

# EMOTIONAL BAGGAGE

By Dennis Bush

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# Emotional Baggage

## A Collection of Captivating Comedic and Dramatic Monologues

by  
Dennis Bush

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## CAST OF CHARACTERS

*Emotional Baggage* may be performed with 13 actors (8 female, 5 male) each performing one character/one monologue or directors may opt for fewer actors playing multiple roles. There is also gender flexibility with some of the roles. Directors are free to arrange the order of the monologues, as they choose.

## SET

*Emotional Baggage* is a collection of monologues, each set in a different time and place. It can be performed on a bare stage or with very limited set pieces. Only minimal costuming is needed to suggest the characters.

## PRODUCTION HISTORY

*Emotional Baggage* includes monologues that are taken from Dennis Bush's plays, *Turn the Page*, *Play the Game*, *Scratching the Surface* and *Stop Time*. The plays from which they were taken have all had readings, workshops and full productions, including performances in New York. Original performers included Kelsey Torstveit, Emily White, Krystal Blackman, Samantha Ortiz, Ariana O'Rafter, Macy Cobb, Alex Knerr, Scott McKown, Jared Sikes, Ben Whitmire and Alex Rivera.

## EMOTIONAL BAGGAGE

### A Collection of Captivating Comedic and Dramatic Monologues

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#### Good Game

#### CHARACTER

**NOAH: Struggles with a lack of praise from his father.**

How hard would it have been? How much of a *challenge* would it have been for him to say, “Good game.” When he knew how hard I tried, how difficult would it have been for him to just say, “Good game. . . You did your best and I’m proud of you.” OK, the last part would never have happened but the first part—the “Good game”—was in the realm of possibilities. (*letting the anger subside; starting at the beginning*) My father was the assistant coach of my Little League baseball team. . . Our next door neighbor was the coach and my dad was his assistant. We were the Pirates. (*quick pause*) Named for the Pittsburgh Pirates Major League Baseball team not the Pirates of the Caribbean. (*pause*) I played outfield. I was a near-sighted eleven-year-old who wasn’t allowed to wear his glasses—*my glasses*—to play baseball because they might get broken or a ball might hit me in the face and break the lens and the broken glass would get in my eye and I’d be blind or—worse yet—I’d have to have an eye removed and get a glass one and surely the greatest tragedy a parent can suffer is having a child with a glass eye. (*pause*) So, there I was in right field without any. . . vision enhancement. (*quick pause*) I could barely see the batter at home plate, much less the ball when it was hit in my direction. I squinted really hard the minute I heard the sound of the ball making contact with a bat. I squinted in the hope that it would enable me to see the ball if it was coming at me. (*quick pause*) So I could catch it. . . So, it wouldn’t drop on the ground a few feet away from me and then I’d have to feel around for it and, then, have to throw it to one of the infielders who I couldn’t see very well. (*quick pause*) It was like playing a game inside a lava lamp. I was surrounded by amorphous blobs and shapes that kept moving. It wasn’t fun. It was not the slightest bit fun. (*pause*) And after every game, all the guys on the team would do this thing where you walk past the other team and high-five the guys on the other team and say, “Good game.” And after we did that, we’d go back to our dugout and the coaches would be there

and they'd high-five all the players and say, "Good game." (*pause*) Except my father. When I got to him, I'd have my hand up all ready to high-five and he'd give me a look like, "No, we won't be high-fiving, today. I doubt if we'll ever high-five. It would take a miracle of epic proportions for you to ever be worthy of a high-five from me." I know that's a lot of disapproval and disgust packed into one non-high-five moment, but it was like time slowed down to a crawl. Like, I'd be two people away from him and I'd see him high-five the guy two people in front of me and hear him say, "Good game," and time would slow down a little and, then, I'd see him high-five the kid right in front of me and I'd hear him say, "Good game," and time would slow down even more and then it would be my turn and it was like a half an hour went by in the non-high-five moment that was filled with disapproval and disgust and. . . disappointment. That's a lot of "dis" for an eleven-year-old to handle. It's a lot to handle at any age. (*pause*) How hard would it have been for him to say, "Good game" to me? (*angry*) How hard? Lie to me! Just say it. Say it like you mean it. Even if you don't mean it. Even if there's no way you could ever mean it, just say it. Just say, "Good game." He could have done that. He could have lied and made it seem like he wasn't. He lied about other things. He said other things that weren't true and he made it seem like they were. So, he could have done it. Just like he could have come to my band concerts and when I sang a solo at church. He could have done that. He *should* have done that. And he should have been proud of me. He should have stood there like everybody else's father and said, "Hey, that's my kid who sang that song. I'm proud of him." I wouldn't even have cared if he lied and said he taught me everything I know or that I got my musical talent from him—which is a total lie. I wouldn't have cared. I wouldn't even have disagreed. I might have rolled my eyes a little but I wouldn't have said anything to embarrass him. But he didn't give me that chance. He has a perfect non-attendance record for every activity I've ever been in that wasn't sports related. I hate him for that. I do. (*pause*) When I was twelve—my last year in Little League—I said, "I don't want to play, this year. I don't." My dad went through the roof. He was so mad. He was . . . furious. His anger had *fury*. It was fast and strong and when his fist hit me on the side of my head it was like getting beamed by a ninety-mile-an-hour fastball. I hit the floor and I remember my body bouncing like a superball. I bounced and hit the floor, again. I could feel the bump on my head swelling almost immediately. And he kicked me, while I was laying on the floor. Kicked me in the ribs. (*pause*) I didn't cry. I wouldn't give him the satisfaction. Usually, when he hit me, if I didn't cry, he'd keep hitting me until I did and then say, "I'll give you something to cry about," like he hadn't already done that. But, this time, I just laid on the floor and I looked up at him. I looked him in the eye. I stared at him. He

looked away. *He* looked away. *I* didn't. . . I never told anybody what happened. I never did. But the next day, our next door neighbor had a talk with my dad. He told him that he thought it would be best if he didn't help coach the team that year. He said he should just sit in the bleachers and watch my last year of Little League without having to worry about the coaching stuff. It wasn't a suggestion. It was a decision that had been made without my father's input. *(pause; reveling in the recollection of the moment)* It was a miracle of epic proportions. *(pause)* When the season started, the coach moved from right field to second base. And he told me to wear my glasses to play, no matter how much it worried my mother. *(pause)* Turns out, when I could see what was going on, I was good. I *caught* the ball, I *threw* the ball exactly where it was supposed to go. My batting average was .312. *(pause)* And at the end of every game, win or lose, the coach high-fived me and said, "Good game." *(pause)* I've still never heard that from my dad. *(pause)* It's too late, now. *(pause)* Maybe he was proud of me but just couldn't say it. That doesn't make it any easier. Even if it's true. It doesn't make it any easier. . . And it doesn't make it OK.

**END OF PLAY**

## Wandered-Off

### CHARACTER

#### **SHEILA: Wants to be found.**

When you're a little girl with a bossy older sister, you don't have much say in what kind of games you play. My sister and the kids in our neighborhood loved hide-and-seek, so that's what we played. *(pause)* It wasn't much fun for me. I didn't really like the hiding or the seeking. I still don't. If I have to look for something too long in a store, I stop wanting to find it. So, playing hide-and-seek didn't have much appeal for me. I played along because it's what my sister and the other kids said we were gonna play. Like I said, I didn't have much say in the matter. One Saturday afternoon, when I was eight, we were playing hide-and-seek, as usual, and I just wandered off. I'd been hiding for a while and got bored and I was annoyed that nobody had found me, yet. They couldn't have been looking very hard. Or maybe they were just really bad finders. Either way, I was bored and annoyed. So, I wandered off. Just walked away, like a fed-up factory worker walking off the job. *(pause)* At first, I was only going to go a couple of blocks to the health food store down the street and get one of those vegan oatmeal raisin cookies. They're delicious, though, if you eat too many of them, they're like a laxative. *(quick pause)* That's just a tip. Do what you want with the information. *(pause; getting back on track)* After I got the cookie, I kept walking. . . farther and farther away from my neighborhood. I must have walked a mile. When you're eight and you walk a mile from your neighborhood, you might as well be in a foreign country. Nothing looked familiar. . . not even remotely familiar. *(pause; SHE's reliving the walk)* When I got tired of walking, I sat down on a bench outside a grocery store. They had one of those horse rides. *(quick pause; then sharply)* Not a real horse. That would be messy. No one wants to step over big piles of horse. . . droppings, when they're going into a grocery store. *(quick pause)* The horse was a ride for little kids. You put a quarter in it and it rocked back and forth. *(pause)* I wanted to ride it, but I didn't have a quarter. So, I asked a lady with a big, lime-green purse to give me one and she did. I was a charming child. I was polite. I asked her with a sweet voice and pretty smile. *(pause; remembering)* You don't get to ride very long for a quarter. Twenty-five cents doesn't buy you much time in the saddle. And I wanted to keep riding. "Gimme a quarter to make the horse work!" *(quick pause)* I demanded money from everybody who walked by me on their way into the store. No more sweet voice and pretty smile. I needed a steady flow of quarters to keep my horse going and I was gonna get it. I didn't care if people thought I

was rude. I didn't live in their neighborhood, so what did it matter? And demanding the money worked. The quarters kept coming and the horse kept rocking. (*a very happy recollection*) That horse kept rocking for the rest of the afternoon and into the evening. You might say I rode off into the sunset. (*SHE smiles and revels in the memory, before her smile fades*) After a couple hours, I wondered if anybody was looking for me. Nobody at the grocery store seemed to care that I was riding the horse all afternoon without a parent anywhere in sight. People gave me quarters, but no one asked where my mommy or daddy was. (*a startling truth*) Children get snatched from amusement parks all the time. That's a fact. But I'm living proof that children riding horses in front of grocery stores are given money but not much attention. Nobody tried to snatch me. If I was a more sensitive child, I might have taken that personally. It was dark, when the grocery store closed. The lights in the parking lot weren't very bright. I was a little scared. And I don't like being scared. I didn't then and I don't now. I started walking home—I just traced my steps backward. I figured that along the way, my parents and everybody from the neighborhood would find me. They probably had a search party out looking for me but they just hadn't gotten to the grocery store. When I got back home, the neighborhood was quiet. One of those perfect summer nights with a light breeze and lots of stars in the sky. When I went into the house, everybody was watching TV. My mom said, "Oh, you're home" and went back to watching TV. I asked if they'd been looking for me and my dad said, "No," and then he told me to be quiet 'til there was a commercial on. (*pause; devastated*) They didn't look for me. It was like hide-and-seek without the seek. Your family should always look for you, if you wander off. They should. (*pause*) After that night, I wandered off in my mind. My body stayed in the house, but my mind wandered far away. And, in my mind, I never went home, again.

**END OF PLAY**

## Trapped

### CHARACTER

#### **JOHN: Struggles with his inability to experience joy.**

There was a moth flying around the curtains near our table when the waiter was taking our order. And he stopped—the waiter. . . . before all of us had told him what we wanted—and he grabbed a napkin off the table and tried to trap the moth in it. He said he didn't want to hurt the moth. For ten minutes, he tried to trap it. *Ten minutes.* And the moth kept escaping and flying around. At one point, he dive-bombed my sister. I think the moth was having fun. It was like he was playing a game, like how a dog can fetch a ball for hours. I think keeping from being trapped in the napkin was the moth's version of fetch. *(pause)* I'm sure it was a male moth. You could just tell by the way it was flying. It was very male. No female moth would do the dive bomb thing. At first, I was frustrated with the whole moth trapping-and-escaping-and-trapping-and-escaping thing. I was hungry. I wanted the waiter to take my order and bring us some bread while we waited for the food. Even one saltine cracker would have helped. If I was the waiter, I'd just have squished the moth against the window, wiped off the moth guts and gotten back to doing my job. *(pause)* But then, I got to wondering. . . . Can moths experience pain? Is the ability to play and have fun limited to mammals? If I believed that the moth was having fun and playing a game with the waiter—and I *did* believe that—then, didn't I also have to believe that a moth could experience pain? Things that can experience joy have to be able to feel pain. *(pause; reflecting)* It doesn't always work the other way around, though. *(explaining)* I can feel pain. *(pause)* I need to work on experiencing joy. I'm not very good at that. I try. But I never feel very joyful. If I'm acting like I'm having fun, I'm usually pretending because that's what I feel like everybody expects me to do. *(pause)* I'm trapped and, unlike the moth, I don't know how to escape.

**END OF PLAY**

## Obstacles

### CHARACTER

#### ISABEL: Is taunted by judgments and insecurities

I thought I'd be further along by now. (*quick pause*) With my autobiography. It's not as easy as I thought it would be. I've done a lot of deleting. I don't want to share too much personal information. Once it's out there, in print, it's out there. You can't erase something once it's in print. (*quick pause*) Well, you could, but it would be a lot of work locating every copy of the book and blacking out the parts I didn't want anyone to see. (*pause*) I used to have a blog. I updated it every day until I read an article about a psychological study that said the more often people update their blogs, the more important they think they are. They're sick with self-importance. I don't want to be like that. I'm *not* like that. So, no more blog. No more posting photos of myself and hoping people will say nice things about the way I look. (*pause*) I rely on the opinions of others too much. My self-esteem is in the toilet—which is exactly what I have a view of, when I look at myself in the bathroom mirror. The toilet is behind me and slightly to the right. I don't look in the mirror too long. If I do, I start to see things in the reflection. It's like my fears come to life. My insecurities swirl around me and I can see them. And my mother's disembodied head floats around dispensing advice. Being judged and criticized by a disembodied head is an unnerving experience. Especially when it's your *mother's* disembodied head. (*quick pause*) She only seems to appear in the bathroom mirror. I wonder why that is? (*pause; pondering*) Maybe that's the only place she feels comfortable being disembodied. It's the only place I see my fears and insecurities become swirling ghostlike entities. (*quick pause*) If I was writing that sentence in my autobiography, I'd go back and delete it all. The delete key is very important to me. If I misspell a word, I can't just go back and fix that word, I have to delete the whole sentence. I have to have a fresh, error-free start. No remnants of errors. No vestiges of mistakes. No swirling ghostlike entities. (*SHE laughs*) I make a lot of mistakes. (*quick pause*) A lot of missteps. . . false starts. (*a beat*) I thought I'd be further along by now. (*quick pause*) With my life. (*rationalizing*) There are always things in my way. (*pause*) Obstacles. . . Things that keep me from doing what I need to do. (*pause*) I've been thinking a lot about the obstacles. (*wryly*) Thinking about the obstacles has *been* an obstacle. I want to get things done. (*quick pause*) I do. . . But I just can't. (*a beat*) There's a little section of my bedroom where I have my computer. It's where I do my writing. And all around my desk, there are piles of paper and boxes and

books. Getting to and from my computer takes a lot of effort. I have to step over and between things. It's like an obstacle course. *(a moment of understanding washes over her. SHE begins to cry, without noticing it.)* An obstacle course. *(SHE has further understanding)* And I've created the obstacles. *(SHE notices a tear trickling down her cheek)* Isn't that silly? *(A half-hearted laugh)* I'm crying. I'm sitting here crying for no reason. It's embarrassing . . . Sometimes, I wonder if it's better not to understand things. If you don't know what you're doing, you don't have to try to figure out why you're doing it. If you could just go on like nothing is wrong, it would be easier. If you could just pretend that you are who you say you are. . . If you could just do that. *(pause; reflecting)* But, then, I look in the mirror and I see my fears and insecurities swirling around me like ghosts. Haunting me. . . Taunting me. And my mother's disembodied head saying, "Maybe someday you'll do something worthwhile. I'm not expecting it, but it would be a nice surprise." *(pondering the question)* Do I find the obstacles or do they find me? *(a confession)* I'm not writing my autobiography. I wouldn't know what to say. *(pause; convincing herself)* But I might. . . I might. *(quick pause)* And it'll be a real page-turner. You heard it here, first.

**END OF PLAY**

## Where You'll Find Me

### CHARACTER

#### **AARON: Gives directions.**

She doesn't like me. I know that. She made it very clear. When she married my dad, she actually told me not to call her "mom" because she had no intention of developing a close relationship with me. I thought that was really harsh. *(pause)* I'm documenting everything she says. *(quick pause)* I have a written record of everything she's said and done to me, since she moved in. My dad's gonna find out what she's like. *People* are gonna find out. If they'd look in the trash they'd find out. That's where I put the pages from my journal. *(quick pause)* Most of them. *(quick pause)* Every day, I put one page from my journal into my dad's briefcase. They're never in chronological order. Yesterday, he got page 63. The day before that was page 49. I don't even know if he reads them. He's never said anything to me. Maybe he just throws them away in the trash with the rest of the pages. *(pause)* I wish things could go back the way they were, but it's too late for that. It's too late for me. *(pause)* Look in the trash. That's where you'll find my journal. *(pause)* That's where you'll find me.

**END OF PLAY**

## Feeling Air

### CHARACTER

**KRISTIN: Is weighed down with sadness.**

I move slowly. When I'm walking, I move slowly. I feel the air moving around me as I walk. Not like when you're next to an air conditioner or a fan and you feel the air blowing on you. This is different. Sometimes, I can see the air, too. Air comes in different colors. Really good colors like aquamarine and seafoam and azure. Azure-colored air floats by so softly. . . like aaaaaaaaaaaaaa-zhur. *(pause)* Seafoam-colored air smells—but not like sea—at least it doesn't smell like that to me. To me, it smells like foam. Like hair-product foam. Good quality hair-product foam. *(pause, then with a bit of pride)* Not everyone sees and feels the air. Most people don't. Most people aren't that sensitive. *(pause, as if a dark, melancholy mist overcomes her)* I feel the air right now. *(SHE begins to cry)* And I see it, too. *(pause to let it waft over her)* It's green. Forest green. Like in a dark part of the forest where only a little sunlight reaches. *(crying intensifies, then gradually subsides)* I need more sunlight in my forest.

**END OF PLAY**

## Pre-Approved

### CHARACTER

#### **OLIVIA MARIE: Has been validated.**

I'm going to be amazing. (*clarifying*) When I'm 35, I'm going to be amazing. I think I'm fairly amazing, now. Already. But in eleven years, when I'm 35, *other* people will think so, too. No one will be laughing at me. (*quick pause*) There will be a *convergence* of appreciation of my amazingness. (*pause, struggling to stay focused and positive*) Until then, I'm just trying to get through the day. Every day. One day at a time. Nights are easier to get through than days. I'm distrustful of days. It's the sunshine. It makes me squint. Having to squint makes me feel distrustful. I could wear sunglasses, but when you wear sunglasses, people think you're hiding something. And you are. You're hiding your eyes. So people are distrustful of you—which I think is worse than me being distrustful of daytime. Eye contact has become very important to me. (*quick pause*) Since yesterday. (*quick pause*) So, I'm making eye contact with you, now. I don't mean that I'm going to stare you down. I'm not going to stare you into emotional submission. I'm not going to stare at you that way. I'm just going to make eye contact with you. I may blink. That's allowed. You can blink, too. You can look away. Making eye contact lets people know you're confident. I've been confident since yesterday. That's when I got the letter. (*pause, then proudly*) I've been pre-approved for a platinum Visa card. Being pre-approved means you're worthy. You're worthy of credit. Your worthiness has been predetermined. Your worth has been validated. You've received society's approval. (*quick pause*) I've receive society's approval. And it's just the beginning. (*pause, profound resolve*) When I'm 35, I'm going to be amazing.

**END OF PLAY**

## A View of Love

### CHARACTER

#### **DREW: Loses his heart on the sky ride.**

The view from the sky ride is incredible. You can see the whole amusement park. It's not at all like a thrill ride. It floats slowly along, high above everything. *(pause)* When I was little, I was afraid I'd slide under the skinny bar that comes down across your lap and fall to a bloody death down below. *(quick pause)* I don't worry about that anymore. Now, the sky ride is the first thing I go on. If you take it from one end of the park to the other, you can see where everything is—the good rides, the places that sell corn dogs *and* funnel cakes, not just one or the other—all the important stuff. The view gives you perspective. You can plan out your whole day. *(pause)* Most of the time, when I'm on the sky ride, I look down. Down is where everything is. And the other people on the ride are looking down, too. Except the woman with the giant stuffed frog. I glanced up for a second and I saw her and the giant frog coming toward me. *(clarifying)* We were going in opposite directions. I almost dismissed her as one of those people who carry around a giant stuffed animal all day. Winning a giant stuffed animal should be reserved for just before you're ready to go home. I was fully prepared to give her the "I think you're a freak for having a giant stuffed frog" look, as we were passing each other on the sky ride. And, then, I saw her face. Our eyes locked on each other. Something happened in that moment. It was like our souls danced together high above the ground. Love at first sight. Destiny. The meeting of soul mates. *(pause)* And then she was gone. We were both gone. Headed in opposite directions. *(pause)* I stayed on the ride so I could go back in the direction she was going. I spent the rest of the day trying to find my soulmate, again. *(HE begins to cry)* You'd think it would be pretty easy to spot a woman with a giant stuffed frog, but it wasn't. They vanished. Her and her frog. They leaped out of my life. *(pause; more tears)* But I kept looking. I kept looking. *(crying intensifies)* Looking down from the sky ride. *(HE is sobbing)* The view is incredible.

**END OF PLAY**

## **An Ascension**

### **CHARACTER**

#### **DOVE: Talks to the angels.**

I lay on the floor in the living room and talk to the ceiling fan directly above me. It's like an angel. It has a head, two arms and two legs. When it spins, there are 5 heads and 5 pairs of arms and legs. It's a dizzying display of angels and they all listen to me. Where I lived before, we didn't have ceiling fans. Nobody did. A climate kind of thing, I suppose. But, here, we have them in every room. And I talk to them all. It's like having friends all over the house. Their faces are hopeful and their arms are open wide, as if they're always ready to give me a hug. Their legs are spread apart, too, kind of like they've been riding a horse. *(pause; a smile)* A cowboy angel. *(pause)* Sometimes, when I'm laying on the floor and the angels are spinning above me, I feel like they're lifting me up to them. Like I could float right up to the ceiling. *(quick pause)* An ascension. A glorious, holy ascension. And I could hover close to the angels. Close enough to feel their arms reaching out to me. *(pause)* That day will come. When they lift me up. When they talk to me, instead of me just talking to them. And I'll come when they call. Ascending to the angels is a calling. A calling reserved for only a few believers. And I'll leave everything behind. There's no loneliness with the angels. There's no one to spray paint a dirty word on your car. There's no one to post lies about you on the Internet. There's only love and acceptance and a peaceful humming sound. *(quick pause; explaining)* The angels don't sing. They hum. *(pause)* It's a beautiful sound. It takes away all the noise from other people that gets in your head. It's perfect and peaceful with the angels. *(pause)* And I'll be with them. . . I believe. *(pause, then, quietly)* I believe.

**END OF PLAY**

## Loud Silences

### CHARACTER

#### **HARMONY: Can't keep her parents or herself together.**

I didn't change my name. A lot of people think I did. But "Harmony" is the name on my birth certificate. So, no, I didn't change it. *(quick pause)* I've thought about it a lot. *(quick pause)* It's not an easy name to have. When you go on vacation, there aren't any souvenirs with "Harmony" on 'em like you can buy little Chelsea or Megan key chains. And people usually have some kind of comment to make about your name, when it's Harmony. "Oh, were your parents hippies? Were you born in a commune where there was a lot of drug use?" Some woman asked me that at a party. I laughed, but I didn't think it was funny and I didn't think it was a very nice insinuation to make, especially at a party. I didn't choose my name. It was chosen for me. I think your name is something you have to accept. *(quick pause)* Like your family. *(quick pause)* You don't get a choice about the family you're born into and you don't get to pick your own name. *(pause)* I'm an only child. I think my parents decided to name me Harmony because they thought it would be symbolic. Like, "Here we are, two people who've come together in this relationship and we've created something like two voices that blend in harmony." *(quick pause)* That's what I like to think. I'm sure the choice of names was symbolic, but probably not as romanticized as my version of it. *(pause)* They named me Harmony but, as far back as I can remember there wasn't anything harmonious about their marriage or our family. They didn't yell and scream, but the silences were so loud. My mom used to say, "I love you and your dad loves you." But they never said anything about loving each other. It was like they were roommates. Roommates who were being forced to live together when all they really wanted to do was get away. *(pause)* When I was five, I remember thinking that maybe I was supposed to do something to make them love each other. Like that was what I was supposed to do. Like it's what all children are supposed to do. *(pause)* I used to draw pictures of our family and my parents were always on opposite sides of the paper and I was in the middle and my arms were stretched way out trying to hold their hands. Like if I could hold their hands, I could keep them together. *(pause)* As I got older, a lot of their fights were about me. *(quick pause)* I think they were. *(quick pause)* I'm pretty sure they were. *(quick pause)* I'm almost positive they were. They still didn't yell at each other, but the intensity of the silences was more suffocating than it seemed to be when I was little. Maybe it was the same and I was just more sensitive to it. I

don't know. The fights started being about me at the same time my mom started calling me "Harm," instead of Harmony. Like all of a sudden I needed a shorter version of my name. I guess using all three syllables is really too much to expect from an unhappy woman. But Harm? It's like she was saying, "You're the harm, here." Like I was harming her. Like I was what harmed her chances of having a happy life of her own. (*quick pause*) I don't know. Maybe that's not how she felt, but it seemed like it to me. (*quick pause*) And when your parents hate each other and are always fighting about you and your mother calls you "Harm" it doesn't take much of a leap to make those kind of connections.

**END OF PLAY**

Do Not Copy

## JonandJen

### CHARACTER

**JEN: SHE and JON are inseparable. And, maybe, that's the problem.**

We met in high school. He was my first boyfriend. He was my only boyfriend. He had one girlfriend before me, but that only lasted a couple days, so I don't think that really counts. We were inseparable. *(quick pause)* Once we got together and we were a couple, we were inseparable. Everybody said it was meant to be. People always referred to us in the same breath. It was never just Jen or Jon, it was always JonandJen. That kinda bothered me. I like my whole name—Jensen—not just the first syllable. Jon is short for Jonathan. J-O-N, not J-O-H-N. We moved in together, right after high school. We both had jobs. Not careers. Jobs. The kind of things you have where you look forward to what's on TV that night more than what you're gonna do at work. At first, money was tight, so we cut corners. A studio apartment instead of a one bedroom and basic cable, instead of HBO and all the good, premium channels. We had one e-mail account for both of us. We still do. We only really need one account. *(quick pause)* Jonandjen. *(quick pause)* That's the e-mail address. Jon set up the account, so his name went first. I probably would have put his name first, even if I was the one who set up the account. His name always comes first. That's just how it is. *(quick pause, then, with a hint of sadness)* JonandJen. *(pause)* He gets home from work, first, so he checks the e-mail and saves any messages that are important. Most of the time, there isn't anything for me. When we got cell phones, we did the family plan thing, so both phones have one bill. Jon always reads the bill and asks me about my calls to or from numbers he doesn't recognize. He's very curious. *(quick pause)* Inquisitive. *(quick pause)* And a little territorial. *(pause)* A lot territorial. If we're both at home and my cell phone rings, Jon answers it. *(quick pause)* He answers my cell phone. I never answer his, but he answers mine. *(pause)* That kinda bothers me. It all kinda bothers me.

**END OF PLAY**

## A Rock That Rocks

### CHARACTER

#### **KRISTIN: Hopes to find confidence and clarity.**

A bigger piece of starry jasper would really help. Starry jasper is a powerful rock. *(sharing an important truth)* It's just one of a *many* powerful rocks. *Rocks are powerful.* They are. Well, not all of them, but a lot of them are. Just by holding them or placing them on parts of your body, rocks can do amazing things. When I'm in a relationship, I use unakite. It's a *stone of partnerships.* It promotes harmonious relationships in love and business. I'm not in business with anyone, but I figure the unakite is smart enough to know that and work extra hard to promote a harmonious love relationship. *(quick pause)* When I have one. *(quick pause)* I haven't had a relationship in a while. *(getting back on track)* It also clears out blockages from the past. That's crucial. I have a lot of blockages from the past. . . Emotional baggage. *(quick pause)* We all have a lot of blockages from the past. Not just me. And unakite helps clear those out. You should get some unakite. You really should. And goldstone. You have got to get some goldstone! It's not gold. It's goldstone. It's entirely different from gold. It sparkles, but you don't really notice it 'til you get really close to it. It's a *revitalizing, energizing* stone. It's a rock that rocks! *(laughs at her own joke)* I just thought of that. A rock that rocks. *(SHE laughs, again)* It's also a *transmitter* stone that causes light to pass through you in order to convey or receive as a medium. That's just cool. A rock that can help you be a medium is just plain cool. *(quick pause)* I'm not talking about medium-size, like small, medium or large. I mean a medium who *receives messages from beyond.* Goldstone comes in purple, too. Purple goldstone. It's beautiful and does the same things as regular goldstone except it's purple. *(a new piece of information)* I just got some apache tears, last week. *(clarifying)* Apache tears are a kind of rock, not what a sad Native American person cries. *(pause)* Apache tears increase spontaneity and help to *overcome barriers which are self-limiting.* *(quick pause)* If you use Apache tears and unakite *together* you can clear out blockages from the past *and* overcome barriers that are self-limiting. Apache tears also eases and releases pain, sadness and grief. That's logical, given the name of the stones. *(quick pause; jolt of inspiration)* Oh, and you've got to get some red jasper! I love my red jasper. It's a *stone of health.* It strengthens the circulatory system and is grounding and brings confidence. *(pause; SHE begins to cry)* I think I need a bigger piece of red jasper, too. *(SHE is crying and trying not to completely lose control; SHE continues through*

*her tears*) Sometimes, I think I should fill up my bathtub with powerful stones and get in and completely cover my body, so just my head sticks out above the rocks. I'd want a bunch of lapis lazuli on top, close to my head and neck. *(gradually, the tears subside)* Lapis lazuli helps to clear and energize the throat and leads to *perfection within the person*. It also enhances *sacred wisdom*, gives insight into dreams and helps you organize your life. Lapis lazuli is *very* powerful. I need the stone's power. I don't have any of my own. *(pause)* I had a pretty big orange calcite rock, but I can't find it. Someone may have stolen it. Somebody who knew how powerful it was and couldn't find their own orange calcite. Somebody who is obviously a very selfish person. *(getting back on track)* Orange calcite alleviates emotional stress, brings peace, serenity and joy. It's also a memory aid and brings insight and facilitates psychic abilities, like the ability to channel. It enhances higher consciousness and connects your intellect and your emotions. If used properly, it can enhance meditation, focus concentration and bring in spiritual light and knowledge and cleanse your organs and bones and strengthen your skeleton and joints. *(tears come, again)* Orange calcite is like an all-star stone. It has some of the abilities of starry jasper and goldstone and a lot of the other rocks, too, and some properties all its own. *(pause; SHE is sobbing; gradually, SHE pulls herself together)* I would like to live in a house made entirely of orange calcite. I'd like that. I really would.

**END OF PLAY**

## Left Alone

### CHARACTER

**SKATE:** Is afraid to leave his little sister behind, when HE moves away from home.

I don't want to move out and leave her. (*backtracking*) My little sister. (*quick pause*) When I move out, I won't be around to keep an eye on her. . . To look after her. . . To make sure she's OK. (*pause*) She's shy. She's not as outgoing as I am. She doesn't have many friends. And, when I'm away, I'm afraid she won't have anybody to talk to. (*pause*) My parents both work a lot. They're not home much. And when they are, they like to be left alone. I know how that is. I have a job, too, and when I come home I like to play video games in my room for a while. With the door closed. Sometimes, through the wall between our rooms, I can hear my sister crying. (*pause*) When somebody's crying, it's hard to know whether they wanna be left alone or if you're supposed to say something to cheer 'em up or if they need a hug or whatever. It's hard to know what to do. When I hear my sister crying, I usually go over to her room and tell her about my day. Kinda distract her from what she's upset about. Sometimes, I tell her I feel like crying, too. There's a difference between feeling like crying and actually doing it. I don't cry. Crying is admitting weakness. It's like surrendering to whatever it is that's making you hurt inside. When I tell my sister that, she keeps crying. That's what worries me.

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