: According to this, the plane doesn't leave today, it leaves TOMORROW.

RITA: Let me see.

SEAN: *(Pointing at the screen.)* Look. It says June 30th instead of June 29th.

RITA: Our flight back isn't until tomorrow? Did you book it for the wrong date?

SEAN: I— I guess I must have. I was in a hurry that night, and— Oh man, I'm such an IDIOT. I don't blame you if you think less of me.

RITA holds SEAN'S face with her good hand, and looks him in the eyes with a sly smile.

RITA: Sweetie. That isn't possible.

SEAN: Hysterical. You're on a roll today. What do we do?

RITA: Well, we can't stay another day. We both have to work tomorrow, and my sister can't keep the kids overnight again. Plus, we have to check out of the hotel in a few hours.

SEAN: You're right. Let me see. *(Typing.)* Maybe we can book another flight home for today. Do we have enough money on the card for two more tickets?

RITA: We should. Depends on how much they are.

SEAN: Um...Okay, here's a flight leaving LaGuardia at eleven a.m., and...ouch. Six hundred each.

RITA: Twelve hundred? Yikes. But I don't think we have much choice. You book 'em and I'll start packing. *(Starts rearranging clothes inside of the open suitcase with her good arm.)* We'll need to get to the airport earlier than we thought.

SEAN: *(While typing.)* Got it. Sorry, babe. I know this was a bone-headed move, but in my defense, I WAS smart enough to write a play that was produced in New York City, so that has to count for something, right?

RITA: Mm, I would say they cancel each other out.

SEAN: Gee, thanks. Okay, done. Flight booked. Here's our new itinerary. *(Leans back and rubs his temples.)*

RITA: *(Comes over to look at the screen.)* Great. So do we get home any...earlier...? Um, honey?

SEAN: Yeah?

RITA: This says we'll arrive in Indianapolis at about nine p.m. on the twenty-ninth.

SEAN: Yep.

RITA: Of July.

SEAN: *(Bolt upright.)* What?!

RITA: *(Pointing.)* You didn't book it for today, you booked it for a MONTH from today.

SEAN: *(Eyes wide, he leans in and looks closely at the screen, yelling even louder.)* Are you— NO!!!

Furious, SEAN jumps out of his chair, knocking it backwards, and begins what can only be described as a full-body convulsion. Angry, he flails around in the back, punching the air with his fists, kicking nothing, and mouthing angry outbursts. It's a spectacle of anger and frustration. Calmly, RITA steps forward and addresses the audience again. Optional: lighting change.

RITA: *(To the audience.)* We'll spare you from listening to what's happening back there. Just trust me when I say, he's using VERY colorful language. He's even inventing some clever new words. *(Beat, then a smile.)* I'm kind of proud.

Tired, SEAN calms down a bit and stands in one place, hands on his knees, resting. RITA returns to him. Optional: lighting change.

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