

INNOCENCE

A One Act Drama

by **Dennis Bush**

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A One Act Drama

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SYNOPSIS: Matthew is afraid of his stepdad and, maybe, of himself. He just wants to have a good time, but rules and expectations get in the way. And then, somebody unexpected shows up in his driveway, and his life – and the lives of his family, friends, and neighbors – will never be the same.

DURATION: 45 minutes.

TIME: Set in the present and recent past.

SETTING: In the homes, driveways, backyards, and neighborhoods of eight people whose lives are connected.

CAST OF CHARACTERS

(4 females, 4 males)

- MATTHEW (m) 23, is figuring it out as he goes. *(88 lines)*
- KAMMIE (f) 21, Matt's stepsister, not afraid to make things happen. *(41 lines)*
- ANIKA (f) 21, friend and neighbor of Kammie, dreams of romance and excitement. [Pronounced AH-nick-uh] *(32 lines)*
- RAYNE (f) 19, Anika's younger sister; opinionated, outgoing. *(25 lines)*
- ARI (m) 25, troubled young man; wishes his life had been different. *(36 lines)*
- TAMAR (f) 23, Matthew's girlfriend, knows how to get her way. [Pronounced tuh-MAHR] *(39 lines)*
- RAFE (m) 23, Matthew's best friend; kind, sarcastic, likes to be in the heart of the action. *(36 lines)*
- JAMES (m) 23, Matthew's and Rafe's friend, bit of a tough guy, quirky, likes to take control. *(31 lines)*

SET: Can be presented with a very simple set. It can also be performed by physically distanced actors or virtually, if need be.

DIRECTOR'S NOTES: Diverse casting and creative staging are encouraged.

PRODUCTION HISTORY

Innocence had a reading in December 2020 with actors from all over the United States. It had its world premiere in Phoenix, AZ in February 2021. The world premiere was directed by Dennis Bush and included the following cast:

MATTHEW.....	Jaden Gomez
KAMMIE	Nancy Leal
ANIKA	Janeth Guerrero
RAYNE	Trinity Ananyeva
ARI	Colin Lavigne
TAMAR.....	Rylee Garvey
RAFE.....	Kenyan Cole-Suggs
JAMES	Connor Pfafman

The playwright offers special thanks to Karen Brown, Joe Pascale, Logan Umbanhowar, Nick Petrovich, Monika Rzezniczek, Emily O'Brien, Melissa Teitel, and Dylan Suehiro for their kind assistance and inspiration, during the creation of *Innocence*.

AT START: *Lights up on MATTHEW, downstage center of the playing space.*

MATTHEW: *(Speaking directly to the audience.)* I want to introduce you to somebody, but I'm afraid you won't like them.

Lights up on the other seven actors, scattered around the playing space. They each speak directly to the audience.

KAMMIE: He said he met somebody.

ANIKA and RAYNE: He found somebody.

ARI: Anyone can find somebody.

TAMAR: Somebody special.

RAFE: I wasn't there. *(Correcting himself.)* I said I was there, but I wasn't. You do that for a friend. Guys have been doing it for their friends for like hundreds of years. *(Quick pause.)* At least a hundred. He was going out with Ellen. He didn't want his parents to know. His mom doesn't like Ellen. Ellen doesn't like his mom, either, but she pretends that she does. His dad—his stepdad—doesn't like anybody. So, he told them he was gonna be with me. *(Clarifying.)* He told them he was gonna be sleeping over at my house.

JAMES: I've always had friends that I thought or I knew were capable of doing bad things. And, even when I'm sure they could do something bad, I don't stop being their friend. It's not like I actively seek out people who definitely have the potential to do bad things. They just find me. Like I meet somebody and a few days into the relationship—the friendship—I realize, "Oh, you could definitely do bad things."

RAFE: He asked me first—before he told them. And I said, "Sure, I'll cover for you." *(Clarifying.)* I'll lie for you. That's what it really means. I figured he was gonna be with Ellen. That's what I expected. He didn't tell me that—I just assumed, so I didn't actually know—not for certain—what he was going to be doing or where he was gonna be doing it. But I knew he wasn't gonna be with me. Not sleeping over. Not anything.

JAMES: Bad things aren't always criminal. Sometimes, they are, but not always. Sometimes, it's just like finding a wallet, with money and credit cards in it, and keeping it.

TAMAR: His stepdad said he had to clean up the mess of bad parenting that happened before him. As long as I have known him, his stepdad has been his dad. I mean, I know he had a dad before the stepdad—because, if he didn't, his stepdad would be called his dad, not his stepdad. But his real dad—his biological father—wasn't in the picture as long as I've known Matt.

ANIKA: I don't think a guy who trips your little sister and kicks dogs should be telling anybody what good parenting is. I haven't actually seen him kick any dogs, but I did see him trip my little sister—and laugh when she fell down.

RAYNE: And, anybody who'd trip a little girl and think it was funny that she cried about it, is definitely somebody who'd kick dogs.

RAFE: "The difference between good and bad is a social construct." That's what his stepdad told me when I was seven—when I was sleeping over at Matt's house. I got up to go to the bathroom. It was like 2:00 in the morning, but you know, sometimes you gotta go to the bathroom at 2:00 in the morning. And his stepdad was standing at the end of the hall. Just standing at the end of the hall in the dark at 2:00 in the morning. And I said, "Gotta pee," and he said, "The difference between good and bad is a social construct." So, I said, "Okay." 'Cause I didn't know what else to say.

TAMAR: My dad went on a few motorcycle rides with Matthew's stepdad. Just a few. And not very long rides. They were only gone a couple hours each time. My dad said, "Any more than a hundred miles with him, and I'm ready to run him off the road." My dad isn't the kind of guy who thinks about running people off the roads. He certainly isn't somebody who'd do it for real. It was just a figure of speech—an expression—to explain how he felt. My dad said, "I like riding my Harley. He likes having a Harley. He rides like the bike makes him dangerous, like the bike is an extension of him, and he's dangerous—like he could run somebody off the road and not care—not even give it a second thought. (*Quick pause.*) But you can't ride like that, sweetie."

RAFE: When you're seven, you don't know what a social construct is. Especially, when it's 2:00 in the morning and you have to go to the bathroom, before you have a liquid construct in your pajamas. But not just then. I don't think a lot of adults know what a social construct is. But it stuck in my head. I'll give his stepdad credit for that. Saying

something like that to me at 2:00 in the morning—when I wasn't expecting anything except a trip down the hall to the bathroom and back—made it stick in my head. (*Repeating it with almost no affect.*) "The difference between good and bad is a social construct."

TAMAR: (*Making it clear.*) He called me sweetie, I'm not calling you that. (*Back to the story, quoting her dad.*) You can't ride like that, sweetie. You can't even *think* like that. People are breakable."

MATTHEW: He missed my birthday. No card, no present, no, "Happy birthday, Matt." Nothing. So, I said, "You forgot my birthday." And he shrugged, like it wasn't a big deal, "You'll have another one next year. And the year after that." And, then, he got real close to me—right up in my face—and said, "I remember things—important things. You're the one who doesn't remember. You don't remember. You never remember anything."

KAMMIE: I found a box of letters. From my mom to some guy who isn't my dad. Actual handwritten letters from back when people used to write letters and send them—like through the mail. Except she didn't send them, because then they'd be at the guy's house, instead of in the back of my mom's closet.

ARI: We're friends. We hang out. It's fun. And, then, we don't hang out again for a while. A month goes by. A year. Two years.

KAMMIE: There were like forty or fifty of them. All with the same flowery kind of envelopes. She wrote the letters, put them in pretty envelopes—but didn't seal the envelopes—and, then, just put them in a box. And kept them. All of them. (*Quick pause.*) I guess it's all of them.

ARI: He calls me when he needs something. I know that. I'm not stupid. I see through his, "Hey, it's been a while—just checking in," opening line. But I'm fine with it. I get something out of it.

KAMMIE: It's a big box. With a lock on it—that wasn't hard to open. (*Conspiratorially.*) The letters are pretty racy. Very descriptive—especially from somebody who didn't want me watching R-rated movies, even after I was more than old enough to see them. She doesn't even like it when I curse. If I drop a four-letter word into a conversation with her, she blushes and tells me to watch my mouth. I'm twenty-one. An occasional four-letter word doesn't make me trash. And she used plenty of... extremely vivid language in the

letters, so she shouldn't pretend to be so offended by those kinds of words, now.

ARI: You don't have to believe me. I don't care.

JAMES: We weren't cosplaying. We weren't pretending to be medieval knights or anything. We were just two aggressive boys—two aggressive young men—who happened to have swords and who liked to fight each other with them. (*Clarifying.*) Actual sword fighting.

ARI: Girls like bad boys. Guys like bad boys. Pretty much everybody loves bad boys—Marlon Brando, James Dean, shirtless rap stars—guys like that. Girls may say they're looking for a nice guy—a prince – but that's just what they say.

JAMES: If we were in short tunics or kilts, once or twice, it wasn't a big deal. The outfits weren't the focus. The fighting was the focus. It was the only focus. We didn't stab each other. It never got to that point. I got a gash in my forearm, one time, and I gave the back of his hand a pretty deep slice, but there was no actual stabbing.

ARI: We're all just good boys trying to be bad boys, or pretending we're bad boys. Or we're bad boys pretending to be good boys, but letting enough bad boy show through, so people notice. Or suspect.

JAMES: We'd joke around, like, "If anybody's gonna stab somebody, it'll be me stabbing you, not the other way around." I always figured I'd be the first one of us to stab somebody.

ARI: Or want to make a connection with us. (*A quick beat.*) "A connection" can mean a lot of things.

JAMES: I'm not sure why I thought I'd be the first one out of the two of us to stab somebody, but that's what I thought.

MATTHEW: How is this who I am?

JAMES: His nickname is Madman. I'm James. No nickname. I don't know why. I just never had one.

MATTHEW: How is this what's happening?

JAMES: If somebody's gonna stab you, a madman is more likely than a guy named James, right? (*A beat.*) Don't be so sure. Before he was Madman, his nickname was Mat-man, because he was a wrestler in high school—you know, like on a wrestling mat. And, then, one day he was going off on me about something stupid—I don't even remember what—and I just started calling him Madman, and that's what it's been ever since. (*Clarifying.*) At least with me.

Different people call him different things. (*Reeling off the variations.*) Matthew, Matt, Matty, Madman, and who knows what Ellen calls him.

MATTHEW: Now, not before.

TAMAR: I didn't know about Ellen. Not even a hint that there was somebody else. Matty was the perfect boyfriend. (*Rethinking it.*) Not perfect. Not so perfect that you suspect he's being that perfect to cover up the fact that he's doing something you wouldn't like—or seeing somebody else, while he's in a relationship with you. With me. He wasn't suspiciously perfect. He was just a really good boyfriend.

RAFE: "You're not fooling anybody." That's what his stepdad said to me, like a month ago. Matt and I were hanging out in his room at home playing video games, and his dad just kind of appeared in the doorway. (*Explaining.*) Not like a ghost or anything. We just didn't hear him coming down the hall to Matt's room. He had his hands on the door frame and he was like flexing. Standing there in a tank top undershirt and flexing. I was thinking, "I wonder if this is some kind of middle-age man workout?" And his dad looked at me and said, "You're not fooling anybody." He was definitely looking at *me*, not Matt. And I was gonna say something. I was gonna have a savage comeback. But I said, "I'm not trying to fool anybody, my dude." Which isn't a savage comeback—in case you don't have an accurate sense of what a savage comeback is. And calling your best friend's stepdad, "my dude," is pretty seriously awkward. And his stepdad said, "I won't forget this." He was definitely looking at me, when he said that. Then, he turned to Matt—he was definitely looking at Matt—and said, "You will." (*Simultaneously with ALL.*) "You don't remember anything."

ALL: (*Except MATTHEW. Simultaneously with RAFE.*) You don't remember anything.

RAFE: And I dropped a four-letter word on him. (*Clarifying.*) On Matt's stepdad. It was part of a short sentence that I ended with, "my dude," because, why not? (*A beat.*) And, then, Matt's stepdad pretty much beat the crap outta me. (*A beat.*) Because I asked for it, I guess... or because he had to, to let me know I crossed a line with him. I don't know which. (*A beat.*) After he was done, he got me a warm washcloth to clean myself up, and, then, some ice for the

swelling. (*A beat.*) Matt just sat there—on the chair beside his bed. He didn't say a word, and he never moved. Not once, since his stepdad showed up in the doorway.

Immediate transition to MATTHEW and TAMAR.

MATTHEW: What do you want me to say?

TAMAR: Something! (*Wishing she'd planned what to say.*) Something that explains how you could do this to me!

MATTHEW: I didn't do anything to you.

TAMAR: When you're in a committed relationship, you don't just start dating somebody else.

MATTHEW: When you're in a relationship, you don't date anybody else. I don't play by those rules.

TAMAR: We talked about exclusivity. We had a conversation. Multiple conversations.

MATTHEW: And, at no point, in those multiple conversations, did I agree to any kind of exclusive commitment.

TAMAR: (*As if this should end the argument.*) We had a conversation!

MATTHEW: You talked. I nodded. (*As if this justifies everything.*) And I listened to what you said. (*Quick pause.*) I did. (*Quick pause.*) But I didn't agree to any of it.

TAMAR: But you didn't disagree. You didn't say, "No, Tamar, I don't think that's something I wanna do. It's not something I could do."

MATTHEW: I could do it. I just don't want to. I don't see the point.

TAMAR: Honesty. Trust. Commitment. That's the point.

MATTHEW: That's three points. Multiple conversations and multiple points. (*His primary point.*) And you wouldn't be worried about any of this, if Kammie hadn't told you about Ellen.

TAMAR: I'm glad she did.

MATTHEW: Really? 'Cause everything seemed a whole lot better for us—for you—before you knew what was going on.

TAMAR: (*Eyes welling up with tears.*) I can't be in a relationship that's based on lies.

MATTHEW: (*Bringing his truth to combat TAMAR bringing the tears.*)

I never lied to you. I never told you I was gonna be somewhere when I was someplace else. I never promised you anything I didn't deliver. I never said, "I love you," and didn't mean it.

TAMAR: There's such a thing as lying by omission.

MATTHEW: Any question you asked, I answered truthfully. I didn't omit anything. Try getting that kind of honesty from some other guy.

TAMAR: *(As tears run down her checks.)* I don't want some other guy. *(A beat, as she wipes away tears with the back of her hand.)* We were perfect together.

Immediate transition to KAMMIE and MATTHEW.

MATTHEW: What d'ya expect me to do?

KAMMIE: Something! *(Wishes she'd planned ahead for the question.)*
Talk to her. Ask her.

MATTHEW: Ask her about a box of old letters?

KAMMIE: That she wrote to a guy who isn't our dad!

MATTHEW: Your dad.

KAMMIE: My dad is your dad.

MATTHEW: He's my stepdad.

KAMMIE: You can only say that if your dad is still around, and, then, the only reason you say it is so your dad doesn't get ticked off that you're calling some other guy your dad.

MATTHEW: My dad was around.

KAMMIE: A long time ago.

MATTHEW: *(Unequivocally.)* When your dad and our mom got together, my dad was still around!

KAMMIE: I don't remember that.

MATTHEW: You don't remember anything.

KAMMIE: I remember important stuff.

MATTHEW: Like old letters in a box in the back of Mom's closet.

KAMMIE: Back when she had an R-rated life. When she did stuff she tells me not to do.

MATTHEW: You can do what you want.

KAMMIE: You don't make the rules.

MATTHEW: Apparently, I do.

KAMMIE: You're not foolin' me. You're not fooling anybody!

Transition to ARI.

ARI: And he got down on one knee. I was sittin' on the sofa watching TV—some kinda kids' show—and he got down on one knee in front of me. I remember thinking, "This is weird. Sit on the sofa. Don't kneel in front of it and block my view of the TV." I was five, but I had my priorities straight. (*Back to his story.*) And, he made eye contact with me – like real serious eye contact. It doesn't take much to creep out a five-year-old kid and my dad was goin' full-out with it. And, then, he kinda smiled and said, "I met somebody. I found somebody. (*Recreating the clarifying beat.*) Not just anybody. She's special." So, I was thinkin' that he made a new friend or that we were gettin' a cat or a puppy. I was five. When you're five you don't think a conversation with your dad is gonna end up being a major life change, but that's what it was. (*A beat.*) My dad met somebody. (*Modifying the description.*) Some woman. And he moved in with her. She already had a son who was two years younger than me, and pretty much right away, he had a baby with the new woman. And, then, he married her, after his divorce from my mom was final. (*A beat.*) I never lived in the same house with him, again, after the day he told me he met somebody. (*A beat.*) He wasn't real good about keeping in touch. Not till I was like twelve or so. But relationships change, you know. They evolve. We're not like your typical father and son. We're friends. We hang out. (*With more effort than before.*) It's fun. And, then, we don't hang out again for a while. A month goes by. A year. Two years. And it's fine. It's totally cool. He calls me when he needs something. I know that. I'm not stupid. I see through his, "Hey, it's been a while—just checking in," opening line. But I'm fine with it. I get something out of it.

Immediate transition to ANIKA and RAYNE. ARI is in a separate space. ANIKA and RAYNE are not in a conversation with ARI.

ANIKA: I met somebody.

RAYNE: (*Correcting ANIKA.*) We met somebody.

ARI: Anybody can meet somebody. If you put your mind to it.

ANIKA: He's not just anybody.

RAYNE: He's special.

ARI: Girls like bad boys.

ANIKA: He shouted at me—

RAYNE: (*Interjecting.*) At us.

ANIKA: From his car.

RAYNE: A very nice car.

ANIKA: He leaned out the driver's side window.

RAYNE: 'Cause he was driving the car.

ANIKA: And he said... (*Simultaneously with ALL.*) "Hey, you!"

ALL: (*Simultaneously with ANIKA.*) Hey, you!

ANIKA: I wasn't sure he was talking to me.

RAYNE: To *us*.

ANIKA: And, then, he yelled... (*Simultaneously with ALL. Flirtatiously.*)

"Hey, girl!"

ALL: (*Simultaneously with ANIKA. Flirtatiously, to audience.*) Hey, girl!

ARI: Saying something in a playful way—like using an expression that wouldn't ever come out of your mouth any other time—can get results. (*With a hint of a cocky smirk.*) It's disarming. It makes you seem like a good boy being a little bad, instead of a bad boy pretending to be something you're not.

ANIKA: He stopped his car right next to where we were standing on the sidewalk. We'd been walking and he'd been driving, but, when we stopped, *he* stopped. (*Assuringly.*) It wasn't as creepy as it sounds.

RAYNE: We didn't get in his car. We're not stupid.

ANIKA: When you're twenty-one—

RAYNE: (*Interjecting aggressively and pointing to herself.*) Or nineteen.

ANIKA: (*Reclaiming her narrative.*) When you're twenty-one or nineteen, you have critical thinking skills. You know that talking to strangers isn't always a bad thing. It happens all the time. Sometimes, it's a good thing.

RAYNE: Even getting into a car with strangers happens a lot. Strangers are just a few clicks away.

ARI: (*In ANIKA'S memory of the interaction.*) You live around here?

ANIKA: Which was a stupid question to ask, since we were walking our dog.

ALL (except ANIKA, RAYNE, and ARI) give one loud bark.

RAYNE: And nobody goes to another neighborhood to walk their dog. That'd be weird.

ANIKA: Technically, in that moment, we weren't *walking* our dog, because she'd stopped to go to the bathroom.

RAYNE: Which is why we stopped. You don't keep walking, when your dog stops to go to the bathroom. If you did, you'd be dragging her along while she's going to the bathroom.

ALL (except ANIKA, RAYNE, and ARI) give another loud bark.

ANIKA: And nobody wants a streaked or smeared sidewalk.

RAYNE: Nobody wants that.

ARI: *(In ANIKA'S memory of the interaction.)* You sisters or friends?

ANIKA: *(To ARI.)* Half-sisters.

RAYNE: *(To ARI.)* Best friends.

ANIKA: *(With a little attitude and a shrug.)* Most of the time.

ARI: *(In ANIKA'S memory of the interaction.)* Cool.

ANIKA: *(To audience.)* I was pretty sure he wanted to date me.

RAYNE: Or not. Because, then, he asked us if we know where a certain person lives. We don't speak that certain person's name, because we have a history with him. But we pointed at the house across the street, where our friend Kammie lives with her brother and her mom and the certain person.

ANIKA: *(An aggressive announcement.)* Who tripped my sister when she was little. On purpose. He tripped her on purpose.

RAYNE: And when I fell down and got cuts and scrapes on my knee, and elbow, and the palms of both of my hands... *(As angry as if it was yesterday.)* the certain person laughed. He said, "Raynefall," and laughed.

ANIKA: Her name is Rayne.

RAYNE: *(Interjecting.)* R-A-Y-N-E.

ANIKA: So, it's not even spelled the same way as like the actual atmospheric water vapor that falls from the sky. But he thought it was so funny. That he was so funny. And this is when we were little—I was seven and she was five—and he was an adult. A supposedly grown-up person.

ARI: *(In ANIKA'S memory of the interaction.)* Thanks. I appreciate the information.

RAYNE: He said it like where somebody lives is information.

ANIKA: And, then, he smiled, revved his engine, and said...

ARI: *(In ANIKA'S memory of the interaction.)* I'll be seeing you.

RAYNE: *(Correcting ANIKA.)* All of you. That's what he said. *(Quoting ARI. Simultaneously with ARI.)* "I'll be seeing you. All of you."

ARI: *(Simultaneously with RAYNE. With a flirtatious smile.)* "I'll be seeing you. All of you."

ANIKA: And, then, he drove away.

Transition to RAFE.

RAFE: We were gonna drive over to that new ax throwing place that opened up next to the not-very-good sushi place, but they were already closed. It was pretty late. A little after midnight. I guess ax throwing places are before-midnight kinda clubs. It was gonna be the first time Matt and James and me did something all together. Matt is friends with James and I'm friends with James, but the three of us have never hung out or done anything together. It happens. You do different things with different friends. I do stuff with James. *(Making it perfectly clear.)* No sword fighting stuff. No tunics. James does that stuff with Matt. James and I play racquetball. It's a man's game. And it's an excellent way to work out your anger issues. If you have anger issues. I suggested that we have a little racquetball tournament and invite Matt to play—you know, like James would play Matt and the winner would play me, because I'm better than James. But I got outvoted.

Transition to JAMES in a separate part of the playing space.

JAMES: The ax throwing was my idea. It's a rugged, manly kind of thing to do. And it's a good way to hurl your frustrations—in the form of an ax—across the room at a target. It's a bring-your-own-beer place, too, if you're old enough—*(Aggressively clarifying.)* which we definitely are. *(A quick beat.)* I guess you could bring your own wine, if that's your thing, but a glass of wine in one hand and an ax in the other just doesn't have the right vibe. You know what I'm sayin'? When we were making the plans—which took way more effort than it should have—Rafe was like, "No tunics. No medieval cosplay

stuff." I said, "Sure, no way. Not the right vibe." But, then, I found an amazingly almost authentic Scottish kilt with the high socks and all. That's an outfit you can throw an ax in.

Transition to MATTHEW in a separate part of the playing space.

MATTHEW: We hadn't even started the car to head over to the ax-throwing place, when James was like, "I'm gonna check and see if they have a refrigerator or cooler or something to keep the beer cold. Bringing your own beer is fine, but we're bringing cold beer and cold beer doesn't stay cold on its own." (*A quick beat.*) If he was so worried about the temperature of things, he should've worn pants instead of that kilt. Or gotten kilts for all three of us, so we looked like we were in the Highland Games. (*Back to his story.*) It was a good thing James tried to call the place, 'cause they were already closed. I was like, "How is this what's happening?" We had plans. And, then, James asked me if my stepdad had an ax in the garage. We were in the driveway, so it didn't take much effort to find out. We had two axes.

JAMES: So, Madman and Rafe were set and I was, too.

RAFE: James had an ax in his trunk.

MATTHEW: I didn't ask why he had an ax in his trunk.

JAMES: Things happen. And, sometimes, those things require an ax. It's not like I'm driving around with an ax sitting on the passenger seat waiting for me to hack somebody up. No. (*Even more emphatically.*) Hell, no! I keep the ax in the trunk. With a crowbar, and couple of knives. Where normal people keep things like that.

RAFE, JAMES, and MATTHEW gradually move closer together.

RAFE: So, I was like, "Okay, my dudes, we have axes, but we don't have any targets or whatever you throw axes at, at the ax throwing place."

JAMES: There's a row of trees right at the edge of Matty's yard. They live next to the freakin' woods and a creek and stuff. We have plenty of stuff to throw axes at.

MATTHEW: So, we did. We threw the axes at the trees just past where my backyard stopped and the woods started.

JAMES: It's what guys do at 1:00 in the morning on a weekend, when your original plans fall through.

RAFE: I was surprisingly good at it. Almost preternaturally skilled for somebody who'd never thrown an ax or even a dart before.

JAMES: Somebody's gonna throw an ax at you, if you keep using words like preternatural when you're out with the guys.

MATTHEW: Having a good vocabulary doesn't make him ax-able, James.

RAFE: So, that's a word, now? Ax-able?

MATTHEW: It's hyphenated. It's when something or someone deserves to get an ax thrown at them.

JAMES: Yup. It's a thing.

MATTHEW: It's definitely a thing.

On their next few lines, RAFE, MATTHEW, and JAMES move apart a bit.

JAMES: It was fun for about an hour. We finished the beer and the ax throwing at about the same time.

RAFE: The two things aren't connected in any way.

MATTHEW: So, I put the two axes I got out of the garage back in the garage, and James popped his trunk to put his ax back in there.

JAMES: And my back tires were both flat.

RAFE: I was like, I can call somebody to pick me up and take me home.

JAMES: That's great for you. But I'm the one with the flat tires. And I've only got one spare tire and I don't have a jack.

MATTHEW: You have an ax, a crowbar, and some knives, but you don't have a jack?

RAFE: Even if you get it towed, you'd be leaving it at some tire place till tomorrow. And if you get it towed to your house, you'll just have to get it towed, again, to a tire place in the morning.

MATTHEW: You should both just crash here.

JAMES: Don't say "crash" in front of my car. It's not cool.

MATTHEW: Say it however you want. It's no different than you guys sleeping on the floor of my dorm room after a frat party, 'cause you didn't feel like driving back to your own place. *(A quick beat.)* We just gotta be quiet, when we go in the house.

RAFE: *(With a stage whisper.)* Right. We don't wanna wake anybody up.

JAMES: Says the dude who was yelling, "I'm the King of Axes!" not more than fifteen minutes ago.

RAFE: Considering my preternatural ax-throwing skills – and that *I am* pretty much the undisputed King of Axes – I wouldn't risk increasing your chances of becoming ax-able.

MATTHEW: *(To audience.)* So, I was like, "Okay, boys, no fighting in the house."

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