

# Grand Concourse

Heidi Schreck

A Samuel French Acting Edition

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FRENCH**  
FOUNDED 1830

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ISBN 978-0-573-70416-1

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*GRAND CONCOURSE* premiered off Broadway at Playwrights Horizons (the Peter Jay Sharp Theater) in New York City in October 2014. It was directed by Kip Fagan, with scenic design by Rachel Hauck, costume design by Jessica Pabst, lighting design by Matt Frey, and sound design by Leah Gelpe. The production stage manager was Sunneva Stapleton. The cast was as follows:

**SHELLEY** ..... Quincy Tyler Bernstine  
**EMMA** ..... Ismenia Mendes  
**OSCAR** ..... Bobby Moreno  
**FROG** ..... Lee Wilkof

*GRAND CONCOURSE* was developed with support of the Roe Green Award at Cleveland Play House and was first developed by the Cape Cod Theatre Project. It was also supported by the Tow Foundation Residency Program and the Edgerton Foundation New American Play Award.

*GRAND CONCOURSE* was a 2015 Susan Smith Blackburn Award Finalist.

## CHARACTERS

**SHELLEY** – Late 30s. In charge of the kitchen for fifteen years. Catholic nun and former high school basketball star.

**EMMA** – 19. Rainbow-colored hair. Loves horror movies. Recently dropped out of college.

**OSCAR** – Late 20s or early 30s. Security guard working his way through community college. Completed a year of dental school in the Dominican Republic.

**FROG** – 50s or 60s. Homeless former hippie and academic. Writes joke books.

## SETTING

A gleaming industrial kitchen in a Bronx church.

## AUTHOR'S NOTES

In the text of the play, line breaks indicate a shift in thought and do not necessarily demand a pause. Actors should feel free to play around with the rhythms of the spoken word and to make choices about punctuation.

Dialogue frequently overlaps, and a slash (/) indicates where the next speaker begins.

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## Prologue

*(The sound of microwave buttons being pushed.  
SHELLEY stands in front of the microwave.)*

**SHELLEY.** Uh

*(She clears her throat.)*

Sorry I'm stuck I'm stuck uh

Why don't I start

I'll just start

Uh

I pray for all people

For all places where there is war or famine I

pray for our community

*(Long beat.)*

(... Justice for immigrants)

*(Long beat.)*

Sorry wow I'm so sorry

I'll keep working on this

*(The microwave beeps.)*





## Scene One

(EMMA and SHELLEY.)

**SHELLEY.** They can be high or drunk they can be falling  
down  
as long as they aren't violent  
If they're violent you call Oscar  
The guys love him he's Dominican  
He speaks Spanish and English and something else  
He can fix things too  
Officially he's maintenance  
But he got roped into being our muscle  
It's a long story and I don't want to scare you

*(SHELLEY dumps several cups of barley into a pot  
of water as she talks.)*

Since this might be their main nutrition  
we use beans, barley, brown rice, whole grains  
we change it up  
All the veggies are in this big fridge  
Zucchini, carrots, sometimes other squashes, no onions  
Onion allergies are apparently on the rise  
Here's a knife did you wash your hands?

**EMMA.** No

**SHELLEY.** Use that sink the water is brown in the other one  
for some reason  
and then put on a pair of gloves  
You want to change your gloves often  
touch the garbage – change your gloves  
start a new vegetables – change your gloves  
that's probably overkill but I'm a clean freak

so I'm gonna make you do it anyway  
Potatoes are in these boxes here  
You can use as many potatoes as you want  
they're good filler

**EMMA.** No meat?

**SHELLEY.** Oh yeah we serve steak and also we have Lobster  
Fridays  
no it's too expensive  
Dinners are fancier  
this meal is just to get people through the day  
We get a small crowd for lunch  
mostly men so in terms of interaction  
the main thing is to have boundaries  
You can joke around with the guys  
but don't let them own you and don't give them money

**EMMA.** ...Ok

*(SHELLEY digs in the bottom drawer of the refrigerator.)*

**SHELLEY.** Oh man Luis got these honking carrots again

*(She emerges with a bag of gigantic carrots.)*

You'll have to use the big knife  
try not to cut your finger  
I cut my fingers a couple of times a month  
(I'm trying to be more mindful)

*(She surveys the vegetables.)*

This here is what I call Shelley's famous  
barley carrot zucchini potato soup

*(Beat.)*

...How did you find us anyway?

**EMMA.** The Internet

**SHELLEY.** You were googling soup kitchens or

**EMMA.** Yeah no soup kitchens

I thought if I gave back in some way

if I did something for other people I thought it would help

**SHELLEY.** Help what

**EMMA.** Oh well them I guess the people who need help and also me

**SHELLEY.** How old are you?

**EMMA.** Nineteen.

**SHELLEY.** Are you in college?

**EMMA.** I was I dropped out I got kicked out

*(Beat.)*

**SHELLEY.** You wanna chop some carrots?

**EMMA.** ...Sure

*(They start chopping.)*

Are a lot of them falling down drunk  
the guys who come here

**SHELLEY.** No most of our guests are very polite  
especially the regulars

But you do have to be careful  
because any one of them could snap  
There's this one guy Frog  
He'll try to sell you these joke books

*(A rock hits the window. They both jump. SHELLEY runs to the doorway.)*

**EMMA.**

Jesus

**SHELLEY.** *(shouting)*

Oscar! *(sorry)*

Hey Oscar!

**SHELLEY.** It's shatterproof don't worry

Oscar!

It's kids they think it's funny

Oscar will scare them away

OSCAR

*(OSCAR enters.)*

**OSCAR.** Hey where's my sandwich

**SHELLEY.** It's those P.S. 96 kids throwing rocks again

**OSCAR.** Yeah I got it but then I need my sandwich

(to **EMMA**) Hi

(to **SHELLEY**) She's cute

I mean you're my true love Shelley

You're my love for all space and time

but she's cute too

**SHELLEY.** Hurry up

**OSCAR.** Ok but don't worry

Ladies

I AM COMING BACK

(**OSCAR** exits.)

**SHELLEY.** He's uh

He brings a lot of energy to the place.

(*Small beat. SHELLEY looks around the kitchen.*)

Uh

Ok

After this we'll clean the dining room

sweep up

The tables can be wiped down with that

Stuff

under there

**EMMA.** Do you use organic cleaning products

**SHELLEY.** Ha

No

**EMMA.** I'm sorry it's just I'm allergic

To chemical cleaners

(*Beat.*)

**SHELLEY.** I guess you're in charge of the sweeping

(**OSCAR** re-enters.)

**OSCAR.** Ok ladies they're gone

I threatened to cut their fingers off with these pliers

now I need my sandwich

**SHELLEY.** Good work

**OSCAR.** Does that mean you'll see a movie with me

**SHELLEY.** Ha ha ha here

**OSCAR.** How come it's always Roast Beef

**SHELLEY.** Because Roast Beef is your favorite

**OSCAR.** *(as he's eating)* Oh yeah.

*(He looks EMMA up and down as he eats his sandwich.)*

You really are pretty

like a Greek Goddess what's-her-name Icarus

**SHELLEY.** Don't play dumb Icarus was a boy

He knows that he goes to City College

Don't play dumb you think it's charming but it's not

**OSCAR.** Oh right Icarus is the guy whose wings melted

I forgot I did I forgot!

I meant the goddess who's

Iris

the Rainbow one

**SHELLEY.** Why because of her hair?

**OSCAR.** Yeah I like that

what you've done with your hair

very creative

**EMMA.** Oh yeah it's

I was hating myself

and I thought maybe if I changed my hair

I wouldn't notice it was me...?

**OSCAR.** Ok so you're crazy

No that's Ok that's hot

I mean it's like I'm gonna stay away

but you're still hot

you know

from way back here from a distance

**SHELLEY.** Be nice Oscar

**EMMA.** I don't actually hate myself all the time, Oscar

I was just having a bad day  
but I feel a lot better now that I'm

*(She makes a goddessy gesture.)*

...Iris

**OSCAR.** Heh

Yeah

It's a full moon tonight Sister Shelley

don't get too wild

Biggest full moon in 20 years so

*(Pause.)*

...watch out.

*(OSCAR exits.)*

*(SHELLEY and EMMA chop.)*

**EMMA.** He's cute.

*(They chop.)*

Sorry you're not supposed to notice that right?

**SHELLEY.** How would I not notice that?

**EMMA.** Yeah but aren't you supposed to

detach from those feelings or

**SHELLEY.** No not from feelings no

*(They chop.)*

...Just from outcomes

*(After a bit:)*

**EMMA.** Sorry if I'm being nosy

but how come you don't wear a head thing

**SHELLEY.** A lot of us stopped doing that in the seventies

*(They chop.)*

Although some of the younger nuns are bringing it  
back

I have no idea why

A group of them play basketball across the street

in their habits

**EMMA.** Whoa

*(SHELLEY chops rather violently.)*

**SHELLEY.** Yeah half-court ball because they can't move very fast

I mean I love basketball

but I am not playing in a dress

Go ahead and dump the vegetables into the pot.

*(EMMA dumps all of her vegetables into the pot.*

*SHELLEY does the same.)*

And now we put the lid on.

*(SHELLEY puts the lid on. She gestures to a bunch of cleaning supplies in the corner.)*

Why don't you grab that broom  
and I'll show you the dining area

**EMMA.** Ok wait let me

*(EMMA goes to her bag and gets out an allergy mask. She puts it on. SHELLEY looks at her.)*

**SHELLEY.** Super

*(They exit.)*

## Scene Two

(**FROG** enters. He goes to the big fridge. He opens it. He starts snacking on vegetables. **EMMA** enters carrying the broom and dustpan. She is still wearing the allergy mask. She sees **FROG**.)

**EMMA.** Oscar

Oscar

**FROG.** Hey whoa calm / down

**EMMA.** OSCAR

**FROG.** Whoa it's me it's Frog

Calm down

Are you / new

**EMMA.** You're Frog?

**FROG.** (*obviously*) Yeah

**EMMA.** I'm sorry sir

Frog

You need to wait out in the cafeteria

We'll be serving lunch in a few minutes

**FROG.** Yeah but I'm a snacker

**EMMA.** Ok but you can't / be in here

**FROG.** Would you like to buy a joke?

(*Beat.*)

**EMMA.** How much.

**FROG.** One joke is a quarter

or I can sell you the whole book for a buck

There's at least 30 jokes in the book

It's a much better deal

**EMMA.** Oh uh

**FROG.** Why didn't the chicken cross the road?

**EMMA.** I don't know.

Why didn't the chicken cross / the

**FROG.** No training



*(Beat. EMMA starts laughing.)*

You see

Give me a dollar you need this book

**EMMA.** I'm sorry I don't have any cash / on me

**FROG.** You can have it for free I trust you

**EMMA.** Oh no / I couldn't

**FROG.** Take it

Take it

**EMMA.** Thank you ok wait I actually do have a dollar in my bag

I don't know why I said I didn't

*(She gives him a dollar and puts the book in her bag.)*

You won't be sorry I'm a fortune-teller too

I come from a long line of gypsies

of Romani sorry the Romani people

so I can see your future

and you have a lot of laughs coming your way

*(SHELLEY enters with an arm full of dirty serving platters.)*

**SHELLEY.** Hey Frog you know you can't be in here.

**FROG.** I can go anywhere I want Shelley

*(He turns back to EMMA.)*

For a while I was in exile they banished me

The cops picked me up in Eugene, Oregon

and instead of taking me to jail

they gave me a one-way ticket to Berkeley, California

"Because it's always warm in Berkeley"

**SHELLEY.** It's not always warm / in Berkeley

**FROG.** Warmer than / here

**SHELLEY.** Frog, go get in line

**FROG.** Berkeley sucks too many bums

**SHELLEY.** Frog

**FROG.** (to **EMMA**) Shattuck street – you ever been?

Shitsuck Street

bums puking all over your shoes

stupid cracked out hippies

**SHELLEY.** I'm calling security.

(**FROG** is gone.)

Did you buy one of his books

**EMMA.** ...Yeah

**SHELLEY.** Ok then you're contributing to his alcoholism

**EMMA.** It was a dollar

**SHELLEY.** A dollar toward his death.

Don't encourage him he's a manipulator

**EMMA.** He seems so nice

**SHELLEY.** Yeah well he got in a fight once

right out there on the corner of 196<sup>th</sup> and Grand  
Concourse

broke a guys collarbone

He just snapped ok any of them can snap

so you need to pay attention when / I

**EMMA.** I have cancer.

**SHELLEY.** What

**EMMA.** That's why I have to wear this mask

I know you think I'm wimpy

I could tell by the way you were looking at me  
in this mask

but I'm not a wimp I have cancer

(*Beat.*)

**SHELLEY.** I'm sorry I had no idea

**EMMA.** It's ok it's not your / fault

**SHELLEY.** I'm so sorry what kind of

**EMMA.** Leukemia

The kid kind so that's lucky

(*Beat.*)

**SHELLEY.** Are you sure you're all right to –

**EMMA.** Yes yes I'm fine

It's good for me to get out and do stuff  
as long as I'm careful

I'm sorry I should / have told you

**SHELLEY.** No no please you have nothing to be sorry for

*(OSCAR enters.)*

**OSCAR.** Hey are we on schedule

**EMMA.** That was a very poor response time Oscar

**OSCAR.** Hey crazy

There's a huge line out there  
is that pot ready to run

**SHELLEY.** Uh

Yes I think we're ready

*(She picks up the pot of soup with potholders and hands it to OSCAR. OSCAR takes the pot and ushers the ladies out in front of him.)*

**OSCAR.** Let's get it moving ladies

Right this way

*(They exit. As he is disappearing:)*

Showtime!

**Scene Three**

*(EMMA, wearing her allergy mask, lugs in two giant recycling bags filled with paper plates. She unlocks the back door, looks around and tosses them into the cans. She shuts the door quickly and locks it. She takes off her mask. She's exhausted.)*

*(OSCAR enters carrying the giant soup pot.)*

**OSCAR.** You hungry

You want some of this leftover soup

**EMMA.** No thanks

**OSCAR.** Seriously you should eat that takes a lot of energy  
and you're not even good at it yet

Wait till you get to my level

I always have a big bowl of soup afterwards  
because I deserve it

You wanna join me

**EMMA.** Uh

**OSCAR.** C'mon a little fellowship here

*(He ladles out two bowls of soup and puts them in the microwave.)*

You mind if I nuke 'em?

**EMMA.** ...No

**OSCAR.** Hey are you ok

**EMMA.** Yeah yeah I'm

That was a little overwhelming

**OSCAR.** First time can be rough

You can't let 'em wear you out  
gotta protect yourself

**EMMA.** That's a lot of I don't know

Need

**OSCAR.** Desperation man that's desperation

**EMMA.** I feel like I'm covered in gunk now

I feel desperate too like it's contagious

I think I'm gonna go home and take a shower  
and then maybe go to Sephora try out some new  
products

**OSCAR.** Oh man

Sephora

My girlfriend spends her whole paycheck there  
then I gotta pay for her to eat

**EMMA.** (*digging in her bag*) Yeah I get it

It makes you feel really good about yourself

Here I'll show you

This is a brand called Benefit  
the packaging is really pleasing

Look at this

This is a whole kit for your eyes

**OSCAR.** Oh yeah that is pretty

**EMMA.** Right?

This covers up your dark circles

And this you can use to put a little shimmer  
under the brow bone

And here I'm going to line my eyes

*(He heads to the microwave to prepare the soup as  
she makes her eyes a little more glamorous.)*

**OSCAR.** Hey do what you gotta do

Just don't poke your eye out

My sister almost did that once had to wear a patch

She worked it though

still had dudes asking her out

*(The microwave buzzes.)*

Soup's ready.

**EMMA.** Just a second

*(OSCAR brings over two steaming bowls of soup  
and utensils.)*

**OSCAR.** Wow you look good that stuff really works

**EMMA.** This is my Buxom lip gloss and plumper  
It tingles

*(She smooths the lip gloss on her lips.)*

It actually makes my lips plumper  
that's why it stings  
Like a bee has actually stung my lip  
Do they look plumper

*(Beat.)*

**OSCAR.** I dunno

*(He starts eating the soup. As he's eating he sort of mumbles.)*

I know that personally  
I would not want that crap in my soup

*(She laughs.)*

*(She takes one of the napkins and wipes off the lip-gloss.)*

*(She starts eating the soup.)*

**EMMA.** Do you ever work here at night

**OSCAR.** I do sometimes yeah

On Fridays

**EMMA.** So like this Friday

**OSCAR.** Uh no

I'm off this Friday

**EMMA.** Is it scary

**OSCAR.** Nah

There's guys hanging around  
but they're just looking for handouts or a warm place  
to sleep

**EMMA.** Right but are there ghosts

**OSCAR.** Uh no I don't think so

**EMMA.** It would be cool to spend the night in a spooky old  
church

I like to get freaked out

*(They eat.)*

OSCAR. So you

I guess you like horror movies then

EMMA. Oh yeah

I'm not like most girls I fucking love horror movies

The Omen is my favorite

Old Timey horror

OSCAR. That's cool my girl is not into them at all

My girlfriend

Rosa

She makes me go to girl movies

EMMA. Some night I'm gonna show up here

and scare the shit out of you

*(SHELLEY enters with an armload of tablecloths and napkin.)*

*(She shoves them into a hamper as she talks.)*

SHELLEY. Oscar will you put the chairs away after you eat

Those nice lady volunteers just bailed

Rafa told them he had lice

OSCAR. Sure

EMMA. Which one is Rafa?

OSCAR. The guy with the nasty hair down to his butt

*(SHELLEY grabs a mop and bucket from the closet.)*

EMMA. He has lice?

OSCAR.

No

SHELLEY.

Probably

OSCAR. No he doesn't

He was just messing with the ladies

SHELLEY. I bet he does have lice but that doesn't mean

we can all run screaming back to wherever

Riverdale

(SHELLEY is gone.)

EMMA. Shouldn't we go help her

OSCAR. No way she never stops working  
she's got super powers from God  
I'm telling you she comes in at 6 a.m.  
so she can clean up *after* the janitors  
You try and keep up you'll never get outta here  
Just eat your soup. That's my advice

EMMA. Yeah ok

(*They eat.*)

Hey this is actually pretty good

OSCAR. Yeah it's not bad for bum soup right?  
Soup desperados  
Could use some more pepper  
(*He grabs some pepper and shakes it in his soup.*)

EMMA. I'll take some in my soup too

OSCAR. Sure

(*He reaches his hand out to give her the pepper.*)

(*EMMA doesn't take the pepper.*)

EMMA. Go ahead.

(*Beat.*)

OSCAR. You want me to put the pepper in your soup

EMMA. Yeah

(*Beat.*)

OSCAR. Like I'm a waiter?

EMMA. Yeah

Like you're a *waiter*

(*Beat.*)

(*OSCAR reluctantly peppers her soup.*)



**Scene Four**

*(Early morning. The sound of microwave buttons being pushed. The kitchen is still dark. SHELLEY stands in front of the microwave.)*

**SHELLEY.** Uh

*(She clears her throat.)*

Ok

Why don't I start I'll just start

...I pray for all people

for all places where there is war or famine

I pray for our community

*(Beat.)*

(...Justice for immigrants)

*(Beat.)*

Forgive me but it feels pointless

lately

Keeping these people alive with so little

And I think I have skills that might be more useful

I'm not even a good cook so

My mind is shriveling up

I used to think the conversations I had here

Deeper and more meaningful than those I have with  
my peers

Forgive me they are my peers too

I know their value I do I'm just grumpy

I'd feel worse if I had to spend my days

With a bunch a jerk lawyers like my dad

He's uh

He's still hanging on and I know I need to reach out

To forgive

but sometimes I wish

he would just hurry up and die

Forgive me

*(EMMA enters and stands in the doorway.)*

I know that you are looking at me with gentleness  
I know that whatever my faults  
You will continue to look at me with gentleness

*(The microwave beeps. SHELLEY crosses herself.  
Turns to see she's not alone and panics.)*

Emma

Hi

**EMMA.** Oscar let me in I hope that's ok

**SHELLEY.** Are you on the schedule

**EMMA.** No but I had bloodwork up the street so

I thought I'd stop by  
see if you and Oscar needed any help

**SHELLEY.** Oh ok most volunteers don't come back the next  
day

or at all so good for you  
but we don't start serving til two and I uh

*(SHELLEY looks at EMMA's hopeful face.)*

You know what come on in anyway

I'm just planning the menu

Have you eaten yet

**EMMA.** Not really

**SHELLEY.** Why don't you sit down

I'll make you a sandwich

Is Roast Beef ok it's all we've got

**EMMA.** I love Roast Beef but I'm not hungry

I'm here to help

*(SHELLEY goes to the fridge.)*

**SHELLEY.** Well you need to eat

so I am making you this sandwich

and I am sticking it in the fridge for later

Ok?

Don't let Oscar eat it

he could eat ten sandwiches at a time

**EMMA.** Thank you

*(SHELLEY starts making EMMA's sandwich. After a moment:)*

**SHELLEY.** ...Do you have people taking care of you

**EMMA.** Yeah my mom but she's driving me crazy

I mean I know she's worried but

I just want her to treat me like a normal person

**SHELLEY.** ...Sure

*(EMMA watches SHELLEY make the sandwich. SHELLEY smiles at her.)*

Hey guess what

One of our parishioners

donated a bunch of eggplant today

Do you have any idea what to do with those?

**EMMA.** Not really

**SHELLEY.** Yeah me either

We usually stick to the basics around here but

Sandwich!

I found this eggplant soup recipe

on Epicurious

You want to figure it out together

**EMMA.** Sure

*(OSCAR enters carrying a box of canned goods. He notices EMMA.)*

**OSCAR.** *(to EMMA)* Oh wow she let you stay I guess she loves you

**SHELLEY.** *(still holding up the eggplant)* Hey Oscar what do you call this in Spanish?

**OSCAR.** Eggplant I mean berenjena

Berenjenas

**SHELLEY.** Do you know what the heck to do with it

**OSCAR.** Yeah, you just scoop it out and fry the guts in a pan

*(He sets the box down, opens it and starts stocking one of the shelves.)*

**SHELLEY.** The guts

**OSCAR.** Yeah it's delicious like mashed potatoes

**SHELLEY.** Right but we have to put it in a soup

**EMMA.** Duh

**OSCAR.** Ok well then you know what's delicious  
is eggplant in a pork stew my sister makes that  
Why don't you make that

**SHELLEY.** It's lunch we can't afford pork

**OSCAR.** Ok but I'm saying I personally if it were up to me  
I would chop it up and make a pork and eggplant stew  
can I get my sandwich

**EMMA.** Here I got it

*(EMMA goes to the fridge, opens it and pulls out a sandwich.)*

*(As SHELLEY squints at the recipe, EMMA unwraps the sandwich.)*

*(Looking right at OSCAR, she starts eating it.)*

**SHELLEY.** So I just chunk it up Oscar?

*(OSCAR is staring at EMMA.)*

Do I leave this skin on?

**OSCAR.** Yes yes you leave the skin on  
because it has vitamins

This girl is eating my sandwich!

*(EMMA starts laughing.)*

**EMMA.** I'm not I'm not this is my sandwich

Shelley made this for me

**THIS IS MY SANDWICH**

**OSCAR.** Girl is crazy

*(EMMA takes out OSCAR's sandwich.)*

**EMMA.** *(laughing)* Dude here's your sandwich

(EMMA is laughing almost hysterically now.)

(SHELLEY is a little confused.)

SHELLEY. Ok let's all just  
calm down  
Oscar we have a lot of work to do  
and too many cooks in the kitchen  
So

OSCAR. I didn't do anything she did it!

SHELLEY. I'm just saying we've got to  
Grapple

(Holding up the eggplant.)

With this

OSCAR. I hear you Shelley I'm gonna leave you two alone  
(Go eat my sandwich)

(He exits.)

(SHELLEY is still holding the eggplant.)

EMMA. You want me to try?

SHELLEY. Please

(EMMA takes the eggplant and starts cutting it up slowly, but fairly confidently. SHELLEY watches her, impressed.)

All right that's your job

(SHELLEY goes to grab a bunch of potatoes.)

EMMA. So you like  
pray to the microwave

SHELLEY. What

Oh

No

Ha

No I don't pray to the  
I don't worship the microwave

EMMA. The microwave god

**SHELLEY.** No no the microwave

*(Beat.)*

It's for keeping time I was timing my prayer

**EMMA.** Why

**SHELLEY.** Uh

I've been having a trouble praying

Lately

**EMMA.** Whoa you're a nun

**SHELLEY.** Right but it's something I'm struggling with  
nevertheless

**EMMA.** And the microwave helps?

**SHELLEY.** Well the timer helps

I've been forcing myself to pray for  
one minute

I'm trying to work up to two  
and eventually five

**EMMA.** Whoa

**SHELLEY.** Yep

*(SHELLEY starts chopping potatoes. They chop for  
a bit.)*

**EMMA.** Do you like picture a face when you pray

**SHELLEY.** No

I don't

**EMMA.** When I was a kid we said that prayer

"If I should die before I wake  
I pray the lord my soul to take"

So I always pictured a monster with a giant mouth  
just waiting for me to die so he could eat my soul

*(They chop. SHELLEY doesn't quite know what to  
say. She clears her throat.)*

**SHELLEY.** If you'd like to talk to someone  
about praying

I'm sure Father Nolan would be happy / to

**EMMA.** Ew no thanks

*(They keep chopping. After a few moments:)*

**SHELLEY.** Uh

When I was learning to pray

I was taught to imagine a real person who loved me

Unconditionally

So I would just talk to my Grandma

she was crazy about me

and she was dead so she couldn't change her mind

*(FROG enters. SHELLEY doesn't look up.)*

Frog

Out

*(FROG exits.)*

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**Scene Five**

*(Sounds of shuffling around in the dark.)*

*(Muttering in Spanish.)*

*(Sound of a woman laughing.)*

**OSCAR.** What are you

What are you

Oh Jesus

What are you doing

*(OSCAR is breathing heavily.)*

Ta pasao

Tu ta pasao

Tu ta pasao

*(OSCAR comes. Beat.)*

Shit.

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## Scene Six

(Morning. FROG and OSCAR in the kitchen.  
OSCAR cooks eggs.)

**FROG.** So after that

Let me say that I had also eaten many mushrooms  
Purple heads so I should have been having Visions  
but for some reason I wasn't  
The experience it was  
It was purely tactile  
I might as well have eaten ecstasy  
which is fine I love ecstasy  
but I was looking for a transformational experience  
and ecstasy does not transform  
it keeps you solidly in this

(FROG pats his belly.)

So after that I had to quit  
There was no other choice

(He pats his belly again.)

Geez I'm getting fat all this soup

**OSCAR.** You're not fat Papi

**FROG.** Oh yeah

**OSCAR.** You like the yolk hard or soft

**FROG.** Oh hard as hard as you can get it  
otherwise I think about the dead baby chick  
That's an embryo you know that's an abortion

**OSCAR.** Hey come on

**FROG.** I'm sorry my friend but that's what it is

I was a vegetarian for years  
First just to piss off my parents but then I really meant it  
And then I didn't eat anything at all for a whole month  
because I got to thinking that plants are alive too  
I would eat some iceberg lettuce

feel it crunch between my teeth  
hear the screams of pain  
Carrot sticks were the worst  
the sound they make oh man ahhhhh

*(He covers his ears for a second.)*

You know what I'm talking about?  
Snapping carrot bones with your murderous teeth?

**OSCAR.** Carrots don't have bones man

**FROG.** Sure they do they've got a spine  
You know that little inside tube of the carrot  
You know the tube the delicate tube  
That's the Spine and listen when you start to realize  
that everything is alive  
and trust me everything is alive  
then you start to realize you have a choice to make  
You can either decide that you are a predator  
No different than a lion or a  
piranha  
crushing life in your murderous teeth  
or you can starve to death  
That's your choice

*(Beat.)*

And it's bleak  
It's a bleak choice  
Look the sun is coming up  
Love it  
Love the sun  
Love the sun  
Is there coffee

**OSCAR.** Yeah

You take milk sugar

**FROG.** Oh no Black

Black black black

**OSCAR.** Man I don't know how you can drink it without sugar

**FROG.** Yeah well I'm epileptic and the sugar makes it worse  
Epilepsy  
You know what that is  
"Epilepsia"

**OSCAR.** Yeah ok

**FROG.** I can say it five different languages just in case  
When I was young I was a global adventurer  
I've been all over Europe  
I've been to Africa  
that big warm cradle  
Also I wear this thing this necklace  
Tells people what my deal is  
in case I flip out on a subway platform or on the sidewalk  
That's another reason I quite the drugs  
and the alcohol  
You wouldn't know it  
But I actually take very good care of myself  
You should tell Shelley tell her  
tell her I'm not a drunk  
Tell that Gargoyle I look out / for myself

**OSCAR.** Here you go here's your eggs  
*(He hands him a plate of eggs.)*

**FROG.** Aren't you going to eat

**OSCAR.** I can't I'm thinking of the baby chicks

**FROG.** Well you're going to have to eat at some point  
At some point you're going to have to make peace  
with being a murderer

*(FROG eats his eggs with relish.)*

*(OSCAR drinks coffee.)*

*(FROG makes growling noises.)*

**OSCAR.** Frog cut it out.

(**FROG** continues to eat.)

**FROG.** Hey Oscar

Why did the boy drop his ice cream

**OSCAR.** I don't know why

**FROG.** Because he got hit by a truck

(*Beat.*)

**OSCAR.** Man I'm sorry but I don't understand your jokes  
maybe it's my English

**FROG.** Your English is perfect

**OSCAR.** Jokes are the last thing you understand in another  
language

Sucks

I need special English as a Second Language jokes I  
guess

**FROG.** Listen my friend

My jokes don't make any sense don't worry about it

Hey how's your girl

what's her name

**OSCAR.** Rosa

**FROG.** Oh yeah Rosa I like her

How's she doing

**OSCAR.** She's good

Oh

Yeah

Papi she's great she's

She wants me to marry her so I'm

working up to that

**FROG.** What the hell does that mean

**OSCAR.** Well I don't have the cash to provide for her right  
now

So it doesn't seem right to marry her

Once I get my degree I can get a better job / and

**FROG.** What kind of job you gonna get

There are no jobs my friend don't delude yourself

There are no jobs  
 There are no jobs  
 Marry her now you guys can figure it out together  
 This is the 21st century you don't have to support her  
 In the 21st Century men and women they support each  
 other  
 You see:

*(He makes a gesture with his hands that resembling  
 "this is the church, this is the steeple.")*

I am holding you up while you are holding up me  
 It's fucking beautiful  
 The 21st century  
 The 21st century  
 Isn't this what you really want

*(He makes the gesture again.)*

This right here

**OSCAR.** Yeah that sounds nice

**FROG.** Oh it's nice it's nice

**OSCAR.** You have a girl

**FROG.** No no no no no

That's not my way Oscar

**OSCAR.** You what gay Frog you

**FROG.** All I'm going to say about this Oscar

Is that it is not my way

and then I'm going to leave you to draw

whatever conclusions you like

I'll tell you one thing though

Unlike some people I am not a playa

*(Beat.)*

**OSCAR.** Oh man what are you talking about / 'playa'

**FROG.** Well my friend I'm camping near the rectory now

**OSCAR.** Frog you know you're not supposed to camp

**FROG.** I know but I am

I am camping near the rectory and I saw

Oh yeah

Oh yeah

Round 3 a.m. I saw her come in

Oh yeah

And then later I saw her go out

Oh yeah

*(Beat.)*

You got something to say about that

**OSCAR.** Shit

**FROG.** Oh yeah

**OSCAR.** She just showed up

**FROG.** All her fault huh

**OSCAR.** Yeah

Actually!

I was sleeping and I opened my eyes and

There she was right there front of me

I thought I was dreaming

Oh man c'mon it was a mistake

Let's forget about it I'm going to forget about it

I gotta headache now

**FROG.** Yeah but did you have sex with her

**OSCAR.** No no no I didn't I

I didn't have sex with her

She did it all without any help from me!

I did nothing I didn't even touch her

She did it all and then she left it was like a dream

So you see I think technically I'm in the clear with Rosa  
because

One: We didn't technically have sex

And Two: I thought I was dreaming

*(Beat.)*

**FROG.** Sweet dream

*(OSCAR nods.)*

**Scene Seven**

*(Sound of microwave buttons being pushed.)*

*(SHELLEY stands at the microwave.)*

*(She stares at the microwave for about 30 seconds.)*

**SHELLEY.** Uh

*(Pause. She sighs.)*

I'm / sorry

*(The microwave buzzes. She crosses herself.)*

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### Scene Eight

*(OSCAR and SHELLEY. OSCAR is eating his sandwich. He's a little jumpy, as if he's waiting for someone to arrive. SHELLEY preps the soup.)*

**OSCAR.** You know I was gonna be a dentist right  
I went back and did a year of training in the DR  
But none of it counts here  
That's the problem  
If I want to be a dentist here I've gotta start all over  
And yeah I could go back to the DR  
set up a clinic make a shitload of money  
but I don't wanna go back there my life is here now  
New York City is the new Dominican Republic

**SHELLEY.** Can you grab me that pot from up there

**OSCAR.** You know most fools in the DR think that New York  
City  
IS America  
Yeah  
My cousin called last week  
he said Oscar we're moving to New York City and I said  
shit that's great news do you need a place to live  
and he said no no no man we found a place  
in Miami

**SHELLEY.** Ha

**OSCAR.** So one date Shelley what do you say?

**SHELLEY.** Get back to work Oscar

**OSCAR.** I'm teasing you!

I mean sometimes it's fun to think  
Could I compete with God  
and I think  
Yeah

*(SHELLEY reacts.)*

I'm kidding!



C'mon I'm kidding I respect you  
and also I love Rosa

I love Rosa you know I do

**SHELLEY.** How is Rosa

**OSCAR.** Oh she's good she's good  
she's gotta new job

Yeah she's gonna be making more money than me  
She's working at Macy's

**SHELLEY.** That's great

**OSCAR.** Hey is that girl coming in again today

**SHELLEY.** Who

Emma

**OSCAR.** Yeah she disappeared what's up with that

**SHELLEY.** Uh

I'm not sure I haven't heard from her

**OSCAR.** Oh really ok cause she's crazy

**SHELLEY.** She has a lot going on right now

**OSCAR.** She got a lot of problems huh rich girl problems

**SHELLEY.** I don't think she's rich

**OSCAR.** Between you and me I think girl's a crazy bitch

**SHELLEY.** Oscar!

**OSCAR.** Sorry

Sorry I never use that word I'm sorry

Shelley will you forgive me

*(It's not clear whether **SHELLEY** will forgive him.)*

It's just there's something about her she freaks me out

**SHELLEY.** You don't know anything about her

**OSCAR.** Oh I know some things

**SHELLEY.** You need to be kind to her do you hear me

**OSCAR.** Not if she's batshit crazy I don't

**SHELLEY.** Oscar shut up she's sick ok she's very / sick

**OSCAR.** What do you mean she's sick

**SHELLEY.** Never mind I don't know if I / should

OSCAR. Yeah but wait is she like

*(Beat.)*

Is it contagious?

SHELLEY. Oscar!

OSCAR. Sorry I

SHELLEY. No it's not contagious

OSCAR. Ok sorry I'm just saying

She shouldn't be serving soup if she's gonna be infectious

SHELLEY. What is with you Oscar

OSCAR. I don't know!

Something

Something's up with me

SHELLEY. Yeah

*(After a moment:)*

OSCAR. Rosa and I are

We've been fighting all week and I don't know why

It's stressing me out

I'm sorry Shelley is that girl going to be ok

SHELLEY. I don't know I hope so

*(Beat.)*

Do you mind chopping some vegetables

OSCAR. No way that's women's work

Ha I'm kidding

Here I'll do the carrots

*(As he talks, OSCAR puts a pair of gloves on and starts chopping.)*

Hey just so you know

Frog's camping in the rectory

SHELLEY. What no he can't do that

OSCAR. I know but he is

S'okay if I give him breakfast

SHELLEY. Oscar he can't camp

OSCAR. I know but is it ok if I feed him until he gets caught  
*(She sighs.)*

SHELLEY. Yes

OSCAR. I knew you'd say yes  
 You nuns are sneaky  
 Sneaky for God

*(A rock hits the window.)*

SHELLEY. Oh c'mon!

*(She runs opens the back door and shouts.)*

HEY

WHERE THE HECK ARE YOUR / TEACHERS

OSCAR. Shelley I got it  
 I'll take care of it

*(OSCAR runs out past her.)*

SHELLEY. JESUS LOVES YOU  
 BUT YOU'RE MAKING IT HARD FOR HIM

*(She slams the door. Another rock hits the window.  
 Then another. Then it stops.)*

*(SHELLEY goes back to the vegetables. She starts  
 chopping rather violently. She stops. She breathes.  
 There's a timid knocking on the door. EMMA opens  
 the door. She's wearing a scarf on her head.)*

Emma

EMMA. Hi

SHELLEY. It's great to see you I was so worried

EMMA. I'm sorry I had a bunch of appointments  
 I'm should have called

SHELLEY. No no that's fine I'm happy to see you

EMMA. I'd love to help out today if that's all right

SHELLEY. Of course it is come on in

How are you feeling

**EMMA.** Uh

Well I'm on steroids now  
so that's kind of messing with me  
emotionally

*(FROG enters.)*

**FROG.** Oh no

Your pretty hair

**SHELLEY.** Frog leave her alone

**EMMA.** *(to FROG)* Don't worry it's still there

It's just getting kinda stringy

**FROG.** Well even with no hair

you are much more attractive

than the person they had serving soup last week

**EMMA.** Aw thanks Frog

**FROG.** Oh god I hate the thought of them putting you in  
that

big radiation machine

Have you thought about doing something more holistic

**EMMA.** There's no machine

They just use a catheter and pump the chemicals right  
into me

*(She pulls down her shirt to reveal a bandage  
covering a port on her upper chest.)*

**FROG.** I don't like the looks of that

I think you should look into some holistic methods

I know they're doing some good stuff down in Mexico

**SHELLEY.** Sloan Kettering is the best in the country

**FROG.** Yeah but this country's out to kill us

**SHELLEY.** Frog you need to get out of here it's almost ten

**FROG.** I will Shelley I just wanna be supportive ok

**SHELLEY.** Tasha's coming at ten and she can't see you in  
here

**FROG.** Loud and clear Shelley

(OSCAR enters.)

OSCAR. Oh hey

FROG. Emma's back from her Chemotherapy

SHELLEY. Frog!

EMMA. It's ok I have to tell people at some point

(Beat. OSCAR looks stricken.)

OSCAR. Oh

Wow

It's cancer

My mom went through that shit I'm really sorry

I'm going to pray for you

(Beat.)

EMMA. Hey you guys wanna see a picture of my doctor

He's cute he looks

kind of like a bald Johnny Depp

(OSCAR shifts uncomfortably as EMMA shows them the photo.)

FROG. He's ok I know some handsomer men

Personally

But I've travelled a lot

EMMA. And look isn't this nice

Tons of people sent me flowers

(She scrolls through her phone.)

FROG. What's this one

Just you in front of the hospital?

EMMA. Yeah I'm documenting everything I don't know why

FROG. Gives you a feeling of control in an uncontrollable situation

(The church bell starts ringing.)

SHELLEY. Ok Frog you're out

Go

Go

**FROG.** I'm going Shelley I'm going sheesh

*(He blows a kiss to EMMA.)*

Stay strong

**SHELLEY.** GO

*(FROG Exits.)*

**OSCAR.** I should get back to my

*(Uncomfortable beat.)*

**EMMA.** Ok

I'll see you

**OSCAR.** ...Yeah

*(He exits. SHELLEY notices that's something's wrong with EMMA.)*

**SHELLEY.** You're sure you feel well enough to work...?

**EMMA.** I don't need any special treatment

I'm gonna make some kick ass soup

**SHELLEY.** I like your attitude

But if you need a break you have to / speak up

**EMMA.** I know

*(She goes to a box and takes out some carrots.)*

**SHELLEY.** Hey!

Sorry uh

I'm so sorry I didn't meant to yell

Just please don't touch those vegetables without washing your hands

*(EMMA is a little taken aback. She walks over to the sink, washes her hands, and puts on gloves.*

*SHELLEY goes to the fridge and starts rummaging around.)*

*(EMMA starts chopping.)*

*(from the fridge)* We need extra everything it's getting crazy out there

almost twice as many guys as last week

Pretty soon the whole city's gonna be homeless  
It feels like the end of the / world

**EMMA.** Ow shit I cut my

**SHELLEY.** Are you ok

**EMMA.** I cut my finger /  
I cut my finger

**SHELLEY.** Here c'mon  
Let's put it under the faucet

**EMMA.** I cut my finger

*(EMMA starts crying.)*

I cut my finger  
I'm fine I'm fine it's not deep

*(SHELLEY holds EMMA's finger under the faucet.)*

It's not deep

It's not deep

*(EMMA is sobbing.)*

**SHELLEY.** You're ok  
Take a deep breath and just count  
Count it out  
Count from one to 20

**EMMA.** 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6

**SHELLEY.** Here let me look at it  
Keep counting

**EMMA.** 7, 8, 9

*(SHELLEY examines EMMA's finger.)*

10, 11, 12

**SHELLEY.** I can't even see the cut  
It's like it already healed  
It's like a miracle

*(EMMA grabs on tightly to SHELLEY.)*

## Scene Nine

*(Later that same day, After lunch service. The bell rings three times as OSCAR carries in a bunch of dishes while pressing his cell phone to his ear with his shoulder.)*

**OSCAR.** Estaba bromeando  
era una broma estúpida!  
Rosa, estoy en el trabajo  
no me hagas esto  
Voy a llegar a las seis y después salimos  
A donde quiere ir

*(FROG enters.)*

¿Que?  
Ese no fue lo que dije  
Disculpame, pero no es lo que dije  
Rosa.  
Rosa.  
Rosa  
Mierda

*(OSCAR hangs up.)*

**FROG.** Hey Oscar

**OSCAR.** Hey

**FROG.** How can you tell if a man has been having oral sex  
with a duck?

**OSCAR.** I don't know

*(FROG blows a bunch of white feathers into the air.)*

*(It's quite beautiful.)*

**FROG.** That was for you man you see

That's an English as a Second Language joke

*(FROG exits.)*



*(OSCAR grabs a broom and starts sweeping up the feathers.)*

*(From the dining room he hears:)*

EMMA. OSCAR.

OSCAR.

WE NEED YOU OUT HERE OSCAR.

SHELLEY. OSCAR.

OSCAR. Shit

*(He exits.)*

*(After a few moments: From offstage, OSCAR can be heard screaming. This is followed by loud shouts and laughter from SHELLEY and EMMA. EMMA and SHELLEY enter, still laughing, their arms laden with dishes.)*

*(EMMA wears a homemade “freaky face” mask.)*

SHELLEY. Oh my gosh that was amazing

You scared the heck out of him

EMMA. He screamed like a girl!

OSCAR. *(off)* THAT WAS NOT FUNNY

LADIES YOU ARE NOT FUNNY

SHELLEY. Oh no

I might pee

I might pee

*(EMMA laughs even harder.)*

No never mind I'm ok I'm fine

I'm not going to pee

Oh man!

His face

Amazing you're amazing

they love you those guys

You bring a lot of light into that situation

and that is not easy believe me

**EMMA.** Can I ask you something weird  
Do you ever fantasize about washing their feet?

*(Beat.)*

*(SHELLEY starts laughing again.)*

**SHELLEY.** Sorry I'm sorry it's

*(She can't stop laughing.)*

No No I do not think about

*(SHELLEY can't stop laughing.)*

I don't even like feet

**EMMA.** C'mon!

I mean didn't you ever think about stuff like that

When you wanted to become a nun

**SHELLEY.** No nope no I did not

**EMMA.** Ok but what about other stuff

Like couldn't we help them find jobs

**SHELLEY.** *(sobering up a little)* Oh

Uh

That's a great idea but that's not what we do here

We don't have the resources for that

**EMMA.** Yeah but it's just phone calls right

Hooking them up with places that are hiring

Helping them find clothes

I could teach them to make resumes

**SHELLEY.** Well you'd need a little money for that

and a whole lot of time

Do you mind passing me that sponge

**EMMA.** Would you mind if I did some research

**SHELLEY.** No no please do some

Research

*(SHELLEY starts scrubbing the pot.)*

**EMMA.** So what *did* you think about?

When you first wanted to become a nun

What did / you

**SHELLEY.** Oh uh

Honestly

I thought about getting back at my mom

**EMMA.** Whoa what really

**SHELLEY.** Yeah I mean at first

That's not why I went through with it obviously  
but yeah

When I was 15 I uh

I had to write an essay on a famous feminist

And my mom God rest her soul  
she was a famous feminist herself  
and a diehard atheist

(Ugh I can't get the crud off the bottom of this pot)

(*SHELLEY scrubs vigorously.*)

So I wrote my essay on a Catholic Feminist

I thought that would really upset her

Yet still fulfill the requirements of the course

**EMMA.** Your mom was famous?

**SHELLEY.** In certain circles

Academia

She wasn't like Gloria Steinem or anything

**EMMA.** Oh yeah

Who's Gloria Steinem again?

**SHELLEY.** Oh

Wow

Really

(*Beat.*)

She's a famous feminist

**EMMA.** And she's a nun

**SHELLEY.** No, no she's not a

I did my report on Dorothy Day

**EMMA.** ...

**SHELLEY.** Dorothy Day devoted her life to the homeless?  
Started the Catholic Worker  
No offense but you were actually in college right

**EMMA.** Not that long

**SHELLEY.** Ok well I'm bringing books and  
You're going to have to read them

**EMMA.** Why were you so pissed off at your mom

**SHELLEY.** Because she married my dad  
Who was  
Well let's just say wasn't the kindest  
Isn't  
the kindest man in the world

**EMMA.** He's still alive?

**SHELLEY.** Yes but he's very sick

**EMMA.** I'm sorry

*(SHELLEY makes a non-committal noise. EMMA changes the subject.)*

It's funny I always thought people became nuns  
Because they had like I don't know  
Visions  
Or like God came to them in the night and was like  
"Come with me"

**SHELLEY.** Oh that happened too

**EMMA.** Wait what

**SHELLEY.** Yeah I mean much later but  
Ha

It's not that interesting

**EMMA.** Oh c'mon

What was it  
What was it

**SHELLEY.** It was technically more of a dream than a vision

**EMMA.** Yeah but what was it

**SHELLEY.** Uh  
Well

I had this dream about this boy in my school  
...Rob Kolker

**EMMA.** Ooooooh

**SHELLEY.** Yeah it was not like that ok

He was a junior when I was a freshman  
Everyone had a crush on him he wore a cowboy hat  
and later he ended up living on a sailboat  
Anyway  
In the dream I was wearing a dress  
I was wearing the dress I wore to my high school prom  
and I used to have horrible eczema in high school  
Do you know what that is

**EMMA.** Yeah like scales

**SHELLEY.** Uh yeah

Sort of  
So in the dream my eczema  
was out of control it manifested as these  
huge weeping sores and I  
I was awash in shame  
I felt like an affront to humanity  
Like how dare a go around offending the world with  
my...

*(SHELLEY gestures again to her whole self.)*

And in my dream I was curled up in Rob Kolker's lap  
and he was looking down at me right at my arm  
My scaly arm  
and I felt a kind of stabbing shame  
I wanted to die  
I wanted to die  
I knew that he must be looking at me with  
contempt or disgust or  
I was waiting to be annihilated by his disgust  
but instead he said...

*(Beat.)*

**EMMA.** What did he say

**SHELLEY.** He said

...You are adorable

*(Beat.)*

And he was looking down at me with such gentleness

That I understood I was

Received

in my entirety

weeping sores and all

that my body was not an affront but a

I'm sorry I know this sounds dorky

but I don't have any other words

I understood that my body was holy

that I am holy

And when I woke up

I knew that it was possible to look at myself like this

and at others

with gentleness

with

*(Beat.)*

Adoration

*(Pause.)*

**EMMA.** Huh

**SHELLEY.** Yeah it's hard to

It loses something in the speaking

**EMMA.** But don't you ever want that with someone in real life

I know you have God

but sometimes don't you just want Rob Kolker?

*(Beat.)*

**SHELLEY.** Sure

*(Making a joke:)*

But you know I have a cat so

EMMA. Ohhhh

what's its name

SHELLEY. Pumpkin

EMMA. Orange?

SHELLEY. Yup my little niece named him

when she was four

Sophie I love her like crazy

EMMA. Yeah I get it

I have two nieces and

I love them both so much I could die

SHELLEY. Ha yes sometimes I feel like I love Sophie  
and Pumpkin so much I could die

*(Awkard beat.)*

Do you mind bringing in the rest of the dishes

EMMA. Sure

*(EMMA starts to exit.)*

SHELLEY. Emma

Why don't you do some research and

I'll ask Tasha if there are funds

We could put towards a job program

EMMA. Wait really

SHELLEY. Yeah why not

She'll probably say no but what the heck

*(EMMA exits. SHELLEY looks after EMMA, and  
then to the microwave.)*

Give her more time here to know you

To know herself

Touch gently this life that you have created

*(She crosses herself.)*

## Scene Ten

*(The middle of the night.)*

*(EMMA and OSCAR stand facing each other in the darkness.)*

EMMA. I think I'm sleepwalking

OSCAR. I am turning on the light ok

I'm turning on the light

*(He turns on the light.)*

EMMA. Boo!

*(He reacts. She starts laughing.)*

Remember that freaky face

Remember how scared you were by that / freaky face

OSCAR. I'm really sorry that you're sick

But I can't be talking to you right now

I have a girlfriend

Rosa

I'm in love with Rosa

and I'm going to ask her to be my wife

and we are going to live

Like this ok

*(OSCAR makes FROG's church gesture with his hands.)*

Holding one another up

and so I can't fuck that up

do you understand I cannot fuck that up

EMMA. Yeah I totally get it

OSCAR. Then what are you doing here

EMMA. I can't sleep

I can't sleep anymore

and I'm hungry

You got anything to eat

*(Beat.)*



**OSCAR.** Yeah

*(He goes to the fridge.)*

Rosa packed me a late night snack  
you can have it I'm not that hungry

Here you go

I'm going to go check the playground and you  
can go ahead and eat as much as you / want

**EMMA.** you're not going to catch my cancer

**OSCAR.** Please don't do this to me

**EMMA.** What you can't have a meal with me?

I can't sleep and I

I need some fucking

Human

Company

I'm very alone

I'm very alone

and also I'm dying

I'm dying so fuck you

you didn't run off when I was sucking your cock

and now you can't have a simple human meal with me

Fuck you if you can't have a simple

human meal with me

*(Beat.)*

**OSCAR.** Hey look / I

**EMMA.** Fuck you

*(He sighs. He starts laying out the food.)*

**OSCAR.** C'mon Emma

I'm sorry

Let's eat together

C'mon

I'm a jerk

*(She won't eat.)*

Let's have a special human meal

*(She won't look at him.)*

Hey  
You know what's delicious is  
Clementines

*(He starts peeling it.)*

This Clementine  
Mmmmmmm  
I wouldn't want to miss out on this  
This is sweet  
and  
delicious

*(Beat.)*

Here one slice c'mon

*(She takes one. She puts in her mouth.)*

**EMMA.** I've had better

**OSCAR.** Look I'm sorry I was a jerk...

**EMMA.** I am a little crazy Oscar

**OSCAR.** Yeah I know

**EMMA.** No I mean since I've been sick

Everything feels so out of my control  
and I can't

I'm sort of following my impulses because  
well why not  
why not right

and I'm sorry I'm so sorry

I don't want to mess up your relationship with Rosa  
but I think I'm going to

Because right now what I want  
is more important than Rosa

and it's more important than you

And what I want

is for you to feed me another piece of this Clementine  
ok

**OSCAR.** Jesus you're a piece of work

**EMMA.** So are you

You are so beautiful Oscar you really are  
You're a piece of work

**OSCAR.** Oh c'mon stop it

I'm a man I'm not beautiful

*(They are holding hands.)*

I mean I'm

...guapo

*(They are holding hands. EMMA begins to exert a small amount of pressure on OSCAR's hand until she has guided it to the Clementine. She wraps his fingers around it and guides it toward her mouth. He feeds her the Clementine.)*

Oh man

**Scene Eleven**

*(FROG is showered and a slightly nicer shirt. He holds a bouquet of daisies. OSCAR enters.)*

**OSCAR.** Hey Hey Papi shampoo!

**FROG.** What the heck does that mean

**OSCAR.** Papi shampoo look at you!

You a ladies man today

“Papi Shampoo” that means like a playa

It means you wash your hair

for the ladies

**FROG.** Hey cut it out man

**OSCAR.** Why you look so nice Frog?

What you got flowers for you got a lady

**FROG.** Nah man

I’ve been staying somewhere

Emma she hooked me up with a shelter

over on Broadway

They’ve got a shower

**OSCAR.** Yeah but who are the flowers for

**FROG.** Who do you think dummy

Emma

Emma had her final chemo session today

So I brought her some flowers man

What’d you bring her

**OSCAR.** Oh

Uh

I can’t encourage her you know that

I’m trying to make things work with Rosa

Emma set you up good huh?

**FROG.** Yes, actually she did

She made some calls on my behalf and now

Well

I’ve got a job interview

**OSCAR.** Wow man that's fantastic

**FROG.** Yeah let's not

Even keel my friend ok

It's just a reception job

I'd be a receptionist at a shelter for the Mentally Ill  
so that's confusing right

**OSCAR.** Nah Frog it's great

**FROG.** When I was a kid my bubby

she worked at a retirement home

taking care of old Jewish ladies

and I always thought it was a little strange

because she was an old Jewish lady herself

so who was taking care of her?

**OSCAR.** Well good luck man

**FROG.** Yeah I just gotta try to be consistent

that's going to be the issue

Consistency is not my strong suit

being on time that kind of thing

Plus I have to be on top of the medication

So we'll see

*(Beat.)*

**OSCAR.** Hey do you think

Do you think those flowers could be from me too

**FROG.** What no way my friend no way

Do you know what I had to do to get these flowers

**OSCAR.** C'mon please I don't want to look like an asshole

**FROG.** No way

*(SHELLEY enters.)*

**SHELLEY.** Hey are those for Emma

**OSCAR.** Yeah

**FROG.** They're from me

**SHELLEY.** We can have a little party I brought this cake

**OSCAR.** Oh man

I'll be right back

(OSCAR exits.)

**SHELLEY.** I brought candles too is that weird?

**FROG.** No way candles are beautiful let's do candles

(She takes the candles from the bag, hands some to

**FROG.**)

(They start putting them on the cake.)

(As they're working:)

Hey Shelley

Ask me if I'm an Orange

**SHELLEY.** Are you an orange

**FROG.** No

**SHELLEY.** That's a good one

You look nice today, Frog.

**FROG.** Emma she set me up with these new duds

and she got me a job interview

It's for next week next Wednesday at 2 p.m.

I don't know if you heard

**SHELLEY.** I did hear and I think it's wonderful

**FROG.** How come you never set me up, Shelley

**SHELLEY.** I don't know

...I'm sorry

**FROG.** You're smart right you're a really smart girl

Why do you kowtow to authority sister

Why aren't you your own authority

The Catholic Church

C'mon

**SHELLEY.** Well you disagree with a lot of the choices

made by this country right

Why do you stay in this country

**FROG.** Oh believe me

I've tried to make a go of it in other places

**SHELLEY.** Right but you came back here

**FROG.** Ok but I'm saying what's your deal

Why are you helping out these losers

Why do you care about these losers

**SHELLEY.** I'm helping you Frog you're not a loser

**FROG.** No way Emma helped me

You never helped me

**SHELLEY.** Well I have helped you Frog

quite a few times

you might not remember

**FROG.** Emma helped me

*(Beat.)*

**SHELLEY.** Ok you know what I don't want to argue

this is Emma's / day and I

*(EMMA enters. She looks wrecked.)*

**FROG.** Hey! Here's our sunshine!

Look at her

You look great kid how do you feel

*(FROG presents his flowers.)*

These are for you

**EMMA.** Oh

Wow

Thanks

**FROG.** Shelley got you a cake too but we can wait on that

**SHELLEY.** I bet you're exhausted

*(EMMA starts to cry.)*

**EMMA.** No I'm fine I'm sorry

**FROG.** you need a joke you want a joke

**SHELLEY.** I bet you just need some sleep

Why don't you go home and we'll

celebrate another time

**EMMA.** I can't be around my mom right now

We got in this stupid fight because I borrowed some  
money

I took 10 bucks out of her purse  
so I could get something to eat on the way to chemo  
and she freaked out like I'm some kind of criminal

**SHELLEY.** Wait she didn't take you to the hospital

Who took you to the / hospital?

**EMMA.** I go by myself

It's worse for me if she comes

**FROG.** Hey if your mom is abusive

you should stay with Shelley

I mean I'd let you stay at my place

but I don't think you qualify

But Shelley you live in an apartment right

**SHELLEY.** Uh yeah

Yes I do

Emma I'm happy to have you stay

...If that's what you need

**FROG.** Oh yeah party at Shelley's

**EMMA.** No no I don't need a place to stay

**FROG.** Look if your mom's abusive you gotta tell us ok

**EMMA.** Please stop I'm fine it's fine

*(OSCAR enters.)*

**OSCAR.** Hey Emma

Congratulations

I got you this Bear

just a little Bear

I wanted to say congratulations so

it's a Jellycat bear

**FROG.** Oh yeah they sell those at the Rite Aid

*(OSCAR glares at FROG.)*

**EMMA.** Thanks Oscar

*(She takes the Jellycat bear and cradles it.)*

Oh my god I love it so much

**SHELLEY.** Why don't we light these candles



**FROG.** I got it

*(FROG lights the candles with a zippo from his pocket.)*

Make a wish

*(EMMA makes a wish. She blows out the candles, but only a few go out.)*

**EMMA.** Oh no

**SHELLEY.** It's ok you'll still get your / wish

*(Suddenly FROG lunges in and grabs all the remaining candles with his bare hand to put out the flame.)*

*(EMMA screams.)*

**SHELLEY.** *(calm)*

Frog

Give me your hand

Give me your hand

C'mon let's go to the sink

**OSCAR.**

Shit

Oh man

Jesus Christ Frog

What is wrong with you  
man

**FROG.** What

What

*(SHELLEY holds FROG's hand under the faucet.)*

She got her wish

## Scene Twelve

*(SHELLEY on the phone, mid-conversation.)*

**SHELLEY.** I apologize I'm not trying to interfere in a family situation

but please know that Emma is welcome to stay with me for as long as she –

Right

No that's not what I meant

I'm sorry

It's just that Emma has been a great help around here

And we'd like to return the favor

We'd like to support your family during this difficult time –

What?

*(Long beat.)*

No I assumed you knew that she was working here otherwise I would never have...

Uh huh

*(Beat.)*

No she doesn't know I'm calling ...you're her emergency contact

*(Long beat.)*

I think we should meet as soon as possible

*(OSCAR enters and lingers by the counter.)*

We're in the Bronx on the corner of 167<sup>th</sup> and

Yes I can come to you

Let me get a pen

*(OSCAR takes a sandwich out of the fridge.)*

*(He's conspicuously distracted.)*

Go ahead

(SHELLEY writes.)

Uh huh

I'll see you there

(She hangs up.)

Have you seen Emma

(Beat.)

OSCAR. What

No

No

SHELLEY. Ok well I have to go out / for a while

OSCAR. Rosa and I just broke up

SHELLEY. Oh no I'm so sorry

OSCAR. Yeah she uh

Do you have an iPhone 4?

SHELLEY. Yeah I think so or no it's a 4S

OSCAR. Yeah but you know what a pass code is right

SHELLEY. Uh

OSCAR. It protects your phone

So nobody can read your texts or emails

Here I'll show you

(He takes out his phone and starts showing her:)

See my phone is locked right now

so you can't read my private things

and then I put in my code

and there I can see everything

SHELLEY. Uh huh

OSCAR. But the iPhone 4 has a little uh

The thing about these dudes in California

I think a lot of them don't have girlfriends.

They're computer guys so they don't have girlfriends

and so they didn't test this pass code feature carefully

you know what I'm saying?

Watch this:

See this is my camera ok you see that

**SHELLEY.** Yup.

**OSCAR.** And even though the phone is locked

The camera icon still appears for some reason  
and when I press the icon it opens right up to my  
camera

and then Shelley look at this!

I am in the phone

I am in the phone

pass code does not protect me

**SHELLEY.** I'm not sure I

**OSCAR.** You know how I figured out this little problem?

I didn't

Rosa figured it out

Rosa figured it out

She figured it out and she read all my texts

and now I'm dead I'm a dead man!

*(OSCAR is overcome by his shitty situation.)*

**SHELLEY.** Are you saying that Rosa read something  
you didn't want her to read?

**OSCAR.** *(not looking up)* Yeah that crazy girl she texted me

*(Beat.)*

**SHELLEY.** Emma?

**OSCAR.** Yeah I don't know why but she texted me some  
wild shit

and Rosa I think she misunderstood

because this stuff she texted was out of / control

**SHELLEY.** You know what I need to go and this none of my  
business

**OSCAR.** Wait are you pissed are you pissed at me?

**SHELLEY.** I have to go meet someone

So I'd rather not be talking to you about this right now

**OSCAR.** you're pissed you look pissed

**SHELLEY.** Yeah well maybe I am a little  
But not at you  
I'm just going through some things too  
Oscar

**OSCAR.** Oh man Shelly I'm sorry what is it

**SHELLEY.** Never mind

**OSCAR.** Come on we're friends right you can / tell me

**SHELLEY.** I'll see you tomorrow.

**OSCAR.** Please don't stay mad at me

**SHELLEY.** I'm not mad at you I just told you that

**OSCAR.** Yeah but are you disappointed in me

*(Beat.)*

**SHELLEY.** Yes actually

I am a little disappointed in you

*(Long beat.)*

But I'll get over it

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## Scene Thirteen

(SHELLEY and EMMA sitting in the kitchen.  
EMMA's head is uncovered. She wears her hair like  
she did in the first scene.)

(Long Silence.)

EMMA. It just came out of my mouth  
and then once I said it  
I couldn't take it back  
and the more I kept pretending  
the more it started to feel true to me  
It was kind of a relief  
like thank God now I can stop pretending that I'm ok  
all the time  
It's like the outside finally  
made sense with the inside  
I'm sorry it sounds so stupid to say it out loud  
but I *feel* like I have cancer

SHELLEY. Right but you don't

EMMA. I mean on the inside

SHELLEY. Real cancer happens on the inside

EMMA. Right but I'm saying it felt true / to me

SHELLEY. No I'm sorry that's not acceptable

EMMA. So what you think I'm what evil?

SHELLEY. What

No

No I don't think you're evil

I think that you lied

You lied about something very big

EMMA. But you're a nun aren't you / supposed to

SHELLEY. You told me your mother abused you

EMMA. I never said that

Frog said it

SHELLEY. Did your mother abuse you

**EMMA.** No not physically / but

**SHELLEY.** What emotionally psychologically  
welcome to the club.

**EMMA.** I don't know I can't explain it

**SHELLEY.** Did your mother abuse you?

**EMMA.** No, no not exactly it's just that / I

**SHELLEY.** You just *feel* like she did

**EMMA.** No that's not what I / said

**SHELLEY.** Because from what I can tell your mother  
loves you like crazy

Working two jobs to put you through college –

**EMMA.** I know that!

**SHELLEY.** And this isn't the first time right

This is a pattern your mother told me this / is a

**EMMA.** Yes /

Yes

**SHELLEY.** You never went to college

She paid for your whole first semester

and you never even went to / class

**EMMA.** I was depressed I couldn't get out of bed!

There's something wrong with me

and no one can even see it

I'm in all this pain

and no one can even see it

It's like I've been through a fucking war or something

**SHELLEY.** Please stop it's offensive comparing your / pain  
to

**EMMA.** I'm sorry I'm not comparing

I thought you were supposed to be compassionate

*(The bell rings four times.)*

**SHELLEY.** Emma I need to start dinner

I appreciate you coming up here

to talk to me in person that was brave

But I don't think it's right

for you to continue working here

**EMMA.** What

**SHELLEY.** You need to take some time to figure this out  
with your family  
with the people who love you  
Your mom and I talked  
she's going to find someone for you  
a psychologist or / a

**EMMA.** HELP ME

*(Beat.)*

I'm sorry I'm sorry I yelled

**SHELLEY.** I have to do the responsible thing Emma  
There are a lot of people who depend on me  
to get them through the day  
You have a family who loves you  
who is ready to get you the help that you need

**EMMA.** Please forgive me

*(Beat. SHELLEY looks down at the floor.)*

You can't even look at me  
You can forgive everyone  
in this whole stupid world except me

**SHELLEY.** I'm not qualified to help you Emma

**EMMA.** You're a nun

I mean if a nun isn't qualified to  
Love  
To forgive  
Then what the fuck am I supposed to do  
HELP ME  
HELP ME  
HELP / ME

*(OSCAR comes running in.)*

**OSCAR.** What the heck  
What happened



Are you ladies all right?

*(EMMA runs into his arms.)*

Hey whoa

whoa

You're all right

**SHELLEY.** I'm calling your mom Emma.

**OSCAR.** What's going on

**SHELLEY.** She doesn't have cancer

**OSCAR.** ...You're clean?

**EMMA.** Well yeah but

*(OSCAR shouts in joy.)*

**OSCAR.** That's fantastic

*(He picks EMMA up off of the ground.)*

Thank you/ God

**EMMA.** No no no no Oscar stop put me / down it's

**OSCAR.** Yeah it's too much I understand it's a lot of emotion

**SHELLEY.** No no it's not it's not a lot of emotion!

Emma tell him

you should tell him yourself

*(Long beat. EMMA is too ashamed to say it.)*

...She lied.

**OSCAR.** What

**SHELLEY.** She never had cancer she lied

**OSCAR.** Oh

*(Beat.)*

That's weird

**EMMA.** Yeah

Yes

I don't know why I

It was my first day and

I felt like Shelley was judging me

**SHELLEY.** Wait what are you blaming me now?

**EMMA.** No no I'm not saying it's your fault

I take responsibility I do  
I can't handle the thought that  
someone might be mad at me  
or might not like me

**OSCAR.** But you were  
You had like the thing on your chest  
for the chemo

**EMMA.** I did that myself I got some gauze and  
I'm sorry oh my god I'm / so sorry

**OSCAR.** You brought pictures

**EMMA.** Those were real!  
He was my doctor when I was fifteen  
and I had my appendix out  
and everybody sent me flowers

*(Beat.)*

He really was my doctor

*(Pause.)*

**OSCAR.** Ok

Uh

I don't understand what's going on  
but you definitely don't have cancer right?

**EMMA.** I don't have cancer.

*(Beat.)*

**OSCAR.** So that's something to be thankful for  
I'm happy for you  
because no one deserves cancer  
My mom went through it and it was terrible  
so I'm going to knock on some wood for you

*(He walks over to the counter. He knocks on wood.  
He exits.)*

**SHELLEY.** You should go Emma I need to / start the

**EMMA.** What if I start seeing a psychologist

Could I keep working here if I see a psychologist

like you said

*(Beat.)*

Please I respect whatever decision you make  
but working here is the only good I have done in my life  
I've done good here you know that I've done good

**SHELLEY.** ...Yes you have.

**EMMA.** Maybe you could let me stay for a trial period  
I'll do extra work around here whatever you want  
Please look at me with gentleness

**SHELLEY.** ...What

**EMMA.** Please look at me with whatever you said  
With adoration

*(Long beat.)*

**SHELLEY.** If you want to stay for the afternoon I could use  
the help  
and I think you should tell the guys yourself

**EMMA.** Yes absolutely

**SHELLEY.** ...Why don't you go out and wipe down the  
tables

**EMMA.** Thank you

**SHELLEY.** You're welcome.

*(EMMA goes to the closet and gets spray and rag.  
She exits. SHELLEY keeps prepping for a few  
moments, then walks over to the microwave.)*

I know that I may not be looking at this situation  
with much clarity  
I've been lied to so many times in my life that I'm  
having a hard time trusting myself here

*(Long pause.)*

She's one of the poor right?  
That's why she's here

*(The microwave keeps running. SHELLEY just  
stands there for a few moments.)*

(FROG enters.)

FROG. Hey Shelley

(SHELLEY shuts off the microwave.)

SHELLEY. Oh hey / Frog

FROG. Emma told me she told me and I just want to say  
what a stupid asshole that girl is

SHELLEY. Ha

Well

Yes

FROG. But you should let her stay

SHELLEY. Frog this is none of your / business

FROG. People are fucked up Shelley

Angels and assholes

Me for example I'm an asshole but I've got a good heart

And she's done so much around here

Shelley

Shelley

I'm going on two more job interviews next week

Emma did that

SHELLEY. I know she did

FROG. This fucked up thing she did is mysterious

but she's a 19-year old girl

and that's a mysterious type of person

And she didn't hurt anyone not really

I mean if she was your kid you'd have to forgive her  
right?

and isn't she your kid Shelley

Look at your Vocation

I would say that she's your kid

SHELLEY. I don't know if that's how I interpret

my vocation

Frog

But I hear you

I have a lot of work to do in here

**FROG.** Oh yeah I know

I just wanted to advocate

Just know she has an advocate

**SHELLEY.** I hear you

*(FROG exits. SHELLEY dumps out a huge bag of potatoes. She starts chopping. After a bit, EMMA enters and returns her cleaning supplies to the closet. She stands looking at SHELLEY.)*

*(After a bit:)*

Do you mind helping me with these potatoes

*(EMMA nods, overwhelmed with relief.)*

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### Scene Fourteen

*(Several months later.)*

*(FROG in the kitchen. He wears a spiffy shirt and a clip-on tie, and a winter hat. He looks cleaned up and better than we've seen him yet. He is holding a potato to his ear like it's a phone.)*

**FROG.** Good morning Bronx Community Residence  
and Mental Health Facility

Good morning Bronx Community Residence  
and Mental Health Facility

Uh

*(He can't remember what to say next.)*

Good Morning

Good Morning

*(EMMA enters carrying several bags of bread, and other supplies. She wears a thick winter jacket over more grown up clothes. Her hair is up. She looks more mature, professional.)*

*(She starts putting things away as if she owns this kitchen.)*

Good morning Bronx Community Residence  
and Mental Health Facility

Uh

Uh

**EMMA.** How may I help you

**FROG.** How may I help you

**EMMA.** I don't know because I'm totally crazy

**FROG.** Well ok then

You know what you should do if you're totally crazy

You should come and meet with one of our trained  
social workers.

**EMMA.** Keep going

**FROG.** We provide

Transitional services for those

Transitioning

Transitional services for those Transitioning

That can't be right it's redundant

**EMMA.** It sounds fine they get the picture

*(SHELLEY comes in from the cafeteria with an arm full of dishes and sets them down.)*

**SHELLEY.** I think this is the last of it

Sheesh

*(SHELLEY starts gathering cleaning supplies.)*

**FROG.** Bunch of pigs

**SHELLEY.** Actually everyone's been very polite today

You look handsome Frog

**FROG.** Yeah I know

Today's my first day I start at five can't mess it up

It took me a million interviews to get this job

I gotta show up with the goods

**SHELLEY.** I know you've got the goods

Emma how are we looking for dinner

**EMMA.** We're ok for tonight but we should

double the bread order next week

We've been getting a lot of families

Little kids it's depressing

**SHELLEY.** I'll check the budget but I can't make any promises

**EMMA.** I think Reya will give us a deal

**SHELLEY.** Great bring me back a quote

Also can you be in charge of tomorrow's list

**EMMA.** Absolutely

Can I experiment?

*(SHELLEY's phone rings. She checks the number.)*

**SHELLEY.** Sure but no cilantro it weirds me out

*(SHELLEY answers her phone as she walks back out to the dining room.)*

Hey Sophie how's Grandpa  
Hey honey it's ok  
I'm here I'm right here what's going on

*(She exits. FROG goes right back to practicing.)*

**FROG.** Hi thanks for holding  
We're located at  
We're located at  
Jesus my mind  
my mind is totally shot  
Sometime around 1974 the atomic bomb  
went off in there and now it's a radiated field  
How the hell can I do this when I've got no memory

**EMMA.** It's 5670 Riverdale

**FROG.** 5670 Riverdale

**EMMA.** Try it again.

**FROG.** 5, 6  
oh god

**EMMA.** It's easy Frog:  
5, 6, 7 that's all in a row and then you go back to zero  
Plus you've got a memory if you can remember 1974

**FROG.** Yeah but that's the last year I remember  
Or maybe I'm just hungry

**EMMA.** You want a sandwich?

**FROG.** Nah I got stop for a while  
This is too heady for me I'd rather clean tables

**EMMA.** Go for it

*(FROG goes to the closet and grabs some cleaner and a rag. He exits. EMMA continues cleaning. Contentedly.)*

*(After a few moments, SHELLEY re-enters. She looks a little disoriented, maybe like she's been crying.)*



*She stands still for a moment, as if she's not sure what to do with herself.)*

Everything ok out there

**SHELLEY.** Uh yes

Fine

How's Frog doing?

**EMMA.** He says he has memory problems

But I think he's just scared

**SHELLEY.** You've done a great job with him

With everything

In fact your work here since

*(Beat.)*

Your work over the past few months has been terrific  
you've made changes I didn't think were possible  
and Tasha and I agreed that if you're interested  
we'd like to put you on salary

*(Pause.)*

Are you ok

**EMMA.** Yes oh my god thank you yes

**SHELLEY.** Oh good

Ha

I was worried you were going to say no

I'm so relieved

Tasha will deal with all the paperwork

she'll have to train you too sorry

I have to fly out to California for a week or so

**EMMA.** Oh

Wow

**SHELLEY.** Yeah my dad uh

he's been moved home he's ready to go

Finally

**EMMA.** I'm so sorry

**SHELLEY.** Thank you

I'm hoping he and I can  
Well I'm not sure what I'm hoping

*(Beat. EMMA's not sure what to say.)*

**EMMA.** Can I do anything

**SHELLEY.** You know what yes I was going to ask –  
would you be willing  
to take care of my place while I'm gone  
look after Pumpkin, water my plants  
If it's not too much trouble

**EMMA.** Of course not whatever you need

**SHELLEY.** That's wonderful thank you  
You're welcome to stay there too  
Pumpkin would love the company  
If you don't mind playing with him  
and petting him a lot  
He's a very spoiled cat  
why don't you stop by when we're done here  
and I can show you how he likes things

**EMMA.** Ha  
Sure

**SHELLEY.** Oh and in terms of this place  
Tasha will be in charge of the kitchen  
while I'm gone so

**EMMA.** Oh I thought you might put me in charge

**SHELLEY.** I think it's a little soon for that

**EMMA.** I know I'm sorry I'll just miss you.

*(OSCAR enters.)*

Hey Oscar

**OSCAR.** Hey

Just here to get my leftovers

*(He opens the refrigerator, grabs his leftovers and leaves.)*

**EMMA.** Do you think he'll ever talk to me again?

**SHELLEY.** Give him time

*(Beat.)*

Hey

Look at this

*(SHELLEY pulls a nun's habit out of a huge plastic bag.)*

**EMMA.** What is that

Is that a nun dress?

**SHELLEY.** Well yes but more importantly it's a basketball dress

**EMMA.** Whoa no way

**SHELLEY.** Oh yeah

I don't know if you know this about me

But I was the leading point guard in Northern California

Triple A ball

and when I come back from this trip

I am heading across the street

And I am going to dominate those girls

*(EMMA starts laughing.)*

**EMMA.** Ha

Yes I will be there

**SHELLEY.** I am going to ruin those girls.

**Scene Fifteen**

*(EMMA is alone in the kitchen, blasting music.)*

*(She chops vegetables and throws them violently into the soup.)*

*(She pulls some spices down from above the stove and starts adding them to the pot.)*

*(OSCAR enters.)*

**OSCAR.** HEY

**EMMA.** OH HEY YOU'RE TALKING TO ME NOW

**OSCAR.** OH C'MON DON'T BE LIKE THAT

HOW'S IT GOING HERE WITH TASHA

**EMMA.** I FUCKING HATE TASHA BUT SHE'S GONE TODAY

*(She turns down the music.)*

It's all fine

Tasha's fine.

**OSCAR.** No she's not she's scary

I'm sorry you have to deal with that

**EMMA.** Me too it's like penal servitude here now  
whatever I can take it

**OSCAR.** We need Shelley man

**EMMA.** Yeah no shit

She's gotta stay longer

I don't know what's going on

But her family sounds crazy

**OSCAR.** Oh man poor Shelley

**EMMA.** Yeah and poor me

I'm going insane here without her

**OSCAR.** Yeah

Yeah

*(Beat.)*

Soup smells good

**EMMA.** I'm trying out some new stuff

Fennel

**OSCAR.** Cool

*(Beat.)*

Listen

I want to tell you

Uh

I mean I know I don't need to tell you this

but I want everything to be out in the open

So I want to tell you that I asked Rosa to marry me

*(Beat.)*

**EMMA.** Good for you

**OSCAR.** Yeah

Yeah

And she said yes

**EMMA.** That's fantastic.

**OSCAR.** Yeah it is right?

And listen to be clear

I didn't tell her everything about us

but I did have to tell her some things

you know because of the texts

which I realize you had every right to send

I realize that I was equally responsible

for what happened

and you had a right to send those texts

and I'm sorry that Rosa saw them

but that is not your fault

*(Beat.)*

Are you ok

**EMMA.** Yeah

I hope you'll be super happy

**OSCAR.** Thank you

*(Pause.)*

So to be clear  
I'm not  
except for telling you this  
I'm not supposed to talk to you

*(Beat.)*

**EMMA.** ...Ok

**OSCAR.** Yeah

So

**EMMA.** So see ya

*(Pause. EMMA is doing her best not to break down.)*

**OSCAR.** Oh c'mon Emma

You knew I had a girlfriend when / you

**EMMA.** Please stop talking to me

You're not supposed to talk to me

I'm a piece of shit and you're not supposed to / talk  
to me

**OSCAR.** Stop it you're an amazing girl and I have real  
admiration

for how you turned your life around

and I'm just trying to do the same

I'm trying to make a life / with Rosa

**EMMA.** Jesus I get it just leave me alone

**OSCAR.** I'm sorry I'm just trying to say

that you're a beautiful girl

or you know woman

human being and I / really wish

**EMMA.** Oh my god can you please

Can you please just

**GET THE FUCK OUT OF HERE**

*(She turns the music back up.)*

*(She goes back to chopping.)*

*(OSCAR stands there for a moment watching her.)*

*(He exits.)*

**(EMMA chops.)**

*(She cuts her finger.)*

Shit

Shit

Shit

*(She runs to the faucet and puts it under water.)*

*(She stands there and silently counts to 20.)*

*(She takes off her apron, goes to the soup, turns it down to a simmer and walks out the door.)*

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## Scene Sixteen

(SHELLEY alone in the kitchen sobbing.)

(She tries to recover when OSCAR enters.)

OSCAR. Shelley girl are you ok

Hey c'mon Shelley

(She starts crying again.)

(OSCAR grabs her some paper towels and hands them to her.)

(He pours her a glass of water.)

Here

Here

Drink this

C'mon Shelley

Drink this.

(She drinks.)

Man you were thirsty

You ok

Shelley you ok

(SHELLEY nods.)

SHELLEY. Has Emma been in yet

OSCAR. What no

She ditched us while you were out of town

Tasha's been working by herself for a couple of weeks

We haven't heard from Emma

SHELLEY. She uh

She didn't feed my cat

(Beat.)

OSCAR. She didn't feed your

(SHELLEY starts to cry again.)

Oh shit



**SHELLEY.** He must have thought  
He thought I abandoned him  
The whole apartment was  
He had torn up the whole apartment  
looking for food  
and water  
He shit all over the place he just died there  
desperate  
Thinking I'd abandoned him  
Why didn't you  
Why didn't you  
Why the fuck didn't anyone call me?

**OSCAR.** Shelley

**SHELLEY.** You or  
Tasha why didn't you why didn't you call me  
If Emma didn't come to work for 2 weeks  
Why didn't you call me  
I was  
I had a lot to deal with  
I didn't check in because  
I had a lot to  
My dad was dying  
Oh my god  
He didn't have any water  
He didn't have any / water

(**FROG** enters.)

**FROG.** Hey you guys  
Hey Shelley  
Shelly  
What's going on  
Are you ok Shelley  
You need a joke  
You wanna hear a joke

**OSCAR.** Hey man c'mon give her some space

**FROG.** Hey Shelley two penguins are sitting in a bathtub

**OSCAR.** C'mon man leave her alone

She's having a hard day

**FROG.** (*fairly calm at first*) Oh yeah I know me too

you know why?

There's fucking a government guy following me

oh yeah

oh yeah

He's about 5'9"

very nondescript

that's the kind of guy the CIA sends

the kind of guy that blends right in

think I won't notice

fuck you motherfuckers

**OSCAR.** Frog man what's going on

Why aren't you at work

**FROG.** Because they know where I work now Oscar

They've got their people disguised in the waiting room

**OSCAR.** Hey did you forget your medication

Did you take your medication today

**FROG.** Can you look outside and see if he's there

He's wearing a tie

He's wearing a tie just like this one

because you know what they do

They mock you

They mock you

Throw it back in your face

Look at you sucker working a fucking desk job

Look at what the fuck you are

A nothing

A nothing

**OSCAR.** Hey calm down ok

Can you hand me your bag

I'm gonna find you some / medication

*(OSCAR grabs for FROG's bag and FROG suddenly turns on him and starts flailing, trying to wrestle the bag out of OSCAR's hands.)*

**FROG.** DON'T TOUCH MY SHIT  
DON'T TOUCH MY SHIT ASSHOLE

**SHELLEY.** FROG  
CALM DOWN.

*(Beat.)*

**FROG.** ...Ok

**SHELLEY.** Listen to me Frog  
I'm gonna go check  
and see if that CIA dude is still out there  
and if he's out there  
I'm going to deal with him

*(Beat.)*

**FROG.** Thanks  
Shelley.

*(She gets up and walks out the back door and shuts it.)*

*(FROG watches after her anxiously.)*

**OSCAR.** Hey man  
I didn't mean to scare you

*(SHELLEY walks back in.)*

**FROG.** Was he out there

**SHELLEY.** Yeah

He was out there

**FROG.** *(to OSCAR)* I told you!

**SHELLEY.** I said he needed to leave you alone  
I told him if the CIA didn't back off  
We were gonna sue their asses  
and take them for everything they've got  
and he got scared

and he agreed to leave

**FROG.** He did

**SHELLEY.** Yes he did

So you're safe Frog

you're safe

and I want you to drink some water ok

Oscar can you get him a cup

**OSCAR.** Sure

**SHELLEY.** (*as she digs through FROG's bag*) We've taken care  
of the CIA guy

and now we're gonna get you back to your house Ok

We're gonna get you back to your living situation

(*Beat.*)

**FROG.** Yeah

Ok

Thanks Shelley

**SHELLEY.** And can I look through your bag Frog?

Can I see if you have some medication

that might help you sleep?

Because I think after all they've put you through

you deserve to rest

(**FROG** *nods.*)

**FROG.** Yeah

Yeah

I do deserve to rest

Oh man

It's so hot in here

**SHELLEY.** Hey Oscar

Can you bring me a cold washcloth

**OSCAR.** Sure

**SHELLEY.** (*pulling a pill container out of FROG's bag*) Ok I  
found these Frog

This is your Olanzapine

It's gonna help you deal with the stress

caused by these motherfuckers ok

**FROG.** Yeah

Yeah

You're sure they're not tampered with

**SHELLEY.** Nope this is a clean supply

I've checked them

It's a clean supply

*(FROG takes the pill and puts it in his mouth.)*

*(He takes a drink of the water.)*

*(OSCAR hands SHELLEY the cloth.)*

There you go you got it

And lets cool you off ok

Will you let me touch your face.

**FROG.** ...Yeah

*(FROG lets SHELLEY wash his face.)*

*(He relaxes.)*

**SHELLEY.** There you go

**FROG.** Shit they're evil you know

**SHELLEY.** I know

They are evil and I'm so sorry

I'm so sorry you have to deal with this

You don't deserve any of this

## Scene Seventeen

(EMMA is waiting alone in the kitchen for SHELLEY.)

(After a bit, SHELLEY enters with an armful of dirty dishes. She is dressed in a contemporary nun's habit. A skirt and jacket. A modest headpiece.)

(She stops and looks at EMMA. Her face and stance are open, generous, kind.)

EMMA. Thank you for seeing me

(SHELLEY nods.)

I uh  
I'm going back to school  
upstate  
and I didn't want to leave  
without apologizing in person

SHELLEY. All right

(Beat.)

EMMA. Oscar said

He said you were leaving the church  
but you're dressed like / a

SHELLEY. I am leaving

this  
Costume  
was a last ditch effort to make it work  
I'm formally leaving tomorrow but until then

(Beat.)

I'm still giving it my all

EMMA. What will you do

(Beat. SHELLEY smiles.)

SHELLEY. I have no idea

(EMMA looks down, sick with remorse.)

**EMMA.** I'm sorry I am so / sorry

**SHELLEY.** Emma I know that what you did  
wasn't actively malicious  
I know that you didn't deliberately  
torture  
another living creature  
who was depending on you for survival

**EMMA.** Did you

My letter did you get / my

**SHELLEY.** I read it yes thank you

I've been reading it for the past month  
I've read it maybe a hundred times  
looking for some kind of...

*(Beat.)*

And thing is

I empathize with you Emma  
with your

Depression – you said you ran away because you were  
very

Depressed

and I understand that I do

I realize this might come as a surprise to you

but I have also experienced

quite a lot of depression

in my life

*(Long beat. She looks at EMMA with genuine  
kindness.)*

But even though I know that you were in pain

and that what you did was thoughtless

and not

actively malicious

I still believe with all my heart that it was evil

*(Beat.)*

EMMA. What

SHELLEY. It was evil and I'm relieved that tomorrow  
I will finally be rid of

*(She gestures vaguely to her habit.)*

Whatever obligation this gives me to forgive you

*(The church bell rings three times.)*

I need to finish cleaning up.

EMMA. Shelley

I promise you that  
one day

I will be a different kind of person

a better kind of person

and even though I know this is something

I can never make right

I hope that one day

you'll be able to forgive me

SHELLEY. Emma I believe you

I believe that one day you will be

A different kind of person

A better kind of person

and I even believe that one day

I might be able to forgive you

But the thing is

*(Long beat as SHELLEY searches her heart.)*

I don't want to

*(She is filled with a dawning sense of wonder:)*

...I feel lighter

and freer

and strangely

...happy?

standing here right now knowing that

I don't ever have to forgive you

Ever



Ever

Ever

Ever

Ever

I don't wish you any harm Emma  
but if I never forgive you that will be fine with me  
I can live with that

*(SHELLEY looks at EMMA with great gentleness.)*

*(After a bit:)*

**EMMA.** Shelley I...

*(Beat.)*

I should go

*(A kind of benediction:)*

**SHELLEY.** Yes

*(SHELLEY lets EMMA go.)*

*(SHELLEY watches EMMA disappear, and then finally allows herself to relax. She takes a deep breath. And another. She is filled with a growing elation, and eventually something resembling joy.)*

**End of Play**

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