

# ON THE EDGE

## By Dennis Bush

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## CHARACTERS

(4 female, 2 male; or 5 female, 1 male)

AUBREY	Female; 20; smart; acerbic; college student; always has her notebook with her
DELAYNE	Female; 20; college student with controlling boyfriend
PIPER	Female; 15-16; lives with stepmother, since both parents have passed away; keeps a special friend in her bag
LYNNETTE	Female; 18; high school senior; her attitude masks insecurities
JONAH	Male; 18; funny, works as a “cookie boy” at sporting events; a dreamer
DREW	Male; 19; has wealthy and successful parents; quirky; bottles up his emotions (This character has gender flexibility.)

## SETTING

The dock at a lakefront estate.

## PRODUCTION NOTES

*On the Edge* can be presented with a very simple set. There are no special costume requirements. Directors are encouraged to be creative with casting, role assignments and staging.

## PROPS

### FOR AUBREY

Notebook  
Pen

### FOR PIPER

Stuffed Monkey Puppet  
Large Pocketbook/Bag

### FOR DREW

Notebook  
Designer Water Bottle

## PRODUCTION HISTORY

Reading  
August 2010  
Pearl Studios  
New York City

Premiere Production  
October 2010  
North Canyon Theatre Company  
Phoenix, AZ

*On the Edge* had a reading at Pearl Studios in New York in August, 2010. The premiere production of *On the Edge* was in Phoenix, Arizona in October, 2010. The original cast included Rosemary Zinke, Tyler Caldwell, Cera Naccarato, Chelsea Karnes, Connery Morano and Alex Reust. The production was directed by the playwright.

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***At rise, AUBREY sits writing in a notebook. SHE is blissfully, peacefully alone. LYNNETTE approaches, looks out at the lake and begins to walk along the edge of the dock. SHE is transfixed by the size of the lake and unnerved and delighted, in equal measure, by the precariousness of her balance.***

LYNNETTE: It's dangerous being on the edge of the dock like this.

*(AUBREY looks up from her notebook, noticing LYNNETTE.)*

*(Rather dramatically)* I could fall in and be swept out into the watery vastness.

AUBREY: It's not the ocean. You know that, right? It's just a little lake. When you can see the other side, it kind of undercuts the whole "vastness" concept.

LYNNETTE: *(Not really an answer)* Right.

AUBREY: You're not thinking of falling in are you? You're not planning to do anything stupid?

LYNNETTE: Stupid is relative.

*(PIPER enters, walking with a spring in her step. SHE carries a large handbag.)*

PIPER: *(Looking out at the lake)* It's nice.

LYNNETTE: Yeah, if you're not out in the center without a floatation device, trying to keep your head above water.

PIPER: *(Downward, in the direction of her bag)* She's morbid.

LYNNETTE: *(To AUBREY)* I think she's talking to you.

*(AUBREY looks up.)*

If she was talking to me, she would have said, "You're morbid," not "she's morbid."

*(PIPER moves downstage and sits on the edge of the dock. SHE considers taking off her shoes but thinks better of it for the moment. LYNNETTE and AUBREY watch her; LYNNETTE with distrust and disgust; AUBREY with curiosity.)*

PIPER: *(Into her bag)* She's creating an awkward situation.

AUBREY: She's not talking to me. I think she's talking to something in her bag.

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*(AUBREY returns her focus to her notebook. JONAH enters, unnoticed by the OTHERS. HE's a bit of a mess. His hair is frantically tousled and his shirt is partly untucked.)*

LYNNETTE: *(To AUBREY)* Do you think she has one of those little dogs in there.

JONAH: Who's got a dog?

AUBREY: *(Without looking up from her notebook)* Nobody.

JONAH: *(To LYNNETTE)* I thought you said she had a dog in her bag.

*(PIPER stares out at the water. Her eyes begin to narrow as SHE listens to the OTHERS talking about her.)*

LYNNETTE: *(Indicating AUBREY, then pointing at PIPER)* I asked her if she thought she had a little dog – a chihuahua – in there.

*(PIPER's irritation begins to bubble up and be visible.)*

AUBREY: *(Barely acknowledging the exchange)* I don't know. I'm not in her bag.

*(A quick beat. AUBREY looks up.)*

And you didn't say "chihuahua." You just said, "little dog." There are a lot of little dogs that aren't chihuahuas.

JONAH: *(To LYNNETTE, concurring with AUBREY)* You said "little dog."

*(PIPER can barely keep from screaming.)*

LYNNETTE: *(Trying desperately to make her point)* I know what I said. I may have said "little dog," but I was visualizing a chihuahua – which is why I corrected myself and said "a chihuahua."

PIPER: *(Loudly, as if the words fly out of her mouth uncontrolled)* IT'S A MONKEY! Okay? It's not a dog. It's a monkey.

LYNNETTE: Oh my gosh! A monkey!

PIPER: Yes.

AUBREY: *(To herself; delighted with the new development)* Nice.

JONAH: *(Practically leaping toward her)* Seriously? *(Quick pause)* You have a monkey in your purse?

AUBREY: *(Feeling compelled to correct the error)* Purses are smaller. She's got more of a full-size bag.

LYNNETTE: *(Moving toward PIPER with urgency)* Are you aware that a woman got her face ripped off when a neighbor's monkey attacked her?

PIPER: *(To LYNNETTE)* You don't have anything to worry about.

JONAH: *(To LYNNETTE, pulling focus away from PIPER)* Your neighbor has a monkey? *(Quick pause)* It's like everybody has a monkey now.

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LYNNETTE: The neighbor of the woman who got her face ripped off. *She's who owned the monkey.*

AUBREY: I saw that on the news. The woman lost her hands, too.

JONAH: Losing your keys is one thing, but your *hands*? That's *unfathomable!* Imagine looking down at your hands and having them not be there. (*Quick pause; the realization strikes him*) But if your face is ripped off you wouldn't be able to see that your hands were missing. And you couldn't even *feel* that your hands were missing because your hands are what you feel with.

AUBREY: She didn't lose her hands like they disappeared – like “poof, your hands are gone.” (*Pause, aware that the focus is on her*) The monkey *tore* them off.

LYNNETTE: That's superhuman strength!

JONAH: (*Interjecting a modification*) Super-monkey strength.

LYNNETTE: (*Continuing without missing a beat in the phrase*) With rage that's completely out of control.

PIPER: (*To EVERYONE*) You don't have anything to worry about.

JONAH: That's probably what the monkey owner said to the woman before the monkey attacked her.

PIPER: My monkey is *stuffed*. (*Pulling it out of her bag*) It's a *stuffed monkey*.

LYNNETTE: Like a stuffed animal?

PIPER: More like a stuffed puppet. If you can put your hand in it, it's a puppet, whether it's stuffed or not.

AUBREY: The obvious question would be: Why are you carrying a stuffed monkey puppet around in your bag?

PIPER: Because he's the only one who likes to travel.

AUBREY: You have more than one?

PIPER: Two. Melinda and Macchiato.

LYNNETTE: (*Pointing at the monkey PIPER's holding*) Which one is that?

PIPER: Macchiato.

JONAH: And you carry it...

PIPER: (*Correcting JONAH*) *Him*.

JONAH: You carry him around with you?

PIPER: (*Sarcastically but not harshly*) Considering that I pulled him out of my bag, which I've been carrying around all day, I think the answer to that would be pretty obvious.

LYNNETTE: And you talk to him?

PIPER: Yes! (*Pause; looking at AUBREY, LYNNETTE and JONAH*) Look... I'm not crazy. I don't have any kind of delusions that Macchiato and I have actual conversations. I'm not *stupid*. I'm fully aware that he's a stuffed monkey and that stuffed monkeys don't speak.

AUBREY: Then what's the deal?

PIPER: I've never been good at talking to myself.

AUBREY: Which makes you normal.

PIPER: Really? So none of you talk to yourselves? Not ever?

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JONAH: Not a lot. *(Pause)* That's a lie. *(Quick pause)* A lot.

LYNNETTE: I mumble. *(Quick pause)* To myself. *(Quick pause)* Mumble more than *talk*, I mean.

AUBREY: I don't usually talk much. Period. To myself or other people.

*(DREW and DELAYNE enter. The OTHERS don't notice them. DREW carries a fancy personal water bottle and a notebook.)*

PIPER: So we all find what works for us. And, for me, what works is talking to Melinda or Macchiato.

DREW: *(Moving downstage)* There's somebody named Macchiato?

AUBREY: Don't ask.

DELAYNE: *(Moving downstage among the OTHERS)* I went to high school with a guy named Blender.

LYNNETTE: That was his first name?

DELAYNE: *(Nodding in the affirmative)* Uh-huh.

LYNNETTE: His real first name? Like on his birth certificate?

DELAYNE: Yep. And his driver's license. *(Quick pause)* And there was a girl named Serendipity. *(Pause)* It's like any word or household appliance has become fair game for naming a child.

DREW: *(To DELAYNE)* Your name's a little out of the ordinary. There aren't a lot of girls named DeLayne running around out in the world.

PIPER: It's a pretty name.

DELAYNE: Thank you.

JONAH: But it *is* different.

DELAYNE: All the kids in my family have names that start with "D." My dad's grandmother died about a week before I was born. And her name was Elaine, so my dad wanted to name me Elaine. My mom came up with DeLayne to kind of do the honor-the-grandmother thing and still have it be a "D" name. She says she negotiated the name compromise while she was going into labor. *(Pause)* There's always a dramatic twist in my mom's stories. *(DELAYNE takes her shoes off. Looking out at the lake)* It's really beautiful. *(Quick pause)* The lake. It's beautiful.

DREW: It's one of the reasons my mom picked this place for the reunion.

LYNNETTE: Your mom is the one who planned the reunion?

DREW: She's on the committee, but she's an event planner so they let her take care of finding and booking the location.

PIPER: Isn't this a public park?

DREW: No. It's a private estate. Mostly it's rented out for weddings and big fundraising events.

JONAH: So somebody lives here?

DREW: The family that owns it has houses in Maine and Hawaii, too. And a condo in New York. So they're only here part of the year. *(Pondering)* I think they have a place in DC, as well. *(Conspiratorially)* The old guy is friends with a lot of politicians.

LYNNETTE: And your mom knows the family?

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DREW: They're friends of ours.

JONAH: Must be nice.

DREW: Yeah. They're great people. *(Pause; looking around, HE does a wave that includes EVERYONE)* I'm Drew.

DELAYNE: *(Pointing to herself)* DeLayne. *(Pause; clarifying the relationship)* I'm his cousin.

AUBREY: We're all cousins, right. Some more distant than others, but we're all related. That's the whole idea of these giant family reunions, isn't it? Bringing everybody together to celebrate our... connectedness.

PIPER: I'm not technically related to anyone here. Not by blood. My stepmom is the one who's related to everybody. I don't have any blood relatives left.

DREW: How is that possible?

PIPER: My parents were both only children, all four of my grandparents died when I was really little. My mom passed away when I was eleven and my dad was killed six months after he got married to my stepmom. *(Pause; looking at DREW)* That's how it's possible.

DREW: I'm sorry.

PIPER: It is what it is. None of it was your fault so there's no reason for you to be sorry.

*(JONAH looks at PIPER, then at all the OTHERS.)*

JONAH: Is anyone else curious?

AUBREY: About?

JONAH: How her dad got killed.

DELAYNE: It's none of our business.

JONAH: That doesn't mean we still can't be curious.

PIPER: Strangled. By a guy he worked with. *(Pause; staring at JONAH)* Does that quench your curiosity?

JONAH: *(Stepping back, looking away)* Yeah.

*(An awkward beat.)*

Sorry.

*(An even more awkward beat.)*

DREW: Well... my mom sent me down here to the lake to make sure nobody had fallen in and drowned.

AUBREY: So far, so good. Nobody's even gone in swimming – at least not as long as I've been down here.

DREW: My mom worries. *(Quick pause)* Accidents happen. She thought about hiring a lifeguard but she decided that it would look like she was *expecting* people to fall in and drown. So no lifeguard. *(Quick pause)* Which is why she sent me down to make sure everything was okay.

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*(Quick pause)* It's not like I could do anything, if somebody *had* fallen in. I can't swim. *(As if this will be a logical explanation)* I don't like water in my face.

JONAH: Dude, what about showers? You get water on your face when you take a shower.

DREW: I don't hold my face up.

PIPER: But you still wash your face, don't you?

DREW: Yeah. *(Quick pause)* Of course. I just hate the water flying in my face. *(Pause; an example)* Like being an Olympic swimmer would be a horrific nightmare for me. *(Quick pause)* Having to put my face in the water. And, as I'm swimming, the water would keep crashing into my face like a tidal wave of terror. *(Pause)* I'm also not a fan of log flume rides at amusement parks. *(Quick pause)* And I would sooner crawl around in a sewer than go to a water park and go down one of those giant slides.

LYNNETTE: Water parks might as well be sewers. People go to the bathroom in the pools at those places all the time. Two summers ago, my friend Lauren worked as a slide monitor at a water park. She was in the pool near the bottom of the slide and her job was to make sure that people moved out of the way after they came down the slide so the next people coming down wouldn't *slam* into them. And her manager told her to pee in the pool, if she had to go, because they didn't have enough staff to cover for actual restroom breaks outside the pool. *(Utterly disgusted and offended)* "Pee in the pool" is the official company policy.

*(DELAYNE gets an incoming text message.)*

DELAYNE: *(Looking at her phone)* Not again.

DREW: Marcus?

DELAYNE: Who else?

DREW: *(Bringing EVERYBODY else up to speed)* Marcus is her boyfriend. *(Pause; to DELAYNE)* What's he say this time?

DELAYNE: *(Reading the text)* "WHO U HANGIN WITH???" WAT U DOIN???"

DREW: That's what he texted a half hour ago.

DELAYNE: I didn't answer that one. So he's asking again. But this time it's all in capital letters with multiple question marks.

AUBREY: *(Dripping with sarcasm)* He sounds like a keeper.

DELAYNE: He's just a little clingy.

DREW: Like psychotic velcro.

DELAYNE: That's harsh.

DREW: *(To DELAYNE)* He rigged up a spy cam in your dorm room so he could watch you on his laptop down the hall!

DELAYNE: There's no proof of that. We never found any hidden camera.

DREW: His roommate told me about it. He said Marcus called it "watching The DeLayne Show."

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LYNNETTE: That's like stalking, you know.

AUBREY: It's not *like* stalking. It *is* stalking.

PIPER: (*To DELAYNE*) Why would you put up with that?

DELAYNE: Drew exaggerates because he doesn't get along with Marcus.

DREW: Because he threatened to punch me in the face. (*Quick pause*) He actually said, "punch you in the face." (*Quick pause; doing his Marcus impression*) "I will punch you in the face."

DELAYNE: Marcus doesn't understand that I have male friends who aren't a danger to my relationship with him.

AUBREY: You make a lot of excuses for him. (*Pause*) I'm just sayin'.

DELAYNE: I'm not the easiest person to get along with either. And Marcus puts up with all my drama...

DREW: (*Interjecting*) Most of which he causes.

DELAYNE: (*Cutting off DREW; refocusing the conversation*) So I can handle his... zealous texting and his need to keep tabs on me. (*Pause; with a contented smile*) It just means he really cares. And it's not easy to find a guy who gives you that kind of... (*DELAYNE chooses her words carefully.*) ... Attention and dedication.

DREW: And it should come as no surprise to any of you that she's a public relations major. She can make anything sound reasonable.

JONAH: I'd give my girlfriend attention and dedication without all the psycho stuff. (*Quick pause*) If I had a girlfriend.

PIPER: What's stopping you? (*Quick pause*) From having a girlfriend, I mean?

JONAH: (*Trying to make excuses seem like justifiable reasons*) I don't know. I'm busy. I'm focused on other things.

LYNNETTE: (*Teasing, but with an edge*) Maybe you don't have the moves.

DREW: No game?

JONAH: I've got moves. And I've got game. I know all about game.

DELAYNE: Oh really? Enlighten us.

JONAH: (*With a laugh, diverting the discussion*) I gave up a game to come to the reunion.

LYNNETTE: (*Confused*) You've got game, but you gave it up?

JONAH: (*Explaining*) I work at the ballpark. And the arena, too, depending on what sport's in season. (*With cocky swagger*) That's right, my game is so major league, I hang with the other pro players.

DELAYNE: Either you're trying to be funny or you're completely unhinged.

JONAH: Let's go with funny. (*Pause*) Seriously, though, I do work at the ballpark and the arena.

AUBREY: You're what? Seventeen? Eighteen?

JONAH: Eighteen.

AUBREY: So you're... a bat boy or something like that at the ballpark? (*An even better guess*) Or, at the arena, you're one of the guys who wipes up the sweat the basketball players drip on the court?

JONAH: Not even close.

LYNNETTE: So give us the 4-1-1.

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DELAYNE: *(To LYNNETTE)* Did you really just say that?

LYNNETTE: I'm down with street slang. I listen to rap music.

PIPER: Do any of us look like we're all about the street slang?

DELAYNE: When I take off my earrings, it's not a warning that I'm gonna get into a fight. It just means, I'm tired and I don't wanna fall asleep with my earrings on.

AUBREY: And, F.Y.I., a lot of rap music degrades women. *(Pause)* Just something to think about.

DELAYNE: *(Playfully, to JONAH)* So street slang and rap music aside, what's your deal, Mr. I-Got-Game?

JONAH: *(With joking swagger)* I'm not sure you can handle my deal.

DREW: *(With a laugh)* Whatever it is, I'm sure we can handle it.

JONAH: *(Teasing, working the moment)* All right, but remember, I warned you...

*(JONAH pauses. EVERYONE leans in.)*

Okay... Here it is, here's the 4-1-1. *(Pause)* Are you sure you're ready?

*(PIPER pulls the monkey out of her bag.)*

PIPER: *(In a mock meltdown)* Yes! We're ready!

JONAH: *(Pointing at PIPER and Macchiato)* Not till you put the monkey away. It creeps me out a little.

*(PIPER rolls her eyes and puts Macchiato back in her bag.)*

OK...

DREW: You're killin' me, dude. Spit it out.

JONAH: *(With great reverence and sincerity)* I sell cookies. *(Pause)* And not just any cookies. I sell *giant* cookies.

DELAYNE: You're kidding me. That's what we waited for? The big reveal was that you're a cookie boy at sporting events.

JONAH: *Cookie man.* And for your information, it's more than just selling cookies and Rice Krispie treats and bottled water. A cookie man is essential to the sporting event experience. I help create – *no*, it's more than that – I'm *integral* to the *vibe*... the overall *ambiance* of a game. *(To DELAYNE)* And that's not something you can diminish with your rolled eyes and superior tone.

*(With a chuckle, DELAYNE steps back and raises her hands in mock surrender.)*

Nobody tells you what to yell when you're walking through the stands hustling your cookies. When you get hired, the manager says, "Sell this stuff!" And he hands you a plastic bin filled with chocolate chip, oatmeal

raisin, peanut butter and – my personal favorite, cinnamon sugar – cookies, plus some Rice Krispie squares and ice cold water. He tells you how much everything costs but that's where it ends. He doesn't hold your hand when you go out among the people. You're on your own in a hostile environment. In the middle of a fast-break play, nobody is thinking about a cookie. As the point guard throws up a last-second three-point shot, nobody is craving a Rice Krispie treat. You have to make them want it. You have to make them *need* that cookie and a bottle of water to wash it down with. *(Pause)* I know where my regulars are. And I know when they like their cookies. I show up in Section 111, Row 28, just before halftime, and I am one-hundred-percent sure I'm gonna sell two cinnamon sugar cookies and a pair of water bottles. That's a guaranteed sale and a tip, too. And at the ballpark, the blond-haired lady in the fifth row behind home plate... She likes a Rice Krispie treat at the beginning of the second inning. I show up right on cue. She pays me, tips me and gives me a little pat on the butt when I bend over to pick up my bin after I finish her transaction.

*(ALL but JONAH laugh.)*

*(Working the crowd even now)* But it's the rest of the crowd that makes me work for my sales. I don't yell too loud. Just enough volume to be heard in the section I'm standing, plus a smile that says, "Baby, I've got a secret." *(Pause)* And I walk up and down the aisles. Confidently. With *swagger*. And I say, "Cookies... Better than your mama makes!" *(Pause)* Not many mothers make cookies anymore. *I know that. You know that. Heck, everybody knows that. But it works. It works like a charm. Like a dream.* They may not be hungry for a cookie. You can't force people to be hungry. *(Breaking it down)* You have to *encourage* them. *Entice* them. *Tempt* them. Paint a sensory picture. Get 'em to *smell* cookies baking in the oven. Get 'em to have a happy, golden memory of their grandmother's kitchen. That's the trick. Nah, wait. That's not a *trick*. It's a *skill*. It's an *art*. *(Pause)* So, yeah, I got *moves*. I've got *skills*. I've got *game*. *(Pause)* I just need to use it in a different way. *(Pause; the big truth)* I'm the cookie. And potential girlfriends are like people who aren't hungry. Not right now. But I can whet their appetite. I can make 'em crave my cookie. *(Quick pause)* Crave *me*, I mean. *(Pause)* Because *I'm* the cookie.

*(A beat.)*

PIPER: I would just about kill for a cookie right now.

DELAYNE: I hear that.

JONAH: Don't look at me. I'm off duty, today.

DREW: I think there are some cookies up in the dessert pavilion.

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LYNNETTE: (*With a lazy whine*) That would require actually going back up the hill.

DREW: According to my mom's agenda, they should be into the games and races about now.

AUBREY: I'll stay down here. I'm not a three-legged race kind of person. And I find no enjoyment in doing an obstacle course while holding a water balloon between my legs. Call me crazy but that's just not how I have fun.

DREW: But those are the kind of wacky things you do at family reunions.

PIPER: (*With a laugh*) According to your mom's agenda.

LYNNETTE: And what's the deal...

JONAH: (*Interjecting; teasing*) The 4-1-1...

LYNNETTE: (*Exasperated*) Whatever! (*Pause*) What's the... idea.... the reason... for everybody to wear the same outfits.

AUBREY: (*Derisively*) It's like a uniform.

DREW: It's kind of complicated.

JONAH: (*With a chuckle*) So break it down for us, professor.

(*ALL except DREW laugh.*)

DREW: Well... usually at big family reunions like this, the registration money you pay to attend includes a t-shirt. It reinforces that we're all related because we're all wearing the same shirt. Like our t-shirt – if we had 'em – would have said, "Oldenberg-Carter-Hampton-Sloan Reunion" because we're all descendants of those four branches of the family tree.

(*DREW takes a sip from his fancy personal water bottle.*)

AUBREY: (*Aside, to PIPER*) He's taking this very seriously.

PIPER: (*Aside to AUBREY*) That's probably on his mother's agenda, too.

DREW: My mom and the rest of the reunion committee aren't T-shirt-wearing kind of people. They're just not. (*Quick pause*) That isn't a slam against people who *do* wear T-shirts, but my mom isn't one of them. So she had the idea that we should all wear khaki pants and white shirts.

AUBREY: So we look like we're on our way to work at Banana Republic?

DREW: (*Sarcastically*) Funny.

AUBREY: It's my default setting.

DREW: But instead of khaki, my mom suggested dark pants because they'd be more slimming for the people who have big hips and extra-large butts.

AUBREY: (*With even more of an edge*) She's so thoughtful.

DREW: But the best part of her idea is that, if everybody is wearing the same kind of pants and shirts, then, nobody will be worried about who has nicer clothes or who's got on which designer label. We'll remember the *faces* of the people we meet and not what they're wearing.

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PIPER: That's actually not a bad idea.

LYNNETTE: *(To DREW)* So are you your mother's personal assistant or what?

DREW: *(A tad offended)* No. I don't work for her. I'm just her son.

LYNNETTE: The way you get behind her ideas, maybe she should start paying you. You're like a cheerleader.

DELAYNE: *(To DREW)* You must have picked up some public relations skills from me.

DREW: *(To DELAYNE)* You're piling on, too?

DELAYNE: I was kidding. *(Pause)* A joke.

DREW: *(To LYNNETTE; sharply)* My mom is great at what she does. I'm proud of her. *(Pause)* And it seems like a family reunion that she was instrumental in pulling together is an inappropriate place for me to get jumped on just because I present my mother and her ideas in a positive light.

PIPER: *(To DREW)* I don't think she meant to jump on you. I don't think she meant that at all.

DREW: *(To PIPER, indicating LYNNETTE)* And wouldn't it be up to her to clear that up, if it's not what she meant to do? *(DREW takes a step toward LYNNETTE; To LYNNETTE)* Is making fun of my support for my mother what you meant to do? Because it sure sounded that way to me.

LYNNETTE: I was just teasing. *(Pause)* Why was it okay for everybody to make fun of something I said but it's not all right for me to do that to you?

DREW: Context. *(Pause; staring her down)* What you said felt personal.

JONAH: I think you're being a little hyper-sensitive, dude.

AUBREY: *(Like a sheriff laying down the law)* I, for one, don't want this turn into an ugly scene here on the dock. People might fall into the lake. People might get *pushed* into the lake. By me.

*(PIPER clutches her bag close to her and moves back away from the edge of the dock.)*

PIPER: Macchiato and I will be over here. Away from any unwanted contact with the lake.

*(JONAH backs away from the edge of the dock.)*

JONAH: *(To PIPER)* I'm with you.

DREW: Nobody has to move back. *(Pause; mentally kicking himself)* I should just throw myself into the lake. I'm being a jerk. *(Quick pause)* I mean, I was being a jerk. Now I'm being contrite because I was being too sensitive which made me act like a jerk. *(Pause)* Here's the thing... *(DREW turns to LYNNETTE with a friendly but mischievous smile.)* Here's the 4-1-1...

(*ALL laugh.*)

The *no-bull* 4-1-1.

(*More laughter from ALL.*)

(*Confessing*) I had a fight with my mother about the matching pants and shirts. (*Sharing the real truth*) She wasn't worried about people remembering each other's faces instead of their clothes. That was just her official line of crap. What she wanted was to be able to control what people wore. She didn't want anybody showing up in cut-off jeans and slutty tank tops. And that ticked me off. (*Quick pause*) Not that people would wear cut-off jeans and slutty tank tops. (*Quick pause*) I mean the idea that she was dishing out a bunch of bull wrapped up in a pretty sentiment, just so she could make sure everybody's clothes were acceptable by her standards. *That's what ticked me off.* (*Pause*) So we had a fight. (*Quick pause*) Now, just so you understand... A fight with my mother means that I disagree with something she says or does. I don't *tell* her I disagree, but I do. In my head, I'm so articulate. I let her know exactly how I'm feeling and I defend my position with incredible skill. I am *awesome* in my head. But that's as far as it goes. The amazing, impassioned arguments I make in my mind never get spoken out loud. Just the thought of doing that scares me so much. (*Quick pause*) And even though I never verbalize my anger or frustrations to her, she *knows*. It's like she can hear what I'm saying in my head. And she doesn't like it. So she *turns*. (*Quick pause*) Just her head – the rest of her body stands perfectly still in beautifully poised position, like a really elegant mannequin. But her head swivels slowly. Sometimes, I swear it's going to spin all the way around – at which point I think I would spontaneously combust and explode into tiny bits of charred confetti-size flesh.

AUBREY: That's vivid.

DREW: When her head stops turning, she takes a deep breath. (*Quick pause*) The whole time she's inhaling, she's looking right at me. (*Quick pause*) Right through me. And then, after all that turning and breathing, she says, "Really?" (*Quick pause*) Which clearly indicates that she heard what I was saying in my head. (*Pause*) But she doesn't dispute my point of view. She doesn't have to. She thinks arguing with me would be a waste of energy that could be better spent another way. *Any other way.* (*Pause*) And after the "really," she gives me this smile that looks like it hurts to make and she says, "How silly." (*Quick pause*) Which absolutely has to be in response to what I said in my head after she said, "Really."

AUBREY: (*To DREW*) Don't take this the wrong way... but you're wound a little too tightly.

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PIPER: If you had a monkey, you'd spend less time talking in your head and you'd let some of those thoughts out. Where they belong.

LYNNETTE: And if you disagreed with your mother, why did you tell us about her ideas like you loved them.

DREW: I don't know. Reflex, I guess. She's big on family unity. Which translates to: she makes the rules and my dad and I just shut up and follow 'em. I'm 19 years old. I'll be starting my second year of college in a few weeks but my mother still makes most of my decisions for me.

JONAH: (*Shaking his head in disbelief and disgust*) Dude. I mean, seriously... Dude. You've got to shut that down.

DREW: I know. But she does the same thing with my dad. And he just goes along with it.

AUBREY: That's his deal, not yours.

DREW: When we were in Amsterdam in June...

LYNNETTE: (*Interjecting*) I go to Pittsburgh. You go to Amsterdam.

DREW: (*As if this explains the disparity of destinations*) We were on vacation.

LYNNETTE: Right. So was I. In Pittsburgh.

DREW: It doesn't matter where we were. The point I'm trying to make isn't that we were in Amsterdam. That's just a fact. It's where we were. The thing is that, there we were in a city my mother picked for our trip, despite the fact that my dad wanted to go to Prague and I didn't want to go at all. And, while we were there, every day she gave us an agenda of what we were going to do that day. She never asked us what we wanted to do. *She decided for us.* (*Pause*) She knows I like to wander around and take pictures. (*Quick pause*) I love that. (*Pause*) Just walking out of the hotel and not knowing where I'm going to go. Just letting myself be drawn to whatever catches my eye. And, from there, on to the next thing. Eating when I'm hungry – not just because it's supposed to be lunch time – and wandering around some more. Eventually, I find my way back to the hotel and my memory card is full of photographs. And the memory card in my brain is filled with even more images... sounds... tastes... smells – everything I experienced that day. (*Pause*) I kept waiting for her to set aside time for me to do my wandering around. I think my dad was hoping his assignment would be to sit in the hotel bar all day but, like you said, that would be his deal, not mine. (*Pause*) The second to last day of our trip, I woke up and asked myself – in my head, not out loud... (*HE begins to cry*) "Why am I hoping for something that isn't going to happen?"

(*A beat. DREW's tears give way to a beatified expression that washes over his face.*)

And then it happened.

PIPER: It?

DREW: My mother twisted her ankle on the sidewalk in front of the hotel! One minute she was standing next to me talking about the museum we were going to and, then, like – bam – she was on the ground. *(Pause, reliving the moment)* It was weird. *(Pause)* For what seemed like forever, she just sat there looking up at my dad and me. Like she didn't know what to do. *(Pause)* I loved that moment! *(Pause)* And my dad said, "I'm going to take your mother up to the room. You're on your own for the rest of the day." So while my mom was laying on the bed with her ankle wrapped up, iced and elevated, my dad went to the hotel bar and I wandered around Amsterdam taking photos.

AUBREY: What'd you take pictures of?

DELAYNE: Don't ask.

PIPER: *(Aside, to DELAYNE)* You've seen 'em?

DELAYNE: *(Aside, to PIPER)* Ohhhhh, yeah.

DREW: *(Ignoring PIPER and DELAYNE)* I have a bunch of them on my phone.

DELAYNE: *(To AUBREY)* Trust me, you don't want to see them.

*(DREW pulls his phone out of his pocket. HE accesses his photos and scrolls through several.)*

DREW: Don't be silly! She wouldn't have asked if she didn't want to see them.

DELAYNE: *(A surrender)* If you say so...

*(DREW finds the photo HE wants.)*

DREW: Okay... Here's the first shot from that day in Amsterdam.

*(DREW passes his phone to AUBREY. AUBREY looks at it. The look becomes a stare. Then SHE turns the phone on it's side to look at it that way.)*

AUBREY: *(Perplexed)* It's a bathroom.

DREW: *(As if this should rectify AUBREY's bewilderment)* At the Central train station.

AUBREY: So you took a picture of a public restroom?

DELAYNE: *(With a laugh)* Remember... I warned you.

DREW: Public restrooms are the best barometer of how civilized a society is. Clean restrooms mean a more civilized society. A city's homeless population is another good indicator.

*(AUBREY flips through several photos on DREW's phone.)*

PIPER: So you take photographs of restrooms and homeless people?

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AUBREY: *(Reporting on what SHE's viewing on DREW's phone)* That's what it looks like so far.

PIPER: And that's what you did the whole time you were wandering around?

DREW: Of course not. I took photos of other things. I had lunch sitting on the edge of a canal. I talked to a girl from Bulgaria who was in Amsterdam studying engineering.

*(While continuing to flip through photos, AUBREY discovers a more traditional tourist shot.)*

AUBREY: *(Squealing with glee)* A big organ! *(Quick pause)* I found a picture of a big pipe organ. And a bunch more of the inside of a church.

*(Looking over AUBREY's shoulder at what's displayed on his phone, DREW provides a verbal caption for what's in the photo.)*

DREW: That's the Westerkerk. *(Quick pause; translating)* That means Western Church – It's in the western part of the city, around the corner from the Anne Frank House. It has a huge pipe organ and a half dozen chandeliers that look like massive Christmas balls with giant candle holders attached to them.

AUBREY: It's a nice change from the restrooms and homeless people.

PIPER: *(Raising her hand)* I have a follow-up question about the restrooms?

DREW: What d'ya wanna know?

PIPER: What did they tell you about how civilized Amsterdam is?

DREW: It's definitely civilized. The restrooms were very clean. Way better than a lot of other cities I've been to. In Hong Kong, at least a quarter of all the public restrooms I went in were disgusting. Like people went to the bathroom *on the toilet* instead of in it.

DELAYNE: I can testify. *(Quick pause)* I saw the slide show.

DREW: *(To PIPER)* I can email the shots from the Hong King trip to you, if you want.

JONAH: *(To DREW, with a laugh)* Dude, you're a freak. And I absolutely mean that in a good way.

*(AUBREY starts writing something in her notebook.)*

LYNNETTE: *(Noticing what AUBREY is doing)* What are you writing?

AUBREY: *(Focused on her notebook)* Hmmmm?

LYNNETTE: *(Pointing to AUBREY's notebook)* In your notebook. *(Quick pause)* What are you writing in your notebook?

AUBREY: Just an observation. *(AUBREY closes her notebook.)*

JONAH: About how civilized we are?

*(ALL laugh.)*

AUBREY: In a way.

DELAYNE: That was cryptic.

AUBREY: I wasn't trying to be.

LYNNETTE: So just tell us what you wrote.

JONAH: Don't be so pushy. She'll tell us if she wants to. *(Clearly trying to use guilt on AUBREY)* It's not like the rest of us haven't put our quirks on display, right?

*(JONAH smiles sweetly at AUBREY. AUBREY opens her notebook and finds the page SHE'd just been writing on.)*

AUBREY: I said... "The cookie man called the restroom photographer a freak. These are my people." *(AUBREY closes her notebook.)* And I mean that in a good way. *(Quick pause)* A totally good way.

*(DREW laughs.)*

DREW: "Restroom photographer." I'm gonna have to remember that the next time somebody asks me what I do.

AUBREY: I hate that question.

*(DREW adopts a very sophisticated pose and uses a posh speaking voice.)*

DREW: "What do I do, you ask? I'm a restroom photographer. And I'm flush with success!"

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