

We're Okay, We're Okay, We're all Gonna be Okay
by Gina Femia

Folks:

Lana – Very driven, her energy is always forward, courageous even when she doesn't think she is. 22, she/her

Zeus – A (former?) football player, he's found himself back home and is trying to find himself, too. 21, he/him

Chris – An actress at the beginning of her career, has a deep well inside of her. 22, she/her

Aster – A somewhat high-strung pre-med student. 21, he/him

Where:

Most of the play takes place in a blackbox theater on the campus of a local community college in Independence, KS,

though sometimes it takes place in Zeus and Aster's shared housing,

and sometimes in a space undefined by time and place.

When:

2025

Playwright's Note:

When text is bolded, it is part of William Shakespeare's *Hamlet*.

Content Notes:

This play explores themes of grief, death, depression and mental health and illness.

Zeus' father died in a car accident.

Lana and Chris often talk about the passing of a friend and while the cause is never explicitly stated, she died by suicide.

Please take care of your own mental health as you enter into the play.

And please know that all these characters are going to be okay.

Resources:

These resources are an incomplete list that I will continually add to, and I encourage those in production do the same. Please make these lists available for audience members but also for actors, designers, directors, producers and anyone who might come in contact with this play. Please add local resources for your productions. I invite you to reach out to me with any additional resources you find that prove to be beneficial.

National Institute of Mental Health: <https://www.nimh.nih.gov/>

Finding a Therapist: <https://www.psychologytoday.com/us>

Crisis Hotlines: <https://www.iasp.info/suicidalthoughts/>

The Trevor Project: <https://www.thetrevorproject.org/>

Resources for Suicide Prevention: <https://www.nimh.nih.gov/health/topics/suicide-prevention>

Safe Practices for Theater Makers: <https://howlround.com/dismantle-hierarchy-best-practices-creating-more-equitable-consensual-theatre-classroom>

Drawing the Boundary Between Actor and Character: Prioritizing the Actor's Mental Health in the Portrayal of Human Suffering & Emotional Distress: <https://www.stage32.com/blog/3365>

*As the lights go down slowly,
the world of the play begins to stir.
The sound of rain and wind,
a bellow of thunder.
A storm.*

*The sound of the storm blends with eerie sounds,
a whine of a violin,
a screech of otherworldly tones,
all blending together until –*

prologue: 2022

*[Lights up fast and we're at a sleepover.
LANA and CHRIS are sitting back-to-back.
CHRIS is wearing a pajama set, LANA an oversized hoodie and sweats.
They each hold a flashlight.
The storm is raging outside. An August thunderstorm.
It is 3am and when we begin, we begin in the middle of it all.]*

LANA

your eyes getting pecked out by birds.

CHRIS

accidentally swallowing one of your own teeth.

LANA

putting your sock on only to discover it's full of flesh-eating ants.

CHRIS

falling down a steep hill and breaking your leg in five places and needing to drag your busted up body across a bunch of sharp twigs and lumpy rocks and -

LANA

Too long

CHRIS

it's detailed

LANA

and not scary,
I'd never go anywhere there'd be a steep hill

CHRIS

Hills aren't like,
they're not relegated to like places where you go hiking,

or the wilderness or -
like New York City has hills

LANA

Not nature hills

CHRIS

Central Park has steep hills

LANA

Central Park is overrun with people,
if I fell down one of those hills,
I'd be fine

CHRIS

Not if there were some apocalyptic –

LANA

If there was an apocalyptic event I'd just die from that instead

CHRIS

Yeah but,

LANA

Not scary.

CHRIS

You're just hating on it 'cause it's a long one –

LANA

Long ones can be scary,
they've just gotta be scary,
like -
getting a papercut on the skin between your thumb and your pointer finger that slowly becomes
more and more infected until it reaches the bloodstream and your veins become black and -

[CHRIS *shivers violently. That one got her.*

LANA *clicks on her flashlight, shines the beam on the ceiling*]

LANA

You move?

CHRIS

Nope.
Just.
Had an itch.

[LANA *turns the light back off*]

LANA

Your turn.

CHRIS

scratching your cheek only to have a chunk of dead flesh come off in your hand.

LANA

falling into a vat of boiling hot acid

[CHRIS *turns the flashlight on and beams it at the ceiling, still doesn't turn to look at LANA*]

CHRIS

Okay, I call bullshit on that one

LANA

What

CHRIS

You're never going to be by a steep hill but vats of acid are everywhere waiting for you to just, what trip and fall in?

LANA

I mean –

CHRIS

that's a bullshit one

LANA

But can't you –

CHRIS

admit it,

LANA

I feel like it -

CHRIS

admit it, admit it!

LANA

God, fine!
Whatever.
This game is.

CHRIS

What?
What is it?
[turns on her light]
Are you scared?

LANA

No.
Are you?

CHRIS

Nope.

[turns the flashlight back off]

CHRIS

So think of a better one.

LANA

Yeah, I know.

[The sound of wind screaming]

CHRIS

Do you have one yet?

LANA

Yeah I.
I don't know, I just.
She was so good at it.

[beat]

CHRIS

We're good at it.
Too.

LANA

It's just.
Not the same
without her.

[beat
Yeah, nothing is.
Beat.]

CHRIS

Some of hers still give me nightmares.

LANA

Yeah, me too.

[*Beat.*

Yeah.

Beat.]

CHRIS

But like. Do you ever think about how.

She would've gotten into Yale, you know?

If she could've,

she would've –

gone off to Yale

and you know Yale,

schools like Yale,

they're so – busy,

a whole different world of bullshit.

She would've faded from our lives just

naturally,

become memes and reels,

and then she'd stop responding,

just reacting,

sending the same generic birthday gifs,

then she'd stop sending reels

and stop reacting

and she would've become a shadow that just

faded into the back of our mind until

I dunno,

we saw some random post somewhere about a play she wrote made it to Broadway and we both would've said

oh yeah,

I remember when I knew her and

LANA

she would've grown up.

CHRIS

Right.

No, you're right. Right.

[*beat*

CHRIS *turns the flashlight on suddenly, shining the light on the ceiling again*]

CHRIS

Hey.
Are you like – scared?

LANA

Nope.

CHRIS

No, not with the game –
I mean about – college?

LANA

Oh.
No.

CHRIS

But it'll be like.
Different.

LANA

It better be.

CHRIS

I guess

LANA

NYU is in a whole other universe from anywhere in Independence Kansas,
you know?
We'll finally get to be like.
Completely free.

CHRIS

As long as you avoid the hills in Central Park

LANA

Shut up

[But she leans against CHRIS' back, like a back hug.]

CHRIS

It'll be hard

LANA

Yeah, duh, it'll be hard.
But you got in,
you blasted through those auditions

and you got in.
They never saw you coming,
some random girl from the middle of nowhere,
but you made them see you and you deserve to be there.

CHRIS

What if.

LANA

What?

CHRIS

No, nothing.

LANA

Okay.

[*beat*]

Are you // gonna go or

CHRIS

Are you gonna hate me?

LANA

The fuck,
no

CHRIS

It's just.
Like rooming together,
what if I get on your nerves?

LANA

You won't get on my nerves.

CHRIS

Promise?

LANA

Forever.

[*They do a backward pinky swear*]

LANA

Besides who knows if we'll ever even like.
See each other.
Pre-med and acting programs are like,

we'll be at opposite ends of the world, you know?

[CHRIS *knows.*
That scares her, too.
beat]

CHRIS
stepping into a hole only to discover it's full of wet, squishy worms.

LANA
a zombie with a half-melted face stumbling towards you.

CHRIS
a clown whose smile is full of razor-sharp teeth.

LANA
looking in a mirror and seeing a cloaked figure behind you.

[*that one almost got CHRIS,
but she sits strong.
The storm rages outside.
She's going to go for the win with this one.
Makes her voice lower.
More deliberate.*]

CHRIS
being home alone and hearing footsteps
slowly creaking up the stairs.

*[The sound of creaking.
They both hear it.
It stops.]*

What was that? LANA

CHRIS
Just the storm.

[beat.
LANA *tries to shake the scare from her*]

Yale wouldn't have been so far from NYU.
We might not have all.
Disbanded or –

CHRIS

I was just.
Saying that to make me feel better, I know.
We all would've.
Forever.

[beat]

LANA

Sometimes I can see her.

[the atmosphere changes a little.
It gets eerier again]

LANA

I'll wake up and she'll be standing in the corner of my room
blending in with the fuzzy dark,

CHRIS

You're just trying to win.

LANA

I'll see the shape of her standing,
flickering with the shadows,
like she is part of the shadows,

CHRIS

Shut up, Lana

LANA

Chris.

CHRIS

What

LANA

Oh my god

CHRIS

What

LANA

I see her.
I see her right -

[CHRIS sharply turns and LANA turns on her flashlight laughing.
She shines it in CHRIS' eyes, laughing]

LANA

I win!

CHRIS

Jesus fucking Christ, Lana, what the actual fuck

LANA

Don't be a sore loser –

CHRIS

Can't you take anything fucking seriously –

LANA

Uh, hello, I just took it seriously?
I literally won.

[She starts to gather blankets, making herself a nest to sleep in]

CHRIS

I just thought.

LANA

What.

CHRIS

You haven't –
heard her?

LANA

Ha, ha, Chris –

CHRIS

I'm not – joking.

[beat
LANA just looks at her.]

CHRIS

The other night,
I was trying to get to sleep
and I heard –
it was as though she was whispering in my ear,
I could feel her voice in my ear, Lana,
but when I opened my eyes -

[The sound of footsteps interrupt them.]

It sounds like they're coming slowly up the stairs]

LANA

Are your.
Did your parents come home –

CHRIS

They're not –

[Footsteps, creaking along.

The two of them are scared.

The footsteps stop right outside the closed bedroom door.

CHRIS is facing the bedroom door, LANA is not.

Neither of them are breathing.]

CHRIS

It's just the wind

LANA

The wind can't walk.

[LANA is center, both in this moment and the next.

The door slowly creaks open and

the sounds intertwine.

*LANA flashes between the two,
back and forth
back and forth until]*

one: auditions.

[LANA is standing centerstage in a blackbox theater.

She's wearing the same thing she wore for the sleepover but it's three years later.

It's 2025.

She's a sophomore.

She should be a junior, technically, but right now, she's a sophomore.

And she's not at NYU, she's at a community college, back at home.

She had been putting away a bunch of folding chairs, getting the space back in order.

She had been inside a memory.

*But in her actual reality, there's someone in here with her, standing by the entrance.
It's ZEUS. He's holding a bunch of papers in one hand and looking a little confused.]*

ZEUS

Hello?

*[LANA turns, sharply.
He scared her.]*

ZEUS

I'm sorry is this –
Am I late?

LANA

What?

ZEUS

I thought,
the e-mail said 11-3.

LANA

Oh.
Yeah.

ZEUS

It's 2:30.

LANA

Right.

*[She continues packing up the space.
ZEUS keeps watching]*

ZEUS

So do I like.
Fill out a form or something?

*[LANA slams another chair shut.
ZEUS just keeps watching.]*

ZEUS

I've heard you have to do that at these things,
fill out a form that lists your availability?
I'm pretty available.
Not completely – I have an evening class –

we'll be rehearsing mostly in the evenings right?
 Or on weekends too?
 I can do weekends, no problem.
 I'm kinda – in between jobs at the moment,
 focusing on my studies –
 not that this would be a study, it would be.
 Extra, but.
 I can fill it all out – do you have a form?

[LANA *slams another chair shut*]

ZEUS

Or is that.
 Am I getting too ahead of –
 Do you only give the form if we like.
 Pass the audition?
 Or something?
 Sorry, I just.
 Don't know how this.
 Works?

.
 .
 .

I can just start reading.
 I've got the scenes.
 Or I guess you call them, sides?
 The sides, I've got them,
 right here.
 I've been.
 Practicing them?
 So do I.
 Start?
 Or.

.
 Sorry, I've just,
 never done this before –

LANA

Auditions are over.

[*She slams a chair shut*]

ZEUS

But the e-mail said // three -

LANA

Nobody came.

[*Slams another chair shut*]

LANA

And like yeah, all right, it's not a mainstage show,
 I wasn't like, naïve or –
 I knew I wouldn't be flooded with –
 but I didn't realize the politics –
 the politics,
 it's all politics in this stupid –
 Like, I'm not trying to step on anybody's toes by doing this play but Jesus fucking –
 everybody acts like –
 and I asked, I asked the Independencers if I could produce this as part of their independent
 season, but no, they only do devised pieces,
 even though – can you say a mash-up of *A Streetcar Named Desire* and *The Glass Menagerie*
 counts as a devised piece?
 I don't –
 and the Blue Humanitarians only does experimental
 and don't I know, don't I know, only the True Mechanicals are allowed to do Shakespeare,
 apparently this place is only big enough for one Shakespeare play and they're already doing
Hamlet so I couldn't do *Hamlet*, how could I, a nobody, think about jumping the line and
 producing *Hamlet* on my own,
 so yeah nobody came, nobody's here and so auditions are done
 and the play is canceled.

[*She shoves the chairs together. They all fall on top of one another. It's a mess.*
 LANA just stares at it like *Fuck*.
She doesn't have the energy for this shit,
not with all that disappointment weighing her down.]

ZEUS

But.
 I'm here.

LANA

So?

ZEUS

So like.
 How many people do you need to do a play?

LANA

Uh, I dunno,
 maybe enough people to like.
 Do the play?!

ZEUS

Yo, sorry,
I just.
Whatever,
all right, I'll just.

[He starts to leave.
LANA feels bad for snapping]

LANA

Just audition for the True Mechanicals' production.

ZEUS

They wouldn't let me.

LANA

What?

ZEUS

They told me all the roles had been pre-cast?

LANA

They're a bunch of stuck-up assholes.

ZEUS

I guess it's.
Stupid to think I.
.
Well, sorry to have.
Wasted your time, I guess.

[He starts to leave]

LANA

Fine.
Go ahead.
Audition.

[LANA opens a chair and sits in it.
Leans back at looks at ZEUS.
ZEUS doesn't actually know what to do.]

ZEUS

I don't.
Don't I need a like.
Scene partner?

[*Fair point*]

LANA

Who are you reading for?

ZEUS

Horatio?

[LANA *hesitates*.

What's she got to lose]

LANA

I'll read with you.

[*She goes to her backpack and starts to take the sides out*]

LANA

Don't expect anything like, good –
I'm not an actor.

ZEUS

That's okay, neither am I.

LANA

I wanted to direct it, not like.
Be in it.
I've never directed before either.
I was supposed to be pre-med.

ZEUS

Oh.

.

Okay.

.

What're you now?

LANA

Just here.

[*Small beat*]

ZEUS

I'm Zeus by the way.

LANA

I know.

Oh ZEUS

Yeah, I mean.
Who doesn't. LANA

I didn't realize. ZEUS

You didn't realize you're kinda famous? LANA

Some people don't know who.
. ZEUS
The True Mechanicals didn't know –

they one hundred percent did. LANA

they didn't - ZEUS

They're supposed to hold auditions,
it's like. The rules. LANA

[beat]

You're not famous. ZEUS

Yeah, and? LANA

So.
Who are you...? ZEUS

Oh.
Duh.
Lana. LANA

[They kinda go to shake hands but it's too weird so they both pretend like they didn't try to do that at all.]

Busy themselves with the sides instead]

ZEUS

Not gonna ask me?

LANA

Not my business.

ZEUS

Everybody wants to know.

LANA

I don't.

[Beat]

LANA

I'm sorry for.
Being a jackass, I'm just.
I've been here since 10:30.
Set everything up and.
Waited.
And waited.
And waited and
all the waiting got under my skin.

ZEUS

I get that.

.

So, should we –

LANA

Why *Hamlet*?

ZEUS

No, I'm reading for Horatio –

LANA

No, but why –
Why are you auditioning for *Hamlet*?
The play, not the –

ZEUS

Because I wanna be in a play.
That's all.

LANA

Right

ZEUS

Do something I've never done before.
Figured well, I'm here now, may as well try –

LANA

Auditions for the mainstage shows already happened.
And you weren't there if –
you said this was your first

ZEUS

Oh – yeah, I guess -

LANA

And you went to the True Mechanicals.
And now here.
So.
Why *Hamlet*?

ZEUS

.
.
I just like it.

LANA

You just like *Hamlet*?

ZEUS

Yeah.
Why, why are you,
Why are you directing *Hamlet*?

LANA

.
.
I just like it, too.

[*she looks down at her sides. Back up at him*]

LANA

Doing a play's not like Doing Football you know

ZEUS

You don't *do* football –

LANA

The adrenaline's the same I bet but like.
Walking and talking with intention?
Different skill.
Memorization?
Can be hard as fuck.
Not to mention the feeling –
acting is all feeling,
and Shakespearean language –
that shit is the hardest.

ZEUS

I wanna try.

[LANA *looks at him.*

Softens.

Hardens again]

LANA

All right, so let's – go ahead and try.

[*They get into position to read the sides.*

They begin to move in slow motion, their slow movements supported by a droning sound.

CHRIS *appears at a different part of the stage.*

She looks more grown up than we last saw her – it's been three years for her, too, after all.

She's auditioning for a play.

She smiles wide.

Exudes a confidence she doesn't really feel.

She is a good actor, after all.]

CHRIS

Hi, I'm Chris Brennan and I'll be doing a monologue from a play called *Once We Were Giants*.

[*Opens her mouth to begin but is interrupted]*

What's that?

Oh, yes.

Yes I am still a student but –

No, I've got special permission from –

Right, Annie recommended me for –

Right, yes!

[She listens intently to the question]

Oh the monologue? – it's actually one a friend of mine wrote –

No, I know, it's either like Bold choice or wrong choice, I just figured –

[Listens again]

Oh your play, I love it.

I really love it.

I love doing new work in general – like Shakespeare? Bleh, we should just be doing -

[What do you love about my play, Christine?]

I mean, what don't I love about it?

The themes, they really resonate with me.

The character – what she's going through just.

It's something I.

Get.

.

I had a friend who.

Passed away.

And then another friend who.

Well, we kinda.

Don't talk anymore and.

[ZEUS and LANA have disappeared.

CHRIS is alone on stage.]

CHRIS

Oh wow, really making my life sound great, huh?

Very glamorous.

[She laughs, laughing off her vulnerability, making it seem as light as air]

Well, anyhow.

It's a great piece – and I'd love to be involved.

Should I go ahead and – start?

Okay, great.

[She steadies herself, entering once again into the character.

When she looks back up, she's inside the character.

No longer Chris but someone else.

A relief to be inside someone else's mind.

She opens her mouth to begin and-]

two: home.

[we are inside student housing at the community college.

They don't have traditional dorms here, they have apartment complexes you can rent for the year that are on campus and assign you a roommate.

The apartment complex is a step up from traditional dorms but at the end of the day, it is still student housing and the roommates are not always the most well-matched.

*ZEUS enters.
He's holding Hamlet.*

*ASTER comes out of his room,
startles ZEUS.]*

ASTER
You've got to stop eating my string cheese

ZEUS
Oh hey, you're alive

ASTER
Uh, what else would I be?

ZEUS
I haven't seen you in like three days

ASTER
I've been busy

ZEUS
Like I literally haven't seen you,
what've you been, like, sleeping at the library?

ASTER
They kicked me out.

ZEUS
Wait, you weren't actually –
were you really sleeping at the -

ASTER
Leonardo DaVinci trained his body to work on twenty-minute naps throughout the day –

ZEUS
Hate to break it to you, bro, but Leonardo DaVinci went insane

ASTER
He was a genius

ZEUS

A genius who didn't realize the human body needed sleep –

ASTER

A genius who wouldn't let himself be slowed down by the false necessity of sleep –

ZEUS

You have a bed, you know

ASTER

Yeah, I know, and I just used it!
Campus security wouldn't let me go until I like,
proved I lived here,
so I had to unlock the door and then I came in
and went into my room
and sat on the bed to just like re-orient myself
and I guess I must have dozed off and woke up
and I was hungry so I go to the fridge and –

ZEUS

Maybe you ate it in your sleep

ASTER

What?

ZEUS

The string cheese?

ASTER

I did not

ZEUS

a lot of people do fucked up things in their sleep they don't ever remember doing

ASTER

I've never done anything in my sleep except for sleep, I'm not –

ZEUS

You wouldn't know – you'd be asleep

ASTER

can you just admit you took it and like pay me back for -

ZEUS

maybe somebody's breaking in and eating the string cheese

ASTER

Oh, are they breaking in and leaving a mess, too?

ZEUS

It's not that bad –

ASTER

Just because I'm not here doesn't mean you can turn the place into a

ZEUS

Here, look I'll pick up

[He starts picking up some random clothes that are strewn around]

ASTER

And the dishes in the sink –

ZEUS

Those are soaking

ASTER

Have they been soaking for three days?!

ZEUS

Yup.

[ASTER picks up Hamlet]

ASTER

Why do you have this?

ZEUS

Because.
It's mine?

ASTER

Yeah but.
It's Shakespeare.

ZEUS

I know.
It is.

ASTER

You're not actually.
Reading it?

Okay, wow.

ZEUS

No, I just mean.
Shakespeare's hard.

ASTER

I'm in it.

ZEUS

You're – what?

ASTER

Yup, I got cast.

ZEUS

In a play?

ASTER

Jealous?

ZEUS

Oh, no, theater's a waste of time.
Just. Surprised.

ASTER

They do teach athletes how to read, you know.
It's actually a requirement for getting into college.

ZEUS

You're technically not an athlete right now, anyway, right?

ASTER

[*Ouch.*]

ZEUS

Maybe it was a ghost

ASTER

What was?

ZEUS

That ate your string cheese?
Could've been a ghost.

ASTER

Fine, don't pay me back, // I don't even care

ZEUS

Makes as much sense as anything else!

ASTER

Uh, no it doesn't,
it makes no sense
there's no such thing as ghosts

ZEUS

Yes there are.

[They both look at each other, trying to see if the other is serious]

ASTER

you don't actually.
You're just messing with me,
you don't -

ZEUS

A ghost wouldn't eat the string cheese, sure,
because ghosts can't digest food, they're dead
but yeah, yes I believe in ghosts.

[This is too much for ASTER]

ASTER

I don't know why the school put us together

ZEUS

It's not like a conspiracy or anything,
it's all random

ASTER

All right.

[He's gathered some books, getting ready to leave]

ZEUS

Where are you going?

ASTER

Back to the library

ZEUS

Bro, you need to relax

ASTER

Yeah, I just did.

[He keeps going]

ZEUS

Hey, you wouldn't like.
You wouldn't want to like.
Toss a football around would you?

ASTER

And do what with it?

ZEUS

It can be fun.
Or we can play a videogame – I brought my system -

ASTER

Oh.
I dunno, I think I'm busy.

[ASTER starts to leave]

ZEUS

You don't have to not be here just because I'm here.

[This causes him to stop and look at his housemate.]

ASTER

What?
That's not why.
I don't wanna not be here just because you're -
I'm really not, I just.
Need to study.

ZEUS

I'll be practicing a bunch.
Like, rehearsal?
At the Blackbox theater right next to the library.
I'm the only one who auditioned for the play
but we're gonna put it on anyway.

ASTER

You're going to do a one-person version of Hamlet?

ZEUS

Oh, no, obviously not,
that would be crazy.
We're doing a two-person version,
the director, she's gonna be in it with me.

ASTER

That sounds
terrible

ZEUS

I mean, we'll still do all the characters,
it's not gonna be [bad].
So if you need me, that's where.
I'll be there.

ASTER

Great, sure, I guess I'll.
See you – around.

.
Really, if you can just.
Pay me back for my string cheese?
I'd really. I'd appreciate it.

[He leaves.]

*ZEUS promptly stops cleaning.
Lets everything fall around him.
He picks up the play.
Sits down and begins to read it to himself,
acting silently.*

*While he does, CHRIS appears again.
She's doing a self-tape by herself.
She has her phone set up on a tripod to record.
She presses record.]*

CHRIS

Hi, I'm Chris Brennan, 5'5 in New York City.
[She presses pause.]
Okay no, let's.
Go again.
*[She presses record.
Puts on a smile.
It's too much of a smile]*
Chris Brennan,

Five foot five,
 New York City.
[Her smiles breaks on her face]
 Oh, fuck.
[She presses pause.
Rubs her forehead.]
 It's just a self-tape
 for a yogurt commercial.
 Just – get it together.
[She gathers herself together.
Presses record again]
 Chris Brennan, 5'5, New York City.
[Takes a beat]
 Lactose free? No problem.
 With faux-gurt, you'll get your yogurt fix –
 without the digestive mess.
 Faux-gurt – for the lactose-free gut.

[She holds her commercial smile for a beat before it
disappears.
She presses stop.
Sits for a moment,
letting the weight of the audition sit on her chest before -]

three: concept.

[The blackbox, the next morning.
LANA is in the space and pacing.
ZEUS arrives. As soon as he enters the space, she pounces]

LANA

All right, I'm pretty sure I figured it out how we can make this work -

ZEUS

good morning

LANA

What?

Oh, yeah, hi,
 anyway, I think I figured it out –

ZEUS

how are you?

LANA

I'm fine I –

ZEUS
I'm pretty good, thanks for asking

LANA
Hello I'm trying to like tell you about -

ZEUS
Yeah, and I wanna hear it, but also –
take a breath.

LANA
I am taking a lot of breaths, all in a row –

ZEUS
I brought you tea.

LANA
Tea?

ZEUS
I was gonna bring coffee but I didn't know how you take it so I just brought –

LANA
What kind?

ZEUS
Peppermint?
Figured that would be.
Safe?
I mean, who doesn't like peppermint, right?
[beat]
You do like peppermint...right?

LANA
I love peppermint.
Thanks.
[She takes a sip.
Takes a sip. Yeah, that's good.
Calming.
Takes another sip.]

[An awkward beat.
What to talk about?]
ZEUS

Yeah, so uh.
My day's been good so far?

Only had one class,
applied statistics,

LANA

that sounds –
painful

ZEUS

Kinda dry, yeah.
But it's like, helpful,
if I get back to playing football

LANA

Oh, yeah, I bet.
But still, applied statistics at, what, eight in the morning -

ZEUS

I get up at five.

LANA

On purpose?

ZEUS

It's the best time of day,
the hour right after the blackest part of the night,
still dark but getting gray with light,
watching it all change?
So by the time an eight am class rolls along,
I've been awake for hours.

LANA

That sounds like.
Super healthy.

ZEUS

It just makes it easier to like.
Live the day.

LANA

I dunno, it takes me like.
A long time to wake up.
It's hard to fall asleep.
And then it's too easy to stay asleep.
And then I have to like.
Drag myself to campus and that sucks, too.

ZEUS

I live on campus. So that helps.
I'm in the student housing?
My roommate's never home so I've got the whole place to myself usually.
He does like it to be clean which is kind of a drag -

LANA

I don't have a roommate.

ZEUS

That's cool, living alone -

LANA

Oh, no.
I mean, I live at home?
So I guess my mom's my roommate!
Or, I guess I'm technically hers.
God, that's.
Pathetic.

ZEUS

Not really.
It's just.
What it is, right?

LANA

Yeah, I guess.

[beat]

ZEUS

I'd live at home if I.
Could.

LANA

Oh.
Right.
.
Right, I'm sorry -

ZEUS

It's no big.
Deal.

LANA

.
.

Do you think.

Are you gonna go back to football?

ZEUS

I...I don't –

LANA

Sorry, I was just.

Wondering.

It's not like –

I'm not a fan or anything

ZEUS

Ouch

LANA

No, I mean.

I know who you are,
obviously.

But it just seems like.

I mean, you got that big scholarship to like
go play football at UT Austin,
doesn't that basically mean you'd be on track to go pro
and be a like multi-millionaire or something?
Why wouldn't you go back?

[ZEUS *considers his tea.*

LANA *is self-conscious*]

LANA

Sorry, I'm just –

Sometimes I say too much -

ZEUS

No, it's.

Fine, I.

Miss it but I.

Without my dad, I.

Don't know how to...

live inside it anymore.

Sometimes I don't know if I miss it
or him or.

.

.
.

Anyway, you were saying – about the play –
about the play or whatever –

[LANA *jumps up, excited*]

LANA

OH!

YEAH!

I figured out how to make the play work with just the two of us.

[*She comes over to him with her plan drawn out*]

LANA

So at first I thought we'd have to cut up the play so that all the scenes became two character scenes but that sucked, like it didn't make *any* sense but then I realized like

[*She turns so her left side is in profile*]

I can be Ophelia over here all

Oh the flowers, the flowers

and then

[*hops so she's in profile on the right side*]

Now I'm Gertrude like Hey girly pop, you good?

[*hops to be Ophelia*]

Singing nonsense about love and stuff!

[*hops to be Gertrude*]

Oh wow, I don't think this girl is okay!

[*hops to be central, to be herself talking to ZEUS*]

What do you think?!

ZEUS

....what?

LANA

We can play more than one character at a time!

We just have to hop back and forth between them!

ZEUS

Are we like.

Allowed to do that?

LANA

Oh, yeah, people fuck with Shakespeare all the time

ZEUS

But that's like – disrespectful.
Right?

LANA

He's *dead* it doesn't *matter*
Besides, that's like – the only way Shakespeare is done,
everybody's got a concept
and the concept never is Just do it the way it's written
like, there's like a bunch of Shakespeares set on the moon,
the actual moon,
I bet the True Mechanicals are putting Shakespeare on the moon –

ZEUS

We're not gonna put this shit on the moon, are we?

LANA

No, we won't do that,
we'll just.
Do it like this.
[*Hops back and forth a couple of times*]
This'll be our concept.
[*Hops back and forth again before facing him*]
Sound good?

[ZEUS *hesitates, considering*]

ZEUS

And you're still gonna direct it?

LANA

Yeah of course!

ZEUS

It just – seems like a lot -

LANA

Yeah but I can do it.
If you – still want to.

[ZEUS *is quiet, considering.*
LANA *gets self-conscious at ZEUS' quiet*]

LANA

I mean, I know it's – unconventional
so I'd get it if you don't want to or -

[ZEUS *decides*]

ZEUS

Yeah, okay.

LANA

Really?

ZEUS

I mean, why not, right?

LANA

Okay, great!

Great.

Come on, let's figure this out -

[She brings the script to him.

They start going through it.

While they do, we see CHRIS.

She's practicing a dance for a dance call.

She does the dance without music,

counting the beats out loud.

ZEUS *grabs a bunch of papers and leaves during it.*

LANA *starts to set up the blackbox space for rehearsal.*

CHRIS keeps going faster and faster

her smile gets tighter and tighter.

She trips.

Sits on the ground, head in her knees in defeat.

Shakes her head.

Gets back up.

Takes a deep breath.

Right before she starts again -]

four: director

[The blackbox, later that day.

LANA, *setting up the space.*

She hears a noise.

It sounds like something being dragged across the floor.]

LANA

Who's there?

[But there's nobody there.

She goes back to getting the space ready, unnerved.

The sound of a girl laughing.

LANA's head snaps up. She follows the sound of the laughter to a wall. She places her hand against it, gently. Whispers to it.]

LANA

Is that you?

[ASTER enters the space]

ASTER

Hey, hello?

[LANA is startled as fuck.

She grabs her hand away from the wall.]

LANA

Oh shit, oh fuck

ASTER

What?

LANA

Nothing you just.

I didn't hear you come in.

ASTER

Oh. Well.

Okay.

Is Zeus here?

LANA

Oh, yeah, he'll be right back, he's just making copies of –
You're – we're in bio together

Yes

ASTER

You're –
Don't tell me, you're –
Aspen?

LANA

Aster.

ASTER

Right, Aster.
I'm Lana

LANA

My parents are obsessed with plants.

ASTER

...okay?

LANA

My name is a flower –

ASTER

Oh, I don't care

LANA

oh.

ASTER

Not like –
I just don't need an explanation,
a name's a name

LANA

Didn't Shakespeare say that?

ASTER

He said something like that!

LANA

.
You're looking for –

Yeah, Zeus,
he's my roommate –

ASTER

Oooh, you're the roommate.

LANA

...yes?

ASTER

I just
heard about you.

LANA

Ah.

ASTER

Nothing...bad.

LANA

Convincing

ASTER

just that you're clean -

LANA

They're a little purple flower.
The one I'm named after?
Small and bright purple,
all clustered together.

ASTER

I'm allergic to flowers.

LANA

*[ZEUS enters. He's holding photocopies of the script.
LANA takes the copies from him, looks over the first scene]*

Oh, uh hey,
What're you –

ZEUS

I locked myself out

ASTER

That sucks

LANA

The doors lock automatically –

ASTER

ZEUS
You need my key?

ASTER
Yeah.

ZEUS
Sure, here –

LANA
I actually know Aster,
we're in the same bio class

ASTER
You pre-med, too?

ZEUS
You're pre-med?

ASTER
Yeah

ZEUS
No wonder you're always so stressed out –

ASTER
I'm not stressed out –

LANA
I was.
Pre-med.
I actually, I used to go to NYU

ASTER
How'd you wind up here?

LANA
It's.
Complicated.

[ZEUS *gives* ASTER *his key*]

ZEUS
Don't lose it.

ASTER

I won't.

*[ASTER starts to leave, but he drags his feet about it.
He doesn't actually want to go, he's curious so he spies in the background]*

LANA

Okay, so we'll start with the first scene, duh.

[She hands ZEUS the scene]

There are only four characters so it'll be like
super easy,
you're Horatio, obviously,

ZEUS

Dope

LANA

and I'll be Marcelleus,
he talks to Horatio,
and we'll each be the guards

ZEUS

Sounds good.

LANA

Okay.
So who'd you rather be, Bernardo or Francisco?

ZEUS

I dunno, what's the difference?

LANA

One talks first, I guess?

ZEUS

Oh, okay.
I'll go with the first guy.

LANA

Okay, cool.

[An awkward beat where they shuffle the pages]

LANA

So.
Do you wanna like.
Start?

ZEUS

Yeah, okay.

Sure.

.

So should I just like – start

LANA

Yeah, you can just start

ZEUS

Cool.

.

I'm gonna start

[Takes a moment for himself. He's getting into character]

[Flatly, as Bernardo]

who's there.

LANA

[Too much, as Francisco]

Nay, answer me! Stand and unfold yourself!

ZEUS

[Flatly, as Bernardo]

Longlivetheking.

LANA

[Too much, as Francisco]

BERNARDO?!

ZEUS

[Flatly, as Bernardo]

he.

ASTER

Okay, stop

LANA

What're you –

This is a closed rehearsal

ASTER

You're not talking to each other

ZEUS

What, yes we are

LANA

We literally are

ASTER

No, you're just
saying the lines

ZEUS

Bro, what do you think talking is

ASTER

Yeah but,
you're not like listening when you say the lines

LANA

What do you know about theater, aren't you pre-med –

ASTER

Aren't you?

[*Damn, he got her*]

ASTER

I'm the one sitting here, watching

LANA

Yeah and you shouldn't be,
it's a closed —

ASTER

What if you did the scene again but like,
actually listened to each other when you talk?
Instead of just saying the lines.

LANA

I was acting –

ASTER

You were doing...Something.

LANA

And I didn't get // to give any notes!

ASTER

Like, it's night and there's been rumors of a ghost roaming around

ZEUS

Thought you don't believe in ghosts

ASTER

Right, I don't believe in ghosts because ghosts aren't real in real life,
but this isn't real life, it's a play,
and these characters aren't me,
they're Fernando and Nabisco

ZEUS & LANA

Bernardo and Francisco

ASTER

and they're both guards, right?

LANA

Yeah

ASTER

And the first one –

ZEUS

Bernardo

ASTER

He's been out there all night,
guarding the entrance to the castle –

LANA

it's more of an estate than a –

ASTER

Right, whatever, he's out there, guarding,
and it's cold and late and dark
and he's scared,
like, on edge,
because there's rumors of a ghost, right?

ZEUS

I guess

ASTER

And when I say it's dark –
like, this is before electricity,
it's dark-dark,
dark in a way we can't imagine,

there are probably a few torches lit,
 and that light,
 firelight,
 it can only illuminate the dark so much,
 can only show so much
 so even on a good night,
 even on a night without ghosts,
 you still can't quite see what's lurking in the dark
 inches away.

[ZEUS and LANA are kinda creeped out by this.]

ASTER

So it's like.
 Sure, maybe he'll always say Who's there whenever he hears a person
 but maybe because he's got all that going on inside of him,
 maybe his Who's there is a little different tonight
 'cause he actually doesn't know who is there

ZEUS

Or what is there.

ASTER

Yeah, exactly!
 Maybe his mind's been playing tricks on him all night,
 he's been out there for hours just looking into the darkness,
 feeling the darkness looking back at him

ZEUS

Oh, shit

ASTER

So then he hears something and he goes –

ZEUS

[As Bernardo, better than before]

Who's there?

ASTER

And the other guard, he knows about the rumors, he knows things are on edge, so he'd respond –

LANA

[As Francisco, better]

Nay, answer me.

Stand and unfold yourself.

ASTER

See, now it sounds like you're talking to each other,
not just at each other.
Okay, bye.

ZEUS

No, wait what the hell,
where are you going?

ASTER

I've gotta study –

ZEUS

Nah, you've gotta stay

LANA

He's got to stay?

ZEUS

Yeah, to like,
direct

LANA

I'm the director -

ASTER

I dunno how to direct anything

ZEUS

You just did!

LANA

It's more complicated than that

ZEUS

Oh yeah, what else is there?

LANA

There's a lot –
like, you have to make decisions about other stuff,
and you have to make the play look good,
making it look good, that's like fifty percent of directing.

ASTER

I don't have a lot of spare time –

ZEUS

Dude, you need to relax,
I already said.

LANA

Directing a play's not relaxing, so

ZEUS

Yeah but it's better than just
burying yourself in facts,
right?

*[He's right.
She knows he's right. Isn't that what happened to her?
Still, though -]*

LANA

Yeah but.
I'm the director –

ZEUS

He can really help us out, Lana.

ASTER

But...you don't even like me.

ZEUS

That's not true

ASTER

You said -

ZEUS

You're annoying
but I never said I didn't like you.

ASTER

Really?

ZEUS

Really.

*[ASTER considers.
Talks to LANA here]*

ASTER

You're actually a pretty good actor

LANA

No I'm not –

ASTER

Better than Zeus

ZEUS

I am standing right – here –

*[LANA doesn't want this to happen.
This was supposed to be her play.
But she's listening.]*

ASTER

if you wanted to just
focus on the play,
being in the play,
I could, I dunno.
Help.

[LANA notices the way ZEUS seems pulled to ASTER]

LANA

I mean.
I dunno.
You seemed to really like....Enjoy telling us what to do.

ASTER

I did enjoy that.

[Fine.]

LANA

I guess we all don't know what we're doing so.
May as well not know what we're doing together.
Right?

[ASTER nods.]

ASTER

Okay, yeah.
Then – let's like,
read through the scene again –

ZEUS

Wait

ASTER

What?

ZEUS

You're not gonna set this shit on the moon or anything, right?

ASTER

Why would I put *Hamlet* on the moon?
Though – that's not a bad metaphor for -

LANA

Let's just do it here on earth,
I think there's enough here to, you know.
Make it interesting.

ASTER

All right,
let's take it from the top!

.
That's a thing directors say, right?

*[LANA and ZEUS get back into position.
They open their mouths to start the scene again,
This time with ASTER more prominently watching.]*

*CHRIS comes into view on the other side of the space,
materializes out of the darkness, almost like a ghost.
She's not an audition this time, she's at a bar.
The sounds of the bar score her monologue.
She's very bright and bubbly and already a little tipsy,
but is trying to do a very good job of not letting that out.]*

CHRIS

Hey, hey,
HEY!
Hi, yeah, I'll have another!
ANOTHER.
One of these.
A gin and tonic.
They taste so bad.
[She laughs loud and a lot]
They get better the more I drink them.
Just gotta practice, you know?
Rehearse?
*[She giggles, drinking the dregs of her drink
notices a man next to her,*

begins to talk to him]

Isn't New York City crazy?

I've lived here three years and I'm still like.

Wow, what a crazy city,

a crazy City filled with crazy people.

Are you crazy?

Yeah, you seem nuts.

[She laughs and he asks her a question]

What?

[How old are you]

Well, how old do you think I am?

Come on, guess.

Guess!

I won't be offended.

You think I'm not old enough to be at this bar?

I'm definitely not old enough to be drinking gin and tonics,

but the government has given me permission to drink

and smoke marijuana responsibly

and buy cigarettes

but not rent a car.

[twenty-five?]

Close. Twenty-two.

[What? I can't hear you]

TWENTY-TWO.

And I'm actually pretty successful.

[Sure you are]

Yeah, I am.

I am!

I'm an actress.

[Mhmm]

No, for real, a real actress.

Really, I am!

I am.

[Ok, so what have I seen you in?]

Well, do you see theater?

[no]

Yeah I had a feeling,

you don't give off theater vibes.

But that's what I've mostly done.

Real stuff.

Off Broadway.

Up until now.

Now, I'm actually –

I'm celebrating tonight.

Why, don't I look happy?

Of course, I'm celebrating,

I am!
 Because I just booked my first feature.
 I did.
 I did!
 All my dreams are coming true,
 don't I look happy?
 Because I am,
 I am happy,
 I am so, so happy,
 I'm thrilled.
 Have an agent,
 and a manager
 and auditioning for things
 and getting things
 and drinking gin and tonics because
 I'm twenty-two and all my dreams are coming true!

[The sounds of the bar abruptly stop.
Muted silence.]

I keep saying,
 over and over,
 I'm happy,
 I'm happy,
 happy,
 but the word is mush,
 a shadow in my mouth.

[The sounds of the bar come back in full force.
She turns back to the man]

I'm also old enough to fuck
 whoever I want.

[I've gotta go]

Oh, okay.
 Okay, yeah, maybe.
 Maybe another time.
 Some other time.

[He leaves.
She says this out loud,
but it's still to herself]

I had this friend,
 she would never let me do this.
 But she's not here.

We don't talk anymore.
 Isn't that sad?
 It's kinda sad.
 But I'm not sad,
 I'm happy.

I shouldn't be here.
 But all my dreams are coming true.
 All my dreams are

*[She never did get that second gin and tonic.
 She just stares out into the night.]*

While she does that, we enter -]

five: text analysis.

*[The Student Housing.
 ZEUS and ASTER are coming back home from rehearsal.]*

ZEUS

Man, why are there so many monologues in this play?

ASTER

Oh, you know,
 it's a nice theatrical device.

ZEUS

I guess

ASTER

Well, it's not like we get to go around just saying all our thoughts and feelings all out loud and in a row in real life, you know?

ZEUS

Yeah

[ASTER sits on the couch]

ASTER

Besides, they're poetic,
 poetry you can just
 sink into.

ZEUS

You said theater is stupid.

ASTER

I said it was a waste of time, not –

ZEUS

You know a lot about it for it to be a waste of -

ASTER

Yeah, well,
I'm a well-rounded human.

ZEUS

Ooooh shit.

ASTER

What??

ZEUS

I know what you are

ASTER

I'm not anything, what're you -

[ZEUS *sits across from* ASTER.

ASTER notices the shape of ZEUS' chin,

he's never notices it before,

but the two of them have never been this close together before.

ZEUS *is very serious when he says -*]

ZEUS

You're a bitter former theater kid

ASTER

I.
Well.

ZEUS

Oh my god, you are!

ASTER

Will you just –

ZEUS

What happened,
didn't get cast in *Peter Pan*
or *The Wizard of Oz*?

ASTER

I was cast,
I was always cast!
.
In the chorus.

ZEUS

I knew it.

*[He playfully pushes ASTER's shoulder.
ASTER instinctively pushes back.
They're close to each other on the couch.]*

ASTER

Fine, I love it.
I love it so much –
There's just something about it that.
I dunno, feels so alive.
Even when I was cast in the chorus,
it wasn't like – bad.
It was actually. Fine.
Because I got to be a part of the whole play.
I've tried to hate it,
to convince myself to hate it
how fake it is,
how empty it is,
how hard it is
but I can't quite make myself
believe it.

ZEUS

That seems – extreme.
To make yourself hate something you love.

ASTER

Yeah, well.
Can't make a living doing it so.
Can't do it.

ZEUS

That's not the only reason to do something, though.
Right?

ASTER

I wasn't supposed to be here.
In community college?

My parents –
 I was supposed to get into Yale.
 Or Harvard.
 Or.
 Something else,
 but I only got in
 here.

ZEUS

Here's pretty good, I think

ASTER

Tell that to my parents.
 They think.
 Never mind.

[A moment of quiet between the two of them]

ASTER

I need to get out of here,
 go somewhere else,
 but in order to do that,
 I need the best grades.
 Not good, grades,
 the best grades,
 I need to be the best.
 I don't have room for anything else.
 That's why I'm so.
 .
 I know I'm intense, but it's just.
 I need to be the best.

[beat]

ZEUS

I was the best once.

ASTER

Aren't you. Still?
 Technically?

ZEUS

No.
 I actually.
 I was only the best here.
 When I got to Austin,

I was drowning
 'cause I wasn't the best anymore,
 I was barely anything anymore.
 I didn't know how to be anything but the best so it was kinda.
 Hard. To not be the best anymore.
 To not know how to be anymore.

ASTER

But.
 You're famous –

ZEUS

Here.
 I'm famous - here.
 .
 I just wanted to play football.
 Being the best,
 it actually kinda ruined it.
 Because being the Best meant I couldn't be human.
 It's bad enough I'm named after a god,
 I couldn't even breathe
 and I couldn't even tell anyone
 because if you're a god,
 you don't need to breathe anyway.
 I lost so much of myself without even realizing it
 because I wasn't this thing I was supposed to be.
 .
 You can't be the best, Aster.
 Best doesn't exist.

[Beat]

ASTER

I really do love theater.
 Even touching it from the outside,
 feeling it, it.
 I wish there was a way I could wrap my arms around it again.

[ZEUS *puts his hand on ASTER's hand.*]

*It happens quickly, naturally,
 Without thinking –
 And then all at once they realize
 How close they are,
 that his hand
 is on his hand.*

They break apart quickly]

ASTER

I've really gotta
I have an assignment I've gotta –

ZEUS

Yeah, me too,
gotta – memorize some lines

ASTER

Great.
Great.

[He starts to head into his room]

ZEUS

Hey.

[ASTER turns around]

ASTER

Yeah?

ZEUS

....
see you at rehearsal?

ASTER

Yeah.
For sure, see you then.

[He leaves.

*ZEUS stares at the door for a moment
before pulling the script out from his back pocket.
He sinks down onto the couch
and begins to read.*

*His eye catches something.
He can't believe it.
Touches the script.
Says the line.]*

ZEUS

**And this above all else:
to thine own self be true**

*[A door slowly opens.
ZEUS stands.
Looks at the open door.]*

ZEUS

Dad.

[As he walks towards the door -]

six: swordfight.

*[The blackbox.
ASTER and LANA are in the space, setting up. LANA is holding a couple of flashlights.]*

LANA

You're not even going to like,
give it a chance?

ASTER

I don't have to give it a chance,
It's a bad idea

LANA

It's not bad!

ASTER

An impractical -

LANA

It'll work!

ASTER

I don't think –

LANA

We can't use real swords –

ASTER

We were never going to use real swords

LANA

No, I mean like
real fake swords,
we can't use any type of

ASTER

Yeah which is why we should just pantomime –

LANA

So why can't we pantomime with light?!

ASTER

You can't have a sword fight using only flashlights

LANA

We use the light from the flashlights,
not the flashlights themselves

ASTER

Yes, I understand the concept,
the light from flashlights,
You can't –

LANA

It worked for Star Wars

ASTER

I've never seen a single star war

LANA

Yeah but you've seen lightsabers –

ASTER

Lightsabers are not lights

LANA

But imagine how cool it'll look!

ASTER

The fights are already gonna be a disaster to choreograph, we can't -

LANA

Just like, look, imagine,
Laertes being all
Have at you now!
and then like,

[She turns on the flashlight and the light hits ASTER 's abdomen]

LANA

And then Hamlet can turn on his light and hit Laertes and back and forth and back and forth and

ASTER

no

LANA

Well what else are we gonna do?!

We need to come up with something –

ASTER

You don't have to come up with anything, I'll figure it out

[ZEUS enters]

LANA

Yeah, but

ASTER

I'll figure it out!

ZEUS

Figure what out?

LANA

The swordfights

ZEUS

Aren't we using real swords?

ASTER

We were never going to use real swords!

ZEUS

Real fake swords –

LANA

None of us are certified in stage combat
and the stage combat teacher is on sabbatical

ZEUS

What are the True Mechanicals doing?

LANA

There are like five of them certified,
they do Ren Faires

ZEUS

Ren Faires?

LANA & ASTER

Renaissance Faires

ZEUS

Oh

LANA

Yeah they're like
real actors

ZEUS

Hey, we're real actors! Too

LANA

We're not real actors –

ZEUS

What makes an actor real?

LANA

Well you know,
like we don't know what we're doing

ZEUS

Speak for yourself,
I've been watching masterclasses on YouTube

LANA

And we're not like
Doing this for real,
We're just doing it to like.
Do it.
We're not like –
I have this friend,
She's a real actor,
She was in a couple of national commercials

ZEUS

Oh, selling Ozempic is real acting but what we're doing –

LANA

I actually think,
it was some kinda yogurt // commercial

ZEUS

whatever!

LANA

I dunno! she's out in New York
Doing it for real

ZEUS

I thought you had to be in LA to be a real actor, not New York

ASTER

Well, New York is the theater capital of the world, so -

ZEUS

I'm just saying!
This is pretty real,
what we're doing here?
It's real!
More real than knowing stage combat or whatever

LANA

Oh, please,
I can barely say the lines in the right order –

ASTER

Yeah but you feel them.

LANA

No I don't.

ZEUS

Yes, you do

ASTER

I bet your friend would think so

LANA

I doubt she would

ZEUS

Is she gonna see the play?

LANA
She's in New York

ASTER
And what, she never visits?

LANA
We don't talk.

*[The air gets icy.
The guys don't know what to do.]*

ASTER
Oh.
Well, okay, then.
[He turns to Zeus]
You're late, by the way

ZEUS
Yeah, I know, I.
Didn't sleep. I kinda. I saw my dad.

*[ASTER and LANA pause.
They exchange a glance]*

LANA
Oh.
Well.
But

ASTER
Your dad's dead.

ZEUS
Yeah, I know.

*[Beat.
Beat]*

ASTER
So you.
Had a dream about him?

ASTER
I think.
This play's getting to your head –

ZEUS

I didn't see him at first.

First I –

there's this cologne?

His cologne,

more than cologne,

his smell,

I smelled it,

like flannel shirts and grass and cologne,

I smelled it.

I was reading through the play,

reading my lines and.

I got to one I didn't even know was.

To thine own self be true

he used to say that all the time,

at the dinner table

when I was little

and he and my mom would be in a fight,

he'd say **To thine own self be true**

and she'd laugh

and the fight would end and

all these words,

he used to say so many of them

all the time,

my dad loved this play.

but I never knew it

like I grew up with him saying shit like

something's rotten in the state of Denmark!

Like, he'd just

say this shit

and I never knew it came from anywhere, really,

not really,

like my dad coached football,

he taught gym

and loved *Hamlet*

and I didn't even know.

I didn't even know I didn't know

him.

Then one day I was.

I said **something's rotten in the state of Denmark** in the locker room

and someone was like Oh, we've got a scholar here

and that's when – he told me it was *Hamlet* and

then my dad died and.

That's why I wanted to do the play,

to be

inside something he loved so much?

[beat]

LANA

When did you see him?

ZEUS

The door opened to my bedroom.
And I smelled his smell
and he was – there
I must sound like –

LANA

I saw a ghost, once

ASTER

Oh, come on.

LANA

Well, I didn't technically see her but
it was -

ASTER

There are no such things as –

LANA

I was with my friend.
The actor?
We used to play this game –
and the last night we were together before college,
our friend who.
Died.
We heard footsteps,
coming up the stairs and.
Nobody else was home but us.
We heard the footsteps,
walking down the hall from the stairs
and then they stopped right in front of her bedroom door
and we just stood there for like.
A long time.
And I finally opened the door and
she wasn't there.
But it was her.
I didn't see her,
but I know it was her.

ASTER

You didn't see her, though

LANA

What about hearing footsteps

ASTER

That isn't *proof*
That's circumstantial

ZEUS

So there's no proof that it isn't true either,
right?

LANA

There's no proof that the ghost Hamlet sees is his father
but he sees something
and that something is real for him

ASTER

This is only a play,
a make believe
metaphor
fairy tale
ghosts aren't,
they can't be real,
that wasn't real
it couldn't be -

ZEUS

But it was real for me.

[*Tension between the two.*
LANA *breaks it*]

LANA

Do you guys wanna play that game?

ASTER

We're supposed to be rehearsing –

LANA

I bet you wouldn't be able to stand it.

ASTER

We don't have time to -

ZEUS

What're the rules?

[She grabs the three flashlights.]

LANA

We all have to sit back-to-back
and say the scariest things we can come up with
and the first person to get someone to turn around
wins.

[She stands by the light]

LANA

And we have to do it in the dark.
So.
Are you in?

*[ASTER is hesitant.
ZEUS wants to play]*

ZEUS

Yeah, for sure

ASTER

We're supposed to be rehearsing

LANA

Emotional research!
This whole play is a lot scarier than people give it credit for.
I need to feel that fear.

ASTER

...
Fine

*[ZEUS and ASTER sit back-to-back as LANA turns off the lights.
She uses the flashlight to light her way to them.
She sits with her back between the two of them,
facing out to the audience so that they're like a triangle.]*

LANA

Last time I did this I conjured a ghost so, you know.
Don't be scared.

ASTER

I'm not scared.

LANA

Great, then start.

ASTER

...

you can start

LANA

feeling something tickle the back of your neck.

Over and over again,

Something that feels like breathing.

You keep swatting at it,

Trying to capture it in your hands,

Trying to make it stop

But it doesn't

And suddenly you hear a sound,

A voice saying your name softly, –

ZEUS

All right, I'm out

[He tries to get up but Lana grabs his arm, keeps him in place]

LANA

You are not,

that was only the first one!

ZEUS

Yeah and that was fucking scary!

I'm scared

LANA

Come on, you go

ZEUS

Jesus, fine.

Uh.

finding a spider on my elbow.

ASTER

Spiders are helpful, not scary

LANA

All right, what's yours then

ASTER

getting a flesh-eating bacteria stuck in my brain.

ZEUS

Jesus Christ

LANA

Can that happen?

ASTER

There are enough real things to be scared of in life,
I don't need ghosts and ghouls and –

LANA

oh, whatever,
being forced to bungee jump from the Grand Canyon with a chord you're not sure will hold.

ZEUS

being a guy in one of the Saw movies.

ASTER

accidentally swallowing a worm that passes through my intestines and comes out my ass.

LANA

waking up to a vampire turning you.

ZEUS

never seeing my dad again.

[*Beat.*

Beat.

Beat.]

ASTER

Being a failure.

[*Beat.*

Beat.

Beat]

LANA

Never being okay again.

[*There's a tone.*

The atmosphere changes.

A movement begins. An elevated theatrical moment, both happening and not at the same time.

*The trio each repeat their fears and move away from another,
standing and moving around one another.*

*They use the flashlights to have a sword fight,
a fight with lights,
each still repeating their core fear as a whisper.*

As they do, CHRIS appears.

*They fall silent when she begins to speak,
but continue moving in slow motion underneath.*

*She dials a number.
She's shocked when it goes to voicemail.
Hangs up.
Dials again, just to hear her voice again.*

Hesitates.

Leaves a message.]

CHRIS

Hey, I.
Didn't know this would actually.
Go through!
I couldn't believe when your voicemail.
Answered,
like your old voicemail with your old voice and.
Man, I've forgotten what it sounded like.
Your voice?
That kinda sucks.
I didn't realize I had forgotten it
until I heard it again!
Wow.
[beat. What to say?]
I wish I could tell you that I think of you all the time
but I don't.
Not anymore.
My mind is taken up with
so much other stuff,
so much life.
I couldn't imagine not thinking of you every second of every minute of every single day but shit,
I don't.
But today I was just.
In my trailer,
I'm in a movie,

a feature?
 I'm going to get launched,
 that's what my manager says,
 I'm about to launch
 and I opened a drawer and all these fuckin'
 butter scotches just
 fell out.
 Those stupid little candies
 you always had in your pockets
 you always said you were practicing to be a grandma.
 God I hope nobody checks your fucking voicemail.
 I hope nobody ever deletes it.
 Just because you don't fill my every waking moment
 doesn't mean you're less gone.
 Fuck.
 Okay, anyway.
 I guess I'll say good bye.
 I miss –

[Blackout on everything.]

seven: set.

*[In the blackbox after a rehearsal.
 Lana has just left.
 ASTER and ZEUS are building the set.
 They're taping out different sized boxes on the floor,
 using different colored spike tape to do it.
 This is the extent of their set, each box represents a different part of the set.
 They talk to one another while they do this.]*

ZEUS

Can we at least do it barefoot?

ASTER

Zeus –

ZEUS

I mean, I thought we'd be wearing costumes,
 like real costumes

ASTER

Just because you're going to be wearing your own clothes doesn't make them less of a costume

ZEUS

Yeah but,
all black?
Isn't that so.
Cliché?

ASTER

What do you know about theater cliches

ZEUS

I think if I know about it,
It's probably cliché

ASTER

Then you'll know bare feet is even more cliché than wearing all black

ZEUS

I just wanted to wear something like.
Princely, you know?

ASTER

Horatio's not a prince.

ZEUS

That's why I said prince-*ly* not full *prince*

ASTER

All right.
Not to get your hopes up,
but I am going to the costume shop.
Gonna look at some hats –

ZEUS

I'll take a hat

ASTER

I dunno if it'll work,
we'll see.

ZEUS

I kinda wish we could have a real set.

ASTER

Hey, this is a real set!

ZEUS

No, I mean like.
A *real* set –

ASTER

Just because it's simple doesn't make it less *real*.

*[He finishes his current box.
Leans back.
Takes in his surroundings for a moment]*

ASTER

It's kinda nice.
Don't you think?

ZEUS

What, the theater?
It's just a black box

ASTER

Yeah but.
It's a nice box.

ZEUS

There's not even any windows –

ASTER

Theaters never have windows,
natural light messes with the lighting design

ZEUS

Ah, yeah, I never realized.

ASTER

Yeah, external light would throw off the vibes

ZEUS

Oh shit,
did you just say vibes?

ASTER

Shut up

*[The two share a smile.
They go back to silence]*

ZEUS

It really is easy to lose track of time down here,
with no light to tell us the day is moving.
Almost like it stands still.

[ASTER *lies down on the ground*]

ZEUS

What're you doing?

ASTER

Looking at the stars

ZEUS

What?

ASTER

What, I'm in the churchyard.
Nobody's here but me and Yorick.
And it's nighttime,
midnight, actually,
the perfect time of day to see the stars,
and there they all are,
each of them blinking through the night.

[*He points up at them.*
There are no stars but ZEUS decides to play along.
He sits next to ASTER.
They're close but not too close.
Just close enough to be next to one another.]

ZEUS

I dunno how to read any of the stars

ASTER

I think they like to tell their own stories.

[*The stars start to appear.*
Slowly, little beams of light flicking on.
The world around them grows darker
and it sounds like midnight out in a backyard,
the two of them in their own little world]

ZEUS

You believe in the stars

ASTER

I do

ZEUS

So why not ghosts?

[ASTER *takes a moment to reply*]

ASTER

I guess it's scary
to not know.
To have to believe
there's something so big
we just really will not know
no matter how much we try,
we can't have an answer.
it scares me.

[*He slowly moves his hand
and puts it on top of ZEUS' without looking at him*]

ASTER

My parents are always asking if I've met anyone.
They don't want me not to meet someone.
They want me to be the best so I can go to a different school
and they want me to meet someone
and they want to know when they could meet her.
When can I meet her?
They ask me that all the time.

ZEUS

My mom asks me that, too.

ASTER

Oh.
Cool.

.
.

What do you tell her?

ZEUS

That I just haven't found anyone special.

ASTER

Oh.
You
haven't?

*[ZEUS slowly takes ASTER's hand in his.
The two are still not looking at each other]*

ZEUS

I think that maybe I -

[SLAM.

*The sound of a door slamming.
They both jump.
The nighttime disappears,
replaced with the real life of house lights.]*

ZEUS

Who's there?

LANA

It's just me!

*[ASTER and ZEUS separate,
but the energy is still electric as LANA enters the space,
she's holding a wet umbrella, raindrops dancing off it.]*

LANA

It's pouring out there
[stops. Sees them]
sorry, did I -

ASTER

Just wasn't -
Expecting you!

LANA

I came to take pictures of the set -

ASTER

Oh, right,
RIGHT,
Lost track of
time,
I was just -

gosh I have to go,
 I have to go to the –
 They're letting me pull some costumes from the shop?

LANA

I thought we were performing in blacks –

[ASTER *is gathering his things*]

ASTER

hats mostly,
 hats, I
 figured you can use hats to
 switch back and forth between characters
 like Hamlet in a cap
 Claudius in a crown
 Ophelia with a flower ring –
 I guess that's not really a hat but
 it's head like
 Headgear?

LANA

Sounds – interesting

ASTER

It's just an idea, we'll see if it,
 it might not work, I don't

LANA

You're gonna need an umbrella,
 it's really coming down –

ASTER

We'll try it tomorrow,
 hats,
 see if it

ZEUS

Sure

ASTER

I'll see you – then,
 trying on some
 hats

[*He leaves.*]

In the silence]

ZEUS

Nothing happened.

LANA

Okay but it would be – okay if something – did

ZEUS

Would it?

.

It's crazy,
you don't even hear the thunder down here.

Almost like another world.

A cave or.

Something else.

.

It's different,
when we're not down here.

I wish it wasn't but it is.

I'm not sure where to put. That.

[ZEUS leaves.

*LANA thinks to go after him,
but she doesn't.*

Lights shift. Things feel a little ghostly.

On the other side of the stage –

CHRIS appears.

*She's in her trailer,
scrolling on her phone.*

*LANA takes out her phone.
She starts to take pictures of the set.*

The atmosphere is eerie.

*Suddenly,
they both hear the sound of footsteps,
right behind them.*

*They each tense.
But they don't turn around.*

*Suddenly,
the sound of a girl, laughing.*

*Both of them look up from their phones,
towards the laughter and*

*when they look back down –
they're Facetiming one another.*

*While the actors start on their screens,
they soon abandon them,
having a conversation from their own separate worlds,
but still together.*

*Another magical moment where the walls fall away
and their world can just exist like this for a little bit.*

LANA
Oh shit,
what's -

CHRIS
What the –
is that
Lana?

Beat.

LANA
Hi.

CHRIS
Hi.

Beat.

They haven't seen each other for a year.

Beat.

LANA
I'm.
What're you –

CHRIS
I'm sorry, I didn't mean to -

CHRIS
I was just scrolling, I think I hit –

LANA
It's so – weird,
I don't usually get service down here.

CHRIS

Yeah, where – are you?
It looks like you're in a –

LANA
Theater
The blackbox at,
I'm at school.

CHRIS

Are you – seeing a play or -

LANA
I'm actually,
I'm doing one,
like, putting one on.

CHRIS

Oh!

You're a...theater major now?

LANA
Oh, no,
not like – at all,
just.
Something I'm.
Doing!

.
How are.
You?

CHRIS

I'm good!

LANA
That's good.
.
I read you're.
In a movie?

CHRIS

Oh, yeah –

LANA
or like,
going to be in a movie?
Doing a movie, I don't know the right –
Phrasing or –

CHRIS

I'm,
we're filming it now
I'm actually in my trailer,
waiting

LANA
oh, cool

CHRIS

Yeah, how did you hear about –

LANA
I saw a headline
in one of those –
Variety or Something,
your name and.
It's. Cool.
All your dreams,
coming true

CHRIS

Yeah.
For sure, it's true, it's.
What... play are you doing?

LANA
Oh, uh,
Hamlet.

CHRIS

Oh!

LANA
Yeah.
It's stupid

CHRIS

Hamlet's not stupid.
It's pretty – hard.

LANA
Yeah.

Beat
Beat

CHRIS

it's not
her version?

LANA
What - Oh, shit.

CHRIS
What?

LANA
I forgot all about,
that she wrote one –

*The mood shifts.
They slowly get closer,
though never in the same place,
but this is nice,
a nice memory*

CHRIS
You forgot?!

LANA
Call it a traumatic response

CHRIS
Oh god, I wish I could forget,
it was such a disaster

LANA
she spelled ofelia with an F instead of a ph

CHRIS
a bunch of eight-year-olds doing *hamlet*

LANA
we weren't eight

CHRIS
it feels like we were eight

LANA
we were in fifth grade, that's not eight

CHRIS
right, that's like

LANA
double digits

CHRIS
so ten?

LANA
I played a witch

CHRIS
Oh god, that's right
Because she put the Macbeth witches in it

LANA
Mrs. Mckowski was like

CHRIS
Horried

LANA
Literally horrified,
she sent that note home

CHRIS
Oh my god,
I forgot about that –

LANA
“Disturbing material”

CHRIS
And her mom was like
“What’s so disturbing about my child knowing Shakespeare?”

LANA
It wasn’t even *that* disturbing

CHRIS
It was good!

LANA
A pbs version of Shakespeare

CHRIS
Her version of Shakespeare

LANA
She would’ve been a great playwright.

CHRIS
She was.
The best playwright.

I still.
I do monologues from her plays for auditions

LANA
Really?
Are you like – allowed to do that

CHRIS
Well
I mean.
I do it anyway -

LANA
It sucks she didn't have a chance to.
Do it for real.

*There is a shift here.
The energy changes.*

CHRIS
So are you like.
Okay?

LANA
Oh.
Yeah.

CHRIS
Yeah?

LANA
Yeah, I'm.

CHRIS
because last time.
You weren't like.
I wasn't sure if -

LANA
No, I'm good,
I'm great.
I actually, I -
Have to go.

CHRIS
You don't.
Have to –

LANA
No, I.
I do, I.

CHRIS
I just want you to be okay

LANA
And I am!
I am okay.
I am okay.
I am, I am, I -

CHRIS
Lana –

*[But LANA has already hung up.
CHRIS considers redialing.
LANA considers it, too.*

But neither do.

*LANA stands, the phone call filling her.
Lights change.
A droning sound begins and gets louder and louder until,
in its crescendo we're suddenly in -]*

eight: ophelia.

[We are back in the blackbox, the next day.

The droning sound has ended, the lights are normal, LANA has been in the middle of rehearsing a scene with ZEUS.]

LANA
Sorry can we just –
I need a break

ASTER
We just took a break –

LANA

Yeah, well,
I need another

ASTER

We don't have time –

LANA

It's not my fault you have a shitty overloaded schedule,

ASTER

It's not my schedule,
we go up in three days
and the hats aren't working -

LANA

maybe I just,
I shouldn't be –

ZEUS

What's wrong?

LANA

I didn't want this,
to be her, I.

ZEUS

Who, Ophelia?

LANA

Yeah, yes,
I didn't – I
Nobody gets it,
nobody understands

ASTER

What?

LANA

Like everybody acts like,
they all act like something made Ophelia mad,
as though they can just point to a thing and say
that was it,
the death of her father,
Hamlet being an asshole,
they never

they never think that maybe
 that it wasn't anything's fault
 she was just sick,
 she was sick!
 She was sick all along and.
 And that's why she.
 Does what she does and.

.
 Nobody understands.
 Her.
 I didn't realize being Ophelia would.
 It's harder than I thought it would be
 to say these things?
 Like, it's not the language, it's her.
 Being her.
 I'm inside Ophelia and I
 think I might be too close.
 What she's saying,
 it's like a reflection of.
 Me.

[*Beat.*

That sinks in.

Beat]

LANA

I had a.
 Mental health event.
 At NYU,
 that's what they called it –
 an event –
 stopped being able to.
 Think? Like, different thoughts,
 they were all uniform,
 the same,
 marching across my brain like soldiers.
 Stopped being able to leave my room.
 Or shower.
 Or.
 Anything.
 .
 Fuck it, this was so stupid,
 what a stupid –

[LANA *begins to leave.*
 ASTER *stops her*]

ASTER

It's okay

LANA

No, it's stupid,
 It's so stupid -
 I'm so embarrassed,
 I'm so embarrassed by – it all,
 everything,
 and I know I shouldn't be
 but I still am,
 the way my mom looks at me,
 the way I had to come back home,
 the way I had to give up a dream,
 I hate it,
 I hate it!
 My friend – Chris,
 the actor?
 She and I were roommates
 and I could barely get out of bed
 trapped inside a stone castle
 she saved me
 but I was still so
 angry
 that she did and.

.
 I was so angry at her
 for saving my life
 and now I'm so embarrassed she
 saved my life
 but she did, she saved
 me
 and I'm so angry at myself
 for being angry and embarrassed
 because I shouldn't have been sick
 in the first place
 and I can't even
 tell her
 'cause I don't know how.

.
 .
 .

I just want my friend back.

*[They sit in an awkward kinda silence for a moment.
Nobody really knows what to do.
Aster makes a choice]*

ASTER

What if you say the play
the way you wanna say the play

LANA

What you mean –
Rewrite Shakespeare?

ASTER

Yeah.
I mean, for right now.
Say it so it makes sense to you.
Say it so it's true for you.

LANA

But.
It's Shakespeare.

ASTER

I'll fight him if he comes back and says anything, okay?
[kindly]
**Speak the speech,
I pray you.**

LANA

Okay.
Okay, I.
I think Ophelia would.
I think she'd say.
*[In character as Ophelia
While she says this, she becomes Ophelia,
truly talking from her heart for the first time ever,
the world disappears for a moment,
replaced with that of the play]*
I don't know how.
I don't know how to take all my.
All my everything and try to.
Say it.
How do I say something that nobody wants to hear?
Why waste time on words when nobody listens?
Why doesn't anybody listen?
Nobody listens,

and then why when they do,
 they don't hear me
 so I push them away.
 Hamlet sucks,
 I don't know what happened
 but I miss my friend.

I miss my friend.
 Why do I do it,
 Why do I push everyone away until there's nobody left
 but me.
 I'm all alone
 and I don't know how to be this alone.
 I don't want to be this alone.

*[She finishes.
 The world is normal again.
 It wasn't Ophelia,
 it was Lana speaking,
 Aster and Zeus listening.
 There's a silence.]*

ASTER

How'd that feel?

LANA

Okay.

.
 It felt okay.

*[She smiles.
 End of scene]*

nine: grief.

[ASTER is in the shared housing. He's holding a battery-operated candle. He looks a little nervous. ZEUS enters, a ball of nerves ASTER puts the candle on the couch.]

ZEUS

Bro is it normal to be like
 catastrophically nervous right now?

ASTER

For Opening Night?
 Yeah, it's really normal –

ZEUS

Like my palms are sweating,
my neck is sweating,
my ass is sweating I like can't -

ASTER

What, you never got nervous before a game?

ZEUS

I mean,
yeah sure, but that was like.
I mean, we didn't know who was gonna win,
nothing was pre-determined,
like those were stakes, those were -
but like this??
I know all my lines, I know all my blocking,
we've rehearsed for weeks – weeks! -
like I'd get if You were nervous because like
you have to trust that I don't fuck up
but I'm not gonna fuck up because I do know all my lines and blocking and
so why am I nervous
How am I nervous
there are no stakes,
so why am I nervous?!

[ASTER *puts his hands on ZEUS' shoulders,*
calming him down]

ASTER

Because you care!
You're putting a piece of yourself on display,
letting a small part of the world see you in a different way.
That's a big thing.
A hard thing.
.
A beautiful thing.

[*Beat.*
Yeah, it is]

ASTER

And also like.
Today's a hard day.
Or at least – I assumed it would be?
So I figured.
Here.

[He picks the candle back up.]

ASTER

Lighting a candle's supposed to help, right?
Like, to keep a person's memory alive?
But we're not supposed to like.
Have open flames in here,
so I got you

[He turns it on.]

ASTER

I figure –
it doesn't matter if it's a real fire,
right?

ZEUS

Yeah.
Right.

*[ASTER turns it off.
Gestures to ZEUS to come to sit next to him.
ZEUS sits next to him,
the candle in front of them.]*

ASTER

Do you want to.
Say some words?

ZEUS

I don't know what to say.

ASTER

Just say what's.
True.

[Beat. We watch as Zeus gathers his thoughts]

ZEUS

He would've hated being in the paper.
But that car accident was all over the papers.
Headline news.
More famous for getting in a car accident,
not for like.
Coaching all those victories.
.

Actually, he might think it was funny.

Ironic?

Maybe he's laughing.

.

He was a good coach.

But a better dad.

Like, as coach, he couldn't be soft.

But as a dad, he was all soft.

Even when he pretended like he wasn't.

Like, one time,

I failed a test

and I couldn't go on this field trip

and I was devastated, man,

like, so sad.

I had studied hard to fail that stupid test.

And I went to my room to pretend not to cry

and he had put this goofy-ass stuffed bird on my bed.

And I knew it was him.

And it made me feel fucking better.

He just wanted me to be

happy.

That's all he ever wanted for me.

For me to be happy.

[ASTER *gently takes ZEUS' hand in his own.*]

ASTER

To thine own self be true, right?

[ZEUS *lets out a laugh.*

Squeezes ASTER's hand]

ZEUS

Right.

You're right.

To thine own self -

[*He leans his head towards Aster*

and gently,

they kiss]

ten: opening.

[LANA *is alone in the blackbox.*

She's getting things ready for Opening Night.

*On the other side of the stage,
ZEUS and ASTER are also getting ready.
Perhaps Zeus is donning a costume,
Aster, reading the script.*

*They should be alive and in action
while this other scene plays out.*

*The sound of a door slamming shut,
followed by the sound of footsteps.]*

LANA

Who's there?

[CHRIS enters.

LANA is surprised.
She doesn't know what to do

They mostly don't look at each other until they do]

LANA

Oh.
Hey.

CHRIS

Hi.
Is this.
I'm not like – interrupting or –

LANA

Oh, no I'm just.
Getting things set up.
But what are you.
Aren't you like,
doing your movie?

CHRIS

Oh, yeah, I am.
I am.
But I kinda.
Left.
To come back here.

LANA
I didn't know you were like.
Allowed to do that?

CHRIS
I'm not.

LANA
Ah.

[*Beat.*
Beat.]

CHRIS
So.
How's the play?

LANA
It's good.
It's been – really good.

CHRIS
Cool.
That's cool.
Hamlet, right?

LANA
Yeah.
It's a two-person version.

CHRIS
Wow.

LANA
Yeah, it's.
Bold?
A bold choice.

CHRIS
Sounds like.
Really bold.

LANA
Yeah.
It's Opening Night.

Tonight? CHRIS

Tonight. LANA

I didn't realize. CHRIS

We only put up flyers so.
You wouldn't have seen them if you.
Weren't here.
So.

.
. .
I'm better, you know.

I didn't know. CHRIS

Not like.
Perfect.
But better.
A lot. LANA

[*Beat.*
Beat.]

It's kinda stupid but
I never thought I'd see you again CHRIS

It's not stupid.
I didn't know how to see you again. LANA

Yeah? CHRIS

Yeah. LANA

[*yeah*
They each search for words,
what to say?
What to say?]

CHRIS

I've been thinking?
 I.
 Don't know what to.
 .
 .
 I wish there was a way
 to keep a person alive.
 Bring them back to life.

[*beat*]

LANA

Yeah.
 I get that.
 I actually.
 I think that's what Hamlet was trying to do?
 Like, this play it's all
 messy and misshapen
 and funny and weird
 and it's the shape of grief and
 this whole play is just him
 trying to bring his dad back to life.
 And he can't.

[*he can't*]

CHRIS

It's not fair, Lana.

LANA

Yeah.
 It's not.
 It's not fair.

[*She reaches out a hand.*
 CHRIS *grabs her in a hug.*

Zeus and Aster are finished getting ready.
They talk silently to one another.
Hold hands.

LANA and CHRIS hug as the lights slowly start to go down

CHRIS pulls away first,
but now they're looking at each other]

CHRIS

Any tickets left for tonight?

LANA

Oh, yeah,
most of them

CHRIS

I'd like to see it.
If that's okay.

LANA

I think that'll be okay.
That's okay.

[The lights slowly go down.

We hear the sound of a girl's laughter right before -]

Blackout.

End of play.