

FOR THE TIME BEING

by Andrew Martineau

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FOR THE TIME BEING

*In Loving Memory of
Jeffrey Scott Martineau*

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SETTING

The living room of Mickey and Levon Lyons' duplex apartment. It is very cluttered and almost filthy. There are family pictures around the room, including a large oil painting of Kitty Lyons in a lion costume. It has a rather prominent spot on the far-left side of the rear wall. The time is the present.

Prologue: A Tuesday evening

Act I, scene 1: A Thursday evening

Act I, scene 2: The following evening

Act I, scene 3: The following Monday afternoon

Act I, scene 4: The following Tuesday afternoon

Act II, scene 1: Two days later

Act II, scene 2: The following evening

Act II, scene 3: One month later; early evening

Epilogue: The next day

CHARACTERS

Mickey Lyons: 36 years old; very attractive but not the model type; reads gas meters for a living; sensitive and intelligent; has no college degree

Athena Miller: 35 years old; a special education high school teacher; of Greek descent; attractive, intelligent and caring; has stage one ovarian cancer

Levon Lyons: 16 years old; has been labeled learning disabled with ADHD; shorter than average; medium build; not a teenager who likes to conform to current trends and styles

Kitty Lyons: 35 years old; very pretty with an intentional tough look; a stripper

Milo Tucker: 40 years old; has long hair and a lot of tattoos; an adult filmmaker

Productions/Readings

Enlightenment Productions – Washington, DC (1999) - First production

Action Theatre Conservatory – Clifton, NJ (2022) – Reading

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Prologue

LEVON is sitting on the sofa playing a videogame, which we can see on the rear wall projection. He takes out his phone and starts to video-record his thoughts.

LEVON. Dr. Weston. You, uh, told me to do this, so what the hell. I'm giving it a shot. I didn't have a nightmare last night, which is rare. But don't worry. They'll come back. You'll still get your money. I just took a night off, I guess you could say. Anyway, like I told you last week, most of my nocturnal dramas as you call them, have been about my special ed. teacher, Miss Miller. At least for the past few weeks. I had one two nights ago where she was shooting grapes into my mouth through this really big straw. The scary part was when I started to choke to death because the grapes were the size of kiwis, and Miss Miller couldn't seem to save me. Instead of trying to push the grapes up through my throat, she was just pushing on my jaw and lips like this (mimes pushing on his mouth and jaw). Figure that one out. Do I have to do this every day? Sometimes it's hard to think of something really mind-blowing to tell you. Wait a second, Doc. I wrote this really fucked up sentence down. I read it in school today. What I don't get is...I go to this school for kids with emotional problems who could go off the deep end at any time, and here we are reading this story about people killing each other, putting heads on sticks and scraping blood no one else can see off their skin. Is this responsible leadership? Let me find it.

(He scrolls through his phone to find the note. He finds it.)

Here it is. It goes: "Tomorrow and tomorrow and tomorrow/Creeps in this petty pace from day to day." Petty pace—what is that? I guess what it's saying is that life sucks, but I already knew that. The dude says it right after his crazy wife offs herself. Maybe it's saying sometimes tomorrow does turn out to be as bad as today, like it or not. If that's what

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it's saying, then this Shakespeare was a genius. I mean, he's right. Time does not heal all wounds. It only makes new ones.

(He starts to take some drags from his e-cigarette. He resumes his videogame.)

I think I'll create a game called "Out Damn Spot!"

(He blows up some strange creature in the game.)

Out damn spot! Out with you! Oh damn, it's back! Spots are hard as hell to get rid of. I see why this evil woman couldn't take it anymore.

(Lights fade to black, along with the projection of the game.)

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ACT I SCENE 1

No one is onstage at rise of curtain. The doorbell rings. MICKEY rushes out of the bathroom, pulling up his pants and buckling his belt. He answers the door. ATHENA is standing there.

MICKEY. Hi. I'm sorry you had to ring for so long. I was in the bathroom. Sometimes it's kinda hard to stop what you're doing. But you don't wanna hear that.

ATHENA. It's okay. May I come in, Mr. Lyons?

MICKEY. Are you selling something?

ATHENA. No. I'm Athena Miller. Levon's teacher. We spoke on the phone this afternoon?

MICKEY. Oh, right! I'm sorry, Miss Miller. Come on in. *(Athena enters.)* I'm a little embarrassed about the mess. But to honest with you, it pretty much always looks like this. So...if you wanted to see us in our natural habitat, you're seeing it. I'm always telling him to pick up his shit, but you know what he's like. Have a seat.

ATHENA. *(Sits.)* This isn't going to be easy for me, Mr. Lyons. What I have to tell you.

MICKEY. You didn't come here to tell me he's real sensitive and needs nurturing and all that special ed. bullshit, did you? Cuz if you did, don't waste your breath. I already know.

ATHENA. All that special ed. bullshit?

MICKEY. You know what I'm talking about. Just don't start in on me with all that goddamn social worker psychobabble. It makes me...I don't know what the word is.

ATHENA. I'm not a social worker...or a psychiatrist. I teach behaviorally challenged high school students with learning disabilities.

MICKEY. Nervous is the word that comes to mind. It's like...it's like when you're in a public restroom and you know you gotta piss, but for some reason, it just won't come out. And some jerk's standing beside you just pissin' away, sounding like a damn firehose. So you pretend to really piss. But everybody knows you didn't because they didn't hear it.

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So you think, “Should I keep pretending and go wash my hands, or just get the hell out?” (*He looks at Athena.*) You don’t know what the hell I’m talking about, do you?

ATHENA. Well, I understand what you mean by psychobabble, but the urinal problem is a bit beyond me, I’m afraid.

MICKEY. (*Thinks for a second.*) Oh, shit! Where are my manners? Would you like something to drink? Water, juice, a beer maybe?

ATHENA. Oh, thank you. May I have some water, please?

MICKEY. Sure. That’s easy. Be right back. (*Mickey exits. Athena looks around, then gets up and takes a close look at the portrait of Kitty on the wall. As she is walking over there, she steps on an empty beer can. She picks it up. Mickey returns with a glass of water and a can of beer.*) Oh, I see you already have a drink.

ATHENA. I stepped on it.

MICKEY. Sorry. Let me take that for you.

ATHENA. I’m very sorry about your wife. Levon mentioned that she had had an illness.

MICKEY. Yeah. She just went like that. It was meningitis. That’s not something you want to get.

ATHENA. No...I wouldn’t think so. I’ve been through something like that myself. It’s not easy, I know.

MICKEY. She was actually a pretty classy stripper, although you sure can’t tell that from this piece-of-shit painting her brother did. She never took it all off. Her real name was Kelly. Kitty was her stage name.

Kitty...Lyons. Get it? I met her when she was just waitressing topless. She was a lot nicer in those days. A hell of a lot nicer. But I don’t know what I’m telling you all this for.

ATHENA. Well, I’m glad you are, actually, because part of the reason why I came here tonight has to do with something Levon said about her.

MICKEY. Oh. Then maybe I better sit down for this.

(*Mickey sits. Levon comes downstairs.*)

LEVON. Are you two having a good time?

MICKEY. What gives you that idea?

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LEVON. I don't like being talked about behind my back. My psychiatrist says *he* can't do it, so I don't see what gives the two of you the right.

ATHENA. Hello, Levon. I'm glad you decided to come down. Why don't you tell your father what happened in school today.

LEVON. Why don't you? That's why you're here, isn't it?

MICKEY. What did he do?

LEVON. You teachers are all alike. I thought I could trust you.

ATHENA. You can trust me.

LEVON. You're always going on and on about how we can go to you any time we have a problem, and that whatever we talk about will be just between you and me, and here you are now, about to tell him crap that I told you in private.

ATHENA. Levon, I am extremely concerned about you. That is the only reason I am here tonight. Now, your father not only has a right to know what happened to you today, but I have an ethical obligation to tell him. And if what you told me about your mother has anything to do with this, then your father should know about it.

LEVON. Oh, so it's not that you care what happened to me, it's that you feel obligated to tell him. I get it. I'm going out. None of this seems real to me. *(Levon heads for the front door.)*

ATHENA. *(To Mickey.)* Well, aren't you going to stop him?

MICKEY. Son, I think we should talk about this.

LEVON. I'll be back. I just need some air.

ATHENA. Levon, it won't do you any good to run away. Now, why don't you come sit down and let's talk about it.

MICKEY. You can't tell him what to do. You're not his mother.

ATHENA. No, I'm not. Levon, I'd like it if you would stay.

LEVON. Fuck you. *(Levon exits and slams the front door.)*

ATHENA. He has never spoken to me in that way before.

MICKEY. Really? He speaks to me that way all the time.

ATHENA. Oh...so that was for you.

MICKEY. No, it sounded to me like it was for you.

ATHENA. Don't you see? He feels as if he needs to test me in front of you. I think he wants you to think he hates me.

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MICKEY. Why would he want me to think that?

ATHENA. Well, I'm certainly no expert, but I think if *he* thinks *you* think he feels animosity toward everyone who cares about him, then that might, in his mind, ensure that you will distance yourself from him, and this could relieve him from any pressure he might feel to get close or even bond him right now. And because of certain resentments he might have with regard to you, he's doing whatever he feels he needs to do to push those pressures aside. Does that make sense?

MICKEY. It would if I know what the hell you just said. (*Levon enters and silently sits back down.*)

LEVON. (*To Athena.*) I'm sorry I went off on you.

ATHENA. Apology accepted.

MICKEY. That's it? "I'm sorry I went off on you?" "Apology accepted"? How come *our* fights don't ever end like that?

LEVON. You get hostile.

MICKEY. No, I don't.

LEVON. It's in your voice. Even now. (*To Athena.*) You hear it?

ATHENA. I tell you what. Let's not argue. Let's just talk about... whatever you want to talk about, Levon. How does that sound?

LEVON. Did you tell him yet?

ATHENA. No, Levon. I thought I'd let you tell him.

MICKEY. Tell me what?

LEVON. (*To Athena.*) Go ahead.

ATHENA. No, I think it would be better if you did it. Tell your father what you did in the cafeteria during lunch today.

LEVON. Why don't you tell him? It's your ethical obligation, after all.

MICKEY. What did he tell you?

ATHENA. He had an argument with his girlfriend, Layla.

MICKEY. Wait. This is the girl with the ring in her nose?

ATHENA. Yes. Well, you know how teenage girls are. If they don't think they're getting enough attention, they'll break up with a guy in a heartbeat. I know—I used to be one. Well, Layla told Levon that she didn't want to be his girlfriend anymore, and...Levon, why don't you tell your father what you did.

LEVON. You're doing fine.

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ATHENA. Levon, I care about you, but I also have to tell your father about a situation this serious. I want you to know that I would never discuss anything personal you have shared with me, contrary to what you might think, unless I felt it might be potentially harmful to you in some way.

LEVON. Whatever you say. I really don't care.

MICKEY. Potentially harmful? What did he do? Just tell me.

ATHENA. When Layla told Levon she was breaking up with him, he took a piece of glass—it looked like a broken piece of a Snapple bottle—and he was about to make a cut on his wrist.

MICKEY. He was about to?

ATHENA. Layla screamed when she saw him hold the piece of glass to his wrist. I ran right over, and then I calmly asked him to give it to me. He was shaking a little, but he finally gave it to me.

MICKEY. *(Pause.)* Did you mean to do it, Levon?

LEVON. No. I was trying to scare Layla. It worked, too. She decided not to break up with me.

MICKEY. Do you think fear is a good way to keep a relationship going?

LEVON. Maybe. I'll let you know.

MICKEY. I'll save you the trouble. It doesn't work, so don't be stupid. *(To Athena.)* Is that it?

ATHENA. No, there's more to it than that. Levon told me that he talked to his mother two days ago. I asked him what he meant by that, because it was the first time he had mentioned her to me since he had told me she had passed away over a year ago. I'm only bringing it up because when I asked him why he wanted to cut himself with a bottle, he said he was upset about Layla, and then in the middle of the conversation, he said, "I talked to my mom two days ago."

MICKEY. He talked to his *mom*? What the hell? Were you having a séance in class? I can't believe what I'm fucking hearing! What's this all about, Levon? And you better have a good answer for me!

LEVON. Why are you being so hostile?

MICKEY. I am not being hostile. I just want to know what the hell this is all about. Talk to me. *NOW!*

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LEVON. (*Calmly.*) I went to her grave in the cemetery, and I talked to her. What's the big deal?

ATHENA. If that's all it was, Levon, then why didn't you tell me that? You said your mother got in touch with *you*, and that your nightmares were getting worse.

LEVON. I thought I heard her voice in the cemetery. Okay? I'm crazy. Now you know. I didn't want you to find out, but there it is.

ATHENA. You're not crazy, Levon.

MICKEY. Maybe I'm the crazy one here, but it kinda sounds to me like you think Levon's not telling you the truth. Or else you think he's hiding something.

ATHENA. No, I don't think he's...

MICKEY. But I can tell you for a fact, Miss Miller—Levon was hit real hard when his mom died, and if he said he heard her voice calling him, then he heard her voice. Haven't you ever heard somebody talking to you when they weren't really there?

ATHENA. (*Pause.*) Mr. Lyons—I don't believe Levon is lying. What concerns me is the reason, or reasons, why he tried to hurt himself. My grandfather has this saying. It went, "If we thought we could keep an elephant from stinking, we would do it."

MICKEY. (*To Levon.*) This woman is nuts.

ATHENA. Let me translate. It means that some things can never be changed, as much as we would like to change them. But this situation can be changed. I strongly believe that. However, Levon should not be expected to do it alone. He needs our help.

LEVON. Dad, is it okay if I go over and see Layla for a little while? She wants to make up with me.

MICKEY. All right. Just be back by eleven. And tomorrow night we're gonna talk about this cemetery thing.

LEVON. Whatever.

MICKEY. Don't say "whatever" to me. Hey look, just because I'm letting you go see this girl, doesn't mean I'm happy right now. So, you better start thinking about this, because you got some explaining to do. You got that?

LEVON. (*Under his breath.*) Got it.

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MICKEY. What was that?

LEVON. (*Louder.*) I got it.

MICKEY. Good. Now go tell this girl you're sorry you scared the shit out of her.

ATHENA. Goodnight, Levon.

LEVON. We'll see. (*Levon exits through the front door.*)

MICKEY. I think it's better that I let him go see her, instead of letting him go up to his room and think up new ways to kill himself. Don't you?

ATHENA. (*Beat.*) I read in his file that he tried a few years ago and almost succeeded.

MICKEY. Yeah, that's true. The thing is, though, he did it with a piece of glass, and now every time things don't go his way, he finds a piece of glass and threatens to do it again. But he never has.

ATHENA. Well...even so, I think it suggests that he is either very seriously depressed, or else something is really scaring him and he's crying out for help. Did you know he's been having nightmares again?

MICKEY. Is he? Well, don't we all have nightmares sometimes?

ATHENA. Yes, but...well, what about him hearing voices?

MICKEY. Look...Miss Miller. I'm glad you're worried about Levon, but maybe I can put your mind at ease a little bit. See, it's like this.

When you first get to know Levon, he seems a lot more messed up than he probably really is. It's like...let me put it this way. It's like when you have a little tiny hole in your shirt, and you never wear it to work because you're afraid your boss might see it, but he probably never will because it's so small. But *you* see it every time you look at it because you know where it is, so your eyes go right to that tiny, little spot. Now, you Miss Miller, see that hole in Levon. He's probably not as messed up as you think he is. You just know where to look to see where the hole is.

ATHENA. You're right. I do see a hole. But to my eyes it's a big one.

MICKEY. Oh, yeah? How long have you known Levon?

ATHENA. Almost a year. I know I could never come close to knowing him like you know him, but I'll tell you what I do know. I know that he's a very smart, sweet young man. And believe me, I wouldn't say it if I didn't think it weren't true. I teach a lot of kids who are neither particularly smart, nor sweet. I think that if someone put a gun in the

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hands of each of my students and they all stood in line facing me, I'd have a pretty frightening-looking firing squad. But Levon wouldn't be one of them.

MICKEY. No, you're right. He would never hurt anybody. And I really don't think he wants to hurt himself. Our lives got pretty freaky around the time of Kitty's death, but that's all past us now. He's fine.

ATHENA. Mr. Lyons. Please forgive me for saying this, but can you really afford to be so complacent about this? Shouldn't we take every sign, every action, no matter how minimal it may appear on the surface, as a serious cry for help? I know I'm not over-reacting here. This is a very scary thing. Isn't it? You're his father. Doesn't it scare you when he does things like this? I don't expect you to have all the answers, but I just want to hear that we're on the same side here. Levon's side.

MICKEY. *(Pause.)* You know, I guess you think I'm the biggest dumb-fuck in the world because I live in this shitty duplex with a screwed-up kid and a scary-looking painting of his mother on the wall. But I'll tell you something. I'm a hell of a lot smarter than you think. Now, before I decide whether or not to throw your prissy-ass briefcase out the window, let me tell it to you straight. I really love that screwed-up kid out there.

ATHENA. I never doubted...

MICKEY. Let me finish. Now, he might just have a big hole in him like you seem to think. But you have no right to come in here, drink my water, and try to lay some fucking, big ass guilt trip on me just because I don't think he was really going to bleed to death over some bipolar girl with a ring in her nose. I know my son. And I'm going to do everything in my power to make sure nothing else bad ever happens to him. So put that in your damn file. Now, please...just get the hell out of here and leave me alone.

ATHENA. *(Stunned, she starts to pack up.)* I'm sorry if I offended you. That was never my intention. I think I'm getting way too involved in this. I had a personal experience once that was similar to...I shouldn't be telling you this. What the hell is wrong with me? *(Starts to tear up.)* Whenever I decide to make these home visits, I either come on too strong, or too opinionated, or else I start sounding like a Goddamn textbook. Maybe I should just stay home, get drunk, and let everyone

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else deal with their own damn problems. Maybe if I do that, I can start dealing with my own. (*Mickey rushes into the bathroom and brings out a roll of toilet paper.*)

MICKEY. Sorry. I'm out of tissues. Not that I ever had any to begin with. But I think this stuff works just as well.

ATHENA. Thank you. (*She wipes her eyes.*) This is that extra-cushiony kind, isn't it?

MICKEY. Yes. Levon won't use the hard stuff and then he gets all backed up, and it's not good.

ATHENA. Really?

MICKEY. No, I'm kidding.

ATHENA. Where do I put this?

MICKEY. Uh...just set it on the table.

ATHENA. (*She does.*) I'm such an idiot.

MICKEY. Don't feel bad. My crazy, dead wife used to tell me all the time that I inspire stupidity.

ATHENA. (*Facetiously.*) Thanks. I feel much better now.

MICKEY. You know, I guess you've probably figured out I'm not exactly "Dad of the Year" here. All I'm trying to do is hang on to some kind of hope that everything's gonna turn out to be okay. I know he seems like sort of a weak kid who lets every stupid, little thing crush him like a grape. Well, I'll tell you, he's already a crushed grape. But it ain't so bad being a crushed grape sometimes. I'm bettin' on wine.

ATHENA. Me, too. Vintage. But I have to play Devil's advocate here, as much as I really, really don't want to. Winemaking is a long, involved process. And unless you know exactly what you're doing, a crushed grape is sometimes just that. A crushed grape.

MICKEY. Oh, look at the time. I know we both get up early for work, so why don't I show you to the door.

ATHENA. I'm going. Can we keep in touch over the next few days, Mr. Lyons? To monitor how Levon is doing?

MICKEY. Uh. Yeah, I guess. Goodbye.

(*Mickey opens the front door.*)

ATHENA. Goodbye.

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(Athena picks up her briefcase and exits. Mickey takes out his phone, finds a number in his contacts and dials.)

MICKEY. Hi. Is this Layla's mom? *(Beat.)* This is Mickey Lyons. Levon's dad. Hi. Listen, is he over there?

(Beat.) Yeah, I just heard about the Snapple bottle thing. I'm really sorry. Did he tell Layla he was sorry? *(Beat.)* Good. *(Beat.)* No, I don't want him to think I'm checking up on him. It would make it worse.

Listen, before he walks home, could you just tell him he did the right thing—you know, apologizing? *(Beat.)* Thanks. It'll make him feel a little better. *(Beat.)* Okay. Thanks again. Bye.

(He disconnects, leans back on the sofa and heaves a heavy sigh. Lights fade.)

(A note about the dream sequences. They should include both onscreen images and live action. The costume changes should be very minimal so as to allow a continuous flow to the action. However, directors are free to include filmed sections with actors along with live action to create a surrealistic effect to the sequences.)

Dream Sequence 1 ***“The Prom Date”***

On the rear scrim, images of Lady M. from the Scottish play can be seen as Medieval warriors shoot arrows at her. She fights back, of course. The videogame screen suddenly goes blank. Mickey and KITTY enter and sit as romantic music plays. They wait for Levon's prom date to arrive. Mickey answers the front door. It is Athena wearing a pale blue prom dress. They all greet each other cordially. Levon comes down the stairs wearing a rented tux. Athena gives Levon a boutonniere. He goes back upstairs. Mickey and Athena hug and exit. Levon comes downstairs with a corsage and see that Athena and Mickey have left. Kitty takes Levon by the hand and they sit to watch T.V. Levon is despondent. Lights fade with a spotlight on Levon, similar to an old school sitcom ending.

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SCENE 2

Mickey is watching a basketball game on T.V. The doorbell rings. He answers it; it is Athena. He slams the door in her face and sits back down. The doorbell rings again. Mickey answers it.

ATHENA. What you just did was very rude.

MICKEY. I know. That was my intention.

ATHENA. Well, at least you're honest. May I speak with you, please?

MICKEY. No.

ATHENA. Is Levon home?

MICKEY. No.

ATHENA. He and Layla must have patched things up. Does he go out every night?

MICKEY. Are you okay? You look like you're in a cold sweat. Maybe you better sit down.

ATHENA. Yeah, you're right. I am a little worked up. I apologize. (*She sits.*)

MICKEY. A *little* worked up?

ATHENA. Do you spend much time with Levon in the evenings?

MICKEY. Yeah. We spend several hours of intense quality time together, much of which is spent watching wrestling. But I'll make sure he does his homework. Anything else? I'm kind of in the middle of something.

ATHENA. This won't take long. When do you expect him back?

MICKEY. Whenever I can raise bail.

ATHENA. Very funny. I hope he's having a good time.

MICKEY. He's not. He never has a good time. But I told him he could be over there 'til 11:30. He always prolongs having a bad time for as long as he can. I know what they're doing, but it's better they do *that* than spend the night robbing some convenience store. And I make sure he carries protection.

ATHENA. I see. Well, you can't always go the traditional route with kids like Levon. He's never done anything illegal, has he?

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MICKEY. No. Unless you count that time when he was still in public school and he set the volleyball net on fire.

ATHENA. Oh, wait...I remember reading something about that in his file. Why do you think he did that?

MICKEY. He was trying to serve, and the ball didn't make it over the net. All of the other kids started yelling at him, so he took out a lighter and torched the net. The alarm went off and everything. I asked him why he would want to do a crazy thing like set a volleyball net on fire. He looks me straight in the eye and says, "It was in the way of the ball." Made perfect sense to me.

ATHENA. I can hear him saying that. He doesn't deal well with barriers. *(Beat.)* What else was I going to tell you? *(Beat.)* Oh, yeah. Do you think Levon has...this is a little embarrassing...do you think he has a crush on me?

MICKEY. A crush? Do you want him to?

ATHENA. *(Laughs.)* Well, it's all right if he does, but I just wanted to know what you thought because...well, it could affect how I talk to him about things. I don't want to send him any mixed messages, since I encourage him to openly discuss things with me.

MICKEY. No, I don't think he has a crush on you. But don't take it personally. I think he just knows that you're out of his league. And he doesn't have a mom, so you're like...it. Does that sound weird?

ATHENA. No. Absolutely not. Well, good. I sure don't want to complicate things for him. *(Beat.)* You know, he's got an interesting name...Levon. Who gave it to him?

MICKEY. I did. After the Elton John/Bernie Taupin song. His mother wanted to name him Leo. Leo...Lyons? She finally agreed on Levon because all the letters in Leo are in Levon. I told you she was crazy.

ATHENA. I see. What do you think of Layla?

MICKEY. It's okay. I guess she was named after the Eric Clapton and Jim Gordon song.

ATHENA. Oh no, sorry, I don't mean the name. I meant her. I don't think she's right for him.

MICKEY. Me, neither. Please tell him that. I tried and he threw a fork at me.

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ATHENA. What did you do?

MICKEY. I threw it back at him.

ATHENA. *(Beat.)* Have you noticed anything about his behavior, or things he's said, things he's done, that might have seemed a little out of the ordinary?

MICKEY. You mean for Levon?

ATHENA. Yes. I'm asking because I haven't seen anything unusual, besides what I already mentioned to you.

MICKEY. No. *(Pause.)* Wait. There is something. I almost mentioned it when you asked whether I thought he had a crush on you, but I didn't think anything of it. But when you said, "Has he done anything that was out of the ordinary," it's made me see a connection, maybe. I found a drawing in his room a few days ago of you. It was obvious that he drew it. He's really a pretty good draw-er...artist, whatever.

ATHENA. Oh, Mr. Lyons...I don't think that going through Levon's things and showing something so private like that would be the right thing to do. Do you think it would be?

MICKEY. Well, I think it might help you deal with him somehow...you know, see where his mind is at. It's a picture that he made with colored pencils of you wearing Kitty's lion costume. I'll tell you right now, it's a hell of a lot better than that amateur picture on the wall that her asshole brother painted. Wait a second. I'll go get it. *(He rushes up the stairs.)*

ATHENA. Mr. Lyons...wait! I'm not going to look at it. You shouldn't be doing this!

(She stands there for a second and then heads for the front door. Just as she is opening the door, Levon walks in.)

LEVON. Miss Miller. What are you doing here? Talking about me again with the old man?

ATHENA. I just came by to finish my talk with your father. I was about to leave, because I have to go home and finish grading those essays you did in class today.

LEVON. You don't have to grade mine. I can tell you already it sucks.

ATHENA. I'm sure that's not true at all, Levon. *(She nervously calls upstairs.)* MR. LYONS, LEVON'S HOME!

LEVON. You seem really nervous, Miss Miller. Are you okay?

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ATHENA. Yes, I'm fine. It's just...your father didn't expect you back so soon. He told me you would be over at Layla's for a while.

LEVON. Yeah, that was the plan, but her mom had some guy over and she asked me to go home. Her mom did, not Layla. It's just as well. Layla's nose is infected from the new hole, and she's being a real bitch. Sorry, I know you hate that word. It slipped out.

ATHENA. I wonder why your dad didn't answer me when I called upstairs?

LEVON. Maybe he's in the bathroom. You can't hear anything when you're in there because the fan's so loud.

ATHENA. That must be it. Maybe I should go up there and knock on the door.

LEVON. What's going on? What is he doing up there that you don't want me to know about?

ATHENA. Why do you think something is "going on"?

LEVON. Isn't it obvious?

ATHENA. No. Tell me. Why do you think something is "going on"?

LEVON. Because you want to go upstairs in *my* house and tell my dad I'm home, so he won't come out of the bathroom doing whatever the hell he's doing. Wait. I know what it is.

ATHENA. You do? What is it?

LEVON. My dad's got some woman upstairs in his bedroom, and you came over and interrupted them, and now you don't want me to find out about it. Don't worry it, Miss Miller. He does this a lot. You don't have to protect me.

ATHENA. No, Levon. That's not it. *(She calls upstairs.)* MR. LYONS! CAN YOU HEAR ME?

LEVON. God, Miss Miller. I've never seen you so whacked out before. Are you sure you're feeling all right?

ARETHA. Yes, I'm fine. Maybe I should just come clean. Your father is not upstairs with a woman right now.

LEVON. Oh, my God. *Really?*

ARETHA. *(Realizing what he is thinking.)* Oh, no! It's not what you're thinking. He's not upstairs with a man.

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LEVON. Oh. Okay. I mean, if he was, I'd be okay with that. It would just be unexpected.

ARETHA. Well, yes, I assume it would be. But no, that's not it.

LEVON. I'm going up there. *(Levon starts to head up the stairs. Mickey starts to come down with the drawing. Levon sees it.)*

MICKEY. Levon. You're back.

LEVON. Get the hell away from me.

MICKEY. It's not what you think. I just wanted Miss Miller to...

LEVON. Get out of my way.

MICKEY. Don't talk to me like that.

LEVON. Why? I don't have the right? Is that what you were gonna say? Well, what the hell do I have the right to do, except maybe slit my wrist if I feel like it? I know I don't have the right to privacy. You've made that really clear lately. So just what the fuck do I have the right to do?

MICKEY. I don't know, son. I'm sorry.

LEVON. ANSWER ME! *(Athena heads to the front door. She starts to get light-headed and drops to the floor. Levon and Mickey come down the stairs and help her to the sofa.)*

MICKEY. Are you all right? Did you hurt yourself?

ATHENA. Yes. I'll be fine. I haven't been feeling a hundred percent lately.

MICKEY. *(Feeling her forehead.)* Your head's not warm.

ATHENA. I'll be fine. Really. I just need to get home and lie down. Don't worry about me. Levon, your father didn't mean to hurt you. Please believe that.

LEVON. Are you all right, Miss Miller?

ATHENA. Yes. Don't worry about me. If I'd had the good sense to stay home tonight, then maybe none of this would've happened.

MICKEY. It's not your fault.

LEVON. *(Looking at Mickey.)* No, it's not. *(Athena heads back to the front door.)*

MICKEY. Why don't I drive you home?

ATHENA. No, then my car would be here. I just tripped on that step down to the foyer. I didn't twist an ankle, so I'm fine.

LEVON. I thought you said you didn't feel well.

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ATHENA. No, I'm fine. Really. I think it would be good, Levon, if you and your dad talked. Without me here.

MICKEY. I can call an Uber.

ATHENA. No, really, I'm fine.

MICKEY. All right, well...drive safely.

ATHENA. I will. Goodbye, Levon. Mr. Lyons. *(Mickey and Levon say goodbye. She exits.)*

MICKEY. *(After an awkward pause.)* I was only going to show it to her because I thought she might be able to help you if she...

LEVON. You don't give a shit about me.

MICKEY. How can you say that? I'm the only person in the world you can even depend on.

LEVON. I can depend on her. *(He points to the front door.)*

MICKEY. I know how you feel about her. And we still need to talk about your little stunt you pulled yesterday at school. And this shit about you talking to your mom. What was that all about?

LEVON. It's none of your business.

MICKEY. *What the hell do you mean it's none of my business? That woman is only your teacher. I'm your father!*

LEVON. *(He gives Mickey a cold stare.)* You're not my father.

MICKEY. That's not fair.

LEVON. Fair? What the hell is fair? Huh? What is fair? *(He goes into a rage and throws everything on the coffee table onto the floor.)*

MICKEY. STOP!

LEVON. Is this fair? *(Levon runs over to the painting of Kitty and takes it off the wall. He takes a pocketknife out of his pocket and threatens to slash the painting.)* Is this fair? Tell me. If it is, then I won't do it. *Tell me!*

MICKEY. Levon, please. Put the knife down. Please. That's your mother. Let me have the knife. Okay? It's not fair, but slashing her picture is not going to change anything. Okay? Please. Let me have the knife. *(Mickey puts his arm around Levon and holds out his hand for the knife. Levon breaks down and hands Mickey the knife. Mickey drops it and leads Levon over to the sofa and sits him down. Levon is shaking.)* It's okay, son. It's okay.

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LEVON. I hate her.

MICKEY. She called you, didn't she? She was the friend you said was in some of kind of danger. Has Milo been pushing her around again?

LEVON. She said he's been hurting her, and she's trying to figure out a way to get away from him.

MICKEY. God, Levon. I'm sorry. I told her never to call you again and scare you like that.

LEVON. When did *you* talk to her?

MICKEY. About six months ago. I called her after she asked you to come live with her and that...whatever he is. She sounded so fucked up, she might not have even known who she was talking to. But then when she didn't call you back, I figured she got the message. If she shows up here, Levon, I want you to call me right away. Understand?

LEVON. Why?

MICKEY. We can't have her screwing up our lives again. You don't want her to move back here, do you? That's what you said the last time this happened. Remember?

LEVON. Yeah. No, I don't want her to live here. I don't want him to hurt her though, either.

MICKEY. I know. I don't want that, either. But your Mom's pretty tough. If anyone can handle the troll-man, it's Kitty.

LEVON. I guess. I gotta get out of here. (*Levon exits through the front door.*)

MICKEY. Levon, where are you going? *Levon!* Fuck! (*He puts the painting of Kitty back on the wall.*) Shit, Kitty. What am I going to do with you? (*Lights fade.*)

Dream Sequence 2 ***"The Strip Tease"***

On the rear scrim, we see Lady M. trying to wash out her "damn spots" but every time she does, someone slashes her hands, causing her to scream. Lights fade on the scrim and come up on the living room. Kitty appears at the top of the stairs wearing her lion costume. Mickey is

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sitting on the sofa, and MILO is sitting in the chair. They are both watching Kitty's act. She starts to come down the stairs and take off her gloves. She throws one glove to Mickey and one to Milo. Levon enters through the front door with a bouquet of roses. He stands by the door watching Kitty unzip her costume in the back with her back to the audience. She turns around and sees Levon and stops dancing. Milo gets up and sticks a dollar bill in the cleavage of her costume. Kitty takes Milo by the hand and leads him out the front door. Mickey and Levon look at each other, not knowing what to do.

SCENE 3

The sound of the front door being unlocked is heard, and Kitty enters. She looks tired; her hair is disheveled. She is not wearing makeup. She wears a trench coat and is carrying a suitcase. She sets the suitcase down and sits on the sofa.

KITTY. Anybody home? *(There is no answer.)* Well, I can see this place hasn't changed any. *(She picks up her suitcase and goes upstairs. A few moments later, Levon enters. He is vaping. He sits down and takes off his shoes. He gets up and exits into the kitchen. He reenters a moment later with a soda. He lies down on the sofa and closes his eyes. A few more seconds pass, and Kitty comes downstairs wearing her stripper "cat suit." Levon opens his eyes. He is very startled to see his mother.)* Hello, Levon.

LEVON. Mom?

KITTY. Yes, it's your mom. I know this is unexpected. You look great, Baby.

LEVON. You didn't tell me you were coming back when you called.

KITTY. Well, I would have, but I didn't know when I called you the other day that I'd be coming. The only thing I knew then was that I'd be going. *(He stares at her for a second. He sees that she appears tired and pathetic. He feels sorry for her and hates her simultaneously.)*

LEVON. You look tired, Mom.

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KITTY. Oh, Baby, I am. I am so tired. And I've missed you like you wouldn't believe. Do you hate me?

LEVON. Yes. *(Beat.)* No. *(Beat.)* Sometimes.

KITTY. Oh, Honey, so do I. I sometimes hate me so much. But I love you. You know that, don't you, Honey?

LEVON. No.

KITTY. Well...how have you been?

LEVON. I'm having nightmares again.

KITTY. Oh, Baby! I'm so sorry. Let's sit down and talk about it.

LEVON. Where have you been, Mom? I don't understand why you could never tell me. When you called me the other day, you sounded really scared. I thought you might be in some kind of trouble.

KITTY. It's a long, horrible story, Honey. I don't know where to start.

LEVON. Why are you wearing your...uniform?

KITTY. Oh, I have good news, Baby! Chuck gave me my old job back. I start back tonight!

LEVON. Just like that?

KITTY. Just like that. Aren't you happy for me?

LEVON. I don't know. Are you gonna ask me how Dad is doing?

KITTY. How is he doing?

LEVON. How do you think? You haven't talked to him since you left with that disgusting troll-man. We've been telling people you died, so nobody will ask questions. How would you expect him to be?

KITTY. I know he hurts. But we weren't getting along too well before I left, if you remember.

LEVON. Oh, so I guess now you think you'll get along.

KITTY. No, not at first.

LEVON. Mom...I think he likes another woman.

KITTY. *(She is silent for a moment.)* Oh. Well, I should have expected that. Who is she?

LEVON. My teacher.

KITTY. You're kidding.

LEVON. Yes, Mom, I am. This is all a bad dream and I'm gonna wake up soon, screaming.

KITTY. Oh, Honey. Are you still getting the pills from Dr. Weston?

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LEVON. Yes.

KITTY. That's good. (*Slight pause.*) Can I have one?

LEVON. Are you serious?

KITTY. Yes, and I wouldn't ask you, but Milo flushed mine down the toilet, and I haven't been able to see a doctor for a few months.

LEVON. So, you're saying the troll-man doesn't believe in psychiatry?

KITTY. The troll-man doesn't believe in anything except gun, knives, Fellini films, and sex.

LEVON. Where is the troll-man now?

KITTY. He's tied up to his toilet.

LEVON. He's what?

KITTY. Yesterday I found a few tranquilizers on the floor. The bastard wouldn't let *me* take anything, but it looks like he's got a good supply for himself. Well, I tell you, Levon, I was so mad I could have killed him, but I got smart instead. I knew he had to have a lot of them hidden someplace, so I looked all around the apartment and found a whole bottle stashed in his movie camera, where the film goes. So I took one myself, and I could've kept some more, but instead I chopped up the rest of them, including the two that were on the bathroom floor, and put them in his deviled ham for supper.

LEVON. So you drugged him and tied him to the toilet?

KITTY. Yes, I did. I tied him up with the rope he used for the sex scenes in his movies. I didn't give hm enough to O.D. on, but he'll sure be surprised when he wakes up!

LEVON. That is so cool!

KITTY. Thanks. So, what's your teacher's name?

LEVON. Athena Miller. Don't you think he's going to come back here looking for you?

KITTY. Well, yes. So, Baby, I can't stay here. I just came to get a costume I left here, and to see you, of course. I'm going to stay with Gloria.

LEVON. But won't he be able to find you at the club?

KITTY. Of course, but Chuck will break his legs if he tries to hurt me. He doesn't know where Gloria lives, so I'll stay there long enough to earn some money, get a lawyer, and put him away.

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LEVON. Put him away for what? (*Kitty shows him an ugly scar on her arm.*)

KITTY. See this scar? This is where Milo cut me.

LEVON. Shit, Mom! I'll kill the mother fucker!

KITTY. No, now don't you worry about it, Baby. I called Gloria and she told me she knows a cheap lawyer, and then she talked to Chuck and got me my old job old job back and said I could stay with her. I'm calling her Saint Gloria. So, please don't worry about me, Honey.

Everything's gonna work out for the best. I hated that crummy waitress job I had in St. Louis. Milo wouldn't let me strip, and it didn't take me long to find out the big business he was in wasn't office products, but pornographic films. He does sell office products, but that's just a front, of course. So, I'm feeling optimistic, now that I'm away from him, finally. But I think I do need something to take the edge off a little bit. My nerves are beginning to surface, now that the excitement is over.

LEVON. Mom, you're in deep shit.

KITTY. Yeah, I know. And not only that, he stole almost all my money. He said he was just borrowing it to pay for the production costs of his low budget sleaze, but I haven't gotten one nickel back yet. And I know he's made a nice little profit. That's the last time I help finance a movie with a title like *Fellatio for Horatio*. But it really is good to see you, Baby. Now, can I have one of your pills, please?

LEVON. Yeah, sure. (*Levon exits into the kitchen to get a pill and some water.*)

KITTY. I see the place looks the same.

LEVON. (*Entering with a pill and a glass of water.*) Yeah, it's still a dump. (*He gives them to her.*)

KITTY. Thank you, Baby. So, this teacher of yours, she hasn't moved in and cleaned the place up?

LEVON. No. They're not, actually, going out. I just get this vibe that they like each other. I haven't talked about it to either of them because it's...it's pretty weird.

KITTY. Well, you don't have to tell me about weird. I tell you, Baby, things have been real weird my whole life. Mostly though, I could've avoided some of the weirdness if I'd been lookin' ahead. It's like when

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you're driving, and you hit a speed bump real hard. Most people either see it coming and slow down, or else they just drive around it, if they can. I always hit that damn bump straight on, and there goes my alignment. Not that my alignment was ever really adjusted correctly in the first place. You know, up here (*points to her head*).

LEVON. Yeah, I know how that feels...sort of. I haven't gotten my driver's license yet. So, what do I tell the troll-man when he comes looking for you?

KITTY. I'm not sure, Baby. I guess just tell him you haven't seen me. I'm sorry you have to lie, but he's a dangerous man. If you *do* happen to see him, please be careful.

LEVON. What do I tell Dad?

KITTY. Oh, it's probably best to tell him the same thing.

LEVON. Why?

KITTY. Well, it's like this. Some people just don't appreciate the tragedy in certain things. And your dad is one of those people.

LEVON. Do you still love him?

KITTY. Your dad? No, Honey, not really. Not like I tried to when I was living here. God, I tried so hard to love him. I would have climbed a steep hill to love that man if I thought it would've helped.

LEVON. Not a mountain?

KITTY. No, I never loved him *that* much.

LEVON. Oh. Okay.

KITTY. Oh, Baby. (*She hugs him.*) I never meant to mess up your life when I was messin' up mine. My life has been a mixed assortment of nuts I never meant to crack.

LEVON. It's gonna be hard not to tell Dad.

KITTY. I know. But I think it's for the best right now...until I can sort things out in this beehive I've got for a brain. Sometimes I think my brain has a mind of its own.

LEVON. That doesn't make any sense, Mom.

KITTY. My point exactly. Well, bye Sweetie. Wish me luck.

LEVON. Good luck. (*As she is leaving.*) Mom?

KITTY. Yeah, Babe?

LEVON. Why do you have to be a stripper?

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KITTY. Well, I'll be honest with you. Because it's fun. See you later, Sweetheart.

LEVON. Be careful out there.

KITTY. I will. *(She blows him a kiss and exits. Levon starts to pace around the room, then picks up his phone and dials a number.)*

LEVON. Hey, Layla. It's me. *(Pause.)* Hey, can I come over? *(Pause.)* Yeah. I'll be right there. *(He hangs up, gets his jacket, then goes over to a little wooden box on the coffee table, takes out a condom, puts it in his pocket and rushes out. Lights fade.)*

Dream Sequence 3 ***"Baby Mickey"***

Mickey is sitting in an adult-sized high chair, wearing only a diaper and a bib. Athena is wearing a prom dress with an apron over it. She is feeding Mickey baby food. Levon comes downstairs holding his left wrist tightly. There is blood dripping down his arm. Mickey and Athena do not notice him. Kitty rushes down the stairs. She is wearing her lion costume. Levon tries to get her attention. She exits out the front door. Levon stands there for a few minutes, then goes back upstairs. Athena continues to feed Mickey. A few more seconds pass, and then a gun shoot is heard from upstairs. Mickey starts to cry. Athena goes back to feeding Mickey.

SCENE 4

Levon and Athena are sitting in the living room. It is Tuesday afternoon.

LEVON. Listen, I don't want to discuss what happened Friday night. That's what you and my so-called dad just can't seem to get through your heads. I wanna be left alone. I have a therapist, so I really wish the rest of you would let *him* do what he's paid to do. Please.

ATHENA. Levon, I thought that you understood that I was asking your father questions because it's part of my job to...

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LEVON. I know. It's cool. But what I don't get is why you let him go up to my room and get...that drawing to show to you.

ATHENA. I tried to stop him. I really did.

LEVON. It was a joke. The drawing of you. I just drew it to show Layla what you would look like as a stripper. I hope it didn't bother you.

ATHENA. Bother me? Oh, no, it didn't. In fact, I was very impressed by your artistic ability. I had no idea you could draw like that.

LEVON. You are?

ATHENA. Absolutely. You know me. I can't even draw a stick man in that hangman game we play.

LEVON. I draw okay. But that's beside the point. Where does he get off going in my room and embarrassing the crap out of me? It shows you what he thinks of me.

ATHENA. Yes, it does. It shows me that he cares the world for you. Look at it this way. If your dad didn't care about you at all, would he even bother to try to find something out about you like that?

LEVON. Maybe not. But he could ask me things, like you do. It's like he's a cop looking for some illegal paraphernalia. Which I don't have, by the way.

ATHENA. Well, he never said anything to me that he suspected something like that. Anyway, I don't think he did the appropriate thing in this case, but I do think he did it because he cares.

LEVON. And that's supposed to make it right?

ATHENA. No, I didn't say that.

LEVON. Then it was wrong.

ATHENA. In a way, yes, it was.

LEVON. In a way? What are you talking about? There's right, and there's wrong. Right?

ATHENA. Yes, Levon, that's true. But there is also this whole spectrum...it's like a spectrum of light and it spreads itself out between right and wrong. Some people like to call it shades of gray. I prefer to think of it as a rainbow.

LEVON. So, what you're telling me is...my dad flew into my room on a rainbow and took my drawing to try to save me from myself. Is that what you're telling me?

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ATHENA. I don't think I'm really getting through to you.

LEVON. Don't feel bad, Miss Miller. You wouldn't be the first to have tried.

ATHENA. Maybe we should talk about something else. How have you been sleeping lately? Are you still having nightmares?

LEVON. Yeah. You wanna know something really weird, though?

ATHENA. What's that?

LEVON. I kind of like them.

ATHENA. You do?

LEVON. Yeah. It's kinda like watching a horror movie. The only thing that really scared me is I remember my mom used to tell me that she started to get used to her nightmares. She used to say, "You know you're in trouble when you'd rather live in your nightmares than in real life."

ATHENA. Is that how you feel, Levon?

LEVON. No. I don't wanna live in my nightmares. It's just that in the beginning of them sometimes, you think you do. It sucks because they always start out being really awesome, but then sooner or later they get all fucked up.

ATHENA. Do you have to say that word?

LEVON. No, I don't have to. I just like to.

ATHENA. Well, I'd like it if you didn't.

LEVON. Do you have to act like a teacher all the time?

ATHENA. No, I don't. I know what you mean about the nightmares starting out awesome, though. I've had those kind when you wake up straight in bed and you're in a cold sweat. It's really scary. And it's not a whole lot better being awake, is it? Because it's pitch-black in your room and you feel like you're totally alone in the world. Is that how it feels to you?

LEVON. (*Amazed that she understands.*) Yeah. Exactly. (*Slight pause.*) Do you see a therapist, too, Miss Miller?

ATHENA. No, but I have in the past. I probably shouldn't be telling you all this, but when I was going through some rough times, I went to one. Do your meds help with your nightmares?

LEVON. Dr. Weston says my pills might be *causing* my nightmares. He said they can be a side effect. He doesn't know what the hell they do.

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ATHENA. Well, I hope he can get it all straightened out.

LEVON. Don't hold your breath. *(Beat.)* Are you okay now?

ATHENA. Yes. Do you mean, am I through that rough period I was talking about?

LEVON. Yeah. Because, like Friday night, when you started to pass out...

ATHENA. I did feel a little dizzy. That happens sometimes when I feel a lot of stress. Like I did at that moment.

LEVON. Can I ask you a really personal question, Miss Miller?

ATHENA. Sure. I may not answer you, but you can ask.

LEVON. Well, I think I need to because people at school have been talking about you, and I don't think it's right to do it behind your back.

ATHENA. What have they been saying?

LEVON. Well, this is kinda hard, but...it has to do with your hair.

ATHENA. My hair? What have they been saying about my hair?

LEVON. Nothing bad. They just say that...maybe...you've been wearing a wig lately.

ATHENA. Oh.

LEVON. It's just that sometimes...if you do...it kind of gets a little crooked.

ATHENA. *(As she goes over to the mirror and looks at herself.)* It does?

LEVON. It's not crooked now. They've also been saying that maybe...never mind.

ATHENA. No, Levon, tell me. What have they been saying?

LEVON. Some people think you might have...cancer.

ATHENA. *(She slowly sits back down.)* Yes, Levon, I do.

LEVON. *(Slight pause.)* Are you gonna die?

ATHENA. I don't know. It's a possibility.

LEVON. I'm sorry.

ATHENA. Thank you.

LEVON. I almost died once. But it was my fault. I cut my wrist like I did the other day, only it went a lot deeper.

ATHENA. I'm sorry.

LEVON. You are? But it was my fault.

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ATHENA. Remember that rainbow I was talking about?

LEVON. Yeah. Can I ask you another personal question?

ATHENA. Sure.

LEVON. How do *you* deal with your nightmares?

ATHENA. Well, good question. I guess I wait until the morning and say to myself, “The nightmare is over. The sun is out. And I’m okay...for the time being.” Because, Levon, that’s as much as any one of us can say...ever.

LEVON. I see what you mean.

ATHENA. But I don’t mean to make it sound like an aphorism you might find hanging on someone’s bathroom wall. It’s something I’m still working on. I keep having this reoccurring nightmare that doesn’t have an ending, and I think that’s why it’s so scary. I’m sitting on a bench in a park. I’m wearing a hospital gown, and I’m hooked up to an I.V. My hair has completely fallen out. People start coming up to look at me. They’re all behind a plate of glass. Then this little girl walks up. She takes my hand and starts running it through her long, black hair. And that’s where it always ends.

LEVON. Who is the little girl?

ATHENA. I don’t know. I don’t recognize her.

LEVON. Well, I always know the people in my nightmares. I think that’s why they’re so scary. Like how yours are scary because they don’t have any endings.

ATHENA. She’s got long light brown hair like I had when I was little. But she doesn’t look like me. Well, maybe a little bit.

LEVON. Maybe it’s in the future, and she’s your daughter.

ATHENA. Oh my God. I think you’ve hit on something, Levon. I, um...I won’t be able to have children because of the type of cancer I have. Maybe I’m dreaming about what I can’t have.

LEVON. You can’t have kids?

ATHENA. No.

LEVON. I’m sorry.

ATHENA. Thanks. You know, you are extremely perceptive. Do you think a lot about what your own dreams might mean?

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LEVON. I try. Sometimes they make sense, but usually they're just weird.

ATHENA. I know what you mean. I'm glad we had this talk. Are you gonna be okay?

LEVON. Yeah. I'll be fine. How 'bout you?

ATHENA. Yeah. I'll be fine, too.

LEVON. Do you ever take your wig off? I mean, do you ever not wear it?

ATHENA. No. I could never...I mean, I'm not ashamed of it, but at school...

LEVON. I don't mean at school.

ATHENA. You mean, like to the grocery store?

LEVON. Yeah.

ATHENA. No. I guess I'm self-conscious about people staring at me.

LEVON. Like in your nightmare.

ATHENA. Right. One of these days I'm gonna do it. It might take an earthquake to knock it off, but I think it's something I eventually need to face. *(Pause.)* Hey, when does your dad usually get home?

LEVON. In about an hour. Why?

ATHENA. Just curious. What do you say we go get an ice cream cone?

LEVON. You don't have to babysit me, Miss Miller. I'm not gonna do anything.

ATHENA. I know. I just think we both could use a banana split. My treat.

LEVON. All right. If it'll make you feel better.

ATHENA. It will. *(They exit through the front door. Lights fade.)*

Dream Sequence 4 *"The Circus Act"*

A video game is projected on the rear scrim. Lady M. is running from trolls. Her hands are now missing. She gets hit and falls, but she bounces back up and keeps running. Athena enters and lies down on the sofa; she is wearing a hospital gown. Mickey comes downstairs with

FOR THE TIME BEING

three juggling balls. Levon enters through the front door with a bunch of balloons with pictures of cartoon animals, reminiscent of the song “Levon” by Elton John and Bernie Taupin. He gives the balloons to Athena. Calliope music begins to play. Levon sits by her and feels her forehead. He then exits into the kitchen to get her a glass of water. As soon as he is out of the room, Milo enters from the bathroom. He is dressed as a lion tamer and has a whip in his hand. They all freeze in time, except for Mickey, who continues to juggle.

END OF ACT ONE

***THE PLAY IS NOT OVER!! –TO FIND OUT HOW IT ENDS
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