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NOT ONE DROP

By morag shepherd

AIDAN - older

ROWE - younger

A blank stage.

1

AIDAN

If you go any slower you'll turn into a stupid green tortoise.

ROWE

Why stupid?

AIDAN

Because they're pointless, and practically blind.

ROWE

I'm not even the one that wanted to do this.

AIDAN

Don't tell me that now.
You should tell me things like that when we're discussing it. When it matters.

ROWE

You don't discuss, you harangue.

AIDAN

We need to go as fast as we can.

ROWE

Don't pep talk me either.
You've done that our whole lives, and I'm always the one that gets caught.

AIDAN

We haven't known each other our whole lives.

ROWE

You pep talked me into stealing all the pink candies from Joe's Corner - and you did it just like Mom does when she can't be bothered to make herself a drink.

AIDAN

You talk about that like it happened yesterday.

ROWE

It did happen yesterday.

AIDAN

And they were blue.

ROWE

No - I took Mom's pink purse and wore her high heels. I put the candies in the purse and I felt like an elegant lady.

AIDAN

Can you concentrate, it's going to be Lent before you get it open.

ROWE

I'm sweating bricks over here, and you're just barking orders like a little... yappy... dachshund.

AIDAN

You're not getting a dachshund, so you might as well go faster.

ROWE

I'm not surprised that people don't like you at work.

AIDAN

People like me.

ROWE

That's not what I've been told.

AIDAN

By who?

ROWE

You.

AIDAN

People do like me.

ROWE

It's probably because you're bossy.

AIDAN

Maybe you just don't know me.

ROWE

You try and win every tiff by saying that.

AIDAN

Maybe you don't, and we're not tiff'ing.

ROWE

You're bossy!

AIDAN

It feels like you've been doing that for six hours.

ROWE

If it's so easy why don't you come over here and do it?

AIDAN

You're stronger than me.

ROWE

What the hell is that supposed to mean?

AIDAN

You're stronger - you have more arm.

ROWE

Maybe you're just lazy?

AIDAN

I am not lazy.

ROWE

And bossy.

AIDAN

If you put as much effort into that as you do gabbing, we could be out of here before St. Patrick's day hits.

ROWE

You're crazy.

AIDAN

And you end every argument by saying that.

ROWE

I'm now going to ignore you.

AIDAN

Great.

ROWE

Good.

AIDAN

Perfect.

ROWE

Why is it I am always the doer, and yet Mom still loves you better?

AIDAN

Don't be five.

ROWE

I am five.

AIDAN

And it's not true.

ROWE

I used to do everything that she liked around the house.

I cleaned the windows so the smudges didn't give her headaches.

I even vacuumed in straight lines so the carpet looked even.

And I cut up her lime wedges just the way she liked - do you remember? I would slip them onto the side of her glass like a professional.

AIDAN

God - that is annoying.

ROWE

And no matter what, she always told me that she wished I was a little girl, with smaller feet and a different voice.

AIDAN

You are a girl.

ROWE

She blames me for everything.

AIDAN

You shouldn't have kept feeding her drinks when she got tentacally.

ROWE

It made her feel better.

AIDAN

She's an alcoholic.

ROWE

She was sad.

AIDAN

I know. That's why she cut all her hair off and shoved her head in an oven.

ROWE

I might as well just take this and shove it into my brain.

AIDAN

You don't have the guts.

ROWE

Maybe I'll stab myself so you can see all my guts.

AIDAN

Stop it.

ROWE

I will.

AIDAN

Hold it the other way. Good God - you almost got me.

ROWE

She blames me for everything.

AIDAN

She blames herself.

ROWE

I hate it when people say stuff like that.

AIDAN

Are you crying?

ROWE

No I'm not crying.
I'm sweating - into my eyeballs, because you stress me out.

AIDAN

You are - you are crying like a tiny little fat tiny baby.

ROWE

Go away.

AIDAN

Funny.

ROWE

I mean it.

AIDAN

You're pointing it at yourself.

ROWE

Fine.

AIDAN

I get it, okay.

ROWE

Say it.

AIDAN

I'm sorry.
Put it down.

ROWE

Now you hate me.

AIDAN

Nobody hates you.

ROWE

I won't even eat meat because I don't want them to hate me. Because if you ate someone they would probably resent you and hate you for all your days, and maybe even after them. When I see bugs fighting I want to just run out into the street and lie face down.

AIDAN

You eat meat!

ROWE

Do you think that's why Dad can't stand to be in the same room as me? I'm surprised he didn't give himself a brain tumor with the way he bored holes into me with his stare. I bet his head was full of massive tumors. I don't even remember what color his eyes were.

AIDAN

Brown.

ROWE

They weren't brown. They were red.

AIDAN

They looked red all the time because he refused to wear his glasses.

ROWE

Because squinting makes the veins in your eyes more bloody?

AIDAN

His eyes were brown.

ROWE

I don't remember. His eyes always looked so blank and angry. I could hear him frowning at me in them.

AIDAN

You're too sensitive.

ROWE

Mom wanted me that way, and if you weren't always so un-sensitive, I wouldn't have to make up for it. Do you think I like being like this? You're selfish.

AIDAN

It's insensitive.

ROWE

It feels like -un.

AIDAN

How old are you supposed to be anyway?

ROWE

Why?

Aidan slips into Rowe's mother.

AIDAN

Rowesy, supposey - can you get me a drinky poo my lovey?

ROWE

Okie chokes.

AIDAN

Can you do the little bit of lime thing that you do? Because - you know, the lime makes it look beautiful and smell fresh and free. And strong, can you make it around three, or four.

(she peaks at her through her fingers)

Whatever you think. But more is better.

ROWE

I'm six.

AIDAN

Yes, you're six, but you know. More - and lime. Cause I have the hugest biggest ache in the back of my head. I probably have a lump down in there. Your father probably put it in there when I was sleeping, because he detests me. Bone marrow deep hates. I think he wants to cut my face off. Probably. Your clumsy feet are making me dizzy. Can you stay in the kitchen?

ROWE

Can I go to my room?

AIDAN

Just stay in the kitchen, in case I need another slippy lippy. You're dad will be home soon with his time, his tie, his lie. So just look out the window.

ROWE

It's raining dogs and mice.

AIDAN

Try and catch the drops.

ROWE

How many drops?

AIDAN

It's harder to catch one than a whole bunch.

ROWE

What if I can't?

AIDAN

I used to do that for hours when I was your age. And I would name them planets. Because I always loved the planets when I was you. I made Neptune out of papier-mâché. It was blue and wet like a water drop. But name them on the inside - the wet is all rainy. How old are you again?

ROWE

Seven and a half.

Aidan back to herself.

AIDAN

Because you're acting like a big baby. A big stupid crying baby.

ROWE

Do you want to do this or not?

AIDAN

Someone's coming.

ROWE

Who?

A phone starts ringing.

AIDAN

You left your phone on?

ROWE

It's my Mom. Oh god, she probably needs me.

AIDAN

Don't you dare...

ROWE

Did you get your pills?

Aidan grabs her phone and hangs up.

ROWE (CONT'D)

She was talking.

AIDAN

What are you thinking?

ROWE

What are you drinking?

AIDAN

This is a nightmare.

ROWE

Do you think they heard?

AIDAN

Of course they heard. The whole village heard.
You're the loudest person the world has ever known.

ROWE

That's not true.
What about babies? Or horns? Or lions?

AIDAN

Just keep your damn voice down.

ROWE

It's over. The whole thing - just take
this and shoot me now.

AIDAN

Put it down.

Aidan pulls a silvery shiny bullet out of Rowe's mouth.
She puts it in her pocket.

ROWE

I try and keep them deep down. I don't
like other people seeing them.

AIDAN

Your mettle?

ROWE

I just don't want people to see us.

AIDAN

No one is here.

ROWE

Sometimes it feels like I'm being
watched.

AIDAN

You're paranoid.

ROWE

Like I'm playing a part.

AIDAN

It's a game.

ROWE

When am I not acting?

AIDAN

You're yourself when you're with me.

ROWE

But it's play.

AIDAN

I think they're here now.

ROWE

Shit hell, my eyes are getting all full of blood just like dad's.

AIDAN

It's serious. The men, the guns. Pay attention, things just became deathly real.

ROWE

Get the gun.

Aidan pulls the bullet out of her pocket and aims it.

AIDAN

We'll show them we're more than two girls. We can do it like them.

ROWE

And we need to speak important and serious words. About death, and dying, and wars.

AIDAN

Stay here.

ROWE

You're going to do something?

AIDAN

Course.

ROWE

Usually you're just the one screaming orders.

AIDAN

If you can manage it - be quiet. Which means, don't call your mother and start chatting about all of her new and curious ailments.

ROWE

I forgot to tell you, she thinks she's allergic to gluten again. She thought it had cleared up, but she had a slice of cake, and the shit hit the fan.

AIDAN

I have no words.

ROWE

Because the cat got your tongue?

AIDAN
Just, stay still.

ROWE
I'm honestly so shocked that you're doing something that I couldn't move even if I wanted to.

AIDAN
Put a lid on it.

ROWE
I'll be as quiet as a candle.

AIDAN
A mouse.

ROWE
That's ridiculous.

AIDAN
You're louder than the loudest town crier that ever was.

ROWE
I'll be sullen and silent, like a quiet, serious, important boy. Maybe a choir boy.

AIDAN
Good grief!

Aidan leaves the stage.

2

Rowe climbs up a structure and sits as though perched on a branch.

Rowe pulls out a long strip of light material.

She lets the material drop.

She pulls out something from her mouth, and lets it drop.

Aidan enters.

ROWS
Watch.

Rowe lets a feather drop to the ground.

ROWE
It sounds beautiful.

AIDAN
I heard nothing.

ROWE
It looked like it sounded beautiful. Stop contradicting me.

AIDAN
Why are you up there?

ROWE
I wonder what it would feel like to drop.

AIDAN
Not as splashy as it seems. At the end anyway.

ROWE
At least you would have control over it.

AIDAN
Down, down, down. And splish. You're in would be out, and you would feel the out in the in.

ROWE
That's probably how things will end. It feels like a falling, so it would only be right to just, drop.

AIDAN
Drop.

ROWE
Drop.

AIDAN
Dro-o-o-o-o.

ROWE
-op. P-p-p.

AIDAN
Drop down.

ROWE
You drop down.

AIDAN
What came first, the water or the rain?

ROWE

Do not say egg - because I can tell
you're going to.

AIDAN

You're such a scaredy-cat in cat's
pajamas.

ROWE

Don't say cat.

AIDAN

Look - I don't have all the time in the
world. I never did.

ROWE

I don't understand this place and where I
am, I mean, I know it's my house, but it
looks slightly off.

Do you ever get that. You're doing
something, but you have the idea that
you're doing it at the same time, and you
feel displaced and doubled in on
yourself?

I don't feel like I'm any one drop of the
rain. I'm all of it.

AIDAN

Can you make like the rain, and drop down
from there?

ROWE

I wonder if the rain drops gets stressed
out?

Aidan climbs up next to Rowe, and they both sit, or hang,
like droplets of water.

ROWE (CONT'D)

I cannot believe that I'm back as a drop
again. Worst worse lake.

AIDAN

Luck.

ROWE

That doesn't even make logic.

AIDAN

Sense.

ROWE

I'm tired of always fighting to land on something first, it makes my throat twig dry. It's this urge that I have in the center of me - a competitive flick.

AIDAN

Bone.

ROWE

Stop interrupting.

AIDAN

You are all higgledy-piggledy and topsy-turvy.

ROWE

If I don't get to the ground first my blood curdles right up. I need to wet my tongue, I'm all fired up.

AIDAN

You're translucent.

ROWE

The water inside me is so dry - I always end up with the bad part, and then my blood just boils. One time I was in such a rush to get down that I landed on a dead man. I landed right on his guts. He was already dead but I worry I may have killed him. The thought of it makes me want to get completely blitzed. I need vodka.

AIDAN

I don't care who gets where first, second, or seventh. I just want to land on that male tree right there. Just look at him with his big, muscly arms. And look at that hair. And oh my god, look at those, massive, sturdy, legs. The idea of it makes me drool.

ROWE

Disgusting.

AIDAN

I can't help it - it's all I think about. To land with a splash on his big... branch, would be the biggest relief.

ROWE

That's so grotesque - no wonder I want to drown myself in an ocean of vodka.

AIDAN

I want to land on him, and then I wouldn't care a penny, a pebble, a nickle, if he killed me.

ROWE

You can do what you want with your dirty thoughts, as long as I get there first.

AIDAN

If you go anywhere near him, I'll pop you with a needle.

ROWE

Do you think I like being like this? I wait hundreds of years to form into a droplet, and then, no matter what water is inside of me, I have to drop as quick as possible. I don't even enjoy it, and it makes me want to go back in the bottle.

AIDAN

On the bottle.

ROWE

It literally waggon's me to drink.

AIDAN

That, is not right!

ROWE

The only part I like is the fall - and it lasts for a plip on the radar. My whole existence is pointless.

AIDAN

It's blip, and all I want to do is procreate.

ROWE

You are foul, like a flying fowl.

AIDAN

Why don't you just go off and drink yourself to death. And get your words in order.

ROWE

Oh, don't be such a phrase-monger. You butcher.

Rowe lets go and drops.

AIDAN

Carnations.

Aidan climbs down slowly. Sexually.

Rowe walks to the edge of the stage and stops, pointing out beyond.

AIDAN (CONT'D)

You can't go out there.

ROWE

I can't tell if I'm in or out?

AIDAN

Stop. Right there - you'll crack, and it will all come undone.

ROWE

Who made you god?

AIDAN

It's a rule - so you can't. And you can't just kill someone.

ROWE

But look.

AIDAN

You can't just kill who you want.

ROWE

I could if I wanted to. If no one knew. People eat eggs all the time and no one cares.

Rowe crosses the line.

AIDAN

(yells)

ROWE.

Rowe and Aidan get into a bathtub. The bathtub is a boat. They row. They sing.

ROWE & AIDAN

Row, row, row your boat, gently down the stream. Merrily, merrily, merrily, merrily. Life is but a dream.

ROWE

A dream.

AIDAN

A dream.

ROWE

A dream.

AIDAN

This is not a dream Rowe.

3

ROWE

You said my name.

AIDAN

You were getting really loud.

ROWE

I was as quiet as a mouse.

AIDAN

I guess if a mouse is the size of an elephant and louder than a hyena.

ROWE

I hated it anyway.

AIDAN

I loved it - when I'm different, time is so soft and real. It's mine.

ROWE

I hate guns, and screwdrivers. The next one should be about crocheting.

AIDAN

Crocheting is boring, and slow, and flat.

ROWE

You are such a man.

AIDAN

I love blood and guts, and body parts. That doctor is so lucky.

ROWE

It's a TV show.

AIDAN

Same.

ROWE

But do you think he gets the same thrill that the real doctor did?

AIDAN

Or maybe now the real doctor gets more of a thrill because of the way *he* did it?

ROWE

You just want to stick things into people.

AIDAN

Of course I do. Why should only men get to do it?

ROWE

Did you see how much cocaine he did. So much that all his veins collapsed. Collapsed. Like the fallen twin towers.

AIDAN

Veins are not like buildings.

ROWE

Mine are.

AIDAN

Collapsed ones look like sausages that are like, "fuck it." And then fry out into every shape and size. Sometimes with holes for good measure.

ROWE

Veins do not look like that. And seriously - don't ever say that word again. Pork is creepy.

AIDAN

Veins are amazing. They're magic.

ROWE

I'm still thinking about pigs.

AIDAN

Don't.

ROWE

But they're so cute. My Mom used to take me to see them at the farm all the time. And I named them.

"Parsley and Sage."

They would loll around in the water and tumble over each other. I imagined they were sisters.

I wonder what it would be called if people were turned into meat.

AIDAN

We should be sisters again.

ROWE

We should.

AIDAN

Did I tell you about that girl whose blood we collected? She almost lost consciousness, pulled her pants down and started shitting in the trash can.

ROWE

Like a pig.

AIDAN

I know, the poor piggie. We had to lay her down on the floor of the van, clean her up - and then she bounced up like a spring chicken and went off on her merry way.

Like nothing happened.

ROWE

I can not do the giving blood thing. It's making me nauseous just thinking about it.

AIDAN

You're nauseous because I mentioned sausages.

ROWE

Ugh, I'm going to kill your tongue.

AIDAN

And then eat it on a hot dog bun.

ROWE

Stop.

AIDAN

Bacon.

ROWE

I'm getting sweaty all over.

AIDAN

Which is why you named them Parsley and Sage - because really you were fighting the urge to eat them.

ROWE

No.

AIDAN

Why do you always want to talk about it if you're so sensitive?

ROWE

I don't know? I like feeling squeamish. I want to see how much I can handle. But I hate it.

AIDAN

So shooting up is fine?

ROWE

Why do they say shooting?

AIDAN

Because it's violent.
Like a gun.

ROWE

Either ways - things going in - fine.
Stuff coming out - no way in hell.
Which could also be the mantra of my whole life.

AIDAN

It's not such a sexy idea when people come in looking like their insides are trying to run away from their own bodies... their veins crawling out of them... Yelling -- "please get me away from my own self because I'm killing me."
"This one is committing suicide in a socially acceptable way, and I don't appreciate it." "Help."

ROWE

Are you finished?

AIDAN

"Please plop me in a more grateful host body." "Because... seriously, look at me."

ROWE

I can not stop thinking about him
shooting up in his toes.

AIDAN

Toes are so bizarre. They're like weird
banana heads.

ROWE

It's triggered something in my brain - I
have to get a needle, stick it in my
toes, and shoot.

AIDAN

You can't stand needles. I've seen you
pass out from the flu shot more times
than Stephen's been laid.

ROWE

You don't know us.

AIDAN

It's like you just feel bad for him.

ROWE

That's a horrible thing to say.

AIDAN

Poor Stephen.

ROWE

Poor Stephen.

AIDAN

Why don't you just leave him?

ROWE

He's lonely. You're married!

AIDAN

We're kind of married.

ROWE

How is Teddy?

AIDAN

Teddy is a bear. A teddy type one. And if
he had a choice he would choose to be a
purple one!
And if he had his way, he would probably
name me "dolly."

ROWE

You don't like him.

AIDAN

Does anyone really like anyone when
they've know each other past ten years?

ROWE

Can we talk about us?

AIDAN

No - we can't. And you know why.

ROWE

God.

AIDAN

Definitely not him.

ROWE

What can we talk about?

AIDAN

I just want to be different people again.

ROWE

I would rather not. It's exhausting, and
I don't like it.

AIDAN

Since when?

ROWE

It scares me.
You scare me.

AIDAN

Oh please.

ROWE

Look at my building.

Rowe shows Aidan a vein in her arm.

AIDAN

That is a great vein - I wish I could eat
it.

ROWE

Grim.

AIDAN

That is grim.

Aidan runs her finger lightly across Rowe's vein in her
arm.

ROWE

Even the idea of a needle on it makes me woozy.

Rowe puts her hand on top of Aidan's and presses it down on the vein.

Rowe kisses Aidan's hand.

AIDAN

I better go.

ROWE

You always do this. You come over, and you're funny, and then it always turns out like this.

AIDAN

Fuck you.

ROWE

You reel me in - with all your humor and conversation, and everything you do, and then you turn on me. And I'm left wriggling on a pathetic hook. Pathetically attached.

AIDAN

You're just bored.

ROWE

You're hiding your disdain like a massive spider that is staring at me on the kitchen floor.

AIDAN

Can we do that?

ROWE

What?

AIDAN

The spider scene.

ROWE

I don't want to be a spider.

AIDAN

I can tell Teddy to pick up something for his dinner. He's probably just counting all the cracks on the wall.

ROWE

We're fighting.

AIDAN

Yes, but you're liking it too much, and that's what the therapist said to do.

ROWE

For you and Teddy.

AIDAN

I'm not about to do it with Teddy - are you joking?

ROWE

Then how is it supposed to work?

AIDAN

Oh, I don't care if it works. I just go because if I don't he starts cleaning all the windows six trillion times over. He rubs his hands open, and I can't stand the sound of it.

ROWE

Why don't you just leave him?

AIDAN

If I was going to do that, I should have done it before he went and fully committed to it. Or you should have made up your mind before you knew I was trapped.

ROWE

I didn't do that and that is an evil thing to think. Let alone say.

AIDAN

And now you have me forever because of that guy and what we did.

ROWE

Don't say it out loud. It didn't happen.

AIDAN

That's ridiculous and you know it.

ROWE

You win - you can go if you want. You can. Just don't punish me right now, I can't take it.

(MORE)

ROWE (CONT'D)

You make me feel like I'm thirteen again, and getting told off by Mr. Claver - and made to feel stupid and small.

AIDAN

Why Mr. Claver?

ROWE

He hated me because I talked all the time, and was loud, and probably because he wasn't popular at school when he was a kid.

When I had that scar on the side of my eye he kept making me go to the bathroom to wash it off, because he said, in front of the whole class, that I drew pen on my face for attention.

Another time he told me to go and wash the mascara off my eyes, that I wasn't supposed to wear make-up to school. So I went to the bathroom, but of course, I didn't have any on, so when I came back he pressed his fingers onto my eyelashes, and then pressed my eyeballs in. With his horrible fingers that smelt like old, and decay, and cigarettes.

I was grossed out - and said it. He got so angry he went purple red across his cheeks and nose, and the lines in his forehead jiggled, which made me laugh hysterically. He made me stand in the corner with my hands on my head, facing the wall. He made me take my shoes off. And then he just always gawked at me, with his horrible little beady black eyes, and with his yucky lines on his forehead. Up and down the halls, and in his class, like he was threatening that he was going to do something.

If I saw him now, it would be hard for me not to wanna take a bat to him. To his stupid eyes, and his ridiculous forehead.

AIDAN

Or push him off a cliff?

ROWE

No one would know it wasn't an accident.

AIDAN

You can't kill people just because you won't get found out.

ROWE

People do that all the time - what do you think war is?

AIDAN

Yes, and they are horrible, terrible people.

ROWE

I'm a horrible terrible person.
And you're not much better.

AIDAN

Maybe I should leave.

ROWE

No please, I'm sorry I said that. You are so much better than me. In every way.

AIDAN

We can't be together without fighting.

ROWE

I would never kill a cat. Or even hurt a dog's feelings.
And I would chat all day to a bird, if I had a bird.
I used to own this fat orangey-brown fish when I was a kid. He was so fat because I fed him too often and my mom was afraid he was going to get diabetes. You can't imagine how much I loved him.
I just want to grow old with you, keep a garden, and own a hundred animals.

AIDAN

I want a baby.

ROWE

You can't have a baby with a Teddy bear.

AIDAN

You know you wouldn't want one. You hate people. And it's just all too much. We couldn't bring a child into this.
We're both damaged.
And broken.
And wretched.
I doubt we could even keep a cat alive.

ROWE

We can undo it.

AIDAN

You can't undo the dead. It's dead and dead, and done, and over, and dead.

ROWE

OK deady deads a lot.

AIDAN

I relate to spiders because they are so detested. Horrible rapists are even scared of tiny harmless spiders.

ROWE

What does it mean about us that we always end up doing such awful things?

AIDAN

They're not real.

ROWE

There's something inside of me, deep inside, that comes up with it, and goes along with it.

AIDAN

Just because we act it out, doesn't mean it's real.

ROWE

I think that's exactly what it means.

AIDAN

No different than just thinking about it.

ROWE

I ordinarily wouldn't think of it.

AIDAN

Don't blame me for your dark spot.

ROWE

I'm just saying, if you can think it up, it means that it was there to begin with, which means what? That I was born with a blighted soul?

AIDAN

You don't have to do anything about it.

ROWE

We do, do something about it.

AIDAN
Only pretend.

ROWE
Sometimes.

AIDAN
You wouldn't blame a novelist for what he writes.

ROWE
Yes, because they're the ones that put the ideas out there. For anyone, which is worse.

AIDAN
Our stuff is isolated.

Aidan exits.

ROWE
Isolated.
That's how I feel when you leave, so isolated, alone, stuck on an island without a shovel. I can only feel peace in chaos.
There's nothing to fight for without war, and no calm without blood.
Can you hear me?
Can you help me?

4

Aidan walks out. She "plays" Stephen.

Rowe points at Aidan as though with a gun, and fires.
Aidan drops to the ground.

ROWE
Did it hurt?

AIDAN
Do it again.

Rowe directs her hands at Aidan, claps them. Aidan drops down.

ROWE
You never do it right.

AIDAN
This is a lot higher up than it seems from down there.

ROWE

I thought men weren't afraid of heights?

AIDAN

I thought women were quiet!

ROWE

You're not going to do it huh?

AIDAN

You do it.

ROWE

I've done it five hundred times. I do it in my dreams, and I always see myself hit the ground - which is not what they say should happen.

AIDAN

Why are you always testing me like this?

ROWE

You said you would.

AIDAN

What if I hit my head on the way down?

ROWE

You have to jump out.

AIDAN

Let's do something else.

ROWE

I'll count to three.

AIDAN

Three is unlucky.

ROWE

I'll do it with you.

AIDAN

Fine.

They stand at the edge.

ROWE

Ready.

AIDAN

I don't know about this.

ROWE

One. Two.

Rowe pushes him. A loud noise of some kind. Aidan sits down.

Rowe looks down, horrified.

ROWE (CONT'D)

STEPHEN.

5

Rowe sits down next to Aidan.

ROWE

I could just drop, it would be so easy.
As easy as peasy, as easy as eating pies.

AIDAN

Pork pies.

ROWE

It would be so easy to just... push
someone.

Rowe pushes Aidan gently with her pointing finger, Aidan falls down dramatically.

ROWE (CONT'D)

And it would all be over. As simple as
pulling a trigger.

AIDAN

Not quite as easy as that.

ROWE

You could trick someone - they wouldn't
see it coming.

Rowe all of a sudden pretends she is a lion and roar's at Aidan to scare her.

AIDAN

It would be easy to lose your footing and
accidentally fall.

ROWE

It would be so easy to make an accident
on purpose.

AIDAN

I can't tell if you are joking.

ROWE
No one would ever know.

AIDAN
You would know. I would know.

ROWE
I can't do this anymore.

AIDAN
Let's go.

ROWE
You weren't the one that did it - so you
can just go back down and act like
nothing's happened.

AIDAN
That has nothing to do with this.

ROWE
It feels the same.

AIDAN
Come on.

ROWE
Get off me.

AIDAN
Get away from there.

ROWE
Stop.

They struggle.

Aidan falls.

Noise.

Rowe gets down on her knees.

ROWE (CONT'D)
Noooooooo.

Aidan leaves the stage.

6

Rowe walks along as though walking on the side of the
mountain.

She looks down.

Steps back from the edge.

Lies flat on her stomach and lets her arms and head dangle downwards.

1

Aidan enters, moving like a spider.

Aidan tries to get Rowe's attention, but Rowe shifts around to avoid eye contact.

ROWE

You're a strange looking thing.
Do you know you have a million eyes?

AIDAN

Just eight - like you.

ROWE

Hum, I think you may need glasses, god knows I do. Mine throb constantly.

AIDAN

Have you ever looked in the mirror?

ROWE

A mirror?

AIDAN

It's a glass that looks back at you, and you see who you are.

ROWE

I've got a patch of terrible arthritis in my back, it crunches every time I move. Sometimes I think I'll snap into eight pieces, and I think I would honestly be fine if someone stepped on me and ended it all.

AIDAN

What if you lie on your back?

ROWE

If I lie on my back I'll never get out of it. And then what if I'm stuck on my back, and don't die? That would be perfectly boring and tiresome.
Your hat is so thorough, and orderly.

AIDAN

I wove it myself.

ROWE

To be honest, I don't have the patience for it. I mean, don't get me wrong, I appreciate it when it's done, but I always get lost in the getting there, and end up tying myself in a giant knot. It's tiring.
I'm so tired.

AIDAN

You can have it if you want.

ROWE

Really?
No one ever made me anything.
The weather made my vegetables - but they're not people.

AIDAN

In your whole life?

ROWE

My husband bought me stuff, stupid stuff, like rings and things. But I don't know what he thought I was going to do with them. So I just buried them in the garden by the radishes.
I prefer practical things, like chairs, and fires, and tissues, and hats. Onions - you can put onions in nearly anything. Plus my hands are beautiful by themselves.

AIDAN

Your poor hands, it looks as though their veins could explode any second.

ROWE

My eyes are so tired - they feel like they could just pop right out into my hands.

AIDAN

They look like they ache. You should close them.

ROWE

I'm sick of being here.
I miss my chair by the fire.

AIDAN

How did you get here?

ROWE

My dog escaped, and then I got lost. Nothing looks familiar, or as it did. I don't even know if I've been here before - it's the same but the colors are slightly off. I think. I couldn't say for sure, because I don't know if this is what I would have said if the same thing happened yesterday.

AIDAN

I didn't know spider's could own dogs.

ROWE

Of course they can, you silly bit of a thing.

AIDAN

You can't go anywhere now.

ROWE

Why?

AIDAN

While you were chatting away about your beautiful hands, your rings and things, I threaded a wall around you.

ROWE

You did that so fast.

AIDAN

You're going to be stuck on my threads until you die, of dehydration, or something. And then I'll pick you apart - if I feel like it.

ROWE

But now I'm stuck. And I don't know where I am, or where Barnaby is? I've forgotten everything, and I'm so tired I could laugh.

AIDAN

Barnaby?

ROWE

My dog.

AIDAN

That's ridiculous, you're ridiculous. And you're trapped.

ROWE

I'm sorry if you thought I was mean.

AIDAN

I don't care about meanness. It bounces off me like images off glass. It doesn't go in - like you thought it would.

But you're not kind.

And kindness counts for more than onions, chairs, and Barnaby's.

Though I might have done this anyway, even if you were kind.

ROWE

Why?

AIDAN

Because it was easy.

ROWE

What do you think will happen to my chair when I die. Will it just carry on sitting there do you think?

AIDAN

The chair isn't a person. It doesn't think it's a person, and you're not either.

ROWE

To think that it will just carry on - with all the memories. Living while I rot. It's a betrayal - chairs are not loyal.

And my house should die too, if it had a shred of any decency.

I don't know if I want to be stepped on after all.

What I really wanted was to lie down in a graveyard.

There's something comforting to the idea that graves just line up in rows, and take up a certain amount of space, and it's all clean and cut? You will die and that's the area you get, it's known and it's in four lines. Perfect.

Like chairs.

AIDAN

For as much as you profess order, it's hard not to observe that you say a lot of stuff, in no order whatsoever.

ROWE

It wasn't always like that. But honestly, I just try to be honest - and I can't ever quite grasp it. But it's all I can do - for as ridiculous as you think I seem.

AIDAN

Here.

ROWE

Really?

AIDAN

Try it on.

ROWE

What do I look like?

AIDAN

If you had a mirror - none of this would have happened.

ROWE

Now that I don't, just tell me.
Be true.

AIDAN

If you hold it, just right, in the light, you can see strands of purple.

ROWE

You're nice.
In your own way.

AIDAN

I want to watch you suffer.

ROWE

I don't think I have enough time left.

AIDAN

Do you think you will cry?

ROWE

I can if you want.

AIDAN

I do.
And can you plead?

ROWE

Honestly I couldn't even if I wanted.

AIDAN

Fine. Then I'll thread you all in and you won't be able to see out.

ROWE

Then you won't be able to see me.

AIDAN

Do what I want you to.

ROWE

You can do that - but you still don't have my words.

AIDAN

Say it.

ROWE

I can't say it.

AIDAN

Try.

ROWE

I don't know what you want me to say.

Rowe starts to grab her heart as though she is having a heart attack and can barely breathe.

AIDAN

Say it.

ROWE

Help.

AIDAN

Now.

Rowe collapses, takes in one breath, and falls.

Not moving, Aidan comes in closer and closer. Nudges her.

Suddenly Rowe grabs Aidan's arm, then her face, squashing her face with the whole of her hand. Rowe pushes Aidan's face down to the ground and then sits on top of her.

ROWE

I'm. Just. Being. Honest.

Rowe jumps off of her.

AIDAN

Liar.

ROWE

You thought I was what? Sixty? Sixty five?

I do that sometimes.

AIDAN

What are you doing?

ROWE

I'm thinking about eating you. If I'm honest. Perhaps.

AIDAN

Are you going to give me a sedative?

ROWE

If you play nice.

AIDAN

You're just saying what I said.

ROWE

How does it sound?

AIDAN

Different.

ROWE

Now you tell me.

AIDAN

I'm not much of a talker.

ROWE

Tell me.

AIDAN

I like the winter. All year long I can't wait for winter.

I spin webs and then the water sticks and freezes to them - and they sparkle. Like diamonds.

And people come along, drawn by the shimmer - and they get stuck. They look perfect. Stuck on diamonds and glass.

(MORE)

AIDAN (CONT'D)

And sometimes they scream, and their screams cut like ice. And they're stuck on ice, and it's all captured, in one drop.

ROWE

Don't try and make your killings sound beautiful.

AIDAN

It takes me all night, all night long to build it. And sometimes someone comes along, and in a one fell swoop brushes the whole thing away.

ROWE

I want to hear your death. Your grave.

AIDAN

I don't know.

ROWE

Do it like how I did it.

AIDAN

I don't like grave-sites.

ROWE

Don't be ridiculous.

AIDAN

I went to the cemetery where all my grandmothers people were buried. It was cold, and dark - even in the middle of the day.
The church was barely standing. Decrepid. Dreary. All but completely decayed. And around it, the stones, with half eroded words, cracked and broken, like an earthquake had ravaged the place.
No, I don't like graves. It smells of grey and it smells of loss and cold. I got the impression that they had been tricked into going in, and now were trapped there.
Which is why everything was splintered open.
Graves are just the living, playing dead.

ROWE

That's not how I said it.

AIDAN

Let me go and I'll go back to weaving,
and if I ever see you again I'll scurry
away and not even look.

ROWE

What makes you so special?

AIDAN

My work - it's beautiful and it can be
destroyed in a second. So that's why -
only things that can be ruined that
easily are truly precious. They hold on
by a thread, and live on the edge,
dangerous because they're so close to
death.
That's why.
And it's usually people like you that
kill it.

ROWE

Don't be arrogant. It's all the same.

AIDAN

Buying something beautiful is not the
same as toiling over it, and making it
with your own hands.

ROWE

I love it the same as you love yours.

AIDAN

You don't know what love is.

ROWE

You're not crying are you?

AIDAN

Yes, but I won't spill a drop.

ROWE

Not one drop?

AIDAN

No.

ROWE

I could poke you in your eyes with a
needle. Then you would cry drops of
blood.

AIDAN

It wouldn't be tears.

ROWE

You're brave at least.

AIDAN

What about my dog? She's lost.

ROWE

You don't have a dog - I'm the one with the lost dog.

AIDAN

I do. She might be over by my radishes. Look - she is, she's digging a grave over there.

ROWE

What are you talking about?

AIDAN

The grave. It's all in there - the whole thing. All the truth of it, and if ridiculous was a hat, and honest was a chair, you made them, and they're in there.

ROWE

You're speaking gobbledygook.

AIDAN

I'm getting old. I've almost lost myself, I'm coming off.

Aidan starts to take her clothes off.

ROWE

What are you doing?

AIDAN

I don't know. I'm separating.

Aidan lays her clothes out on the ground, Rowe starts to arrange them in the shape of a body. Rowe talks to the clothes on the floor.

ROWE

But I didn't get to end you.

Aidan kisses Rowe on her neck, holds her underneath her arms, and lays her down next to her clothes.

8

Rowe and Aidan exchange their clothes throughout this scene.

AIDAN

It's freezing.

ROWE

Winter snuck up on us again, like a frigid wench.

AIDAN

You talk about winter like he's your longest friend, keeps disappearing, and then pops back up -round the corner.

ROWE

I like feeling cold and getting warm in fluffy sweaters.
I love blankets. And winter is a she. Solidly female, feminine when she snows, feminist in her ice - reclaiming the ground.

AIDAN

We should only ever talk about the weather. The cold, crisp wintry weather, in all his silvery splendor.

ROWE

It's so hard to stay myself when I'm around you. I think I know, but then I get confused, I'm all frayed around the edges.

AIDAN

Just drop the whole thing.

ROWE

My blood?

AIDAN

No - your clothes.

ROWE

When I think about my blood pumping so close to the surface, to the outside, and the thin layer of skin that clothes it - I wonder how it doesn't just pop right through.

AIDAN

I would say that your head is in the clouds, but it's more that it's in the sand.

ROWE

If you have anything nice to say, say nothing but the weather.

AIDAN

Say nothing at all.

Aidan and Rowe both look up.

A moment.

9

Aidan and Rowe exchange clothing again.

ROWE

I'm freezing.

AIDAN

Winter got on top of us like a silly cherry tart.

ROWE

You're cheating on me with her huh?

AIDAN

You're caught in a snow cloud.

ROWE

What shall we do when they get here?

AIDAN

Who?

ROWE

Them, they'll find out about all the things - and it will get bad and they'll put a leash around my cloud.

AIDAN

It's fine. If you say anything wrong, we'll just erase it and start over.

ROWE

Can we do that? I thought when time drops you couldn't get it back?

AIDAN

On the clock it always comes back around.

ROWE

But it's gone. We're dropping and
shedding time every moment. It's gone.
It's gone. It's gone.

AIDAN

Drop.

ROWE

Gone.

AIDAN

Drop.

ROWE

Drop.

AIDAN

Drop.

ROWE

I forgot all the words.

10

Rowe sits in a bathtub holding a bullet on her palm.

Aidan has an old fashioned camera.

ROWE

I'm freezing to death in here. Or is it
you over there?

AIDAN

Stay still.

ROWE

I cannot believe you have me holding a
drop of water, inside a drop of water.
It's ridiculous.

AIDAN

Can you just bite the bullet and stop
complaining?

ROWE

Why, are you going pull the trigger?

AIDAN

I just always pictured you as water, and the best way to capture it is in a drop. Stop talking.

ROWE

How can I stop talking. There's something in my eye.

AIDAN

It's probably just the whole world. Or an eyelash. Don't move.

ROWE

How can I not move - it's freezing in here. Why am I in a bathtub?

AIDAN

Because you're rowing on the sea.

ROWE

And why are you out there and I'm in here?

AIDAN

It's just better that way. When you're in charge people get pushed off of the sides of things, and then we're at each other's throats.

ROWE

Can I hang off of your neck?

AIDAN

You'll end up hanging from a tree.

ROWE

I thought it would all end around my voice.

AIDAN

Stop talking. You're making it worse.

ROWE

At least make me blue, I look good in blue.

ROWE

I love blankets.

AIDAN
You're a blanket whore.

ROWE
I love you more.

AIDAN
I want a belly full of arms and legs.
I have an urge to nurture, even though I
am the most un-nurturing person that ever
was. It's inside of me, but it's coming
from everywhere.

ROWE
Can we talk about our throats?

AIDAN
Why talk about the fight that we're not
fighting about anymore? I can't even
remember...

ROWE
It happens all the time.

AIDAN
You're trying to make one right now.

ROWE
This is so immature and embarrassing.

AIDAN
In front of who?

ROWE
Myself. I'm embarrassed that you're doing
this.

AIDAN
You're not two people. You're just the
one.

ROWE
You make me feel like I'm fourteen
different people.

AIDAN
Is that why you have so many blankets?

ROWE
I have so many blankets so I can climb in
them all and escape.

AIDAN
I could help you with that.

ROWE

You're trying to escape by not talking about it.

AIDAN

And you talk so much about it that you cover it up in something else entirely.

ROWE

It feels like we should let it out, even though something else says it's better to suppress.

Maybe resolution is a myth.

AIDAN

My mother wanted to always talk, talk, and talk about it.

But it wasn't really talking - it was like she wanted to skin an animal alive with her words, and then take it apart bit by bit, put it in a blender and make soup out of it.

Apparently she just needed a warm blooded person in the room, because her issue was never the issue at hand.

ROWE

I'm not your mother.

AIDAN

It's futile to talk it out. It's better to just ignore it so we don't end up making another baby.

ROWE

What was it?

AIDAN

Usually about my Dad, and one of his affairs. Affairs, accidents, or "incidents," as they called them. A necklace here, a note there, spending an endless amount of money, with money he didn't have.

My mother flattened him, and he would go out and find women that would give him a thimble of attention, because any attention was better than her attention. And then she would obsess over the most ridiculous things - like the coats, the silverware, or something about the cat.

(MORE)

AIDAN (CONT'D)

But really it was about Dad, and how Dad would leave loose ends and messy shame all about town. So she emasculated him. She dehumanized us. It was a nightmare.

ROWE

No - what was the thing we were fighting about?

AIDAN

Oh.

ROWE

I can't remember how it even started?

AIDAN

See!

ROWE

Either way, I don't like this.

AIDAN

Jesus, even talking about fighting, or not wanting to fight, turns into a fight.

ROWE

I thought you wanted to.

AIDAN

This exact argument has happened before. It's like a broken record that keeps playing the same part over and over - because of what we did.

ROWE

Do not talk about that.

AIDAN

So talk!

ROWE

The whole thing feels like it was a dream.

AIDAN

Can we not analyze it.

ROWE

You tried to strangle me.

AIDAN

You tricked me.

ROWE

Because you were going to kill me.

AIDAN

You killed me.

ROWE

I am you.

AIDAN

I feel like you always change the rules.

ROWE

That one pill you gave me for sleep gave me the worst dreams.

I thought you were Stephen and that I pushed you off the side of the mountain. But then you were you and I accidentally pushed you off, and then I almost accidentally threw myself off. I couldn't stop it. And it exhausted me.

AIDAN

Maybe you want to kill me.

ROWE

I woke up in the bath tub at two in the morning, which I don't remember running! I could have drowned.

AIDAN

Don't take them.

ROWE

But I can't sleep.

AIDAN

I've heard you snore before!

ROWE

When there is something that works, my brain becomes immediately immune to it - so it only lasts three nights at best.

AIDAN

It doesn't work like that.

ROWE

It does for me.

AIDAN

You shouldn't drink so much caffeine.

ROWE

But then I can't wake up.

AIDAN

I thought you couldn't fall asleep?

ROWE

I can't.
It's like an in-between state. Foggy.
Gluey.

AIDAN

So you can't fall asleep, and you can't wake up?

ROWE

You're making me feel how my doctor makes me feel.

AIDAN

I'm not your doctor.

ROWE

I'm not your mother.

AIDAN

Sometimes it makes sense why dogs bite people.

ROWE

Now I feel how my Dad makes me feel.

AIDAN

What has he got to do with this?

ROWE

He's a pusher. He pushes everyone around. He pushed me through doors, pushed me through school, he pushed me into everything - he would have pushed my brain around if he could have taken it out. And the truth is, he just didn't like that I'd grown breasts.

AIDAN

The reason you can't sleep has nothing to do with your breasts.

ROWE

Hardly anything works for me. And when it does, it goes away - which makes me wonder if it's all in my head. And don't say anything...

AIDAN

I despise my breasts. They are the bane of my childhood, adulthood, death-hood.

ROWE

I love your breasts.

AIDAN

Because you don't have to carry them around.

ROWE

I'll carry them for you!

AIDAN

I'm not talking about chicken breasts. I'm talking about real life meat.

ROWE

I would skip over the moon to have breasts your size.

AIDAN

I've contemplated slicing them off since twelve.

ROWE

Shut your mouth.

AIDAN

I think Bear likes them. He stares at them sometimes, like he stares at the wall and the floor - it's not reassuring! Poor Teddy.

ROWE

Bless his head.

AIDAN

Let's not talk about it.

ROWE

You never talk about you.

AIDAN

You mainly talk about yourself, and when I do say something it's like you're not really listening.

ROWE

Good god.

AIDAN

You forget my brother's names all the time. And you're the one always having some kind of a crisis. So...

ROWE

Geez. We're supposed to be talking about your tits - not what a horrible person I am!

AIDAN

We can't even fight without talking!

ROWE

Now you're going to threaten to leave? Because you're turning over a new branch.

AIDAN

You're pretending you don't want me to, so you can keep up with the charade.

ROWE

Which one?

AIDAN

The one where you're in love with me.

ROWE

I remember your brother Patrick. You and your sister dressed him up like a little girl all the time, and used to laugh when he cried.

AIDAN

I feel bad about that.

ROWE

You got into a fight with a girl at school because she was trying to walk like you, you turned around, slapped her, and pushed her into a bush. She got berry stains all over her shirt, and you talked about the stains for a solid month straight.

AIDAN

Well I felt bad about it.

ROWE

You shouldn't.

AIDAN

My Dad got my Mom an aquarium for her birthday one year.

(MORE)

AIDAN (CONT'D)

It was one of the only presents he ever got her. And we all went with her while she picked out her fish. Which of course we couldn't afford. And she got this one, this really expensive beautiful one, with a long purple tail.

And we all loved it. And the tank and the fish were my mom's pride and joy.

Any question of love and my Dad always retorted with, "I got you that damn fucking tank didn't I?"

One day, I went downstairs, and my Mom or someone had left the lid off the top - and that one, the one with the purple tail was on the carpet, and flapping about.

And I thought for sure it had committed suicide, just like my uncle with the frizzly hair - jumped out of the tank when no one was looking because she was sick and tired of hearing my Mom and Dad fight. And I felt jealous. Because the fish had gotten an easy out. So I went and got the vacuum, vacuumed her up - shut the lid, and carried on!

ROWE

Fish don't commit suicide.

AIDAN

I realize that Rowe - but at the time, it's just what made sense.

ROWE

Do you think it was your Dad?

AIDAN

I just made it up.

ROWE

The suicide?

AIDAN

The whole of it.

ROWE

Why?

AIDAN

I don't know.

My stories are all sad. They start sad, go no where, and then end up being even sadder.

(MORE)

AIDAN (CONT'D)

Which also sounds like every relationship
I've ever been in!

ROWE

That story was definitely not, not sad.
Why do you do that?

AIDAN

I don't know. I guess I just do it to see
if you'll believe me. But then when I'm
telling it, it feels like I own it - so I
just go further.

ROWE

What about the one where your mom ate
you?

AIDAN

What?

ROWE

The one where your mom picked you apart
because your dad cheated, or some such
nonsense?

AIDAN

That's not how it went.

ROWE

You can't even remember what you said can
you?

AIDAN

Come on, it's not like I killed anyone.

ROWE

That's debatable.

AIDAN

I didn't have to tell you.

ROWE

I'm sure that's what every liar thinks.

AIDAN

I'm hardly a liar.

ROWE

What would you call it?

AIDAN

It was a joke.

ROWE

You're terrible at jokes.

AIDAN

There was a kid in my class at school, Travis I think his name was. He started this whole company where he wrote letters to poor old lonely men, posing as beautiful women. He made millions. This one guy lived out of his car, and sent his social security checks to him. He's a real liar.

ROWE

How do I know you didn't just make that up?

AIDAN

It was on the news.

ROWE

It's not a competition, a lie's a lie. And it's not just the biggest lie that gets the prize, you all get prizes! Bad ones.

AIDAN

Travis made millions. He had a Jaguar and a Rolls Royce.

ROWE

But now he's behind bars.

AIDAN

No - he died of lung cancer.

ROWE

Jesus.

AIDAN

I'm not going to sit here and be lectured - by you of all people.

ROWE

If you can't be true with me - after everything, then what? Are you honest with yourself?

AIDAN

That's a decrepid and tired sentiment. I don't even know what it is I'm feeling more than half the time, let alone be honest about it.

(MORE)

AIDAN (CONT'D)

And then if I can catch it and am honest about it, it changes, again, again, and again.

ROWE

Be honest with me.

AIDAN

It's easier to be honest with people I don't know.

ROWE

Did your Dad ever get your Mom a present?

AIDAN

He got her binoculars and a bird book for Christmas one year.

ROWE

Are you sure?

AIDAN

Do you want to know or not?

ROWE

Why binoculars?

AIDAN

She adored birds. But she never used them. I think she wanted to, but nature and birds were probably too much to take after being in the house all day, with all the crap and all the dust. And I think she liked the idea of the birds better than the actual birds. She didn't want to ruin it. I think. I don't know. I don't think she ever took them out of the case.

ROWE

Why birds?

AIDAN

Her mother had a yellow canary.

ROWE

Why didn't she just leave if it was so horrible?

AIDAN

You know. Sometimes things aren't as bad as they really are. You question your tolerance. Sometimes you are sure things have to get better.

(MORE)

AIDAN (CONT'D)

People talk themselves into shitty
wretched situations all the time.

ROWE

Why don't you hate her?

AIDAN

I felt bad for her.
And at least if she was still fighting at
me she had life, and hadn't fallen in,
and under.

ROWE

(pointing to Aidan's face)
She marked you.

AIDAN

If I hated her, it would be giving in.

ROWE

It annoys me to no end when people refuse
to be negative, and bitchy, and yucky
about shit shitty things. They're the
worst kind of people, poking and prodding
with their smiles, and kinds.

AIDAN

I'm hardly a ball of sunshine!

ROWE

You don't have to bawl in a corner, just
be real.

AIDAN

No one wants the real.

ROWE

Yes they do.

AIDAN

No, because it turns out real is
tiresome, and it looks peculiar and
sounds stunted.

ROWE

You need to let it out.

AIDAN

Catharsis is a myth.

ROWE

Good - because I thought you were the
tragedy.

AIDAN

She's gone now, and the whole thing is a dream.

ROWE

Was it you?

AIDAN

What?

ROWE

I'm the only one that knew.

AIDAN

Knew what?

ROWE

You were with her.

AIDAN

No I wasn't.

ROWE

You were.

AIDAN

What are you talking about?

ROWE

I followed you, because I followed you everywhere.

AIDAN

Why are you saying that?

ROWE

I understand why you did. You were just a kid.

AIDAN

I'm tired of playing games.

ROWE

Maybe we need to go back to the beginning - where it started.

AIDAN

You said we shouldn't say it out loud.

ROWE

I can't wrap my heart around it.

AIDAN

Fine.

ROWE
Should we?

AIDAN
Let's eat.

12

Rowe walks in front of Aidan. Rowe "slips" into Aidan's mother.

AIDAN
Why did you cut your hair off?

ROWE
It was weighing me down. Down, down.
Everything is always down.

AIDAN
Can you stop - you're walking so fast and
my legs are going like this.

ROWE
If I stop, everything will stop, and I
can't, can't. I can not.

AIDAN
Hair grows even when you're asleep.

ROWE
I know. It's a cruel, cruel, cruel trick.

AIDAN
I loved your hair. It looks like a
waterfall.

ROWE
It doesn't matter. It all doesn't matter
Aid. You and your brothers need to leave,
fly, fly, fly off.

AIDAN
No.

ROWE
You should go home Aidy. Really. Home.
Home.

Rowe back to herself.

AIDAN
You were following me?

ROWE

Obviously - I'm right here.

AIDAN

You should go home Rowe. Really.

ROWE

I just said that.

AIDAN

You always get in everything. Why are you here and going over this? I feel like I have no control over anything.

ROWE

You told me that your mother didn't leave the house.

AIDAN

No I didn't.

ROWE

You said that she liked the idea of nature better than actual nature - and now we're outside.

AIDAN

I'm not certain I was telling the truth. It happens like that.

ROWE

Can you remember what you did?

AIDAN

Can you?

ROWE

Yes - which is why we're here right now.

AIDAN

So what's the problem?

ROWE

The problem is that your words don't line up with what happened.

AIDAN

What's more important, what was said, or what happened?

ROWE

Either-or. I still don't know anything about you.

AIDAN
Stop being such a hammer.

ROWE
I know what I saw.

AIDAN
No one knows what they see. Eyes are
pointless. Just go back to that.

ROWE
I almost had a thought about this whole
thing, but then I lost it. If I could
just swallow it, we wouldn't have to keep
doing this.

AIDAN
Go back.

ROWE
I think I might be almost out.

AIDAN
I'm fully in the middle of it. I thought
it was you, but maybe it's me.

Rowe slips back into Aidan's mother.

ROWE
I want to see the birds for once. See
them outside. See them breathe. I wonder
if they ever get scared, scared, scared.
Flying around with all the space and all
the weather. It's so much. So much, and
I'm so scared.

AIDAN
Where are you going?

ROWE
I don't know. I barely care. But you need
to leave.

AIDAN
Tell me about your mother again. Tell me
and I'll go.

ROWE
Her smile was sunshine - and she was the
only one that could get me out of the
dirt.

(MORE)

ROWE (CONT'D)

She wore scarves whenever she left the house, even when she was young she would put it over her head and tie it under her chin like a 70 year old, and walk down the street to the store like a dancing dandelion. And she hummed, hummed and hummed throughout everything, upbeat humming that brightened everywhere. She left her hums like a trail of smoke, and everyone loved her.

The only time I ever saw her upside down was when Dad squashed her canary - her beautiful yellow bird. He said it was an accident - but she knew. We all knew. It was worse than if he had slashed my mother's face. He was nothing, and she was everything. She was me. But I'm so far away now, and I've got hardly any of her left in me. Hardly any, almost nothing.

AIDAN

What about me?

ROWE

You said you would go.

AIDAN

I hate you.

Rowe as the mother drags her fingernails down the side of her face. Aidan holds her face.

AIDAN (CONT'D)

I knew you were going to do that. I knew it.

ROWE

I didn't mean it. I didn't mean it, I'm mean. It happens and I have no restraint. It's like someone else is doing it. I didn't do it.

AIDAN

It was you.

ROWE

But I'm not myself right now. I'm not me. And I'm so angry - mainly at the birds, birds, the stupid fucking birds. They get to go wherever they want, and I'm dropping down, down, down.

Rowe, without hesitation, walks directly and steadily right off the edge of the mountain.

Rowe back to herself. Turns and faces Aidan.

ROWE (CONT'D)

That's not what happened.

AIDAN

What do you mean? That's what we just did, so of course that's what happened.

ROWE

If you're not going to do it right, there's no reason or rhyme for doing it.

AIDAN

Rhyme or reason.

ROWE

Who cares about that - you mess actual things up.

AIDAN

You mess everything that flies out of your mouth, constantly. You're like the black plague to words and phrases.

ROWE

Oh boohoo. You pushed your mom off the side of a cliff.

AIDAN

You pushed me off the side of a cliff.

ROWE

You can say or do what you may. I saw. I was there, so do it right.

AIDAN

And Stephen? I saw. I was there.

ROWE

Don't.

AIDAN

I didn't push her. She walked off, right off, without a single hesitation. It was so quick, so simple. I didn't dare even look over the side, and all I have left of her is this mark.

ROWE

I saw you.

AIDAN
Drop it will you?

ROWE
Do it right.

AIDAN
Please be her again - I miss her.

ROWE
Fine.

Aidan strokes Rowe's hair.

AIDAN
You look like a waterfall.

Rowe puts her hand on Aidan's cheek.

13

ROWE
I never want to eat meat again.

AIDAN
That's ridiculous.

ROWE
I mean it.

AIDAN
You love meat.

ROWE
Yes - I like eating it. I just don't like
the idea of it.

AIDAN
That's ridiculous.

ROWE
Every time I eat steak it reminds me of
dead deer on the side of the road. And it
makes me hate myself.

AIDAN
It's not deer. It's cow.

ROWE
I don't know how anyone could drive past
a dead deer and then go and eat steak.

AIDAN

We just did.

ROWE

And we're the most disgusting people in the world.

AIDAN

I don't want to stop eating meat.
And quite frankly you don't want to stop either.

ROWE

Why do you treat me like that.
Like I'm some poor thing, like a dead deer.

AIDAN

I'm not treating you any way. You're freaking out, and it's making me nervous.

ROWE

Maybe you should just go home to Teddy, and have a teddy bear picnic.

AIDAN

One time I pretended to have a picnic in front of the languages school at college. I mean, the picnic was real - but it was on purpose so that I could run into this Italian student teacher. Giuseppe. I could barely concentrate on anything because I wanted him so badly - but we hadn't even talked. He hadn't even looked at me - ever.
I just wanted him and obsessed about it more than Teddy obsesses over the sheets on the bed. I fantasized that he would bump into me, literally, and fall on me. It wasn't real, and I didn't care. If anyone could have seen my thoughts I for sure would have been diagnosed with one of those nasty, non-curable disorders.

ROWE

Is that true?

AIDAN

You mentioned picnic and it reminded me of it.

ROWE

I hope the deer that got hit wasn't hungry before it happened. At least that would be something. Life is such a cluster, that to be hungry on top of it seems like a cruel joke.

AIDAN

You're becoming a liability.

ROWE

What?

AIDAN

You're unraveling.

ROWE

If you know me so much, just be me.

AIDAN

Right now?

ROWE

If you're so smart and know how to do things, and when and where to say them.

AIDAN

I'm not like you. I'm stuck.

ROWE

You have these opinions about me, and about things - and you leave no room for any type of a wiggle.

AIDAN

You mean like wiggle room?

ROWE

Like that. You do - you think you're so right and I'm just spewing out every which way.

AIDAN

I'm mainly, mostly, more right.

ROWE

It's bothersome. People who have fixed opinions about things think they're so ahead because they have ready-made answers, but isn't it really the reverse. Aren't they more closed off, more unwilling to look at all the grey and see the truth? I don't know. It's getting so that I can't remember things.

AIDAN

I think that's how it happens at the end.

ROWE

Act out something. Play me.

AIDAN

I want to. I want to always. It's the only time I'm not bored, and the conflict is completely controlled.

ROWE

Conflict is the only reason you like doing it! You're excited by it, but it's not real. It's not true. It's not tears.

AIDAN

You like it too. You love your unhappiness like a juicy secret. You love it more than anyone.

ROWE

Yes. But you like acting because you are the most scared character that ever was. You need your lines, and your conflict all neat and tidy in a box so you don't have to deal with Teddy, your scar, your mother.

AIDAN

You're right. It's all a million times less conflict than five loads of laundry.

ROWE

You can leave if you want.

AIDAN

I'm afraid.

ROWE

You're not attracted to me.

AIDAN

Are you shitting me?

ROWE

You don't want me. Not like you used to.

AIDAN

Death has happened since then. Death all over the place. My veins are full of death, they're pumping straight death and you're wondering whether I want you?

ROWE

You want me, you just don't want me in the right way.

AIDAN

I'm not going to pity you right now.

ROWE

Why do I bother? Just talk for me if I aggravate you so terribly.

AIDAN

I don't even know whose voice is speaking.

ROWE

Yours.

AIDAN

Sometimes it seems like yours.

ROWE

At least you weren't the one that did it.

AIDAN

No one did anything.

ROWE

Not that one time.

AIDAN

Weren't you the one that said we shouldn't talk about it?

ROWE

I can't remember - maybe it was you.

AIDAN

Am I the one that likes blood?

ROWE

Are you out of your mind?

AIDAN

I think so. I think I am - outside of it. I feel more like the trees, the air, than I do my self. We did a horrible thing.

ROWE

It was an accident.

AIDAN

But then you just left.

ROWE

Don't put this on me.

AIDAN

You say "we" whenever it suits you - but really you don't care about me. You don't care about him. You only care about yourself.

ROWE

So you're putting me on the block, you're going to bleed me dry to assuage your guilt.

AIDAN

I don't feel guilty.

ROWE

Of course you do. You love it, you can't just leave it alone because you like picking and prodding at it.

AIDAN

Did I tell you that Teddy can't stand you. He hates you. Ever since that time that you stole makeup when we went to the store together.

ROWE

Because of that?

AIDAN

You didn't need it.

ROWE

It was just a joke. And you said you did it too.

AIDAN

When I was 12.

ROWE

So who's really mad? Him, or you?

AIDAN

He was mad. He thinks you're just a taker, you take whatever you want and don't think you owe it to anyone to pay for it.

ROWE

It's not my fault he's sick.

AIDAN

I don't care that he's sick.

ROWE

Of course you do. We all do.

AIDAN

You know what's so, so sad. That it's easier for me to feel compassion and sympathy for everyone, anyone, but him. He just lumps about the house, and his presence dries my eyes out. I feel the blood boil at the back of my neck and I have to get away from him. But then I feel so damn terrible for feeling that way. Why can't I care for him like a normal person. Why can't I just have a real baby and take care of that? I feel like I would be good at that, but him, I'm not good at it.

ROWE

I can only love, truly love someone when I first meet them.

AIDAN

Then I doubt that it's true then.

ROWE

Why?

AIDAN

Because love can only happen when you truly hate the person.

ROWE

Stephen and I would pretend we didn't know each other. But it wasn't even that, it was his smell that bored me. I need new smell I think.

AIDAN

Why do you have to have love anyway?

ROWE

Maybe it's not the love, maybe it's the new.

AIDAN

Or the old and familiar.

ROWE

The cold and round.

AIDAN

Don't you dare cry. Don't you dare let them drop - you promised.

ROWE

It's coming to an end. I can feel it.

AIDAN

You be Stephen this time.

ROWE

I was just your Mom.

AIDAN

I was Stephen last time.

ROWE

How do I know you won't push me for real and it will all be over?

AIDAN

I won't.

ROWE

Promise me.

AIDAN

Promise.