

Someone Else's Life

A comedy/drama in two acts

**By
Scott Gibson**

SOMEONE ELSE'S LIFE

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Someone Else's Life was awarded a first place prize in The Rocky Mountain Theatre Association's Playwriting Competition in Pocatello, Idaho in January, 2005. It received its World Premiere on October 12, 2006 at the Buntport Theatre in Denver, CO, produced by Conundrum Theatre Company. The cast and production crew were as listed below.

CAST

(In order of Appearance)

ROSE-----Susan D'Autremont
ALAN-----John Samson
AMY-----Susan Scott
MATTHEW-----Jono Waldman
DANIEL-----Jake Mechling

PRODUCTION CREW

DIRECTOR-----Jim Hunt
STAGE MANAGER-----Biz Schaugaard
PRODUCER-----Davis Bennett
SET DESIGNER-----Biz Schaugaard
LIGHTING DESIGNER-----Nick Kargel
COSTUME DESIGNER-----Alice Minaga
SOUND DESIGNER-----Gov Landrum
PUBLICITY-----Melanie Mayner
PUBLICITY-----Gloria Shanstrom

ACT ONE

Scene One

AT RISE:

(Lights up on a small patio/terrace area fronting the exterior of small, picturesque motel. In the background, doors to three rooms can be seen. The numbers on the three doors are 21, 22, and 23. Baskets and hanging planters of petunias and geraniums decorate the area. In the foreground, there are two wrought iron garden tables, each with two wrought iron chairs, ostensibly to be shared by the occupants of the rooms. After a moment, the door to Room 23 opens and ROSE emerges. She wears slacks and an attractive blouse. She is perhaps 50 or so, and pretty. She carries a canvas bag which she takes to the table down below her room. She places it on one of the chairs, then goes back into her room and returns several seconds later carrying a glass of iced tea, which she sets on the table. She sits in the other chair and sips her tea. She digs in the bag and pulls out a variety of items: A paperback book, a pen, a box of note cards, a magazine, a sketch pad, and an eyeglasses case. She arranges them in a configuration that suits her, then settles back in her chair and gazes out in front of her, enjoying the scenery. It would appear that she is content to do nothing but this for awhile longer, but after a moment, Room 23's door opens again and ALAN steps out. He is a nice-looking man in his mid-50s or so, wearing jeans, a short-sleeved shirt, and sneakers. As he comes out onto the terrace, ROSE lunges for the box of note cards and

the pen, and busies herself with writing.
ALAN gazes at the scenery.)

ALAN. The rain's clearing out. Looks like it's going to be a beautiful sunset.

ROSE. Mm-hm.

ALAN. I love the way things smell after a summer shower. Especially up here. (Listens) You can hear the creek. (ROSE stops her writing to listen. She smiles, then goes back to writing.)

ALAN. I'm going to take a walk. Want to come?

ROSE. Not this time, no.

ALAN. I think I'll stop by the grill on my way and make some dinner reservations. Six o'clock okay?

ROSE. That's fine.

ALAN. I'll be back in about an hour. (Watching her write for a few seconds) You really should wear your glasses when you're pretending to write. (ALAN exits. ROSE has reacted to his comment with just the slightest hesitation in her writing. But once he is gone, she sets down the pen and pushes the note card aside. She seems lost in thought. After a bit, she takes her glasses from their case, puts them on, and then picks up the pen and resumes writing. But after a couple of lines, she gives up. She puts the card back into the stationer box and sets both it and the pen to one side. She sips her iced tea, then settles back into her seat, looking at the scenery again. AMY enters. She is in her mid- to late-20's, and she wears a battered bridesmaid's dress. Her hair, festooned with bits of Baby's Breath flowers, is something of a tangled mess. It is somewhat difficult, in her present state, to determine whether or not AMY might actually be attractive. She carries no luggage, just a room key. She is looking for Room 21, and glances at ROSE, though she takes no real notice of her. She checks the tag on her key and then approaches Room 21. She inserts the key in the lock and struggles to open the door, which seems stuck. The struggle attracts ROSE's attention, who watches her.)

AMY. (Muttering) Dammit. (The struggle continues.)

ROSE. (Taking off her glasses) The doors stick sometimes, especially after the rain. The wood gets warped, I think. (AMY

ignores her and continues to wrestle with the door. Just as ROSE starts to get up and offer assistance, AMY succeeds in opening it. Without a look back, she steps inside and closes the door behind her. ROSE starts to sit down again, but changes her mind and moves down below to table, arms folded in front of her, to look out at the scenery. MATTHEW enters. Dressed casually, he's a handsome man in his late twenties/early thirties.)

MATTHEW. Hey, Rose. Checking for smoke signals?

ROSE. What? No, I was... (Getting the joke) Oh. I thought you'd already left for the wedding rehearsal.

(MATTHEW has crossed to stand in front of the door to Room 22. He fumbles for his key, and continues to fumble as he talks.

DANIEL enters. He smiles at ROSE and crosses to stand behind MATTHEW. DANIEL is slightly older than MATTHEW, but the two resemble one another somewhat. DANIEL is also dressed in his version of "casual," which is perhaps slightly more formal or reserved than MATTHEW's interpretation of the word.)

MATTHEW. That's where we're headed now. We've been having drinks on the lawn with *Muthah and Fathah*, the future in-laws, and assorted others. (As he talks, MATTHEW continues to struggle with fitting the key into the lock.)

DANIEL. Maybe too many drinks. (DANIEL takes the key away from MATTHEW and opens the door.)

MATTHEW. Which would be the only way to spend any extended period of time with our parents. (To DANIEL) Are you changing? (DANIEL shakes his head No.)

MATTHEW. It'll just take me a minute. (MATTHEW goes into Room 22, leaving the door standing ajar. ROSE and DANIEL smile at each other somewhat awkwardly. ROSE returns to her table and sits in her chair. DANIEL, hands in his pockets, waits outside the door for a moment, then crosses down to sit in a chair at the other table. ROSE sips her tea. DANIEL checks his watch.)

ROSE. It's a beautiful afternoon.

DANIEL. (Almost too quickly) Very nice, yes. (Pause.)

ROSE. It's your sister who's getting married, right?

DANIEL. Jennifer, yes. (Pause.)

ROSE. Is she older or younger?

DANIEL. Younger. (MATTHEW sticks his head around the door of Room 22.)

MATTHEW. Danny, you got some deodorant I can use? I can't find mine.

DANIEL. (Starting to get up) It's in my shaving kit.

MATTHEW. I'll find it. (MATTHEW disappears back inside. DANIEL sits down again. Pause.)

ROSE. They do a lot of weddings here. It's such a beautiful spot. Will it be outdoors?

DANIEL. No. It's going to be at that little church down the road.

ROSE. Oh. That should be very nice. Now, how did your sister happen to pick Audra? Is your family from around here originally?

DANIEL. No. Ken, her fiancé... His family has a summer place here.

ROSE. Oh, yes. There are a lot of summer residents now. Years ago, when we first started coming here, all you'd see on the hillsides over there were trees. Now, there's just as many rooftops. I tried to count them one time, but then I realized it was just depressing me. (Glancing at DANIEL, suddenly worried she may have offended him) I'm sorry. I didn't mean to be tactless. Your sister's in-laws have every right to have a home here. (Another awkward pause.)

ROSE. Are you or Matthew married? Or is your sister the first of you to take the plunge? (MATTHEW emerges from Room 22, closing the door behind him. He is wearing a different shirt.)

MATTHEW. I "plunged" a few years back, but it turned out the water temperature wasn't right, so I climbed back out again. (to DANIEL) Mom wanted to know if we were riding with them. I said no, we'd take my car. Unless you want to go with them. (DANIEL gets to his feet.)

DANIEL. No, this is fine. Where are we eating afterwards?

MATTHEW. Here at the lodge. They reserved that room in the back. I heard some vague threat about karaoke later on.

DANIEL. That's good.

MATTHEW. Are you nuts? Karaoke!

DANIEL. I meant I'm glad it's here. I can come back to the room whenever I want.

MATTHEW. (To ROSE) And that would be why my brother isn't married yet. (To DANIEL) Come on, you little social butterfly. We've got people to charm. Or, in your case, to avoid. (MATTHEW and DANIEL exit. ROSE watches them depart, then glances down at her array of stuff. After a few seconds of deliberation, she picks up her sketch pad and opens, it flipping through a few pages. She gazes off at the distant mountains, then puts on her glasses and picks up her pencil. Another second passes and she begins to sketch. After a moment, the door to Room 21 opens. AMY stands in the doorway. She still wears the unkempt bridesmaid's dress and still has Baby's Breath tangled in her hair, though it's clear she has worked at removing some of it. AMY gazes surreptitiously at ROSE. Leaving her door open, she strolls down the walkway in front of the rooms, looking off into the distance. Twisting her fingers nervously, she walks back and gazes in the opposite direction. ROSE has become aware of AMY's presence, but continues to draw. AMY, evidently wrestling with some inner conflict, crosses back to stand in front of her open door, studying ROSE. Finally she takes a couple of steps toward her.)

AMY. Uh, 'scuse me..?

ROSE. (Focused on her sketching) Yes?

AMY. Uh, do you know if there's a clothing store in town? Within walking distance?

ROSE. Here in Audra? No.

AMY. Oh.

ROSE. There's the little general store about halfway down the street. They mostly carry sundries and such, but I believe they sell t-shirts.

AMY. (Inspecting her dress) Well, that would at least be something.

ROSE. (Checking her watch) But it's past five now. I'm pretty sure they're closed.

AMY. Damn. And that's it? There's nothing else?

ROSE. (Setting down her pencil and pad) Well, there are a number of gift and craft shops. The requisite souvenir places.

Some of them carry clothing, I think, but it's quite expensive.

Unless that's what you want. I guess I assumed...

AMY. No. I was really just hoping to pick up some jeans and a shirt. Sneakers, maybe. A toothbrush. (Tugging at her tangled hair) A comb.

ROSE. (Studying her) Ah. (AMY walks some distance away and then stops, thinking. She attempts to pluck more of the flowers from her hair.)

ROSE. You're part of the wedding? (AMY looks at her, slightly wary.)

ROSE. The church down the street. Jennifer Somebody-or-other. I don't remember the last name.

AMY. No.

ROSE. Oh. I thought... (Gesturing to AMY's dress) Well. (ROSE picks up her pencil and goes back to her sketching. AMY folds her arms in front of her. She seems at a loss. After a moment, she crosses and sits at the other table. She takes off her shoes and massages one foot. With an exasperated sigh, ROSE tosses her tablet to one side and drops her pencil.)

ROSE. I don't know why I try. (She sips her tea)

AMY. Are you an artist?

ROSE. That depends on how broad your definition of the term is. (Setting down her glass) No. I'm not an artist.

(ROSE starts to gather her stuff and put it back into the canvas bag. AMY leans over to look at the sketch pad.)

AMY. It's not bad.

ROSE. (A snort of laughter. She watches AMY massage her foot) I have a pair of sandals I could loan you. Until tomorrow, or whenever.

AMY. (Suddenly self-conscious, she tucks her feet under her chair) No, I fine. Thank you.

ROSE. Are those your only shoes? Your feet are going to be a mass of blisters in no time. (AMY says nothing. ROSE watches her for a second.)

ROSE. We're not exactly the same size, but I'm sure I can scrounge up a sweatshirt, or something. I don't have any jeans, but—

AMY. –No. ...Thank you. I'll be fine until tomorrow. (ALAN enters, crossing to ROSE.)

ALAN. Hey.

ROSE. That was a quick walk.

ALAN. I haven't gone yet. When I stopped at the grill, they told me they wouldn't be able to seat us for dinner before seven-thirty. (Glancing at AMY as he talks) I didn't know if that was all right with you, or not.

ROSE. It's fine, Dear.

ALAN. I put our name in, but I can go back and cancel it. We could try that café on the corner instead.

ROSE. Seven-thirty is fine.

ALAN. I'm going to walk right by that place. I could poke my head in and see if we could get in earlier there.

ROSE. (Sharply) What difference does it make when we eat? We're on vacation! (collecting herself) Seven-thirty is just peachy, Alan. (To AMY) This is my husband. If you hadn't already figured that out. Alan. Oh, and I'm Rose. Rose and Alan Swofford.

AMY. Hi.

ALAN. Hello. (There is an awkward pause as ALAN and ROSE wait for AMY to introduce herself. She does not.)

ROSE. Well, look. I'm going to go get those sandals and a few other things and bring them out here. You can wear them or not.

AMY. You really don't have to...

ROSE. I can't imagine that traipsing around in... in those... (Gesturing to AMY's dress and shoes) ...until tomorrow is going to be very comfortable. (ROSE rises and goes into Room 23.

ALAN and AMY watch her go. Then they look awkwardly at one another.)

AMY. She... She doesn't need to do that.

ALAN. (Good-humoredly) Try and stop her.

AMY. I... I have other things. They just aren't... here yet.

ALAN. Ah.

AMY. I told her I was fine, but she was pretty insistent.

ALAN. Yes, that would be Rose. Pretty insistent. (Pause) Are you with the young fellows in..? (gesturing to Room 22)

AMY. No. (Awkward pause. ALAN would like to depart on his walk, but courtesy prevents him from leaving AMY alone. He moves close to ROSE's table, and sees her sketchpad.)

ALAN. Been sketching the scenery again, I see.

AMY. It's very nice.

ALAN. No, it's not. She can't draw to save her life.

AMY. (Trying to be generous) No, it's... it's... (giving up) No. It's not. (They look at each other, laughing a little. ALAN flips back a few pages in the sketchbook.)

ALAN. Take a look at this. (They inspect the page for a few seconds.)

AMY. What is it? (ALAN shrugs. They look at each other and smile. AMY, feeling slightly guilty about laughing, takes a step or two away. ALAN continues to look at the drawing.)

ALAN. I admire her determination, though, if not her talent. Every time we come here, she brings this pad, or something. She's tried composing poetry. Even a novel one time. I guess, because it's so pretty, she feels an obligation to be inspired. As if just enjoying it isn't enough.

AMY. You come here a lot?

ALAN. Every summer. Since the kids were little.

AMY. This place must hold a lot of memories for you.

ALAN. (Beat) We just like it here. (They both appear to have run out of conversation. After a few awkward seconds, ROSE returns from Room 23, carrying an armload of clothes.)

ROSE. Take a look at these. (ROSE carries them to the table where AMY was sitting and plops them down.)

ALAN. I'm going to walk now, before it gets any later. Or cooler. (ALAN waits a beat or two, but the women pay him no mind. He exits.)

AMY. I feel...silly. Borrowing clothes from you. We just met.

ROSE. Sillier than parading around town in that dress the next day or so? (Holding up a pair of sweatpants) I tossed these in while under the delusion that I might actually be inclined to do something physical. There are a couple of sweatshirts here, too. It gets cool in the evening.

AMY. Thank you. I'll give them back tomorrow, as soon as I can get to a store and buy some things.

ROSE. (Crossing to her table to gather up her things) You'd be better off driving down the canyon to Ellsworth. There's a regular dry goods store there. And one of those big discount centers.

AMY. I'd like to pay you a little something for the loan of all this.

ROSE. Not at all. (Crossing to Room 23 and opening the door) I'm glad someone's getting some use out of them. See you later. (ROSE goes inside and closes the door. AMY turns back to the table, holding up each of the shirts ROSE has left. They are large and baggy, with bright colors and garish designs. Her face is expressionless. After a moment, she sets the clothing to one side. Glancing around to make sure no one is in sight, she reached into the waistband of her dress and extracts a wad of folded money. There appears to be a lot. She counts it silently as the lights fade.)

Scene Two

AT RISE:

It is late evening. The terrace area in front of the rooms is bathed in moonlight. Perhaps one or two small wall sconces outside the motel rooms are lit. DANIEL ambles into the terrace area. He walks to the door of Room 22, pulling the key from his pocket. He unlocks the door and goes inside, closing the door behind him. Through the window, we see the light come on. After just a couple of seconds, the door reopens and DANIEL comes outside hurriedly, closing the door behind him. He walks down to one of the wrought iron tables, exasperated. He stands there, as if at a loss for what to do next. The door to Room 22 opens again, and MATTHEW comes out, struggling to zip up a pair of pants. He is barefooted and shirtless. He closes the door and crosses down to DANIEL.

MATTHEW. I told you not to come back for awhile!

DANIEL. Dammit, Matt! I hate it when you pull this shit!

MATTHEW. I'm sorry! But I—

DANIEL. —And if you're going to, then at least put the chain lock on the door!

MATTHEW. I thought—

DANIEL. —Were you too busy getting her out of her dress to be bothered with that? I suppose she's lucky you at least waited until you got back to the room.

MATTHEW. Danny, I'm sorry, okay? I'm sorry. (Pause.

DANIEL, fuming, gazes into the distance. **MATTHEW** glances surreptitiously back into the room, then turns back to **DANIEL**.)

MATTHEW. So, um, could you take off for awhile?

DANIEL. No! This is my room, too! Take her back to her place!

MATTHEW. She's sharing it with one of the other bridesmaids.

DANIEL. Well, of course. We wouldn't want to inconvenience the roommate, or anything.

MATTHEW. (Inspiration strikes) Look, Mom and Dad have that suite! There's an extra bed in there. Go get Dad's key. They're still in the bar. You know them: They'll be there for hours yet.

DANIEL. I'm not going to stay in their room. What do you expect me to say? “Can I sleep with you guys? Matthew's banging one of Jenny's bridesmaids in our place!”

MATTHEW. That's fine with me! Or, if you're shy, just say I got really drunk, and my puking is so noisy and smelly, you can't sleep through it. (**DANIEL** studies **MATTHEW** for a second.)

DANIEL. God, you're a pig.

MATTHEW. (Thinking about this and nodding) Yeah.

(Clutching **DANIEL**'s shoulders) Please? Please do this for your baby brother? Just this one little favor?

DANIEL. No.

MATTHEW. Danny, you should see her!

DANIEL. I did. More than I wanted to.

MATTHEW. (Cradling **DANIEL**'s face, moving **DANIEL**'s head back and forth gently) She's so pretty, and she's so nice. And

she's already naked. (DANIEL pushes MATTHEW's hands away and steps back.)

DANIEL. Stop it! Matt, I'm tired, and I want to go to bed. In my own bed. I... You... (DANIEL wavers, looking at MATTHEW standing in front of him, arms huddled around his chest, in the cool night air.)

DANIEL. (Sighing resignedly) I'm not sleeping in Mom and Dad's room. (Glancing at his watch) One hour. I will give you one hour. Then I start pounding on the door. If you aren't fin... If you haven't sent Miss Nice, Pretty, Naked on her way by then, I promise you, I will make enough noise to wake everyone in the place!

MATTHEW. Oh, Dan, Daniel, Danny, you are the best brother ever! (MATTHEW squeezes DANIEL's cheek, then dashes back to the door of Room 22. As he opens it, he turns back.)

MATTHEW. I'll tell her you said Hi! (MATTHEW goes inside and closes the door. The light inside goes off. DANIEL watches this, then turns away. Now he is at a loss. Hands in his pockets, he starts to walk away, then realizes he doesn't have anywhere to go. He stops. Trying to plot his next move, he pulls out one of the chairs and sits at the table. AMY enters. She is now wearing the sweatpants and one of the sweatshirts ROSE loaned her. She carries a large bottle of wine, already opened. She crosses to Room 21 and attempts to unlock it. DANIEL has not noticed her at first. But, as before, AMY has difficulty getting her door unlocked, and her struggle and muttering catches his attention. He glances at her, and then looks away again.)

AMY. Son of a bitch. You stupid door. (AMY sets the wine bottle down and continues to struggle. DANIEL is debating as to whether or not he should offer assistance, but AMY wrestles the door open, picks up her bottle and goes inside. She leaves the door slightly ajar. A moment passes, during which DANIEL, settling in for the long haul, pulls another chair out from the table and lifts his feet onto it. He locks his hands behind his head and gazes out into the night sky. AMY reappears in the doorway, carrying the wine and a plastic glass. Stepping outside, she starts to close the door, then, remembering her earlier struggle, decides to leave it ajar.

She crosses to the other table, unaware, in the moonlight, of DANIEL's presence. She sits and pours herself a glass of wine, sets the bottle on the table, and sighs heavily. She takes a drink of wine, reacting to its taste speculatively, smacking her lips. Taking another drink, she then tilts the bottle back to squint at the label in the dim light. DANIEL has watched this process with fascination and some guilt, not quite sure what to do. Before he can decide, the choice is made for him. AMY, almost intuitively sensing his presence, releases the bottle and turns to look at him watching her.)

DANIEL. Uh... (AMY studies him without apparent emotion for another second or so. Then she abruptly stands in preparation of taking her wine and going back to her room.)

DANIEL. You don't have to go. I can leave. I was just... I'm in 22. (Gesturing to his door) ...But I'm... (Standing) ...I didn't mean to startle you. (Pause. Both of them look at the other.)

DANIEL. I saw you trying to get your door open, and then you came back out. You didn't notice me, and I didn't know what to say. I didn't want to scare you.

AMY. 'Hello' would have been acceptable.

DANIEL. Please sit down again. You were enjoying your wine, and the night. I'm only here because... I can't... I'm not...

(DANIEL's hands drop to his sides. He is out of things to say.

AMY, deciding he is not dangerous, sits back down.)

AMY. I don't have exclusive rights to all of this. You can stay.

DANIEL. (Sitting) I'm sure you wanted to be alone. That's why I was here. (AMY looks at him. She takes a sip of wine, then gets up and heads back to her room, leaving the bottle and glass sitting on the table.)

DANIEL. Wait! That didn't come out right! I just meant that I'd come back here, back to my room, to get away...from... (His voice trails off as AMY disappears into Room 21. DANIEL watches her leave, then faces forward, sighing. A few seconds pass, then AMY comes back out, bringing another plastic glass. She gets the wine bottle from her table, carries the extra glass to DANIEL's table where she places it in front of him, and fills it with wine.)

DANIEL. No, that's all right. Thanks. But I don't really want... I've already had... I... (Realizing his protestations are doing no good) Thank you. (AMY, carrying her bottle, crosses back and sits at her table.)

AMY. Don't thank me. It's not my wine. I stole it. (AMY pours more wine into her glass.)

DANIEL. Oh. (He picks up his glass and raises it in a toast) Well, here's to thievery.

AMY. There's some sort of party going on. A bunch of obnoxious drunks and a lot of unguarded bottles of wine. I'd've bought my own, but they'll only sell it by the glass in the bar. So I just wandered into the party, acted like I belonged, and wandered out again with this.

DANIEL. I doubt anyone will miss it.

AMY. I'm starting to think I have a future as a career criminal. I... (Stricken, she looks at DANIEL) Oh, shit.

DANIEL. What's the matter?

AMY. This afternoon, Rose, the woman in there... (Gesturing to Room 23) ...mentioned something about a wedding and the bride's brothers... (Looking at the door to Room 22 and then back at DANIEL) Crap.

DANIEL. What?

AMY. (Holding up the bottle) This is from your sister's wedding reception. And I just called your friends and family a bunch of obnoxious drunks.

DANIEL. It's not the reception. The wedding's tomorrow. This is from the rehearsal dinner. And by now, they probably are a bunch of obnoxious drunks. (Pause) It's all right. Really.

AMY. (Sighing) It's just so fitting, you know? I started this day at a wedding. I ran away from it. Didn't say anything to anybody. One minute I was there, the next I was gone. Climbed on a bus.

And where do I wind up? Barging into somebody else's wedding.

DANIEL. (Gently correcting her) Wedding rehearsal. Rehearsal dinner. (Something dawns on him) You weren't... This isn't like some movie, is it? Did you leave some guy standing at the altar?

AMY. There is no guy. Well, my sister's guy. I was the maid of honor. And, actually, the wedding was already over. I ran away from the reception.

DANIEL. I can relate. So, it must have been a really awful reception. Bad cake? Didn't catch the bouquet?

(AMY smiles, but does not answer. DANIEL takes a sip of his wine. Pause.)

AMY. I've never been here before. It seems to be a nice place. A nice town.

DANIEL. (Nodding) Picturesque.

AMY. So different than growing up in a city. (Turning to DANIEL) Who would name a town 'Audra?'

DANIEL. I don't know. People who live here, apparently.

AMY. I hadn't planned to get off the bus. But I saw the sign: 'Audra.' So when we pulled over at the truck stop, I thought, "I need to see this place."

DANIEL. The truck stop? Isn't that down by the interstate? That's got to be a couple of miles down the canyon.

AMY. Almost four. (Pause. DANIEL isn't sure what to say to this.)

AMY. It was kind of a nice walk. The creek alongside the road. Pretty. Until it started raining. Then it wasn't so nice.

DANIEL. Because, on a whim, you wanted to see a town called 'Audra?' I hope it's lived up to your expectations.

AMY. I don't know yet.

DANIEL. So, where were you headed before you saw the sign... (The door to Room 23 opens. AMY and DANIEL turn to see ALAN, wearing a warm-up suit, step outside. He looks like he's just awakened. He closes the door behind him.)

ALAN. I thought I heard voices.

AMY. I'm sorry. Did we wake you? (ALAN to the others.)

ALAN. No. The couple making love in the next room did.

DANIEL. Oh, I'm sorry. I had no idea...

(DANIEL's voice trails off as both ALAN and AMY look at him.)

DANIEL. No, it wasn't me. Us. We didn't. I mean, we aren't...(To AMY) You're really nice. I wasn't saying that I

wouldn't... Not that you're that kind of a person. (Giving up) I... I'll go tell them to stop. (Starting to get up)

ALAN. Don't worry about it. There are a lot of worse sounds to wake up to. (Gesturing to the bottle) Wine?

AMY. Would you like a glass?

ALAN. That would be lovely. I don't want to intrude, though.

AMY. (Rising) You're not. I'll get another glass. (AMY exits into Room 21).

DANIEL. What about your wife?

ALAN. Oh, she's sleeping. I don't think she'd want any.

DANIEL. No, I meant... (ALAN pulls out a chair and sits at AMY's table.)

ALAN. Rose is a very sound sleeper. A mack truck backing into the room wouldn't disturb her. I doubt that a little sex is going to wake her up. (DANIEL leans back in his chair. Then the realization of what ALAN has just said hits him, and he looks at ALAN, who smiles back at him, perfectly aware of the double entendre. AMY returns with another plastic glass. She sits and fills the glass with wine, handing it to ALAN.)

ALAN. Thanks. (ALAN takes a sip. The other two take sips. Four a couple of seconds, nobody says anything.)

ALAN. I seem to have brought the conversation to a screeching halt.

AMY. Not at all. We weren't really talking about anything.

DANIEL. Just enjoying the night air. (Pause. DANIEL takes a drink. AMY takes a drink. ALAN takes a drink.)

DANIEL. We were just wondering how the town got its name. (Gesturing to AMY) Do you know, she actually got off the bus—

AMY. —It's just so charming. And unusual. I was curious. It's no big deal.

ALAN. Walter Elliott's daughter. (ALAN takes another sip of wine. DANIEL and AMY look at him.)

ALAN. They have a whole display set up at the library just down the street. Walter Elliot made the first silver strike here back in the 1880s. When word got out, prospectors started swarming from all over, the way that kind of thing always happened. This place went from being a mining camp to a tent city overnight. When actual

buildings started to go up, they needed to call it something, so Elliott named it for his daughter.

AMY. Oh. Wow.

ALAN. She never saw it, though. Never even came here for a visit. He was from back east. Philadelphia, I think. Left his family to seek his fortune. Then the silver played out, and most everybody left. Walt stayed, though. Maybe he'd have gone back eventually, but he contracted bronchial pneumonia and died.

AMY. (After a pause) Well. That was a cheery little story.

ALAN. But thanks to Mister Elliott's efforts, the three of us are sitting here now, enjoying one another's company. So, ultimately, there was a happy ending. (ALAN raises his glass in a toast. The others raise theirs.)

ALAN. So, how was the rehearsal?

DANIEL. Relatively painless.

ALAN. What time's the wedding?

DANIEL. One o'clock tomorrow.

ALAN. Are you guys leaving after the ceremony?

DANIEL. No, the ordeal continues. There's a big send-off brunch for the bride and groom on Monday morning. Since I'm riding with my brother, it's really up to him when we leave?

ALAN. What do you do for a living?

DANIEL. I'm an instructor at a community college. English, and a couple of business courses.

ALAN. (To Amy) And you?

AMY. (Caught off-guard) I... I work in the records office in a clinic. It's nothing. It's boring. You?

ALAN. (Raising his glass) You're looking at it.

DANIEL. A professional wine-taster?

ALAN. That. But before then, I was a film projectionist in an adult movie theatre. That was after I was a professional boxer. But I took a punch to the eye that cracked the socket. Oh, and get this: For a time, I lived on the wharves in San Francisco and made my living as a mime. (AMY and DANIEL study ALAN in silence.)

ALAN. You don't understand this game very well, do you? (To DANIEL) A teacher? (To AMY) A file clerk? (Snorts) Puh-

leeze! (Setting down his glass) We are three strangers with the singular commonality of having rented adjacent rooms. In a day or so, we'll go our separate ways and never see each other again. When else will we have such an opportunity to be desperately dishonest and get away with it? We can say and be whomever we want. As long as no one asks questions too prying or specific, the illusion can remain intact. If, for example, you were to ask me how to load a film cartridge into a projector, I would be screwed. (Pause) Where's your sense of romance?

DANIEL. Not in my repertoire, I'm afraid.

ALAN. Sorry to say, I suspected as much. (To AMY) But you. I had high hopes for you. You wouldn't even volunteer your name this afternoon. Perhaps you are just naturally reticent. Maybe you subscribe to the theory that telling someone your name gives them power over you. Or maybe you arrived here under circumstances that must, at present, remain secret.

AMY. (Almost defiantly) It's 'Amy.'

ALAN. (Considering this) Hm. Not very dramatic. Either it's the truth, or you don't have much imagination. (The door to Room 22 opens and MATTHEW emerges. He is wearing jeans and a pullover sweater, but he is still barefooted. He closes the door behind him and comes down to the group at the tables.)

MATTHEW. Evening, everybody. (Pulling out the other chair at DANIEL's table and sitting down) A little party going, huh?

DANIEL. Not exactly. So, are you guys...done?

MATTHEW. (Grabbing DANIEL's wine and taking a sip) Yes. Done.

ALAN. (To MATTHEW) Your party seemed much livelier than ours. Not that Amy and your brother aren't scintillating conversationalists.

DANIEL. (To MATTHEW) You guys woke him up.

MATTHEW. Oh. Sorry.

ALAN. Not at all.

DANIEL. So, when can I have my room back?

MATTHEW. Shouldn't be long. I think she's freshening up.

AMY. Well, good night, everybody. (Rising) I'll leave the bottle here, in case anybody wants more. (to DANIEL) It's sort of yours, anyway. (ALAN and DANIEL rise.)

ALAN. Now I've chased you off. Stay. I was about to go inside, anyway.

AMY. No, you didn't. I'm tired. It's been a long and bizarre day. (AMY crosses up to Room 21, goes inside, and closes the door. DANIEL and ALAN watch her go, then look at each other, feeling awkward. MATTHEW, oblivious to all this, reaches over to grab the bottle of wine and re-fills DANIEL's glass. DANIEL sits down again.)

ALAN. Sorry to have intruded.

DANIEL. You didn't. Any more than me.

ALAN. The two of you seemed to be having a nice conversation, and—

DANIEL. —It was nothing. If anything, you made it less awkward. We hadn't expected to run into each other out here, and when we did, neither of us could figure out how to excuse ourselves without seeming rude.

ALAN. (a pause as he tries to sort this out) Well. Thanks for the wine. (Finishing his glass) Enjoy the wedding tomorrow. (ALAN crosses back up to Room 23 and goes inside, closing the door behind him.)

MATTHEW. So, who was that chick in the weird clothes?

DANIEL. I don't know. Just some girl. So, how long is it going to take what's-her-face to freshen up?

MATTHEW. (Sipping more wine) A minute or so. Just go on in. I'm sure it's fine.

DANIEL. I'm not going to just walk in on her. ...Again. We should have gotten separate rooms.

MATTHEW. Do you know how much these rooms go for? We couldn't have afforded two. Look, I'm sorry. I didn't plan it this way. I asked her to dance, we talked. Had a few drinks. And we just kind of...wound up back here. It's over now. I won't do it tomorrow night. Promise.

DANIEL. No. You won't.

MATTHEW. You know what? You can bring somebody back here tomorrow night.

DANIEL. Right.

MATTHEW. And I'll sit out here waiting. And drinking.

(DANIEL gets up and walks a few steps away. He stands with his hands in his pockets, his back to MATTHEW.)

MATTHEW. Really. Seriously.

DANIEL. I don't want to bring anybody back here.

MATTHEW. You should. It's a vacation, for Pete's Sake.

That's what you do in places like this.

DANIEL. Would you please go see what's taking her so long?

(Pause. MATTHEW sets down his glass, stands, and crosses to Room 22. He goes inside, leaving the door just slightly ajar.

DANIEL paces back and forth in front of the tables. He stops, looking at the wine bottle. He picks it up and takes a generous swig directly from the bottle, then sets it down again. He paces some more and then stops, listening to the night sounds. For the very first time, he seems to relax just a bit. A few seconds pass and then MATTHEW emerges from Room 22. He moves tentatively towards DANIEL. When he is just a couple of steps behind him, MATTHEW stops, as if waiting for DANIEL to notice him.)

MATTHEW. Um. She seems to have fallen asleep.

DANIEL. Then wake her up.

MATTHEW. Yeah... I tried.

DANIEL. Send her on her merry way. Tell her you had a nice time. Tell her you'll call her. You'll see her around. Maybe at the wedding.

MATTHEW. She just keeps muttering that she's sleepy.

Something about it being Saturday, and she wants to sleep in.

MATTHEW. I'm serious, Danny. I think she's pretty much settled in for the night. Unless we bodily carry her out of there and prop her up in one of these chairs.

DANIEL. I don't believe this.

MATTHEW. (Weakly laughing) Yeah. Who knew?

DANIEL. Call her roommate. Have her come get her.

MATTHEW. I can't. I don't know who her roommate is. And

it's nearly two in the morning. (Pause. DANIEL stares at MATTHEW.)

DANIEL. So, what are we supposed to do now? It's the middle of the night, tomorrow is the biggest day in Jenny's life, and we're standing out here in the middle of the courtyard with nowhere else to go, because you picked up some bimbo and brought her back for a get-acquainted boink, and now she's passed out cold. And speaking of cold—

MATTHEW. –Sh! Sh! Keep your voice down! You'll wake everybody up! (Pauses, considers this) Well, not her. But everybody else.

DANIEL. You're asking me to be a little more considerate.

MATTHEW. (Putting a hand on DANIEL's shoulder) Danny, there's nothing else I can do right now. Look, she obviously isn't going to wake up for hours. She's snoring like an idling tractor. Let's just go inside and go to bed. She's not going to know we're there, not before morning. We just have to make the best of a bad situation, all right? (DANIEL stares at MATTHEW grimly. Though he is loathe to admit it, he realizes there is no alternative. He sighs, shrugging MATTHEW's hand on his shoulder, and walks to the door of Room 22. Matthew grabs the wine bottle and glass from the table and follows DANIEL.)

MATTHEW. Hey, can I sleep in your bed? She really is snoring like crazy. (DANIEL looks at MATTHEW. MATTHEW smiles at his brother as he slides past him and goes inside. After a slight pause and a big sigh, DANIEL follows him inside. The door closes behind them as the lights fade.)

Scene Three

AT RISE:

It is morning. The terrace area in front of the rooms is empty. ROSE enters from off, carrying a cardboard container that holds two paper cups of coffee, some napkins, and two paper plates covered in aluminum foil. She has some brochures tucked under her

arm. She sets the container on the wrought iron table closest to her room and begins to set the cups and plates on the table. The door to Room 23 opens and ALAN steps out.

ALAN. There you are. Where'd you go?

ROSE. Down to that little espresso place. I brought back some fresh-made cinnamon rolls. (ROSE sits. She takes the lid off of her coffee and begins to remove the foil from one plate. ALAN crosses down and stands behind her.)

ALAN. I thought we were going to have breakfast at the café on the creek. Isn't that what we decided last night?

ROSE. (Stirring her coffee) It always takes so long. We'll waste half the morning lingering over our food.

ALAN. Isn't that the point of a vacation?

ROSE. Have your coffee before it gets cold. Isn't it funny? Even a little town like this has an espresso bar now. (ALAN sits and removes the lid from his cup.)

ROSE. It wasn't there last year. What was it then? A pottery place, I think. (She pulls off a piece of cinnamon roll and eats it. Then she picks up a brochure and studies it. ALAN sips his coffee, then lifts the foil and peers under it at his cinnamon roll.)

ROSE. So, what do you think you'll do today?

ALAN. I don't know. Whatever you want to do.

ROSE. (Looking at the brochure) They still offer those hayrides. Remember when we did that? Back when the kids were little.

(Setting down that brochure and picking up another) I was thinking about checking out the ladies' spa. Oh, look! (thrusting the brochure at ALAN) There's a nature walk up to Crystal Falls. You brought your camera, didn't you? (ALAN takes the brochure. ROSE picks up a third one and examines it.)

ROSE. Why don't we meet for supper at that place on the creek? You're right; it would be nice to eat there. (ALAN puts down his brochure. ROSE continues to study hers. ALAN takes a bite of his cinnamon roll and chews slowly, thoughtfully.)

ALAN. It must take an incredible amount of energy to keep me at bay like you do.

ROSE. (Seemingly half-listening) What?

ALAN. People who watch us for any length of time must think there's some terrible, unspoken tragedy in our past, and this is how we cope with it.

ROSE. (Shaking her head, amused) Alan.

ALAN. Sometimes I find myself wondering... Was there a tragedy? And I just don't remember it? (ROSE sighs and sets down her brochure. She sips her coffee as ALAN talks.)

ALAN. The kids turned out all right. After we all suffered through their various problems. The dog died. Was that it? But, no. She was fourteen. She had a good life. So, when did we get like this? What changed? Or was it always this way, and I never noticed until the kids were gone?

ROSE. This is a vacation. Could we please not do this now?

ALAN. When, then? Not at home. You have a hundred more opportunities to escape into things there.

ROSE. (Suddenly angry) What is this "escaping?" Why be so dramatic about things that don't warrant it? I'm fine. I'm not "escaping" anything!

ALAN. Then why do we have to—

ROSE. —I just can't walk around with a big smile all the time, touching your arm and calling you "Honey." I can't give you that kind of validation! (Pause.)

ALAN. I never asked you to.

ROSE. It's not who I am.

ALAN. I know that. (Pause. ROSE is out of breath; ALAN is miserable. They both gaze out at the scenery in different directions.)

ROSE. (Not looking at ALAN) I will not be bullied into saying, "I love you." (ALAN, surprised, turns to look at her. ROSE continues to stare ahead.)

ROSE. That way you have. That plaintive way of telling me you love me, that carries with it the implication that I should say it back. You say it too much. It doesn't have any meaning any more. You tell me, "I love you," and I say, "Mm-hm," because as

far as I'm concerned, "Mm-hmm" means just about as much. (Sighs; she is suddenly weary) How's that for a meaningful discussion? (ROSE stands and crosses towards the door of Room 23, then stops. After some consideration, she turns to ALAN.)

ROSE. I'm still here. Shouldn't that count for something? (ROSE had intended to go inside, but instead, she strides away, out of sight. ALAN continues to sit at the table a moment. He picks up another brochure and leafs through it. The door to Room 22 opens, and MATTHEW, yawning, stumbles out in shorts and a t-shirt. ALAN stands. MATTHEW moves down towards him.)

MATTHEW. Morning.

ALAN. (Nodding to him) Morning. (ALAN, brochure in hand, crosses and exits in the opposite direction from ROSE's departure. MATTHEW, still waking up, scratches his head and stares after ALAN for a moment. He turns back, not quite sure what to make of ALAN's abrupt departure. He notices the plates with cinnamon rolls and the coffee cups on the table, and strolls down to inspect them. After glancing around to see if anyone is in the vicinity, he tears off a piece of cinnamon roll and chews it speculatively. Deciding he likes it, he glances around again, then pulls up a chair and sits, and proceeds to eat more of it. He inspects the coffee cup but then pushes it away. Deciding to make himself more comfortable, he pulls another chair over with his feet and rests them on it. AMY enters the courtyard. She has been shopping and now wears a pair of jeans, a blouse, and a new pair of sneakers. She also has sunglasses and carries a couple of shopping bags with her. She glances at MATTHEW, who also takes notice of her, but she does not stop. She unlocks the door to Room 21 and goes inside. MATTHEW leans back in his chair and folds his arms behind his head, closing his eyes. After several seconds, AMY re-emerges from her room with just one of the bags. She crosses to Room 23 and knocks. MATTHEW turns at the sound of the knock. AMY glances at him, then turns back to the door. She knocks.)

MATTHEW. I don't think anybody's in there.

AMY. Oh. (AMY starts to go back to her own room.)

MATTHEW. Been shopping, I take it?

AMY. Yeah.

MATTHEW. Got any more wine?

AMY. No, I don't. (AMY moves closer to her door, but MATTHEW interrupts her again.)

MATTHEW. How about beer?

AMY. No. Nothing. Sorry. (MATTHEW jumps up from his chair and trots towards Room 22.)

MATTHEW. That's okay. I have something. Meet you over there-- (Gesturing to the table he just left) --in one minute.

AMY. I don't—

MATTHEW. —You can show me what you bought. (MATTHEW dashes inside Room 22. AMY is at a loss. She watches him go, then looks at the table. She looks down at the bag in her hand then at the door of Room 23. She has no idea what to make of his invitation. Just as she's about to head back inside her own room, MATTHEW re-appears, carrying two plastic glasses full of clear liquid. He crosses back to the table.)

MATTHEW. Come on! Pull up a chair! (Setting one glass on the table, he drinks from the other, smacking his lips in appreciation)

AMY. (After a pause) You don't want to see what I bought.

MATTHEW. Not particularly. But I'm lonely and bored. And I hate to drink alone.

AMY. It's a little bit early for me.

MATTHEW. (Sitting) Really? How late does it have to be, before you start drinking water?

AMY. That's...water?

MATTHEW. Ah, not just water. Tap water. The latest thing! (MATTHEW raises his glass in a toast to her. AMY watches a second, then goes back inside her room and closes the door.

MATTHEW turns back with an "Oh, well" expression, putting his feet back up on the other chair. He continues to pick at the remains of the cinnamon roll. The door to Room 21 opens again and AMY re-emerges, carrying with her a bag of pretzels. She comes down to the table and looks at the chair where MATTHEW has propped his feet. Then she stares at him expectantly until he lifts his feet and she is able to sit in that chair. She opens the pretzels and places the bag in the middle of the table. She lifts the

water glass he brought for her, and eyes it with a small amount of suspicion.)

MATTHEW. Plain old water. No knock-out drops or anything. Would you like me to taste it first? (AMY snorts derisively. She starts to take a drink, then pauses. After another second of contemplation, she hands the glass to MATTHEW. He takes a sip and hands it back to her. She then takes a drink and sets the glass on the table. They both gaze at the scenery.)

MATTHEW. Scuttlebutt has it that your sister got married yesterday. (When AMY does not respond, he continues) Mine's getting married this afternoon.

AMY. (Eating a pretzel) The world is just rife with coincidence.

MATTHEW. Do you think it will last? Your sister's marriage? (AMY studies him for a second. Then she puts another pretzel in her mouth.)

MATTHEW. I think my sister's will. Through sheer force of willpower. I don't know whether my new brother-in-law realizes it yet, but he's pretty much relinquished whatever little control he had over his destiny. The marriage—hell, his life—is now going to proceed the way Jenny wants it to.

AMY. She sounds charming.

MATTHEW. Oh, she is. In a...forceful kind of way. (Gesturing to the pretzels) May I? (AMY pushes the bag in his direction.

MATTHEW helps himself to a handful of pretzels. As he eats one, he studies her.)

MATTHEW. It wouldn't break your heart if your sister's marriage failed. (Pause) I'll bet it was a perfect ceremony, though. I bet she looked radiant. I bet the sun was shining, and it wasn't too hot or too cool, or too windy. I bet when they kissed, everyone went, "Awwwww."

AMY. (After studying him a second, she eats another pretzel) You like to get a rise out of people. You see yourself as a roguish, charming guy. Girls swoon. Other guys are intimidated, and they're not even sure why. Older people shake their heads at your outlandish ways, and they say to each other, "He's full of the dickens, but you just can't help liking him."

MATTHEW. You see right through me.

AMY. What I can't figure out is why you're wasting your charms on me. I'm not your type. I'm too old. I'm not cute enough.

MATTHEW. Then it must be your scintillating personality.

AMY. Or maybe you just can't help yourself. The fact that I have no interest in you presents a challenge. An enigma.

MATTHEW. You're not an enigma. Don't flatter yourself.

AMY. (Smiling) Don't you have somewhere to be? Some girl to seduce?

MATTHEW. (Smiling) Your sister is younger than you. She was always the fair-haired child. Cute as a button. Popular. So adorable you just want to push her down in the mud.

AMY. Very impressive.

MATTHEW. Thank you.

AMY. So why do I think what you've really done is describe *your* sister?

MATTHEW. Not at all. I've just described myself. (AMY regards him for a moment. Then she pulls the bag towards her.)

AMY. You can't have any more of my pretzels.

MATTHEW. The part I'm still trying to figure out is why, when it was your sister who got married yesterday, it's you who's here on the honeymoon.

AMY. I'd tell you that's none of your business, but I wouldn't want to seem enigmatic. (The door to Room 22 opens. DANIEL, wearing a t-shirt and shorts and barefooted, steps out, blinking sleepily.)

MATTHEW. Hey.

DANIEL. (Stumbling down to join them) What time is it?

MATTHEW. (Checking his watch) Quarter 'til eleven. Feeling better? (To AMY) Danny didn't sleep so good last night.

DANIEL. You snore worse than your girlfriend does. Thank God she finally dragged herself back to her own room this morning. (ROSE enters. She's barefooted, carrying her sneakers in her hands. She pauses on her way to Room 21.)

ROSE. Hey, everybody. Party?

MATTHEW. Sure. Come join us.

AMY. Oh, Rose, I have your things. (Rising) I'll get them for you.

ROSE. There's no rush. I'm not going to wearing them anytime soon.

AMY. (Crossing to the door of Room 21) I might as well do it now. We're both here; who knows if we'll see each other again? (AMY goes inside. ROSE remains by the door. MATTHEW remains seated, and DANIEL stands close to him. It is a prolonged, awkward moment during which the men and ROSE exchange smiles, but can think of nothing to say. AMY comes back outside, carrying the bag of ROSE's belongings, which she takes to ROSE.)

AMY. Thank you again. It was very generous of you.

ROSE. So, you've been shopping?

AMY. Yes.

ROSE. (Studying AMY's blouse) This is lovely.

AMY. Thank you. You were right. Everything is expensive up here.

MATTHEW. (to DANIEL) If you're up, I think I'll grab a shower. (MATTHEW takes his glass, and goes into Room 22.)

ROSE. (to AMY) Are you sure you don't want to hold onto these things? I don't really need them.

AMY. No, I'm fine. (With a glance at DANIEL) Maybe I'll see you both later. (AMY crosses and exits off to the side. ROSE goes into her room with the bag and closes the door. DANIEL looks around him, in the wake of all those who have departed. He inspects the cinnamon roll and then picks up the bag of pretzels and helps himself to one. Then another. The door to Room 22 opens, and MATTHEW sticks his head out. He holds the telephone in his hand.)

MATTHEW. Dad's on the phone. He wants to know if we'd like to grab a bite with them before the ceremony.

DANIEL. Who's "them?"

MATTHEW. (Into the receiver) Who all's going? (Listening; then to DANIEL) Just he and Mom. (DANIEL shakes his head 'No.')

MATTHEW. (Into the receiver) Nah, Danny says No. I think I'll pass, too. (Listens; then) He isn't feeling too well. He wants to take it easy until the wedding. (DANIEL nods.)

MATTHEW. (Into the receiver) No, I'm fine. It isn't that. I just asked... No, I'm not saying that... Dad, I'm always happy to have lunch with just you and Mom, but I'll see you guys soon enough... No, I don't want to hurt her feelings. I just think... Dad... (Facing forward and listening to MATTHEW's end of the conversation, DANIEL eats pretzels and smiles.)

MATTHEW. (Into the receiver) Dad, we're already spending the entire frigging weekend together. It's not like... No. No, I did not. I said "frigging." Dad, I'm not... I didn't... (expansive sigh) Okay, fine. You're absolutely right. I'll meet you for lunch. ...Yes. ...Yes. (Glancing at his watch) In twenty? Can we make it thirty? I want to grab a shower. ...No. ...Because I got up late. I just need a little... Fine. Twenty. I'll make it a quick shower. (MATTHEW lowers the receiver to his side and glares at DANIEL.)

MATTHEW. I hate you.

DANIEL. Hey, you've known those people all your life. You know how manipulative they can be. You walked right into that.

MATTHEW. I should call them back and say you've made a miraculous recovery, and you'll be joining us.

DANIEL. (Feigning a dramatic, feeble little cough) Nineteen minutes. Better hurry. (MATTHEW glowers at DANIEL for a few seconds, then disappears inside, closing the door. DANIEL strolls along in front of the rooms. As he gets close to Room 23, the door opens and ROSE comes out, nearly colliding with him. She is holding a twenty dollar bill.)

ROSE. Oh!

DANIEL. I'm sorry.

ROSE. No, it's all right. I just... I... (Holding up the money) Will you look at this? She stuck it in the bag with my clothes. (ROSE crosses to Room 21 and knocks on the door.)

DANIEL. She isn't in there. She went off that way. (Gesturing in the direction AMY left)

ROSE. Well, I'm certainly not going to keep it. (Studying the money for a second, she then looks at DANIEL as if trying to decide whether to share a secret) She applied for a job at the library. Did you know that?

DANIEL. Amy did? The library here? (ROSE crosses to DANIEL.)

ROSE. This morning. I was over there, browsing through the shelf of discarded volumes they've put up for sale, and I heard someone say, "I don't suppose you might have a clerical position available." I thought the voice sounded familiar, and when I leaned out to look, sure enough. I don't know what the librarian told her. But when she left... (Crossing down a few steps) ...I'm embarrassed to even own up to this, but... I followed her.

DANIEL. You did?

ROSE. I've become this nosy busybody while I wasn't looking, I guess. I don't know why I did it. She's just... She's this wounded, defiant...thing, you know? (Intrigued, DANIEL takes a couple of steps toward ROSE, who continues to drift as she talks.)

ROSE. So, there we are... She's walking down the street, and I'm skulking along behind, hiding in doorways and peeking around lilac bushes. She may not have seen me, but everyone else in town wondered what I was up to.

DANIEL. What happened?

ROSE. She window-shopped awhile. But while she was in the little grocery, buying toothpaste and some other things, she asked the clerk if there were any apartments available for rental around here. (ROSE glances at DANIEL, who seems ready to hear more.)

ROSE. That was it. That's all. I was so disgusted with myself that I stopped following her then. (Sighing) My husband accuses me of being more interested in other people's lives than I am in my own. (pause) I hate it when I prove him right.

DANIEL. Maybe she's... It could be she's just...

(ROSE watches DANIEL. At a loss for anything else to follow this up with, DANIEL holds out the bag of pretzels to her. She helps herself to a few.)

ROSE. Are you and your sister close?

DANIEL. (Sitting at one of the tables) Not especially. We get along okay.

ROSE. My four fought like cats and dogs growing up. I was an only child, so I had no frame of reference. They...intimidated me. I thought, either something's wrong with them, or with me. But it

worked out okay. Nobody ever actually killed anybody, and now, they actually seem to enjoy each other's company. (Sitting; studying DANIEL) You remind me of Chris, my next-to-youngest. The others were noisy, and they had somehow developed this sense of entitlement. I mean, when push came to shove, and it often did, she could give as good as she got. But it was as if, early on, she sized up the older kids, saw there was one behind who was always going to get to be the baby, and realized that the only option left was to be the quiet one. (Pause. If DANIEL is taking this in, he is not reacting to it.)

ROSE. I'm sorry. I hardly know you, and here I am, comparing you to one of my kids.

DANIEL. That's okay. You're right. I am the quiet one. Dull.

ROSE. Oh, I wasn't saying that.

DANIEL. And I didn't mean to imply that your daughter is, either. But I know I am. If you want to be charitable, you could call me grounded.

ROSE. (Pause) We got a call from the police when she was seventeen. Chris had been busted for smoking pot with some friends behind a movie theatre. (Smiling; looking at DANIEL) You always need to keep your eye on the quiet one. (The door to Room 22 opens and MATTHEW emerges. His hair is wet from the shower. He wears a polo shirt and a nice pair of slacks. He closes the door and walks down to stand behind DANIEL. With a thumb and forefinger, he flicks DANIEL on the back of the head.)

DANIEL. Ow! (Expressionless, MATTHEW turns and exits. DANIEL rubs the back of his head.)

DANIEL. Sometimes, there's bloodletting in my family, too.

ROSE. (Laughs) I knew the moment I saw you boys the other day that he was a handful. The one who had your parents tearing their hair out. He prides himself on it, too.

DANIEL. I always wished I wasn't the oldest. I felt I needed an older sibling to show me how to do it.

ROSE. To do what?

DANIEL. (Shrugging) Function. I watch the way Matt and Jenny move through life. Nothing ever confounds them or slows

them down for long. They just found their place, their friends, without effort.

ROSE. You don't think they learned that from you?

DANIEL. They learned how not to do it from me.

ROSE. Maybe you sell yourself short.

DANIEL. Where did they pick up all that stuff I still don't know? My parents wonder, too. I can tell. (Pause) I wasn't going to come to the wedding. For the same reason I come up with excuses to avoid Christmas and Thanksgiving get-togethers. Disapproval is one thing. I think I could handle that. But to bear up under the scrutiny, the looks on their faces that indicate they're trying hard to understand or to sympathize. If they could just figure out what it is they need to sympathize about. (Pause. ROSE is trying to pick her words very carefully.)

ROSE. Maybe they just hope you're happy.

DANIEL. (Not listening) In the plus column, I was here for the whole blasted weekend. All the rituals, the events. That should buy me some grace points.

ROSE. (Talking more to herself than to DANIEL) I think that's what parents want for their children: "Have I taught them the skills they need to be happy?" (DANIEL looks at ROSE.)

DANIEL. Really? Then mine succeeded wildly with Matthew. I approached this whole weekend as something to be endured as best I could manage. I don't think he doubted for a second that he was going to have a good time. We both grouse about having to spend so much time without folks, but Matt turns it into a game, exploring new and delightful ways to dismay and confound them.

ROSE. And that's a good thing?

DANIEL. It's an art.

ROSE. I'm confused. Weren't you just telling me that you dismay and confound your parents? How is that different?

DANIEL. With Matty, it's calculated. With me, it's graceless and inevitable.

ROSE. Oh. (Contemplating this) Well, that sounds nicely self-pitying. And convenient. What you've basically told me is that your brother takes responsibility for his actions, but that you're a

victim of yours. (This is not what DANIEL expected from ROSE. He looks at her, trying to think of a response.)

ROSE. Sorry. The “mother” in me gets defensive. (Touching DANIEL’s hand) Maybe you shouldn’t think so much. Try going on gut instinct sometimes. (standing, gathering the cups and plates) Have fun at the wedding. It can be done, you know. (Taking the plates and cups, ROSE exits into Room 23. DANIEL sits a few seconds, then folds up the bag of pretzels and stands. He is crossing to his room as AMY enters the courtyard.)

DANIEL. Hey.

AMY. Hey. (DANIEL opens his door and starts to go inside.)

AMY. Uh... (DANIEL pauses. AMY gestures to the bag.)

AMY. Those are mine.

DANIEL. Oh. Sorry. (DANIEL hands them to her, goes into his room and closes the door.

AMY crosses to Room 21. She takes out her key and prepares to unlock her door as ALAN enters the courtyard.)

ALAN. Well, hello there.

AMY. (Turning to look at him) Oh. Hi.

ALAN. New duds.

AMY. Yeah. (Pause. AMY would like to go into her room, but ALAN stands there smiling at her.)

ALAN. What else have you been doing with your day?

AMY. Just walking around. Looking at things.

ALAN. (Nodding) Charming little place. Getting a bit too “touristy” for my tastes, though. I mean, how many overpriced galleries and antique shops does one town need? (AMY offers a polite little laugh. After some hesitation, she unlocks her door and opens it. As she is about to enter, ALAN resumes speaking.)

ALAN. The mountains, though. Have you ever seen such views? And, at night. The stars are so bright. And sharp. You don’t really see the stars in the city. You think you do, but—

AMY. —Alan, I’m sort of tired. I’ve been walking all morning, and I was kind of hoping to lie down for awhile.

ALAN. Oh, sure, sure. I’m sorry. (AMY steps inside.) Oh, hey, someone was asking about you over in the lobby a little while ago. (AMY stops, frozen.) A woman. Older lady. Your aunt, maybe? I

think that's what I overheard. Rita. Or Ruth. Do you have an Aunt Ruth? I think it was you she was looking for. She was describing someone to the desk clerk who sounded quite a bit like you. But he wasn't the same clerk who checked you in yesterday, and there was some confusion about the name, so—

AMY. –JUST LEAVE ME ALONE, WOULD YOU? (Pausing, trying to get herself under control) I don't have an aunt. Not a Ruth or anybody else, okay? Please, just stay out of my business. (AMY closes the door behind her. ALAN stands a moment, thinking. Then he crosses towards Room 23. He reaches for his key, but before he can insert it, the door to Room 21 opens again. AMY stands in the doorway. ALAN stops, but he does not turn around.)

AMY. Where... Where did she go? Did you say anything to her?

ALAN. Just that I hadn't seen you. I believe she left. (There is a pause as AMY considers this. Then she retreats back into her room and closes the door. After another pause, ALAN unlocks his door and goes inside, closing the door behind him as the lights fade to black.)

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