

NO LIFEGUARD

By Dennis Bush

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NO LIFE GUARD

A One Act Drama

By Dennis Bush

SYNOPSIS: One girl's harrowing medical diagnosis connects the lives of eighteen people, like pieces of a puzzle gradually brought together to tell her story. In the process of walking a metaphorical mile in the girl's shoes, we follow the life journeys of the other characters, discovering their secrets and fears. As one character in the play says, "Life is like a pool with no lifeguard on duty. We're all swimming at our own risk."

CAST OF CHARACTERS

(11 females, 7 males)

SHAYNA (f).....	A college student; Violet's roommate; friend of DeAnne, Max and Andy. <i>(25 lines)</i>
VIOLET (f).....	A college freshman, diagnosed with diffuse intrinsic pontine glioma. <i>(53 lines)</i>
ELLIE (f).....	A college senior; works at Student Behavioral Health Services, dating Max. <i>(36 lines)</i>
LIZ (f).....	30's - 40's; married to Gordon, moving into new house. <i>(37 lines)</i>
RONDI (f).....	Violet's older sister. <i>(52 lines)</i>
GORDON (m).....	30's - 40's; married to Liz. <i>(34 lines)</i>
MAX (m).....	A college student; dating Ellie; lives across the hall from Shayna. <i>(40 lines)</i>
DEANNE (f).....	A college student; works at Student Behavioral Health Services. <i>(18 lines)</i>
YVONNE (f).....	Violet and Rondi's mother. <i>(80 lines)</i>

KENDRA (f).....	A high school student; Kollin's sister; lives next to Yvonne's family. (35 lines)
KOLLIN (m).....	A high school senior; Kendra's brother; lives next to Yvonne's family. (27 lines)
DR. FRIEDMAN (m)	A pediatric oncologist. (21 lines)
KEVIN (m)	In his mid-teens; diagnosed with diffuse intrinsic pontine glioma. (28 lines)
ANDY (m).....	A college student; Max's roommate. (25 lines)
TYLER (m).....	In his mid-teens; Kevin's best friend. (13 lines)
FRANCINE (f).....	Yvonne's best friend. (15 lines)
CECILIA (f).....	A high school student; a leader; Kendra's friend. (30 lines)
ROBIN (f).....	A high school student; Kendra's friend. (16 lines)

DURATION: 40 minutes.

SETTING: *No Lifeguard* is set in the present and past, in the homes, offices and minds of a group of people in Southeastern Pennsylvania.

DIRECTOR'S NOTE

No Lifeguard can be presented with a very simple set. Directors are encouraged to be creative with casting and staging, and to avoid literal use of inferred props or to group actors together so it appears that conversations are happening in places where a character may be speaking directly to the audience. There are many staging options that would work effectively and directors are encouraged to be creative with their staging.

PRODUCTION HISTORY

No Lifeguard had a workshop in Phoenix, AZ, in early 2017, which was directed by the playwright.

The playwright offers special thanks to Meggy Lykins, Nick Petrovich, Kelsey Torstveit, Joe Pascale, Hailey Araza, Karen Brown, Pam Eckert, Melissa Ganas, Darcy Harper, Nico Paradis, Paul Jackson, Rich Redding, Sam Passamonte, Courtney Thompson, Belle Turner and Martin W. Scott for their kind assistance and inspiration, during the creation and workshop process of *No Lifeguard*.

The world premiere performance was held in April 2017 at Manhattan Theatre Club Studios with the following cast:

SHAYNA -----	Meggy Lykins
VIOLET -----	Elena Conti
ELLIE -----	Kelsey Torstveit
LIZ -----	Emily O'Brien
RONDI -----	Hanna Leister
GORDON -----	Zane Michael Powell
MAX -----	Blake Christopher Karnes
DEANNE -----	Alexis Ghigo
YVONNE -----	Melissa Teitel
KENDRA -----	Rachael Eng
KOLLIN -----	Kaveh Moasser
DR. FRIEDMAN -----	Lester Thomas Shane
KEVIN -----	Ryan Bernardino
ANDY -----	Nick Petrovich
TYLER -----	Ben Collison
FRANCINE -----	Anastasia Koss
CECILIA -----	Alexis Zimmerman
ROBIN -----	Ashlynn McKelvey

AT RISE: *Lights up on actors seated in a circle with all the chairs facing toward the audience. As the lights brighten, an actor begins to giggle. That actor is joined by another actor giggling. Soon, all the actors are giggling. The giggles build to manic laughter, which intensifies, then, abruptly stops. As soon as the laughter stops, the actors turn to each other.*

ALL: What's so funny?

The actors turn to the audience.

What's so funny?

SHAYNA: *(To audience.)* I'm not laughing at you. I'm laughing with you.

VIOLET: *(To audience.)* I'm laughing at you. *(A quick beat.)* I think honesty is important.

Each of the following lines is spoken in the direction of the audience, not to another character onstage. It should feel as if the character is speaking to an unseen character who is in the audience's point of view. This should be the approach anytime a character is not in a scene with other characters.

ELLIE: I saw you laughing at me. In your cubicle. While I was on the phone with my boyfriend. I guess you find other people's relationship challenges amusing.

ALL: *(Except ELLIE.)* Honesty is important.

ELLIE: I'll be honest with you. I honestly don't think you can handle me being honest with you, but I'll be honest with you. Brutally honest.

LIZ: That's what I'd do.

RONDI: She rambled on about electromagnetic fields.

GORDON: I'm paying attention.

MAX: That's what you do when you get cancer.

ALL: *(Except MAX.)* Nobody wants to talk about that.

RONDI: They're too busy. Or too tired. Too whatever.

GORDON: I don't see the problem.

Transition to the Student Behavioral Health Services office where ELLIE and DEANNE work.

ELLIE: The problem with my boyfriend isn't that he doesn't care. It's that he doesn't know what he should care *about*.

DEANNE: So you tell him what to care about?

ELLIE: I see it as my responsibility. I make lists for him. Sort of like to-do lists, but instead of to-do, they're to-*care* lists. And I prioritize the things on the list by percentage of caring importance. And I write the lists on blue paper. Blue is for boys. It reinforces the idea that caring isn't gender exclusive. Guys should care, too. Maybe even more than we do.

DEANNE: Have you noticed an improvement?

ELLIE: Not yet. But it takes time. Really worthwhile things take time. Chimps don't learn sign language overnight. They don't.

Transition to RONDI'S office.

RONDI: When your parents decide to have another child when you're eight years old, it's like they're giving you a doll to play with. And that's good. Until you don't want to play with dolls anymore. Then, you just have an annoying little kid running around, screaming and putting her sticky fingers all over your stuff. Your parents don't want to play with her either. And, by play with her, I mean they don't really want to do any active parenting. They're tired. They don't care. So, they build her a playhouse that looks like a little castle in the backyard. And when you're in college and not living with them anymore, they put in a pool – a giant pool with a built-in hot tub – so they don't have to drive your sister to the community pool. So she can just walk into the back yard and go swimming. Because your parents are lazy and your little sister is spoiled. (*The unequivocal truth.*) My parents are lazy and my little sister is... spoiled. I don't blame her. I blame *them*. And I told them that. I sent my mother a very tersely worded email articulating my anger and disappointment. And I left my father a voicemail that cut right to the heart of the situation.

ALL: Too much and not enough.

RONDI: (*Clarifying.*) That was the message. Too much and not enough. (*An amalgam of disgust and disbelief.*) Neither of them responded. No email from my mom and no phone call from my dad. I guess they're too busy. Or too tired. Too whatever. (*Quick pause.*) But like a week after I sent the email, my mom dropped by my job – with no advance warning – and said she wanted to take me to lunch. Like we were friends or something. So for twenty-five minutes, she complained about how my sister didn't have any friends. At least none that she was inviting over to go swimming. So my mom told the neighbor kids to use the pool. So it would *look like* my sister has friends over. For the rest of the lunch, she rambled on about electromagnetic fields and how close our house – *their* house – is to a power substation. Which they knew when they bought the house, so I don't know why she's freaking out now. And the whole time – the *entire lunch* – she didn't say a single word about my email.

YVONNE: That's not who I am.

RONDI: And, then, as she was signing the credit card receipt to pay for lunch, she said, "Oh, you're sister's going to Swarthmore in the fall. And she's going to live in the dorm." (*A quick beat.*) Just like that. An afterthought. I went to Bryn Mawr – which is farther away from home than Swarthmore, and I had to commute. But my sister gets to live in the dorm. She has a pool she doesn't swim in and, now, she gets to live on campus in a dorm. (*A quick beat.*) And lunch was mediocre. If anyone is keeping track.

Transition to LIZ and GORDON.

GORDON: I really don't see the problem.

LIZ: The sirens will drive us crazy.

GORDON: After a while, you won't hear them.

LIZ: The house is next to a hospital. How are you *not* going to hear the sirens?

GORDON: You just won't.

LIZ: I'll hear them. Believe me. I'll hear the sirens.

GORDON: You make it seem like a hospital is "siren central," 24/7.

LIZ: The master bedroom is only a stone's throw away from the entrance to the ER.

GORDON: So, now, you're measuring distances by hurled rocks?

LIZ: It means a short distance. Remember the brochure from that bed and breakfast we stayed at, last July? "You'll be just a stone's throw from the beach."

GORDON: How did we get from the hospital to the beach?

LIZ: Keep up, Gordon. Adult ADD doesn't give you permission to stop paying attention to me, when I'm talking to you.

GORDON: I'm paying attention.

LIZ: And who builds a house next to a hospital, anyway?

GORDON: The house was there before the hospital. It's a historic house. So, maybe you should ask the hospital why they built the hospital next to a house.

LIZ: It'll be a parade of ambulances coming and going.

GORDON: Don't look out the window and you won't see 'em.

LIZ: That's why houses *have* windows. So you can look out of them. If I didn't want to look outside, I'd live in a place that didn't have windows. I'd live in a basement. Like some kind of rodent. Or a greasy-haired man in his thirties who still lives with his parents. In their basement. That's what I'd do, if I didn't want to look outside.

Transition to SHAYNA and VIOLET'S dorm room.

SHAYNA: If you're going to put something in my fridge, it's fair game. It's community property. It's *my* property.

VIOLET: But I put my name on it.

SHAYNA: And you put it in my fridge.

VIOLET: Because I don't have a fridge.

SHAYNA: And that would be your problem.

VIOLET: I guess I just won't put anything in your fridge.

SHAYNA: If that's how you wanna play it. It's your choice.

VIOLET: (*Pondering.*) Hmm.

SHAYNA: Life is a series of choices.

VIOLET: I never thought of it that way.

SHAYNA: This is gonna be a long semester.

VIOLET: We're roommates for the whole year.

SHAYNA: If that's how you're gonna play it. I have choices, too. So, we'll see how it goes.

Transition to KENDRA and KOLLIN.

KENDRA: You can't just go swimming in their pool anytime you want.

KOLLIN: They said, "Feel free to use the pool – anytime you want."

So, yeah, that's exactly what I'm gonna do.

KENDRA: But they told you that when you were dating their daughter.

KOLLIN: We weren't dating. We were just hanging out.

KENDRA: That's not what *she* thought.

KOLLIN: You don't know what she thought. You don't have a *clue* what she thought.

KENDRA: But nobody's home.

KOLLIN: That makes it the ideal time to go swimming in their pool.

Transition to DR. FRIEDMAN'S office. DR. FRIEDMAN is in his office. VIOLET and KEVIN are each in separate spaces. Neither is speaking to Dr. Friedman, nor are they speaking to each other.

DR. FRIEDMAN: When you give someone a diagnosis they're not expecting – a diagnosis with a dubious prognosis, it takes a toll. On them. And on you. On *me*. (*Simply.*) It takes a toll on me. And it leaves me with residual resentment... A *residue* of resentment. It's the comforting and consoling that are the most difficult and most draining. You can't just walk out of the room with a handshake and a concerned smile. You can't. You have to stay – at least for a minute – until you can get a nurse in the room.

VIOLET and KEVIN: Getting a diagnosis of diffuse intrinsic pontine glioma...

DR. FRIEDMAN: DIPG.

VIOLET and KEVIN: (*Continuing as if a single, uninterrupted thought*) ...Isn't good news. It's pretty much the worst news you can get, in terms of brain cancer. The survival rate is—

ALL: (*Except VIOLET and KEVIN.*) Nobody wants to talk about that.

DR. FRIEDMAN: But advances are being made every day.

ALL: (*Except DR. FRIEDMAN.*) Well, not every day.

DR. FRIEDMAN: But advances *are* being made. And clinical trials are underway. So, we're able to project positive outcomes for sometime in the future, while still remaining guarded against unwarranted optimism...

ALL: (*Except DR. FRIEDMAN, clarifying.*) False hope.

DR. FRIEDMAN: In the present.

VIOLET and KEVIN: My doctor – my *pediatric oncologist* – told me about all the treatment options, but after the diagnosis, everything was a blur.

VIOLET: And I couldn't hear anything except a low hum – like when you're floating on the pool, late at night, and all you can hear is the low hum of the filter.

Transition to the ELLIE'S cubicle at Student Behavioral Health Services. DEANNE is sitting in the doorway to ELLIE'S cubicle.

ELLIE: What does it mean when you start humming a song you don't already know? How does it get into your brain?

DEANNE: I don't know.

ELLIE: (*As if DEANNE hadn't responded.*) Seriously, how does a random melody just pop into your head. (*Clarifying.*) My head.

DEANNE: It's like an invasion. An invasion of your brain.

ELLIE: And this morning, after I'd been humming the uninvited melody for an hour and a half, I started singing a lyric: "What do you get when you fall in love?" That was the lyric. And it planted itself in my brain. What *do* you get when you fall in love? What did *I* get when I fell in love with Max?

DEANNE: He got you that mug that says, "Taken" on it.

ELLIE: And I gave it back. I'm not about to use a mug that identifies me as someone's perceived property.

DEANNE: I think it's cute.

ELLIE: You would. (*With complete seriousness.*) Don't be a pawn of the patriarchy, DeAnne. Don't.

DEANNE: I won't. (*Quick beat.*) Not intentionally. Not on purpose. (*Quick beat.*) But isn't leaving all those notes for Max kind of facilitating the patriarchy?

ELLIE: I'm encouraging him to be a better man. I'm giving him the tools to be a better human being. That's hardly facilitating the patriarchy. If I'm facilitating anything, it's a better relationship for Max and me.

DEANNE: "Max and Me" sounds like a TV comedy or one of those movies about a guy and his dog.

ELLIE: So Max is the guy and I'm the dog?

DEANNE: I guess, since Max is Max's name and the "me" in "Max and Me" is the dog. But that only applies if it's a movie about a guy and his dog. If it's a TV comedy, then the me would be the person who tells the story about Max and all his wacky adventures.

ELLIE: (*With sarcasm and condescension in equal measure.*) Great. I'm either a dog or somebody who puts her boyfriend and his wacky adventures ahead of herself and her own adventures – wacky or otherwise.

Transition to YVONNE.

YVONNE: I read about a girl in the Midwest who had DIPG, and she played basketball – *competitive, collegiate* basketball – *while* she was sick! Her doctors gave her their diagnosis, and I'm sure they told her what the life expectancy is for people with DIPG – because that's what they do. They can't resist shoving our mortality down our throats. They're no different from the people who stamp expiration dates on food in the grocery store. People shouldn't be given expiration dates. *My daughter* shouldn't be given an expiration date! An MD after your name doesn't give you the right to limit what my daughter thinks is possible. There's no lab test to measure a person's spirit. My daughter is strong-willed and she's special. And she's going to do things that doctors don't think she can do. She's not going to play basketball, because she's never played basketball, so why would she start now? But she's going to go to college and live in the dorm and *do* things. She's going to live her life. She's going to *live*. She is. And no doctor is going to tell me otherwise.

Transition to MAX and ANDY in their dorm room.

MAX: The girl across the hall...

ANDY: The one who lives with Shayna...

MAX: Shayna's cool.

ANDY: Yeah. She's great.

MAX: Shayna's great.

ANDY: But the girl who lives with her...

MAX: The one who lives with Shayna...

ANDY: Right. That girl.

MAX: She got cancer or something.

ANDY: And she doesn't want to leave school or move out of the dorm?

MAX: She should get an apartment or something.

ANDY: Or move back home. Wherever that is.

MAX: She had to come from somewhere, right?

ANDY: Yeah, so she should go back there.

MAX: That's what you do when you get cancer.

ANDY: That's what you do.

MAX: And you set up a GoFundMe page or something like that.

ANDY: Somebody should fund *me*.

Transition to RONDI.

RONDI: Fifty dollars. That's all I asked for. (*Quick pause.*) Or a hundred, if she could spare it. I just needed a little help this month. (*Explaining.*) I bought a bag of candy corn at the store. One bag of candy corn and a bottle of water, and my debit card was declined. So I left the candy corn and the bottle of water on the counter – because they don't let you take stuff with you, if you haven't paid for it – and I drove right over to my parents' house. My mom was standing in the driveway – wearing a cranberry-colored business suit and a pair of matching slingback pumps – like she was waiting for a meeting to start in the middle of the driveway. I asked her for the money right there. Right in the middle of the driveway. And she said no. She said she "wasn't comfortable" loaning me the money. And I told her I wasn't asking for a *loan*. I was asking for the *money*. A little help. And, just then, two trucks pulled into the driveway. Several husky men started unloading big, tinted glass panels and carrying them into the backyard.

YVONNE and RONDI are not in the same place at the same time. They don't speak directly to each other.

YVONNE: We're winterizing the pool and building a sort of greenhouse around it, so we'll have climate-controlled swimming year 'round.

RONDI: All I wanted was fifty dollars. A hundred, if you could spare it. And, clearly, you can spare it, if you can afford to build a glass house around a pool you never use.

YVONNE: I've been reading about water aerobics. Apparently, people are doing water aerobics. It's low impact – which is good. I may start doing water aerobics. And your sister will be able to go swimming when she comes home on weekends and during winter break. Won't that be nice? While it's cold and snowy outside, she can swim in a heated pool that's just a stone's throw from the house.

RONDI: People with glass pool houses shouldn't talk about stones being thrown. They shouldn't put those ideas in people's heads.

Transition to KEVIN and VIOLET in a waiting room.

KEVIN: Sometimes, I get headaches.

VIOLET: They might just be regular headaches. Even when you have DIPG, not every headache is an uh-oh-I'm-getting-worse headache.

KEVIN: I guess.

VIOLET: I *know*.

KEVIN: Just 'cause you're a few years older doesn't mean you *know*.

VIOLET: Are you in college?

KEVIN: No.

VIOLET: Have you graduated from high school?

KEVIN: Nope.

VIOLET: Well I have and I am, so I know. And I got diagnosed a few weeks before you, so I have more experience.

KEVIN: Are you gonna get the surgery? The cut-out-the-tumor-and-part-of-your-brain surgery?

VIOLET: I don't think so. Dr. Friedman says I'm not a good candidate for it. Plus, I need all of my brain. I'm in college, remember?

KEVIN: My mom and dad'll decide whether I get it or not. I'm kind of glad I don't have to make the decision myself.

VIOLET: You'll have to decide where you want to go to college and stuff like that, so you better start making some small decisions, now, so you're ready for the bigger ones about your future.

KEVIN: I guess. But college is probably way more future than I'm gonna have.

VIOLET: Don't talk like that.

KEVIN: Honesty is important.

Transition to TYLER.

TYLER: I haven't been anywhere. I'm not exaggerating. I'm being totally honest. Kevin's already *been* to Disneyland. He's my friend and all, but he's already been to Disneyland. He's even been to *Disney World*. And *Australia*. That doesn't have anything to do with Disneyland or Disney World, except that he's been to both of them *and Australia*. And I haven't been anywhere. I mean, other than school and church and the places you go when you don't really have any places to go. So, shouldn't I get to get my wish made, too? Not *instead of Kevin*, but like *also...* in *addition* to. Kevin gets a wish and I get a wish. It seems fair. I mean, I'm not sick like he is. I'm not sick at all, but I haven't been anywhere. And that's a kind of lack-of-exposure-to-places-like-Disneyland-and-Australia kind of sick. I'd even take somebody else's leftover wish. I'd go someplace that wants Make A Wish kids to go to but nobody ever picks that place for their wish. Send me there. Seriously. I'd go.

Transition to MAX and ANDY'S dorm room.

MAX: Seriously?

ANDY: Another note?

MAX: Yeah. She must've snuck into the room while we were asleep.

ANDY: That's breaking and entering.

MAX: She has a key. She made a copy of mine, in the beginning of the semester, when she was bringing me food, 'cause I was sick and couldn't get out of bed.

ANDY: Oh, right. I remember. (*Quick pause.*) She should've brought me food, too.

MAX: You weren't sick. And she's not your girlfriend.

ANDY: Right. (*With a laugh.*) You're the one she leaves notes for.

MAX: Yep. Lucky me.

ANDY: And the blue paper is subliminal manipulation. I heard on a podcast that girls wear blue when they want guys to get serious and think about marriage. I bet it's the same for blue paper.

MAX: It wouldn't surprise me. She does all the manipulative stuff girls do. She's passively aggressive.

ANDY: What's today's note say?

MAX: It's another list. Things I'm supposed to care about.

ANDY: What's on the list?

MAX: I don't care.

Transition to LIZ and GORDON'S house.

LIZ: I mean, seriously, what kind of care are they providing, if the doctors and nurses are standing outside the ER gossiping – still in their scrubs – without any regard for the germs they're going to drag into the hospital, when they go back in?!

GORDON: We have a TV, you know. With a lot of channels. You don't have to look out the window for entertainment. You could watch the TV. Or read a book or something.

LIZ: (*Continuing, as if GORDON hadn't spoken.*) Earlier, today, a guy walked into the ER. By himself. No ambulance. No sirens. Just him. I think he got off the bus in front of the hospital and walked around to the ER entrance. And, then, just before he went in, he bent over and vomited. He didn't even wipe his mouth, afterward. He just walked in like he owned the place.

GORDON: But no sirens. See, I told you the sirens wouldn't be a problem.

LIZ: I wasn't talking about the sirens.

GORDON: Exactly!

LIZ: People are coming and going and vomiting and nobody seems to be concerned, and all you can do is obsess about the sirens? Seriously, Gordon. I worry about you.

Transition to SHAYNA and DEANNE.

SHAYNA: I think there's something seriously wrong when my roommate looks better than I do.

DEANNE: You don't look bad.

SHAYNA: I didn't say I looked bad. Seriously, DeAnne. Pay attention. I said, she looks *better* than I do. She's sick, but she looks healthier than me. She's got some kind of sci-fi glow. I don't know. Maybe the lighting's just better on her side of the room.

DEANNE: She seems nice.

SHAYNA: A ten-dollar Starbucks gift card is *nice*. I was hoping for a roommate who'd be more fun to hang out with.

DEANNE: Have you hung out with her?

SHAYNA: Not really. I have a feeling she wouldn't be very fun. I'm really good at sensing those things.

Transition to VIOLET and KOLLIN. The next sequence of scenes, alternating between VIOLET and KOLLIN and YVONNE and FRANCINE should flow without interruption between them.

KOLLIN: Thanks for the tour. It was fun. *(Quick pause.)* And *informative. (Quick pause.)* Informative and fun.

VIOLET: I missed a lot of orientation, because of doctors' appointments and stuff. So when you said you wanted to check out the campus, I started making a list of all the places to include on a tour and all the things I wish somebody had told me before I started classes.

KOLLIN: I'm glad we ran into each other over Thanksgiving.

VIOLET: About that... I'm sorry if I scared you.

KOLLIN: No... *I'm* sorry. I didn't think anybody else would be in the pool in the middle of the night.

VIOLET: I couldn't sleep. Sometimes, the worst headaches happen after midnight.

KOLLIN: Your mom gave my sister and I a key to the pool house. And she said we could use it any time, as long as we didn't do anything stupid.

VIOLET: *(Quoting YVONNE.)* "No lifeguard on duty" and all that.

KOLLIN: Before your parents put up the pool house, Kendra and I used to go swimming when nobody was home. Your mom said we could use the pool, but I liked the feeling of doing it like I was getting away with something.

VIOLET: Even though you weren't.

KOLLIN: Yeah, it's all in how you look at it. That's why I go swimming in the middle of the night, now. I even sneak out of the house to do it. It feels like more of an adventure that way. *(Simply, honestly)* I don't get a lot of adventure.

Transition to YVONNE and FRANCINE.

YVONNE: And he said...

YVONNE and ALL THE MEN: Think of it as a new adventure.

YVONNE: He was glib.

FRANCINE: Clearly.

YVONNE: That was how he started the conversation. (*Quick pause.*)

In the kitchen. (*Quick pause.*) While I was making him breakfast. He wanted a frittata with the last bits of leftover turkey and stuffing from Thanksgiving. And he wanted some of that cranberry jelly that comes in a can. I told him he'd have to go someplace else for the canned cranberry jelly, because I wasn't about to keep that kind of thing in the pantry.

FRANCINE: I like it on a turkey sandwich. As a condiment. It's good that way.

YVONNE: It's not about the cranberry jelly, Francine. It's about what he did in the middle of breakfast – in the middle of me telling him he'd have to go someplace else for the canned cranberry jelly.

FRANCINE: I'd like some right now.

YVONNE: (*Sharply.*) He said...

YVONNE and ALL THE MEN: I'm leaving.

FRANCINE: To go look for some canned cranberry jelly?

YVONNE: Moving out, Francine. He told me he was moving out and leaving me. Leaving me and the kids. (*A beat.*) And I didn't know how to respond – which isn't a situation I find myself in very often. And, then, he started to say something – to *mumble* something.

YVONNE and ALL THE MEN: Maybe when things change

YVONNE begins to laugh.

ALL THE MEN: What's so funny?

YVONNE: You think you know a person. You think you can *count* on a person. And, then, that person says, "Maybe, when things change..." – when the only thing that's going to change is our daughter is going to die.

Transition to VIOLET and KOLLIN.

VIOLET: How much adventure do you need?

KOLLIN: I don't think it's a question of need. It's about wanting more excitement in my life. Not like diving off a cliff in one of those jumpsuits that's made of parachute material – and you soar through the air and hope you don't crash into a mountain or slam into the ground with a splat. That's too much adventure. Way too much. I just want about two notches more on the adventure meter than I have now – which is none.

VIOLET: College is definitely a couple notches more than high school.

KOLLIN: Cool.

VIOLET: What do you wanna major in?

KOLLIN: Ideally, something like the socio-political impact of subversive music from the 1970's, '80's and '90's. But I don't think that's an actual major. So, probably, business.

VIOLET: There are all kinds of interesting liberal arts classes. I met a girl in the Behavioral Health Services Office and she's taking a class on the impact of rap and hip hop on racism. That's kind of like what you were talking about.

KOLLIN: Behavioral Health Services? That sounds like something in a sci-fi movie, where cyborgs go to have their human-like behavior modified so it's more human-like or whatever.

VIOLET: They provide counseling and mental health stuff like that.

KOLLIN: Do you...? *(A quick beat)* Never mind... Sorry.

VIOLET: It's okay, you can ask.

Transition to YVONNE and FRANCINE.

YVONNE: Is our daughter being sick inconvenient for you?

ALL THE MEN: You'll be provided for. I'll take care of the bills. I'll do what needs to be done."

Transition to VIOLET and KOLLIN.

KOLLIN: *(Tries to word his question as carefully as possible.)* Do you need counseling because of the...

VIOLET: *(Finishing his question.)* Cancer?

KOLLIN: *(Unable to make eye contact with her.)* Yeah.

Transition to YVONNE and FRANCINE.

YVONNE: How can you say that? How can you say you'll do what needs to be done, when you're leaving?

ALL THE MEN: Because that's what needs to be done. It's what I need to do. What I *have* to do. (*A beat.*) Honesty is important.

YVONNE: You're pathetic.

A beat.

YVONNE and ALL THE WOMEN: Honesty is important.

FRANCINE: You should see somebody. You know, like a therapist or somebody like that.

Transition to VIOLET and KOLLIN.

VIOLET: It's good to have somebody to talk to. It helps me navigate the... adventures of brain cancer.

KOLLIN: You can talk to me. In the middle of the night, when you're have a really bad headache and I'm probably sneaking out of the house to go swimming in your parents' pool. Just send me a message.

Transition to YVONNE and FRANCINE.

YVONNE: In stressful, life-changing situations like that – when your weak, cowardly husband leaves you – the universe sends you a message, if you're open to receiving it. And, ironically, the message from the universe was...

YVONNE and ALL OTHERS: Think of it as a new adventure.

YVONNE: And, on my new adventure – on mine and Violet's new adventure – his negativity is not welcome. *He* is not welcome. He's dead to me.

Transition to VIOLET and KOLLIN.

VIOLET: I don't want to interrupt your adventure.

Transition to YVONNE and FRANCINE.

YVONNE: What is, was. (*Assuring herself.*) What is... was. Because *that's* what needs to be done.

Transition to VIOLET and KOLLIN.

KOLLIN: We can *share* adventures.

Transition to KEVIN and TYLER.

KEVIN: You want half of my sandwich?

TYLER: No thanks. (*A quick beat.*) My mom says I'm not supposed to share stuff with you. (*Clarifying.*) Food, mostly, but I'm not supposed to play sports with you, either. She says physical contact is risky.

KEVIN: Cancer's not contagious. You know that, right?

TYLER: Yeah, but she says your immune system is probably messed up, so she doesn't want to take any chances. (*Quick beat.*) She doesn't want *me* to take any chances.

KEVIN looks away.

TYLER: Sweat has germs in it. And so does saliva.

KEVIN: It's not like I'm gonna sweat – *or spit* – on you.

TYLER: I know. But she's pretty freaked out, so I'm just gonna do what she says and hope she calms down.

KEVIN: Is your dad freaking out, too?

TYLER: Not really, but they got into a fight about germs and hand sanitizer and anti-bacterial soap. It was pretty ugly. He said she was neurotic, and she called him, "disconnected," which really ticked him off. He cursed at her. He strung together a few seriously bad words – it was impressive, really – and he went into the backyard and walked around in the dark like a crazy person for about an hour. So, yeah, that's what I'm dealing with.

KEVIN: Part of me feels guilty, like all that is kind of my fault. But *most* of me says, no, I'm not taking that on. I'm not going to be sick *and* guilty. Not today. Not ever, if I can help it.

TYLER: My mom says brain cancer can change your personality.

KEVIN: (*Sarcastically, but not unkindly.*) Did she read that somewhere or just wake up one morning and discover that she was a brain cancer expert?

TYLER: Dude, that's my mom you're talking about. Have some respect.

KEVIN: Respect is a two-way street.

Transition to ELLIE and MAX.

ELLIE: Relationships are a two-way street. At least, they're supposed to be.

MAX: (*Not paying attention.*) Right... Yeah...

ELLIE: But, most of the time, it feels like a *one-way* street. Like an *alley* in a bad part of town. And that's not fair. It plays into all the stereotypes of women as nurturers and men as disconnected and disinterested.

MAX: So, how long do you think this is gonna take?

ELLIE: This conversation? This *behavioral intervention*?

MAX: Yeah, I've got stuff to do.

ELLIE: In the grand scheme of things, this entire interaction between us is an ephemeral moment in time.

MAX: Whatever that means.

ELLIE: It's fleeting... transitory.

MAX: Huh?

ELLIE: Temporary!

MAX: Oh, cool.

ELLIE: Cool that you learned a new word? Or cool that you have a greater understanding of things, in existential terms?

MAX: (*Playing video games in his mind.*) Sure.

ELLIE: We are temporary, Max.

MAX: We're temporary?

ELLIE: Yes. *Everything* is temporary. *You're* temporary. *I'm* temporary ...(*Everything becomes very clear to her.*) Our relationship is temporary.

MAX: That's pretty harsh.

ELLIE: I'm giving you my best and you're just winging it. *That's harsh. (She begins to cry.)* Because I deserve better. *(Struggling to make herself understood through her tears.)* Because every moment is temporary... Can you understand that?

MAX: I guess. *(An uncomfortable beat.)* You're breaking up with me?

ELLIE: Yes... *(The unvarnished truth.)* I'm showing you a reflection of yourself that should scare the life out of you.

MAX: I'm pretty happy with the life *in* me... So I'm just gonna be on my way.

Transition to RONDI.

RONDI: There are ways to let people know you're angry with them... to let them know you have issues with the way they've treated you. *(With a taste of triumph.)* And I found the perfect way. Every day I go to my parents' house and I make my way into the backyard, and I put a rock on the ground next to the pool house. It's a warning – a *message of intention*. I've been doing it for two weeks. My mother has definitely gotten the message. I'm almost positively certain of it. She can't miss the pile of rocks on the pathway near the entrance to the pool house. They're visible from the kitchen window. And from inside the pool house. She has eyes. She's seen the rocks. She knows I could throw them at the pool house. One rock at a time. She knows I don't make idle threats.

Transition to ELLIE.

ELLIE: There are ways to accept the end of a relationship – to acknowledge and accept it – without being dismissive of the shared journey. A person needs to be gracious. When you enlighten someone in a way that could help him live a better life – even if you're dumping him in the process – he needs to be gracious and grateful. It's that simple.

Transition to YVONNE.

YVONNE: There are ways to be a good neighbor. There are a *variety* of ways. (*Giving an example.*) I've encouraged the neighbors to use our pool. It was a gracious gesture – an act of generosity and inclusion. *That's* being a good neighbor. (*Quick pause.*) And when I heard they were having some financial difficulties, I asked their son if he wanted to do some work for me – cutting the grass, pulling weeds in the garden and, when it starts to snow, he can shovel the driveway and the path to the pool house, to make some extra money. He's already been making a difference with the garden. He pulled the weeds and, apparently, dug a bunch of rocks out of the soil, too. There's a pile of them near the entrance to the pool house. I was going to reprimand him for putting the rocks there. If you dig up rocks in the garden, you should put them somewhere out of the way. But, the more I looked at the pile of rocks, the more it reminded me of one of those Native American trail markers. And it's on the pathway to the pool house, which is a trail of sorts. So, I decided not to reprimand Kollin. That's his name. Kollin, with a "K." K-O-L-L-I-N. I don't know what his parents were thinking. With a name spelled like that, he's not going to find personalized souvenirs at any gift shop.

Transition to MAX.

MAX: There are ways to get a girl's attention. There are a variety of ways. Especially with a new girl – somebody who doesn't know very much about you. Ideally, she doesn't know anything – about you or about pretty much anything at all. That's the kind of girl who's grateful for however much time you spend with her. That kind of girl thinks you're funny and hot – and not in that order.

Transition to ELLIE.

ELLIE: There are ways to let go of the baggage that you're left with, after a relationship doesn't work out the way you planned. And you have to let go of it. Otherwise, it's like carrying around a golf bag filled big heavy rocks. You have to carry it everywhere you go. And you have to carry it yourself, because we don't get a caddy to carry around our baggage-filled golf bags as we move around the golf course of life.

Transition to DR. FRIEDMAN.

DR. FRIEDMAN: There are ways to put one's patients out of one's mind. (*A quick beat.*) It's not golf, if that's what you were thinking. It's never been golf.

Transition to ANDY.

ANDY: There are ways to tell your roommate about the secret you've been keeping from him. I'm gonna do some research on the Internet to find out the best ways to do it. But I'm sure there're ways.

Transition to KENDRA and CECILIA in KENDRA'S room.

CECILIA: There are ways to take the yawn out of a slumber party. Do you see what I did there? Take the *yawn* out of a *slumber* party. (*Noticing KENDRA'S distraction.*) I'm going to need you to be a little less distracted when I talk to you.

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