

# *LoveJoy*

By: Mykai Eastman

**DRAMATIS PERSONAE**

HANNAH LOVEJOY (W): 21. A college student. Poet, singer, daughter. Described by some as “Emotionally damaged and volatile.”

DR. LEILA MOSS (W): 30’s. Hannah’s therapist. Extrospective and thoughtful. Deliberate in her words and actions.

LAURA LOVEJOY (W): 40’s. Hannah’s mother. Churchgoing, conservative, living life in the best way she knows how.

ERIC LOVEJOY (M): 40’s. Hannah’s father. Former artist, drinker. Trying his best to marry his best intentions with action.

LYDIA LOVEJOY (W): 16. Hannah’s adopted sister. High school soccer athlete. A hard shell with soft filling inside.

ANTHONY MARTIN (M): 22. Hannah’s high school best friend. Odd job worker. Wise beyond his years and can always find an opinion.

**AUTHOR’S NOTE:**

This is not a family play, however this is a play about a family. I encourage creativity in blending the realism with the euphoric and ethereal. This is a memory play told from Hannah’s perspective, and I recommend the actors keep that in mind. All is subject to Hannah’s personal biases and interpretation of events; for better or worse. The play is to be done with no intermission.

-M. Eastman

## SCENE I

*(Present Day. January 21st. At rise, we see Hannah Lovejoy anxiously waiting in her university's Health & Wellness Center. She is alone. She is listening to neo-soul music and writing in her notebook. We hear a voiceover from her that says "Ladies and Gentlemen, My name is Hannah LoveJoy: Emotionally Damaged and Volatile..." After a few beats, we see her counselor, Dr. Leila Moss, come in. She mouths to call out to Hannah, as she cannot be heard over the loud music in her headphones. After a few calls, Hannah finally looks up, removing her earbuds.)*

DR. MOSS: Hannah, are you ready?

HANNAH: *(Gathering her things to get up.)* Sorry. Sorry, I- my bad. Sorry.

DR. MOSS: No, no. don't be sorry. As a matter of fact. *I'm* sorry for being a bit behind schedule.

HANNAH: No worries. Thanks for seeing me on such short notice.

DR. MOSS: Don't mention it, why don't you come on in?

*(They enter the office through a zigzag path in the hallway. When they get to the office, they sit down. Hannah eyes the jar of jellybeans in between them.)*

HANNAH: Can I...?

DR. MOSS: Oh, yeah. Sure. By all means, that's what they're there for!

HANNAH: Thank you. *(She grabs a few to eat.)*

DR. MOSS: So. Let's get started in just a minute... Just looking at my notes... *(Flipping through her legal pad.)*

HANNAH: Yeah. It's all cool...

DR. MOSS: O...Kay... *(She's done flipping.)* So. How are you today? How was the holiday break?

HANNAH: Uh. Yeah. Good, thanks, how are you?

DR. MOSS: Doing well. Thank you...

HANNAH: Awesome. Glad to hear it.

*(Beat.)*

DR. MOSS: But... This isn't about me, it's about you.

HANNAH: Oh. Well, yeah, of course.

DR. MOSS: Mhmm...

HANNAH: Right.

DR. MOSS: Mhm-

HANNAH: Absolutely... So... *(Taps on her thighs. Blows through her mouth.)* Ooo boy, I don't even know where to start...

DR. MOSS: Okay, well, we can just kind of take it one step at a time. Let's start generally. It says here that, our last session was... um- *(Looks at her notes.)*

HANNAH: Oof. Yeah. Uh- Three, four weeks...?

DR. MOSS: 4 *months* ago? First week of September?

HANNAH: Whoa, really? That long?

DR. MOSS: Mhm. Starting to think you forgot about me?

HANNAH: Yeah, sorry, I guess I kinda fell off the, uh, proverbial "wagon" for a little while.

DR. MOSS: No problem, no problem at all. The important thing now is that you're here. Welcome back.

HANNAH: Thanks...

DR. MOSS: So, my guess is a lot has happened since we last spoke?

HANNAH: ...Yep...

DR. MOSS: Okay. So let's start there. Updates?

HANNAH: Well... Um...

DR. MOSS: How's it going with your boyfriend? What's his name... Tyrone?

HANNAH: ...Tyson...

DR. MOSS: Tyson. Apologies. How is he?

HANNAH: Heh... Wouldn't know. We ended things.

DR. MOSS: Oh... I'm sorry.

HANNAH: Don't be. He sure as shit wasn't. Fuck! I'm sorry, I can't say "shit", can I?

DR. MOSS: Well, you know my office has an open book policy. I invite you to say what's on your mind, and what you feel. And it seems like this young man has elicited some... uh, let me say... visceral responses from you.

HANNAH: Yeah. You can say that.

DR. MOSS: So, let's look at that for a second. How does that make you feel? What happened, if I may ask?

HANNAH: How do I feel? Wow, it's kinda shocking that someone asked how *I* feel about all of that.

DR. MOSS: I'm sorry about that.

HANNAH: Again. Don't be. Really. It's funny how life kinda works out like that, huh? You know, you- you- you meet someone. ANYONE, really, and you give them a piece of you, and I think it kinda diminishes it to say a piece... More like a chunk, a whole chunk of you, and it turns out they really don't give a fuck about you. And the people you think are on your side end up being the ones you need to watch out for in the first place.

DR. MOSS: What do you mean, Hannah?

HANNAH: My freshman year roommate. Liz.

DR. MOSS: Did something happen between the three of you?

HANNAH: More like, the two of them.

DR. MOSS: Hm. I see.

HANNAH: Yeah. That's a whole mess. So...

DR. MOSS: Just so I'm clear... He was being unfaithful?

HANNAH: Unfaithful. Sneaky. Deceitful. Run the gamut. They both fucked me!

DR. MOSS: How long ago was this?

HANNAH: While I was abroad this summer. He couldn't keep it in his pants for three months, and just lied through his teeth the whole time we were talking.

DR. MOSS: And where did you go again?

HANNAH: London.

DR. MOSS: London. Yes.

HANNAH: I bent over backwards for him. With the time difference and all. I stayed up late to video chat, to call, to text... Yet to my surprise, when I went to bed, he was jumping in Liz's. Jesus. Liz! Like, come on, of all people. And I remember when I introduced them, too. I should've known, now I look like the damn idiot.

DR. MOSS: And when did you find this out?

HANNAH: When I got back from break, it was a few weeks before school, and I was so excited. He was already here, and I wanted to cook for him. Because you know, that's my love language. Acts of service. And I missed him. I made a big dinner, like, 4 or 5 courses, and his favorite wine. I should've known something was off because he was late. And I don't mean like 5, 10 minutes late. Like 45. So I was already pissed because the food was gonna get cold. He finally got there, and... I went to kiss him... He didn't kiss me back. He just... *(Tearing up.)* Fucking stood there. I thought he was just tired, you know. So, I- I- pulled up a chair. Played some music, and put a fireplace on the TV, since we can't have candles in the dorms, or anything. And he said nothing to me. Trying to talk to him, he just looked down at the food. Until I finally asked him what was wrong, because I felt the energy in the room. It was different. Inexplicable, but just

different. I asked him what was wrong. He just looked through me. Not at me, but through me. He mumbled... "I'm sorry..."

DR. MOSS: Oh... Hannah...

HANNAH: Yeah... "I'm sorry..." (*Fighting the tears.*) So, Dr. Moss... That's how the fuck I am...

*(End of scene.)*

## SCENE II

*(December 14th. The first day of Winter Break. Laura Lovejoy's car. We see her waiting for Hannah, and she's listening to Christian music on the radio. She is a complicated woman with a complicated history. Laura is plainly dressed and has a fluffy winter coat on. After waiting a little while, she rolls down the window and lights a cigarette, taking a couple of puffs. She is stressed beyond recognition. Enter Hannah with her suitcase in tow. She isn't noticed by her mother.)*

HANNAH: *(Visibly disgusted.)* I thought you quit?

LAURA: Well "Hello" to you too.

HANNAH: Sorry. Hi mom.

LAURA: *(Taking a long drag, then flicking the cigarette into the street.)* Let me open the trunk for you.

HANNAH: I got it. *(Putting her luggage in the back.)*

LAURA: No, really, you've got a lot of stuff.

HANNAH: I got it. You can just sit. It's cold.

LAURA: I mean-

HANNAH: Mom. Please. Look, it's done. See? Thanks, but I got it. Let's just go.

LAURA: *(Sighs.)* Okay. Sure.

HANNAH: *(Getting in the car.)* Okay. I'm good.

LAURA: Can you put home in your GPS, please?

HANNAH: I mean, yeah, but how'd you get here, then?

LAURA: Well, I used my phone, but it's almost dead, I think. It's on three, or something.

HANNAH: Yeah, that's fine. *(She puts in the address.)* Okay.

LAURA: Mm. *(She begins driving.)* How was your appointment?



HANNAH: It was fine.

LAURA: Just fine?

HANNAH: Yep.

LAURA: Well. That's good. That's good to hear, Han.

HANNAH: Yeah.

LAURA: Do you think it's helping? After a few months?

HANNAH: Yeah. I think it is.

LAURA: Okay. Good. I was thinking about looking into it myself.

HANNAH: Seeing someone?

LAURA: Mhm.

HANNAH: Oh wow. Well. Um, yeah, yeah. It definitely helps.

LAURA: Okay. *(Beat.)* Everything else going okay? School, and all.

HANNAH: Yeah, just the usual stuff. Tests, papers, homework.

LAURA: Didn't you make the Dean's List or something? Monica said you posted something about it?

HANNAH: Oh, yeah, I did.

LAURA: Congrats. That's an accomplishment.

HANNAH: Thank you.

LAURA: I got off social media. I couldn't deal with that negativity right. It's just too much.

HANNAH: I get that.

LAURA: You might wanna try that?

HANNAH: Try what?

LAURA: Getting off the internet. Unplug for a while.

HANNAH: Well, I wish I could, but that's my best bet for gigs, and stuff.

LAURA: You sure? I think it could be good for you.

HANNAH: I rarely get on unless I'm posting something. Which, to be honest, isn't much these days.

LAURA: Why's that?

HANNAH: I've just been busy. A lot of work.

LAURA: Hm.

HANNAH: Yeah.

LAURA: Well, you know we all love your voice at home. That's your gift, I really believe that.

HANNAH: Yeah, I know.

LAURA: They miss you down at choir on Sundays.

HANNAH: Ah.

LAURA: Minister Syd really does. She's had to ask Mon to do the solo parts.

HANNAH: Oh?

LAURA: Yeah. And that's a trip, let me tell you. Poor thing has stage fright like nobody's business.

HANNAH: Wow. I'm sorry.

LAURA: You alright?

HANNAH: Yeah, I'm fine, I just... Have a headache.

LAURA: Are you still getting migraines?

HANNAH: No, no, it's not that. I just didn't have any water or anything like that.

LAURA: Well do you want to stop or anything?

HANNAH: No, it's fine, I just wanna go home.

LAURA: We got another three hours before then; you sure?

HANNAH: Yes, I'm sure. Why does everyone keep asking me that?

LAURA: Asking you what?

HANNAH: If I'm sure. I'm always sure.

LAURA: I'm just seeing if you're okay. You're being strange.

HANNAH: I'm not being strange. It's just a lot.

LAURA: What's a lot? Me talking to you like I'm your mother?

HANNAH: No, it's not that-

LAURA: Well what is it? Because you're getting snippy with me when I'm just trying to have a conversation!

HANNAH: I just wasn't expecting an interview as soon as I walked in the car. It's like I'm being accosted just for walking in here.

LAURA: Like you're being what?

HANNAH: Accosted- I. Attacked. Like I'm being attacked.

LAURA: Well, nobody is attacking you, I just wish I could know what's going on in my daughter's life.

HANNAH: Nothing. I've got nothing new to report.

LAURA: Hm. I don't believe you.

HANNAH: I'm sorry.

LAURA: Hannah!

HANNAH: What?!

LAURA: Don't you "What?!" me young lady-

HANNAH: I don't know what you want me to say!

LAURA: Say something! Anything!

HANNAH: I'm thinking!

LAURA: Well, I don't know, think faster! Make something up! You're on your way home for the break, you can at least act like you're happy to see your family! (*Beat.*) Hello? (*Beat.*) So is that it? You're not excited to spend time with me?! ...Us?!

HANNAH: ...I never said that...

LAURA: (*Overlapping.*) I just don't understand it. I have done so much for you. Sacrificed so much, but what do I get? Silence. Getting ignored. Nothing. Just like your father, I swear-

HANNAH: (*Overlapping.*) Mom... Mom... Please. I don't even know how we got to this. I just wanna relax, I- What?!

LAURA: Don't "what" me, I already told you about that "what", nonsense.

HANNAH: "Just like your father?!" What the hell is that supposed to mean?!

LAURA: HANNAH GABRIELLA LOVEJOY!

HANNAH: Sorry! "Heck!"

LAURA: Don't you dare start!

HANNAH: You always do this. You push the boundaries, you push people until they can't help but to fall over the edge into the planes of oblivion-

LAURA: Don't be so dramatic! You and your dictionary words-

HANNAH: I'm not being dramatic, I'm trying to have a conversation with you! A simple, intelligent conversation.

LAURA: Oh stop being so darned smart. You're being condescending!

HANNAH: I'm really not.

LAURA: Just like-

HANNAH: Just like my father?

LAURA: Yes, little missy, for your information, you are just like him. In every way: the spitting image, head to toe, and the smart-behind brain of yours thinking you're better than all of us.

HANNAH: There. See? That's what I'm talking about. You're always putting words in my mouth, and I'm painted to be the villain.

LAURA: It's not about what you say, it's what you never say, and your silence yells the loudest!

HANNAH: Haha! I can't win. I can't win! Good Lord-

LAURA: (*Slapping her on the head.*) YOU WILL NOT... Blaspheme... And I mean that young lady. I don't know what's gotten into you but stop that. NOW!

HANNAH: ...That's exactly why I choose to say nothing.

LAURA: Sorry. Sorry. I didn't mean to lash out. It's been rough these past few months. (*She gets a cigarette from her little purse. Lighting it with one hand.*)

HANNAH: Which is why you're smoking again?

LAURA: ...Yeah. Something like that. I shouldn't be taking it out on you.

HANNAH: No offense taken.

LAURA: It gets hard as you grow, Han. I wish I could say it gets easier, but it doesn't.

HANNAH: That's probably the most honest I think you've ever been with me.

LAURA: Ha. You think?

HANNAH: Looks like we're all making breakthroughs today.

LAURA: Mmm...

*(A long beat of silence. Hannah begins to choke up.)*

HANNAH: Mom?

LAURA: ...Hm?

HANNAH: Tyson and I broke it off. For real this time.

LAURA: Oh?

HANNAH: Yeah.

LAURA: Well... Sorry to hear about that.

HANNAH: Yup...

LAURA: Do you want to talk about it?

HANNAH: Not really...

*(Beat.)*

LAURA: Want me to turn on the radio?

HANNAH: Mhm...

*(Laura turns up the radio as Hannah situates herself to look out the window. End of scene.)*

### **SCENE III**

*(Present Day. We return to Dr. Moss' office. Hannah and Dr. Moss are in the positions we left them in.)*

DR. MOSS: And how's mom?

HANNAH: Hm?

DR. MOSS: How's mom?

HANNAH: She's... mom. I guess.

DR. MOSS: Have there been any improvements over the last few months?

HANNAH: Well. We're on semi-speaking terms again. Through other people. So, that's progress, right?

DR. MOSS: *(Perking up.)* Oh?

HANNAH: Yeah.

DR. MOSS: Well, that's... better? I'm glad to hear something. *(Writes it down.)*

HANNAH: Mhm. For better or worse.

DR. MOSS: What do you mean by that?

HANNAH: I mean there are two sides to every coin. The yin and yang. The ebb and flow.

DR. MOSS: *(Taking it in.)* Wanna elaborate?

HANNAH: I don't know, I guess it's just funny how somehow, someway, I find her to be at the center of a lot of my problems. I get sucked in when I get pushed out, and when I'm back in, I wish I stayed out.

DR. MOSS: Anything, in particular, you wanna stay out of?

HANNAH: The drama. The conflict. It's just so much to deal with, I wish I could just make it all disappear. I spend so much of my energy trying to get rid of the confrontation in my life, but I can only take on so much. Hell, I had to lie about going to therapy to get her to level with me.

DR. MOSS: Well. You're here now, and that's what matters. As for the problems of the world: it's not fair to you at all.

HANNAH: No. No, it isn't. My family dynamic is always so complicated, and it's not like I don't have any of my own problems to deal with. Like, at school. Just completely separate from them. I have my own life to worry about, and it's difficult to juggle my shit when they throw theirs on top of it.

DR. MOSS: So why do you?

HANNAH: Because-... I just...

DR. MOSS: Why do you focus on things and people that are beyond your control? Don't you think you would have a little more success if you drew your attention inward, rather than so much energy on the external?

HANNAH: Hm...

DR. MOSS: Hannah, you're very much the type of person who needs to feel like you're in control of the situation. Am I wrong?

HANNAH: Well, I don't know if "control" is the exact word I'd use, because-

*(Dr. Moss shoots her an incredulous look.)*

HANNAH: No... You're right.

DR. MOSS: Mhm... *(She writes in her notes.)* I figured. The reason I said that is because you can't expect to have control over everybody and everything. They're all gonna do what they do. Something that you can put yourself at ease with is the fact that you can control yourself. Your viewpoint, your outlook, and your reactions. Right? Everything else, and excuse my French, can be damned.

HANNAH: Right.



DR. MOSS: You're not Superman. I don't see a cape. I don't see a big "S" on your chest. You're Hannah Lovejoy. You can't save the world. Nor should you try.

HANNAH: Yeah...

DR. MOSS: Now. How's everyone else? Dad? Lydia?

*(Hannah sighs, and looks down, twiddling her thumbs. End of scene.)*

### SCENE IV

*(December 14th, 5:30 PM. At rise, we see Hannah in her room, and she's just finishing up a poem in her notebook. She hasn't really unpacked. Her bag is open, but there are still articles of clothing in there. As she finishes her last bit, she stands to read it out loud.)*

HANNAH: *Stories of the mind's eye seem to fade faster than I can blink.  
I question their validity, the reality. The truth of it all, I think?  
A race that's so quick, I can seldom keep up.  
A fleeting dream, catching up before I wake up.  
I run. I sprint. I'm chasing the high of the highs when I finally see what it all means.  
The flashing lights I can only perceive when I close my eyes. In my dreams.  
The moments of sobriety, to make sense of what I thought.  
The moment of clarity that cannot be easily taught.  
Just the one?*

*(We see her father, Eric, appear in the doorway. He is tired, down on his luck. Looking for moments of love and joy wherever he can find it. He quietly listens.)*

HANNAH: *Just the one. Why must it only be that one?  
The elusive one. The uncommon one. The sole soul.  
The only one.  
To replicate. To reproduce. To reap the benefits of what grows from the inspiration sown.  
Do I long to reap what I sow?  
Do I even dare to dream what I don't know?  
What will become of the seeds I sow?  
I ponder as time will tell  
What truly is meant to grow.*

ERIC: *(Slow-clapping.)* Well, it looks to me that we've got ourselves a real laureate in our house.

HANNAH: *(Startled.)* Dad?

ERIC: Last I checked.

HANNAH: (*Goes to hug him.*) I didn't know that you were gonna be back so soon. I thought you had to work or something?

ERIC: No. No... Nah. Not today. I, uh, just had to run to the store for a few things. When'd you get here? Where's your mother?

HANNAH: She went to pick up Lydia from soccer practice.

ERIC: Oh! Yeah. Today is... Wednesday...?

HANNAH: Thursday.

ERIC: Mm. They... Days kinda blend together when you get old. Spoiler alert: you just stop counting after a bit.

HANNAH: Great. Looking forward to it.

ERIC: How's school going, mini?

HANNAH: (*Debating on telling the truth.*) Well... I'm sure you don't really wanna hear all of that. I mean, it's the same old, same old, you know? Just taking it day by day. Lots of... Tests, papers. The usual.

ERIC: Got any work over the break?

HANNAH: Homework? No. But I am working on this poem for a thing coming up.

ERIC: A thing? Just a thing?

HANNAH: Yeah, it's no big deal. Just an open mic thing at my school's club thing.

ERIC: Oh wow! Well, I'm proud of you. Is it just for fun, or-

HANNAH: I mean, yeah. It's fun, there's a prize, or whatever, but I don't expect to win, or anything, you know?

ERIC: How much is the prize?

HANNAH: It's like 500 bucks, or whatever-

ERIC: 500 bucks?! Well damn, sounds like something you need to buckle up and knock out of the park.

HANNAH: Again, I'm not gonna get my hopes up or anything, but-

ERIC: Mini, if anyone is gonna be able to win that prize, it's you.

HANNAH: Well, thanks, Dad.

ERIC: Keep practicing. It's all in the delivery. You got the words down. Just gotta really hit it home.

HANNAH: I'll keep that in mind.

ERIC: Why don't you uh- come on into the living room? Got something I want ya to see.

HANNAH: Yeah. Sure, thing.

ERIC: Come on.

*(They go into the living room. Eric grabs a beer from the fridge.)*

ERIC: Want one?

HANNAH: Uh- *(Remembering.)* No. Thanks though.

ERIC: Oh come on. You're old enough. I won't tell your mother.

HANNAH: Um. Yeah, I'm good right now. I just drank a lot of water.

ERIC: Mm. Welp. Suit yourself. More for me later. But, of course, the fridge is open. You ain't company.

HANNAH: Haha... Thanks, I know.

ERIC: *(Getting an envelope from the drawer.)* Guess what this is?

HANNAH: What is it?

ERIC: It's a check. And a letter of congratulations.

HANNAH: Oh? From who?

ERIC: Open it.

*(Hannah opens the envelope.)*

HANNAH: \$1,000?! From the '80s?!

ERIC: Yep. That was from MY first open mic competition. I did the song that I wrote for your mother. "The First Thing I Saw."

HANNAH: You didn't cash it?

ERIC: Nope. I wanted to keep it for a rainy day. Save it for when I really needed it.

HANNAH: Dad, checks void after like 180 days?

ERIC: *(Chuckling.)* Yeah.. Mini, I didn't go to college like you. I thought I was doing something smart and constructive.

HANNAH: Fair enough.

ERIC: I found that out the hard way, so I just sealed it back up, and I keep it close by.

HANNAH: How come?

ERIC: You never wanna forget the feeling you first get when you find that you're good at something.

HANNAH: Have you played your guitar recently?

ERIC: Well, you know, work and stuff. Fell off the habit... So that's why I try not to forget.

*(He downs the rest of his can. We hear Lydia enter. She's dressed in her soccer uniform. Energy drink in hand )*

LYDIA: I'm home! *(Noticing Hannah.)* WHOA! You look like shit!

HANNAH: Well "Hello" to you too.

LYDIA: Oh hush, you know I'm happy to see my big sis. I was just making an observation. Come on. Hugs.

HANNAH: No. I'm good. You smell like salt and grass.

LYDIA: Yeah. It's called "physical activity", look it up sometime, art geek.

HANNAH: (*Mildly disgusted.*) Meathead.

ERIC: Girls! Come on now, be nice.

HANNAH/LYDIA: Whatever dad.

ERIC: Oh, "Whatever" yourselves. Now hug.

(*They resist.*)

ERIC: Go ahead.

(*They playfully give in.*)

ERIC: There we go. So nice. It's so nice to have all my girls under one roof. That right there is a feeling you can't beat.

HANNAH: I was just here on Thanksgiving,

ERIC: And I'll just keep saying it. Wait. Where's your mother?

LYDIA: She's in the car.

HANNAH: What is she doing still in the car?

LYDIA: A praise and worship song that she liked came on, and she likes to finish it out before she comes inside.

HANNAH: Oh.

ERIC: Yeah. Her "decompression" time.

LYDIA: Yep. Well, I'm gonna shower so I won't offend Miss bath-bombs-every-night over here.

HANNAH: I do not-

LYDIA: The daily snaps in the tub say otherwise. *(Goes to the fridge, grabs a banana from the counter.)* Dad, what's for dinner tonight?

ERIC: I think your mother's making vegetarian lasagna and salad.

LYDIA: Ugh. Again?

ERIC: It's your sister's favorite. She's back home, that's what she wanted.

LYDIA: Ugh. Fine. Carbs but no protein. What are you gonna turn me into a rabbit?

ERIC: *(Shrugs.)* I don't make the rules.

LYDIA: *(To Hannah.)* You owe me a friggin burger.

*(She exits. End of scene.)*

## **SCENE V**

*(Present Day. Dr. Moss' office.)*

HANNAH: He always calls me “Mini” because everyone always says I’m “a mini Eric.” In looks, in talent, in personality... I guess I can’t argue with that. It’s clear that he was depressed, but no one really said anything about it to him. He drank as far back as I could remember, but I can’t really tell you when it got the way it does now. It’s as if he lost a hand and replaced it with a can. When he offered me one, I just couldn’t bear to take it, because I don’t want him to really know how alike we can be.

DR. MOSS: So, what I’m gathering here, and correct me if I’m wrong, please, but you haven’t told your parents you’re suffering from depression? *(Hannah shakes her head.)* Not even your sister? *(She shakes again.)* Nothing at all. Okay. Well, it’s not necessary for you to communicate that specifically with them, but I do think it’s best for you to communicate *something* to them, right? Because ultimately, if the goal is to fix the lines of communication, then it’s best to voice your concerns as they arise, Hannah. Now, I know that it may be hard, but you do owe it to yourself to allow that repression to turn into EXpression. It sounds like they love you enough to listen to you. Your sister and father, anyway. Do you really find it that hard to speak to them?

HANNAH: *(Sarcastically chuckling.)* ...Yes.

*(End of scene.)*



## SCENE VI

*(December 14th, 8:15 PM. We see Hannah in her room, reading a novel. Eric is sitting at the dining room table, scrolling through his phone. Lydia is sitting on the floor watching television. Laura is putting the finishing touches on the lasagna. She is a little antsy than normal.)*

LAURA: Food's almost ready, I-... *(She looks around.)* Good Lord above did someone move the salt?! *(No answer.)* Did anyone hear me or am I just talking to myself? Did anyone touch the salt shaker?!

LYDIA: Nope.

ERIC: Mm-mm.

LAURA: Nobody saw anything?! I can't find where I put the darn thing... Ugh, this is gonna be a disaster. You know what, fine, I did my best. It is what it is, I wash my hands of it, but don't start talking about me beyond my back about bland food. It's not gonna be my fault.

LYDIA: Okay.

ERIC: Mmm.

LAURA: *(Looks around in disbelief.)* Unbelievable. Just... Ugh... Lyddie, do me a favor and tell your sister it's time for dinner.

*(Beat.)*

LAURA: ...Lyddie?

LYDIA: *(She rolls her eyes and pauses the tv.)* ... HANNAH!!

*(Laura winces and shakes her head. Hannah tries to ignore her. Putting her headphones in.)*

LYDIA: ... HANNAH!!!

HANNAH: *(Rips her headphones out.)* Oh my fucking... WHAT?!

LAURA: Oh my goodness, STOP! Why are you screaming in my house? If I needed to yell for her, I'd just do it myself.

LYDIA: So why didn't you? I'm doing something!

LAURA: *(Digging her feet in the sand.)* Lydia, will just get up and let your sister know that dinner is ready?! ...Will you do that for me please?

LYDIA: *(She scoffs, and dramatically walks to Hannah's room.)* Dinner.

*(Lydia walks back out to the table and sits. Hannah puts her stuff away, then follows. Laura begins to set the table. Eric goes to get his first dinner beer. As everyone gets settled, they mentally prepare for the infamous immediate family dinners that haven't happened in months.)*

LAURA: I made your favorite, Han. Veggie lasagna.

HANNAH: Yeah, dad told me. Thank you.

LAURA: *(Disdained.)* Oh.

ERIC: I did what now?

LAURA: You told her about her surprise homecoming dinner.

ERIC: Well, I wasn't under the impression that it was supposed to be a surprise...

LAURA: Well I wish you weren't under a lot of things, but who on Earth cares what I have to say?

ERIC: Huh?!

HANNAH: Oh, I mean, thanks but-

LYDIA: It was supposed to be a surprise? Wow, who would've thought?

HANNAH: It's really not that big of a deal. Thanks for the food. Really.

LYDIA: I wish I got surprises, but the most I get is a pat on the back for bringing home medals. She just brings *herself* home and gets rewarded.

HANNAH: Chill...

LYDIA: I'm just saying!

ERIC: Lyddie, don't be that way.

LYDIA: What?! You always say that our generation gets participation trophies, yet, here we go-

HANNAH: Dude, are you being serious right now-

LAURA: *(Sitting.)* Stop it you two, I'm getting ready to say grace now. *(She stretches out her hands. Beat as everyone stares.)* Come on now, let's go. Food's getting cold.

*(They join hands. The parents close their eyes, and the children don't.)*

LAURA: Dear heavenly Father, thank you for this food as we prepare our bodies to receive it. Bless the hands that prepared it, and bless the hands that will eat it. Thank you for giving us another day of not wanting, and thank you for allowing us to be able to eat as a family again. In your name we pray, Amen.

ERIC: Amen.

*(Laura darts her eyes at her daughters.)*

HANNAH/LYDIA: Amen.

*(They begin to eat. Beat.)*

LYDIA: Oh.... Mm....Wow.

ERIC: Hm?

LYDIA: Not gonna lie, this is actually pretty good.

LAURA: See?? There you go.

ERIC: I think mine could use a little salt though.

LAURA: Oh, I hope you choke.

*(They all laugh except for Hannah.)*

ERIC: So, Mini.

HANNAH: Hm?

ERIC: I was at the store earlier today and I saw something that made me think of you.

HANNAH: Oh?

LAURA: You went to the store today?

ERIC: Hm?

LAURA: I didn't know you were going to the store today.

ERIC: I did. Anyway, I saw this bumper sticker with the funniest spoof on a quote from *The Great Gatsby* on it-

LAURA: If you went to the store, how come you didn't pick up any eggs like I asked you to-

ERIC: I- I forgot. My bad. But, yeah, it was... Ugh. Man, I'm trying to remember?

HANNAH: What was it?

ERIC: Ah. I dunno... It'll come to me. Remind me in like an hour or so. My short term memory's a little off, but the longer it is, I'll just remember. Funny how that works.

LAURA: Well, I gotta agree on that one, because you can't seem to remember something as simple as getting eggs.

ERIC: Okay...

LAURA: Or heck, even some salt.

ERIC: Got it...

LAURA: Could you remember that next time? To pick up some salt, or is that gonna be too much for you to handle?

HANNAH: (*To Lydia.*) I see that nothing's changed...

LYDIA: (*To Hannah.*) You don't even know the half of it, it just gets worse.

LAURA: So anyway... Hannah, do you have any news for the table?

HANNAH: News? Like what?

LAURA: "Like what?" That you did that thing.

ERIC: Hannah did a thing?

HANNAH: A thing?

ERIC: Did you do a thing?

HANNAH: You mean the Dean's List?

ERIC: Oh that?

LYDIA: Old news. Been knew that.

ERIC: Liked it on Facebook.

LAURA: Oh.

HANNAH: Yeah.

LAURA: Well, I didn't know until this morning.

HANNAH: I'm sorry.

LYDIA: That's what happens when you're outta touch. Gotta get with the times, mom.

LAURA: Well, I wish someone would've told me!

ERIC: (*Overlapping.*) Totally forgot.

LYDIA: (*Overlapping.*) Didn't even think about it.

HANNAH: I meant to call-

LAURA: Well I wish you would have! How the heck am I supposed to be the last to know what goes on in my daughter's life?

HANNAH: I'm sorry. (*Hannah's phone pings, she checks it.*)

LAURA: I had to hear it through the grapevine that my firstborn accomplished something, and act like I'm not surprised when it seems like it's secondhand information. What kind of a mother would I look like? (*She looks at Hannah.*) Uh-uh. No phones at the dinner table. This isn't a college cafeteria. It's family time.

HANNAH: (*Putting the phone away.*) Sorry-

LAURA: Who're you texting that's so important?

LYDIA: The way she was being all sneaky with it, it must be Anthony.

HANNAH: (*Embarrassed.*) What?!

ERIC: Anthony? That's a name I haven't heard in a long time. Shoot, how is he?

LAURA: Anthony who?

HANNAH: ...Yes, if you must know, Anthony was wondering if I was free tonight.

LAURA: I don't know who this Anthony boy is, but you need to tell him that you're busy tonight. After dinner I had a family game planned.

LYDIA: A what?! Mom!

LAURA: It is still a Friday, which means it's family game night. Don't act brand new. Tell your little friend that you'll reach out to him another time. I rarely get to see my family at one table.

HANNAH: Um.. Okay.

LAURA: Why do you have an attitude with me?

HANNAH: What? I don't have an attitude.

ERIC: Laura, please. She's fine.

LAURA: Always gotta take up for her. I swear you two are in league to make me crazy.

LYDIA: Mom, you need to chill.

LAURA: How about you tell me what I NEED to do when you start paying bills here? This is still my house, and I am still the mother.

HANNAH: Oh my God, where is this coming from?

LAURA: Don't blaspheme in my house, young lady! You're gonna be on thin ice soon, too. I'm trying to have a nice, and peaceful dinner, without being told by disrespectful little teens what I need to, and need to not do.

ERIC: Lyddie, tell your mother you apologize.

LYDIA: But I-

ERIC: Just say it. No lip, come on now.

LYDIA: Okay! Fine! Jeeze, I'm sorry.

LAURA: Sorry for what?

LYDIA: For asking you to calm down?

LAURA: Don't play with me! For being disrespectful.

LYDIA: Okay, fine! I'm sorry for being disrespectful.

LAURA: I accept your apology. See? It's not hard. *(There is a beat of awkward silence.)* Oh. Kay. Guess I have to keep the conversation going... Since nobody wants to talk all of a sudden... So "Anthony" huh? What exactly happened to Tyson?

*(Another awkward beat. Eric glares at her from across the table over his glasses.)*

ERIC: *(Getting up.)* Welp. Time for another beer.

LYDIA: Mom...

LAURA: What?! I liked him! It's not often that you find a nice Christian boy in your generation.

LYDIA: You can't just say things like that-

HANNAH: *(Stoically interjecting.)* I told you we broke up.

DR. MOSS: *(Silently gasping.)* She did not...

HANNAH: *(To Dr. Moss.)* Oh, believe me. She did.

LAURA: You broke up!? Since when?!

LYDIA: Mom, you can't be serious...

LAURA: I most certainly am, you never told me that. How am I supposed to know these things when I'll be lucky to talk to my daughter once, maybe twice a week, if I'm lucky!

HANNAH: I told all of this when I was just here a few weeks ago. And again in the car!

ERIC: She did.

LAURA: Did she?

LYDIA: Yes mom!

LAURA: I don't remember that, I swear you all are on a mission to just make me crazy. All the time, this is what we go through.

HANNAH: Mom... Please...

LAURA: Don't "Mom. please" me! I'm serious, I'm not TRYING to be the bad guy, as matter of fact, I'm doing the exact opposite, if I have to say. Unlike SOME people in this household, I'm actually going to get help and work on myself.



ERIC: That's enough!

LAURA: OH! Hahaha, you're funny. You're funny, Eric, that's the first time I've ever heard those words come out of your mouth.

HANNAH: (*Tearing up.*) This can't be happening.

LYDIA: (*Consoling her.*) Hannah, no. Jesus Christ, I'm sorry.

ERIC: What the hell is that supposed to mean?!

LAURA: What it means is that I can't remember the last time you haven't had your hands full with your little "Vices" in years!

ERIC: Oh, here we go again! Always bringing up the same old shit! -Excuse me, girls, I apologize, but your mother seems to have a knack to bring out the worst in people!

LYDIA: Can we please just enjoy our dinner? Please?!

LAURA: You know, I do too darn much for this family to be looked at the way I am! I go to church by myself every Sunday and Wednesday, and I hear the whispers. I do. And like a good little mouse, I keep my mouth shut. I turn off my ears, and keep my mouth shut. Because the Good Lord knows that I'm reaching the end of my fuse, and I'm liable to go off at any moment. But something I have, which doesn't seem to rub off on anyone in this household, is freaking self-control! I have the ability to look like everything is just peachy and all okay like the damn Partridges, when you all do nothing but just drive me up the wall, and back! They say God won't give you anything you can't handle, but I'm truly being tested to my limit with you people! I feel like I'm going absolutely insane in this fucking house!!

ERIC: LAURA STOP IT! THAT'S ENOUGH!

LYDIA: (*Getting up.*) Oh dear God, that's it. I'm done, I've lost my appetite.

LAURA: SIT DOWN! I'VE GOT SOMETHING TO SAY, AND DAMMIT YOU'RE GONNA LISTEN, BECAUSE I'M SICK AND TIRED OF BEING TREATED WITH DISRESPECT FROM LEFT, RIGHT, AND CENTER!

ERIC: YOU ARE NOT GOING TO SCREAM AT OUR DAUGHTER!

LAURA: YOUR FATHER AND I ARE GETTING A DIVORCE!

*(Beat of silence. The stillness is broken after a while by Lydia getting up and running to her room. Hannah remains in shock.)*

LAURA: What?... Nothing to say now, huh?... I'm surprised you didn't already tell your little partners in crime, since you all love to conspire against me so much.

ERIC: Wow.

LAURA: What are you so surprised about?

ERIC: This is not how we agreed to bring it up...

HANNAH: Excuse me?

LAURA: Well, things change, that's the way it goes. And by the way, I didn't agree to anything. You dictated to me how I want to share my business.

HANNAH: Bring it up, I just... How long has this been going on.

LAURA: 4 months.

HANNAH: 4 months?!

ERIC: ... I suggested that we not talk about this until the summer, because I wanted you girls to focus on school.

HANNAH: Wait, wait, wait, so you planned on keeping this a secret for almost a year?!

LAURA: Well, explain that to your daughter, Eric.

ERIC: It's not that, I-... It's just not that...

LAURA: *(Overlapping.)* Then what is it?

ERIC: I just obviously know what it's like to have parents divorce. It's hard on a family, especially while you're in school. Hell, I almost had to drop out.

LAURA: It'd be nice if you could take some personal responsibility, and realize that not everything is everyone's fault, grow up and be a man already!

HANNAH: I can't believe this...

LAURA: Well, it is. That's how life goes. But, like I say over and over again, I pour too much into you, into all of you. And the most I get is passive disrespect 24/7. So, you know what? I'd say that I'm sorry, but I'm not sorry. Enough is enough. I've gotta move past this hurdle if I'm ever gonna move forward.

HANNAH: ...So is that all we are to you?

ERIC: Hannah...

LAURA: ...Excuse me?

HANNAH: I said is that all we are to you? Just roadblocks and hurdles you have to jump over-

ERIC: Hannah, just take a moment-

LAURA: Nononono, go ahead, let her talk. She wants to be an adult, then go ahead and speak up. I'm not gonna be mad, this was a long time coming, huh?

HANNAH: *(Standing her ground.)* Okay then... After a few sessions, I was able to realize that a lot of my issues come from the home. And, I'm trying to say this in the most respectful way, but without sugarcoating it, mom, when it comes to MY mental health, you have been little more than a hindrance rather than a help. And it's not your fault, per se, but I just -I don't know- I don't feel like I have the familial support that a lot of other people have.

LAURA: -Wow...-

HANNAH: And-and to have this bomb just dropped- To hear you say things like that just seem to make things worse, like I'm nothing but a hurdle to be passed, just hurts my feelings in ways beyond what I can ever express.

ERIC: *(Heartbroken.)* Hannah...

LAURA: So you think I'm some evil witch huh?

HANNAH: That's not what I said-

LAURA: But that's what you're implying. And you know I hate to beat around the bush. I gave you a chance to say what you needed to say, and you can't even say that. Because you know why?

HANNAH: Mom-

LAURA: Because you know that you're dead wrong, and you know that's a lie. You're a liar! I've done nothing but give you the best years of my life, and you know that's true! That's why you can't even bring yourself to say anything else!

HANNAH: That's not what I-

LAURA: So you know what, don't bother anymore. I'm over it. I'm done. You hate me? I'm such a bad mother to you? Then fine. Don't worry about me anymore. You wash your hands of me? I wash my hands of you. You can leave.

HANNAH: Excuse me, what!?

LAURA: *(Reaching into her purse to grab a pack of cigarettes and a lighter.)* No, go on, pack your shit, and go. Get your father to take you since you two are two peas in a pod. Eric, get your little "Mini-me" and get the hell out of my house.

HANNAH: I'm just trying to talk, and do what you asked!

LAURA: Good, now do something else for me and get out. Your father knows his new address. End of discussion, this conversation is over. I said my resolution was to not let anyone make me crazy and look like an idiot. So you both can go.

HANNAH: MOM!

LAURA: Nope, that's it. We're done talking, since I'm so evil. *(She goes outside the backdoor to smoke.)*

HANNAH: Mom, I! MOM!!

*(Beat. Hannah begins to cry.)*

ERIC: Mini... I'm sorry. That's, uh... all I can say. I'm sorry... It wasn't supposed to be like this. *(Silence.)* I uh... I have an apartment in Yonkers that I've been staying at, about 20 minutes away. *(Silence.)* I go there late after Lyddie goes to sleep and come back before she wakes up...

She doesn't know. But, we can go soon. If you, uh... Wanna start getting your things together? I just can't drive now. Uh- not yet. I need a few minutes-

HANNAH: ....Yeah, I understand.

ERIC: *(Getting up to give her a hug, he hesitates, and just touches her shoulder.)* It'll be okay, Min. We'll work it out. Just let her decompress.

HANNAH: ...I'm gonna go pack. *(She leaves to her room.)*

ERIC: Sure. Sure.

*(Hannah is bawling while she packs.)*

ERIC: Yeah... Okay. *(He chugs the last of his beer. To himself.)* I'll be here...

*(End of scene.)*

## SCENE VII

*(Present day, Dr. Moss' office.)*

DR. MOSS: So that's how you found out?

HANNAH: Yep.

DR. MOSS: That must have been very traumatic for you, Hannah... Goodness, I'm so sorry.

HANNAH: Yeah. Well, what the hell are you gonna do, you know?

DR. MOSS: Divorce is never easy on any of the parties involved. Oftentimes the couples neglect to consider the ripples it has on the relationships around them. It's nobody's fault, per se, but in an unprecedented time of relatively simpler reasons to end a marriage and the skyrocketing rates, this is new territory for all of us. I have to ask again. Have you spoken to your mother since then? Like, not even a phone call?

HANNAH: *(Shaking her head.)* She cut me off entirely. I think that's her way of "healing." When Lydia asks me more than a simple "How's it going?" I know that my mother is on the other end of it.

DR. MOSS: And how does that make you feel, Hannah?

HANNAH: Um... I don't really know, to be honest.

DR. MOSS: Well, I think it's healthy to put thoughts and feelings into words; if you codify these emotions it could give you a roadmap as to how to tackle them. In as many or as few words as possible, just try. Think of it as an exercise. Fragments, sentences, phrases, anything really.

HANNAH: Okay... Um... Scared? Renewed?... Found a new sense of self. Growing up really fast. A lot of thinking to do. I uh- I miss having my mom. I don't know what happened...

*(Beat.)*

DR. MOSS: Okay. That was good. No context needed. Just word vomit. Good work.

HANNAH: Awesome.

DR. MOSS: So I assume you stayed with your father for the rest of break, right?

HANNAH: *(Nodding her head.)* Yeah. It was a tight squeeze, but we made it work.

DR. MOSS: And how was that?

HANNAH: It was alright. He'd lost his job due to layoffs, so we spent quite a bit of time together.

DR. MOSS: Good. Good. Did you go over that night?

HANNAH: *(She shakes her head.)* I called my friend and kinda disappeared the rest of the night.

DR. MOSS: Antonio?

HANNAH: Anthony.

DR. MOSS: "Anthony", yes. My apologies.

HANNAH: It's no problem. A lot of names are being thrown around today.

DR. MOSS: And how was that?

HANNAH: Hm?

DR. MOSS: Would you like to talk about how that was for you? Having a friend to help you threw this?

HANNAH: It was... Nice. I needed it.

DR. MOSS: Let's explore that for a few minutes. Focus on what could help. Did you feel like it helped?

HANNAH: Uh... I mean, yeah, I guess... Yeah.

*(End of scene.)*

### **SCENE VIII**

*(December 15th. 12:31 AM. A park just outside of town. We see Hannah sitting in Anthony's car, staring off into space. Anthony is digging in the trunk. Music is playing. Anthony comes around to the front of the car, and gets back in the driver's door.)*

ANTHONY: Yo! You're not cold are you?

HANNAH: No, no, I'm fine, thanks a lot.

ANTHONY: Yeah, for sure, just let me know though, I can turn the heat up a few more clicks if you need.

HANNAH: Really, I'm good. Comfortable for once.

ANTHONY: Cool, cool. *(He takes out a pre-rolled joint from his pocket.)* You care if I-?

HANNAH: Man, it's your car.

ANTHONY: Nah, I know, I just didn't know if you partook or not, I didn't wanna assume.

HANNAH: After the day I had, I need to do a little more than partake.

ANTHONY: Well, shit, aight then. *(Lights up. Puffs. Passing it to her.)* Go for it, H.

HANNAH: I appreciate it.

ANTHONY: You good though? Like overall.

HANNAH: Long story short: no. No, I haven't been good in a long time.



ANTHONY: What you were saying about that stuff with your parents was some bullshit. I can't even imagine being in a situation like that.

HANNAH: It was just like a total blindside. I don't even know where it came from. I mean, sure, shit wasn't perfect, but the last thing I expected was divorce, you know?

ANTHONY: You think they'd really go through with it?

HANNAH: I don't know. I really couldn't tell you. Who the hell knows what happens next?

ANTHONY: Yeah, man, it sucks, but unfortunately that's just how it goes sometimes you know?

HANNAH: Yeah. I know.

ANTHONY: Well, you know I always got your back, Homie. Just hit me up when you need to escape, especially since your ass ain't got a license.

HANNAH: Hey, now, I'm working on it! Parallel parking is a bitch.

ANTHONY: I'll show you sometime.

HANNAH: You're gonna let me drive your Jag?

ANTHONY: *(Taking a puff.)* Hell no! I ain't got that kind of insurance that's gonna cover gross negligence.

HANNAH: What?! WOW! I'm offended, not gonna lie!

ANTHONY: Girl, We all know the way you push a shopping cart. God forbid they put you behind the wheel. I still can't even go into the grocery store without getting shifty looks.

HANNAH: YOU KNOW WHAT?!... Shut up...

ANTHONY: Mhmmmmmm! See? Yeah, you can miss me with that hahaha.

HANNAH: I'm over it. Let me walk home.

ANTHONY: Hahaha chill chill. You know I'm just fucking with you.

HANNAH: Mhm. You need to chill, I'm "Emotionally damaged and volatile."

ANTHONY: Calling bullshit on that one. I ain't met a harder motherfucker on these streets than Hannah Lovejoy.

HANNAH: Well, tell that to my counselor. That's what she wrote in her little notebook. I took a peek.

ANTHONY: Well, do you think you are?

HANNAH: What? Emotionally damaged? Perhaps. Volatile? I guess it depends on the day, now doesn't it?

ANTHONY: I mean... Aight, fair enough.

HANNAH: Now is that a product of my fucked up childhood, or am I just an *artist* in the purest form?

ANTHONY: What do you mean?

HANNAH: You know, is it like a chicken or the egg scenario? Like why am I like this? I don't want to seem like the depressed drag of a person all the time, but... Like that's what helps me fuel my songs. My poems. Everything. Now, people like to say that everything happens for a reason, but is that a nature or nurture thing. Like, fuck Freud and his problematic ass, but I gotta think sometimes if my mom hugged me more would I still be a writer? Would I still be as quote/unquote "gifted" or as I'm branded now, "Emotionally damaged and volatile?" I don't know man, it's shit that keeps me up at night.

ANTHONY: ...Huh.

HANNAH: Listen, I'm high as shit. Who knows what I'm saying anymore?

ANTHONY: You always did have some type of way with words.

HANNAH: See, for example, why is that? Is it because I have some natural affinity, or is it because my mother forced me to write essays for her every week.

ANTHONY: It might be a little bit of both, to be honest.

HANNAH: Yes! Exactly. Nuance that exists in the fabric of my DNA, and it's just wild to think about.

ANTHONY: Maybe that's some shit we just aren't meant to understand, you know?

HANNAH: Well, it's gonna drive me insane until I do.

ANTHONY: Yeah. And you're gonna keep driving yourself insane unless you pick up the pieces of the past and make something new and beautiful with it for the future. That's why you're good at what you do, because you do exactly that in your work. Now, I ain't over here about to flex on you like I'm some kinda literary genius or some shit, but I read some of your stuff you post online. It hits different.

HANNAH: Well, yeah, but if I just shove it out into the ether, how will I ever know it works? Or if it even made any difference to anyone's life.

ANTHONY: You don't.

HANNAH: Exactly.

ANTHONY: But you don't know that you didn't do anything either. You can't realistically measure whose lives you changed, or anything like that. And yeah, you may not be getting a Pulitzer in the mail yet, but even if you helped one guy realize some shit that he couldn't put into worth, then I gotta say it was at least semi-worth it, don't you think?

HANNAH: Well. I mean yeah.

ANTHONY: So what's your angle?

HANNAH: What do you mean?

ANTHONY: Like, what's the goal? What's the plan? You go off to college, get a fancy degree, then what? All that stuff is meaningless fluff compared to the things that matter. You know? Like a real human connection, and a real human experience. Let's say you at the end of your life, and you look back on everything, and you say "Life well spent." What's gonna make you say that?

HANNAH: Um...

ANTHONY: Nah. First thing that comes to mind. Off the cuff: Three, two, one: go.

HANNAH: Um. To say "I left the world a bit better than when I got here."

ANTHONY: Word?

HANNAH: Yeah, word. Um- Can I say that?

ANTHONY: Nah, homegirl, it sounds weird as fuck coming out your mouth, not gonna lie.

HANNAH: Question.

ANTHONY: Shoot.

HANNAH: Not to get all existential or anything but... Do you ever just look up at the stars and realize how small we are compared to everything else in the universe?

ANTHONY: ...Girl HUH?!?!?!?

HANNAH: What?

ANTHONY: That's enough gas for you. *(He takes the joint and finishes it.)*

HANNAH: *(Beat. She thinks for a minute. She starts hysterically laughing.)* Hahahahaha....  
HAHAHAH...

ANTHONY: I miss something?

HANNAH: Nothing... Hehehe... I just remembered a video I saw.

ANTHONY: Girl you are GONE.

HANNAH: Here, lemme show you- *(She reaches for her phone, and attempts to turn it on.)*  
Damn...

ANTHONY: Hm?

HANNAH: My phone's dead.... Sad.

ANTHONY: Shit.

HANNAH: *(Yawning.)* Yeah... Mm. Excuse me. But uh- it was this channel I watch, all the time, and don't- *(Yawn.)* Don't laugh but it's this science channel, and they always talk about the mysteries of the universe, and... Um... They, like, zoom out and show you how small you are

compared to the perspective of everything else. You know, compared to Beetleguese or something. I think the point of it is to show that all your problems on Earth are insignificant compared to everything else out there. Space is hell, man.

ANTHONY: OR, and hear me out, because of how vast the universe really is out there, it puts things into perspective of what you do and don't have power over. It's not to diminish your problems. It's to show you that your world is yours, and everyone lives in their own universes, you feel? You over here talking about Beetleguese, but one day that shit finna explode, and there ain't a damn thing you can do about it. The things you can control exist in your world. Make it the way you want to see it. You see what I mean?

HANNAH: Yeah, I guess I do. *(Yawns.)* God I'm exhausted. I just want the day to end...

ANTHONY: You wanna head back to your pop's?

HANNAH: No... No, I mean, I told him I was staying at Sam's place tonight.

ANTHONY: From English class? Shit, I didn't know y'all still talked like that.

HANNAH: No. We don't... I was hoping I could stay with you? If you didn't mind?

ANTHONY: I mean, uh, sure. We can head back now?

HANNAH: Yeah... Thanks a lot. For everything.

ANTHONY: You know we go way back. I gotchu fam.

HANNAH: I know.

*(Anthony turns up the music, and begins to back out of the parking spot. End of scene.)*

## **SCENE IX**

*(Present Day. Dr. Moss's office.)*

HANNAH: It felt... Pretty damn good, I'm not gonna lie. To have someone, and just be at peace for once, like the rest of the world was able to just shut up and stop, even for a few hours. When we went back to his apartment, I gotta tell you, that was the best air mattress sleep I ever had, hahaha.

DR. MOSS: So you two are fairly close? He could be a resource for you to reach out to, don't you think? A support system is an invaluable asset when we're feeling down.

HANNAH: Well, he is my best friend. We fell out of touch for a little bit there, but, it was... Nice to reconnect.

DR. MOSS: Just nice?

HANNAH: Just nice.

DR. MOSS: Okay. *(Writes in her notebook.)*

HANNAH: Mhm.

DR. MOSS: *(Looking at her little clock.)* Well, unfortunately, it looks like we're running out of time. Anything else you want to mention before we end the session today?

HANNAH: I have my first performance in months tonight. So... That's kind of a big deal. In the campus cafe.

DR. MOSS: Oh wow! That's great news. You'll have to let me know how it is. What are you doing?

HANNAH: A poem and a song I've been working on.

DR. MOSS: Well, I'm sure you'll be just fabulous.

HANNAH: Thank you Dr. Moss.

DR. MOSS: Now, before you leave, I have to ask: Do you feel like you want to hurt yourself?

HANNAH: Nope.

DR. MOSS: Do you feel like you want to hurt anyone else?

HANNAH: No, ma'am.

DR. MOSS: Okay. Have a great day, Hannah.

HANNAH: *(She gets up.)* Thank you, you too.

DR. MOSS: And break a leg.

*(Hannah leaves the office, and heads outside. She looks around, and picks up the phone to call her mother. We see Laura silhouetted in the background, she checks her phone. It rings twice, then goes to voicemail. Hannah leaves a message.)*

HANNAH: Hey, mom... It's Hannah. But, you know that of course. It's caller ID. Um, I just wanted to let you know that I'm good, and I have that scholarship competition tonight. The literary one? Well, basically it'll fund my grad school, so... Yeah. I just wanted to let you know. I don't even know if you listen to these, or if it gives you some sort of comfort to know that I did call anyway... So... Yeah. I'm doing okay in case you were wondering. Much better. I'm going back to see someone. For real this time. I just hope you do the same. Okay, well um... Bye. Talk to you soon. Hopefully.

*(Hannah hangs up. Laura gets the voicemail. She listens. End of scene.)*

## SCENE X

*(Present day. Later that night. We see Hannah backstage for her performance. She is going over her notes, and pacing back and forth nervously. She gets a text from Anthony.)*

ANTHONY: *Yo, Ms. H! I wanted to hit you up real quick and tell you good luck out there. No pressure or nothing, but you may be surprised to find a familiar face out there in the crowd... Surprise! LOL. Nah but for real you gonna do great, and drinks on me when you through. We boutta get lit! You got this homie!*

*(Hannah smiles. She replies.)*

HANNAH: *OMG! No way! I'm so shocked! Thank you for coming! AHH! I'm losing it, hahah.*

*(She sends the message. Her phone vibrates again. She gets a text from Eric.)*

ERIC: *Good luck kiddo..... Watching the livestream..... Chip off the old block LOL. (Thumbs up.)*

*(Her phone rings. It's Lydia.)*

HANNAH: Hello?

LYDIA: Hey. Dad told me to tell you "good luck", or "break a leg" or whatever... "Shit", don't dancers say "Shit"?

HANNAH: Well... Thanks but I'm not dancing.

LYDIA: Same-difference. Whatever.

HANNAH: I know there's a genuine well-wish in there somewhere. But I appreciate it. Are you watching the stream.



LYDIA: Yeah, of course. Don't be weird about it

HANNAH: Well, again, thank you Lyddie.

LYDIA: Mhm. Wait, you didn't go yet, did you?

HANNAH: No, I've got like one more person in front of me.

*(We see Laura appear outside, smoking a cigarette, silhouetted in the background. Lydia turns around, and hands the phone to her. Laura waves it away to decline. Then she turns around.)*

HANNAH: Hello? You still there?

LYDIA: Yeah, sorry. Um. Yeah. Mom says "Break a leg."

HANNAH: Did she?

LYDIA: Something like that.

HANNAH: Well... Tell her thanks.

LYDIA: I will.

HANNAH: I'm being told to standby. I gotta go.

LYDIA: Okay, yeah, cool. Do your thing.

HANNAH: You uh... You gotta come visit sometime. I think you'd like it here.

LYDIA: I don't think so... I see myself at a D1 school-

HANNAH: Lyddie...

LYDIA: ...But a weekend would be cool.

HANNAH: Thank you. Okay. Love you. Gotta go.

LYDIA: Yeah, love you too.

*(Lydia hangs up. She turns her phone landscape to watch the stream. Laura turns back around. Pulls out her phone to watch the livestream too. She puts out the cigarette. Hannah heads center stage to perform.)*

HANNAH: Good evening ladies and gentlemen. My name is Hannah LoveJoy: Emotionally Damaged and Volatile...

**END OF PLAY**