

We Just Left

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Workshop Draft

Made in Highland

Cast Of Characters

Greg	29 years old
Cary	30 years old
Jean	29 years old
Diane	49 years old, Greg's mother
Jeff	35 years old, Wedding guest
Angela	35 years old, Jean's Friend
Kristen	31 years old, just married
Greg's Mirror	Greg with no face.
Cary's Mirror	Cary with no face.

SETTING

Cary and Greg's apartment. Sparse. Two couches face each other. A TV at the center. A table in the corner covered in papers. A counter along the wall. Stage right, a door that leads to the bathroom. At the back of the stage, two doors on opposite sides, each going to a bedroom. A door with deadbolts toward the front of the stage that leads out of the apartment. The walls are deep black. A window in the center of the stage looks outside onto the brick wall of a neighboring building. Above the center window, one white mask hangs, looking like knockoff native art, somewhat horrifying in its facial expression.

ACT 1

SCENE 1

Living room. All that is seen is the flickering glow of a TV in the center of the stage. As the sun rises and casts light on the brick wall out the apartment window, the room lights up. Each couch has someone sleeping under a thin blanket.

CARY (screaming)

Fuck!

Greg, on the opposite couch, wakes abruptly and sits up at attention.

GREG

Did it grind him up?

Cary stands up from the couch and looks around the room, confused. Greg watches him with wrapt attention. Cary smiles to himself. He's calm now. He sits on the foot of Greg's couch.

CARY

(relieved) I think I overslept. What the hell did you say?

GREG

What?

CARY

Someone is being ground up?

GREG

I don't remember that. How could you have overslept? The sun is barely up.

CARY

I know that now.

GREG

And a second ago?

CARY

I couldn't see yet.

Greg gets up and paces for a moment. Then, he stands behind the opposite couch, looking at Cary.

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Cary is somewhat bubbly, as if remembering he's looking forward to something.

GREG

Was there something we needed to do today?

CARY

My suit. I need to pick it up.

Greg ponders.

GREG

At sunrise?

CARY

Will you drop the time?

GREG

How would one do that?

CARY

Like, let it go. That was morning fog. Brain fog.

GREG

Like the covid thing. Do we have covid?

CARY

I was still entering reality. I was partially asleep.

GREG

Oh.

(Greg walks over to the TV and shuts it off)

I'd like to have a human conversation now.

CARY

I'm almost ready.

GREG

I just remembered what we have to do today.

CARY

I'm glad to hear it.

Greg slowly walks around the room as if inspecting it.

GREG

I'm not going.

CARY (off the couch now)

Please don't do this.

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GREG
I don't believe them.

CARY
It's not a concept that requires belief. You go. You eat. You drink.

GREG
Attendance is justification.

CARY
Is that a slogan?

GREG
I'm condoning it by being there.

CARY
Then you shouldn't have RSVPed. They made you a chicken.

GREG
I selected fish.

CARY
They didn't offer fish.

Greg continues pacing and inspecting.

GREG
I'm not going.

CARY
What am I supposed to tell everyone?

GREG
The truth. It's a rotten union.

CARY
Yeah, but you're not marrying Kristen. What's-his-name is.

GREG
Agamemnon.

CARY
It's Allen.

Cary walks over to the corner of the room toward a pile of papers. He begins rifling through them. Greg sits back on the couch and pulls a thin blanket over him.

GREG

Tell them I have self-diagnosed ADHD, and I can't focus long enough to get my clothes on.

CARY (holding a slip of paper)

Avery! His name is Avery. (throws paper like frisbee)

GREG

I'm finally getting around to watching Casablanca tonight. I can't cancel on myself.

CARY

We don't own Casablanca.

GREG

I'm renting it. Later. Who owns any movies anymore?

CARY

I think it's pretty shitty of you to do this. Just so we're clear.

GREG

Crystal.

CARY

You're something.

Cary grabs his phone. He dials and waits.

GREG

Don't.

CARY

(On phone) Hey. Yeah. Sorry it's so early. He's not going. I know. I know. He doesn't believe them. I practically said the same thing. You sure? OK. (Holding the phone out to Greg) Jean wants a word.

GREG (pulls blanket over head)

I don't want to right now.

Cary pulls the blanket off Greg. Greg takes the phone.

GREG

(voice softens)

Hi. Uh huh. No one can remember his name. It's not Eric. Cary just told me what it is. I know, I already forgot it, shouldn't that mean something? OK. Yeah.

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Greg hands the phone back to Cary.

CARY
Hi. Ok. I need like 20 minutes. Love you.

Cary looks at Greg with a knowing smile.

GREG
That was unfair.

CARY
I didn't do anything.

GREG
You're both exploiting my fondness for your girlfriend.

CARY
She wants you to be there. Our friends want you there, too. Even Allen- Avery!

GREG
No one wants me there.

CARY
They do.

GREG
How would you know?

CARY
Do I really need to explain how invitations work? Is your suit clean?

GREG
Yes.

CARY
Was this a flex? Were you going to come anyway?

GREG
I'm not flexing.

CARY
OK.

Cary finds the invitation he flung and picks it up off the floor. He sets it back on the table.

GREG

You fell asleep before the movie finished last night.

CARY

Don't tell me the ending. I'll catch up later.

GREG

I was lying there thinking about the time I drove through the gorge.

CARY

Why?

GREG

I saw this abandoned factory. Maybe it was a cannery. Wasn't too big. Just a rusting building by the water's edge. I broke in and wandered around.

CARY

I think I remember you telling me something about it. But I forget. You saw someone, is that right?

GREG

No. Nothing. No one. I was just alone, and the wind was rattling the corrugated steel walls, and it smelled of bird shit and dirty river and... Yeah. There was a boat whistle in the distance maybe. Birds were chirping inside.

Cary has a look of concern.

GREG

I was remembering what it felt like to be there. Profound, I think... in a way I've never felt with another person before or since. Sort of an epiphany, really. This feeling I'll only get alone.

CARY

Hmm. That makes me (searching for feeling) sad.

GREG

It's not meant to.

CARY

OK.

GREG

When was the last time you felt really connected to the ground under your feet?

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CARY

I think you spilled milk or something in front of the fridge. So, when I stand there, my feet kind of stick to the floor.

GREG

What? No, I'm being serious.

CARY

So am I. Clean the fucking floor, dude.

GREG

Forget it.

CARY

Connected to the ground. Maybe a few minutes after Jean kissed me on the fire escape.

GREG

Right. Sure. Why?

CARY

I just didn't think she still liked me back. I was so certain of it. And it was my favorite time I was proven wrong.

GREG

That was a real answer. Thank you.

Without a word, Cary walks out the front door. The lights start to dim. With the lights low, Greg folds both blankets and then makes himself a pot of tea. He pours the tea, and drinks the entire first glass immediately. Then, he pours a second and walks over to the window. The theater goes completely dark for a moment.

SCENE 2:

Mid day. Greg sits with a mug of coffee on the windowsill and looks out. The mask on the wall is now next to the window, lower than before. Cary and Jean enter Stage Right. Cary holds a garment bag.

JEAN

Hey there, sunshine.

GREG

Please.

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CARY

They had to take my suit in like 2 full inches at the waist. How about that shit?

GREG

You've done really well for yourself.

JEAN

It's tracking calories. Once you get a benchmark-

GREG

It's turning the repression of food into compulsion. I can't do it. I'll get an eating disorder.

CARY

You don't need it. I did.

JEAN

Yes, we're not all blessed with your chromosomal lottery ticket.

Jean gravitates over to the couch. She eyes Greg's mug.

JEAN

Coffee?

GREG

Tea. The pot is there.

Jean gets up and pours herself a mug of team from a ceramic pot. She smells it. She is confused and then shrugs. She takes a sip.

CARY

I don't see your suit out? It probably needs to be steamed.

JEAN

You should pop it in the bathroom. After you both shower, it should loosen up.

Greg doesn't respond. He stares out the window. Then, he gets up and studies the mask on the wall. Jean gives Cary a look and gestures toward Greg. Cary shrugs.

CARY

You hear me, buddy?

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GREG

Oh yes. Definitely. My suit will loosen up eventually. No doubt.

Greg starts laughing to himself.

JEAN

G, are you ok?

Greg gulps the rest of his tea down and drops the mug on the floor. It shatters. Jean and Cary both jump.

CARY

What the fuck?

GREG

That masks is- You hate to see it, you know?

Cary, seemingly realizing something, quickly gets up and snatches the mug out of Jean's hands. He smells it.

CARY

Did you dose this?

Greg is laughing. He nods.

JEAN

Oh my god, Greg. How much?

Greg makes a "tiny" gesture with his fingers.

JEAN

I had a full sip of that, am I gonna be fucked up tonight?

GREG

No, micro dose at most.

CARY

Why didn't you warn her, asshole.

GREG

I thought it was something we could all enjoy together.

Cary drops his look of outrage for a moment to sample the tea.

JEAN

What are you doing?

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Cary gestures "don't worry about it" to Jean.

CARY
(to Greg) you know the wedding is tonight. How much did you have?

Greg uses his hands to make a "big" gesture.

JEAN
You could have just refused to go. I wouldn't have pressed you more.

GREG
Yes you would have. And you would have won.

JEAN
I genuinely wanted you there. We both do. I wasn't trying to manipulate you.

GREG
I know. I don't think about you like that.

CARY
So now what? You're back out?

GREG
I'll go to the reception. I'll be fine by then.

CARY
The fuck you will. You'll be peaking by then.

Silence while everyone considers Greg's decisions thus far.

CARY
(shakes head) Have it your way.

Cary enters the bathroom. Greg and Jean sit in silence. Greg with a smile on his face that's slowly dissipating.

JEAN
I think that was pretty mean.

GREG
(genuine) I'm sorry.

JEAN
I told you about Amanda, my friend. She's going tonight. I wanted you two to meet.

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GREG

I'm in a surly mood. She'll be put off by me.

JEAN

That's self-aware.

GREG

I'm an acquired taste, isn't that what you told me?

JEAN

I said it took me a few times hanging out with you to really get past the-

GREG

I'd prefer you don't search for the right word.

JEAN

I thought Amanda might get you. I don't know. She would have appreciated your cynicism maybe. She's funny, too.

GREG

I'm not funny.

JEAN

Normally, you are. This might seem funny in a few days.

GREG

I'm sorry.

JEAN

What possessed you to do this?

Greg smiles again and starts to shake his head. Then, he looks toward the mask on the wall. His smile stops.

GREG

Did you see that?

JEAN

See what?

GREG

I just forgot I'm tripping. Wow.

JEAN

It kicked in that quick?

GREG

That was my second pot.

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JEAN

Oh, Greg.

Jean walks over to him, pats him on the shoulder.

JEAN

(yells to bathroom) Babe! I'm gonna head out and get looking so good. I'll pick you up in 2 hours.

CARY (from bathroom)

Sounds good.

Jean leaves the apartment. Greg looks at the mask, then he slowly turns and faces the audience. Looking toward the back of the theater, his eyes catch someone.

GREG

You don't buy it, do you? My friend's patience for me is declining lately. I remember one time he asked me how I felt about something, Cary. I still haven't answered because, well, the truth is, I feel so many things about it. I thought about trying to tell him how I felt, but then it would change, or I'd feel something different about another thing, not his thing. Do you know what I'm talking about? Has that happened to you?

From the back of the theater, a man approaches, wearing the same outfit as Greg. But no face, just a smooth, skin-toned mask and a wig matching Greg's hairstyle. He slowly makes his way to the stage. Greg keeps his eye on the mirror-image. The mirror-image takes a seat on the opposite couch and faces Greg.

GREG

Remember the factory? Remember the birds? I can hear it sometimes. Can you hear it now?

Greg listens. He closes his eyes. The mirror-image continues to face him. There is no sound of the birds or the factory. As the mask on the wall slowly slides down, a single voice begins singing random notes.

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The mask and the voice abruptly stop when the mirror-image man gets up. Greg watches him. The mirror-image walks toward the bathroom, opens the door and enters. Greg stares at the bathroom, but doesn't get up. He sits and stares at the bathroom for a minute. Then the lights go black.

SCENE 3:

Early evening. The living room is empty. Then, Cary enters from the front door. He's dressed in a suit. He's looking around the room for something. Jean enters.

JEAN

It's in a purple envelope, I think.

CARY

Who can find anything in here?

(beat - continues looking)

Could it be in your car?

JEAN

No.

CARY

How can you be so confident about that?

JEAN

Because I keep my spaces clean. (Beat)

Can you write them another check?

CARY

It was cash.

JEAN

Oh. That makes more sense.

CARY

I think he's an accountant, right? So maybe a check is better. Can he write off a wedding gift?

JEAN

I'm not sure you know how write-offs work, honey. He doesn't need to-

CARY

(finds envelope) Got it!

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JEAN

Good. Should we see if Greg is lucid enough to come?

Cary considers.

CARY

Greg? You here?

Nothing.

JEAN

He wouldn't have left, would he?

CARY

If he's good enough to leave, he's good enough to come with us.

Cary checks Greg's room. He comes out shaking his head. They both stand silently for a moment.

JEAN

We should-

CARY

Yeah.

They make their way toward the door, but as they reach for it- Greg bursts through the door. He's holding an enormous hoagie and a family-size bag of chips.

GREG

Hello, friends.

JEAN

You seem better. Maybe a little underdressed.

Greg starts unwrapping his sandwich and working to open the bag of chips simultaneously.

GREG

I was thinking about when I moved out of my mom's house. Like after high school. And it was my first real independence-

CARY

Hey, can you-

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GREG

And I distinctly remembered buying these chips. These ones (holds bag up). And crumbling them and adding them to this sandwich. This one right here (displays sandwich). And then I could taste it in my mind. In the moment, you know. A few minutes ago, I think. Maybe it's been hours. You're back already?

JEAN

We haven't left yet, technically.

GREG

Oh, well you should go. And send my love to, you know. Them.

CARY

You seem solid to me, buddy. Maybe throw your suit on, join us.

Greg sits down and begins crumbling the chips into his sandwich. Cary and Jean observe Greg, then each other. Cary motions for the door. Jean holds a finger up. She sits next to Greg on the couch.

JEAN

I think you should come. It would be nice to have you. Cary would appreciate it. You know how he is. He's gonna wander off, and I'll be bored at the table, and I don't want to wander around with him. I want someone at the table who's going to talk about the silly people. That's you. You're a shit talker. And while I normally do not talk shit, I was feeling kind of excited to do it tonight.

GREG

I'm not a shit talker.

CARY

You are. It's fine.

JEAN

It would be easier if you were there, Greg. You did basically dose me earlier, and I think I've taken it really well. Maybe you owe me?

Greg is eating and savoring the chips and sandwich. He swallows.

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GREG

My dad worked at a dog food plant. Did you two know that?

CARY

Yes.

JEAN

I don't think-

GREG

Our neighborhood was due south of the plant, and when winter storm systems would come in, the neighborhood would stink of the plant. You smell dog food outside, pretty likely snow's coming. Soon.

Jean gets up off the couch. Cary hands the envelope to Jean, who puts it in her purse.

GREG

I had a dream once that my dad fell into a giant blender at the plant and was, well, ground up, pureed into a red and white paste. I don't think they have giant blenders there. Just my mind doing this terrifying mashup of objects and, yeah, the winter smell started to fill me with dread. Wasn't sure why. And last year, I was waiting for the train, and this cold breeze hit me, and then the dog food smell, and I started crying.

Greg goes back to eating.

CARY

Did you wanna come with us or not? You can finish that in the car, even though there will be, you know, a meal made specifically for you at the reception.

GREG

Isn't that so twisted up, the smell and the sadness? I didn't even like him, my dad. I don't think I did at least. All these strange inputs. Like my dream, right? Just a series of different things connecting. And do they mean anything? I don't think so.

JEAN

Have a good night, Greg. If you change your mind, get a car and join us. Won't be as fun without you.

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GREG

Right. Yes. Have fun. Tell them I- I don't know what you should tell them.

CARY

I'll think of something.

Cary and Jean leave. Greg continues eating.

From the back of the theater, Greg's Mirror-image walks up on stage and, without pausing, goes directly toward the bathroom door and enters. Greg watches the bathroom door and then gets up, sets his sandwich down, and enters the bathroom. When he enters, the light in the bathroom switches from white to red.

The lights in the room dim. Then, the light outside the window. Slowly, the mask on the side of the window moves over the window frame and settles on the other side of the window, on the same side of the wall as the bathroom door.

SCENE 4:

Slightly later, the sun is down outside. The light in the bathroom switches from red to white. Greg exits the bathroom. His clothes are soaked. He looks around the room and sees Jean and Cary standing by the door, both faceless.

GREG

You all are going to be late.

The faceless couple look at each other and move their heads as if speaking, but make no sounds. Then, faceless Cary opens the door. Faceless Jean follows and looks back at Greg.

GREG

Bye, Jean.

Faceless Jean exists.

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Greg walks over and stands behind the couch and stares at his sandwich. Then, he sits down, picks up his sandwich, smells it and is disappointed. Then, a knock at the door. He looks up at the door. It slowly opens. Diane enters and sits opposite Greg on the other couch.

GREG

Sorry, I don't have enough to share.

Diane takes the room in, looks around. She appears somewhat dazed. She looks at her hands and her legs. She runs her hands over the couch, feeling its texture.

DIANE

Your face is rounder than normal. I don't like this new round face.

GREG

Yeah, I'm on a diet (holds up sandwich). I was just telling a story about dad earlier.

DIANE

Tell me.

GREG

I suppose it was more about me.

DIANE

Was I there?

GREG

No. But, don't feel left out or anything. I know you feel that way sometimes. But this story was specific to me; dad was just in it.

DIANE

I'm surprised you're still here, in this place.

GREG

The rental market in this town is very competitive.

DIANE

Hmm.

GREG

I know.

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DIANE

Maybe it's time you come and stay with me.

Greg considers. He's emotional about the prospect. He takes a bite of his sandwich and immediately regrets it. It tastes rotten. He sets the sandwich down on the floor.

GREG

How did you get here? Did I call you?

DIANE

You're so talented. Even back when you were 2. You would make these water color paintings that were astonishing.

GREG

Every parent thinks their kid is an artistic genius.

DIANE

No, your color theory was informed by something. There was an energy moving through you, and you could grasp it when you created.

GREG

So what happened? Why can't I grasp it anymore?

DIANE

I don't think you ever enjoyed the feeling. I loved your art, but you never enjoyed making it. That's what it looked like to me. We always think we know what's going on in our kid's heads. Maybe I was too certain back then.

GREG

Nothing ever felt complete. Your compliments about my work felt like lies. I thought you were trying to trick me.

DIANE

Why would I do that?

GREG

That's the question, isn't it?

DIANE

If you had children of your own, you'd find out very quickly how easy it is to do things wrong, and just how hard it was for me when I did things right.

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GREG

Sounds a little like you're letting yourself off the hook.

DIANE

No one has infinite patience.

GREG

And I require too much.

DIANE

No, I don't mean it that way.

GREG

Sure. OK. So what do you want? Why are you here?

DIANE

I thought of something and wanted to tell you about it.

GREG

OK, What?

DIANE

I spent my whole life trying to figure out how to live. That's kind of sad, don't you think?

GREG

Yes. Did you ever learn the answer?

DIANE

Did you?

The theater goes black.

Act 2

SCENE 1:

The wedding reception. One table in the center of the room. A spotlight only on the table and the people seated. Dance music plays in the background. Jean is seated with Jeff and Angela. Cary stumbles over to the table and takes a seat. He's somewhat out of breath.

JEFF

I didn't take you as a dancer.

CARY

Alcohol helps to get me there.

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ANGELA

I hated his vows. Is that cruel to say out loud?

JEFF

They just felt inauthentic.

ANGELA

Maybe that's why she was making the sulfur face.

CARY

The what?

ANGELA

You know, like she's just smelled something stinky, like rotten eggs.

JEAN

I'm really happy right now. I can't express why, really.

CARY

I've never noticed that about her face. And I thought he looked very handsome.

JEFF

I've spent some time with them recently. They work well enough together.

ANGELA

Low bar.

JEFF

It mostly ends the same way. No reason to raise the bar.

ANGELA

How does it end? Death?

JEAN

Divorce.

CARY

Infidelity.

ANGELA

Not that way. I think they have an open marriage.

JEAN

Are you serious?

ANGELA

You fucked her, right, babe?

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JEFF

Stop.

Cary and Jean are uncomfortable.

JEFF

She's messing with you.

ANGELA

Sorry. I'm dry tonight and just trying to find something to poke my finger into.

JEAN

My god.

JEFF

I do think they have an open marriage, though.

CARY

I envy people who can make that work.

JEAN

Ugh, why?

CARY

I think if you know you really can take advantage of any opportunity, but you still stick with your partner, and have something deeper with them, then it must be real, right?

ANGELA

I just see it as codependent people who are too chickenshit to admit their relationships are over. They are roommates in denial.

JEFF

Maybe.

JEAN

But definitions are shifting now. Relationships and identities. I mean, why buy into a construct simply because it exists? We can reinvent who we are or how we see ourselves. Isn't that better?

ANGELA

I don't know. My sister was miserable, and then she found religion, and now she's insufferably miserable.

JEAN

I kind of hate my sister right now.

(Beat)

I really am having a nice time.

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JEFF
Where is Mr. Sunshine?

ANGELA
Who's that?

JEAN
Greg, obviously.

JEFF
Yeah, Greg.

ANGELA
He makes me uncomfortable.

CARY
Why?

ANGELA
He's unpredictable.

JEAN
He's not boring. He's soft underneath the-
What would you call his exterior?

CARY
Prickly.

JEFF
He's an asshole. But He's the type of asshole
I enjoy. Like he's our asshole, you know? He
was kind of a musical genius, right?

JEAN
I think so.

CARY
I remember he went through this break up. We
both did at the same time. But we had each
other. We were sort of racing to the bottom
and cheering the other along as we sunk. But
in the midst of all that, he started doing
this Tuesday open mic, and this song just
haunted me.

JEAN
It was devastating.

ANGELA
I'm confused on the timeline. Weren't you two
dating back then? I thought you said you were
going through a break up.

CARY
I was.

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JEAN

With me.

JEFF

Right. I always forget you two split and re-found each other.

ANGELA

That's sweet.

JEFF

And you two set the bar too high.

JEAN

I was still around. We tried to be friends. I think I was pretending to be better about it than I actually was.

CARY

She was in a relationship with someone. That's important information she's leaving out.

JEAN

I'm not leaving it out. I would go out partying with Cary sometimes, and then one of us would get wasted and ruin it.

ANGELA

By sleeping together?

CARY

By not sleeping together.

JEAN

The song, though.

CARY

Yeah, the song. He was so fucking crushed. And most people write songs about the person who broke their heart or about their own broken heart.

JEAN

Not greg.

CARY

No, he writes this song that's like the saddest pep talk you've ever heard. He's like trying to convince himself it's going to be ok.

JEAN

There's nothing sadder than chasing happiness.

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CARY

I'm getting like PTSD thinking about those days. That song. And his mom died right around then. Young, too. It just walloped him.

ANGELA

Hmm. Spent plenty of time with the guy. I can't imagine a tender, creative side really.

JEAN

It's down there.

Kristen enters, wearing her wedding gown. She glides over to the table and leans in. Before she speaks, her face tenses as if she smells something stinky. Angela notices and hits Jean's arm and motions to Kristen's face. Jean nods in understanding. She's delighted.

KRISTEN

I'm so glad you all could come.

JEAN

It was really sweet.

ANGELA

(gently touches Kristen's dress) I love this cut. You look so skinny.

KRISTEN

I've been eating at an extreme deficit. It's actually quite dangerous.

ANGELA

Oh good. (unsure how to react)

CARY

Congratulations.

Cary stands and gives Kristen a polite, crotch-out hug. Kristen pulls Cary a few feet away from the table.

KRISTEN

I wasn't trying to be insensitive. I genuinely thought he was ok to come.

CARY

No. He's fine. I think it was the right thing to do.

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KRISTEN

Because Avery thought acknowledging Greg's impact on my life was important. He worried a little that Greg might be rude to him, but Greg has been around him many times since, and I thought it went well enough. Is that your opinion?

CARY

Which part?

KRISTEN

That it went well.

CARY

Yeah. Sure. I think so.

KRISTEN

Is he OK? Did he just not feel up for it?

CARY

He was sick.

KRISTEN

Oh no.

CARY

A stomach thing.

KRISTEN

Jeez.

CARY

Kind of a horror-show.

KRISTEN

Oh. Give him my love. Our love. From both of us.

CARY

Will do.

KRISTEN

I have to make the rounds, you know?

CARY

I get it.

Before Kristen exits, a faceless man in a nice suit approaches her. She nods as if listening to something he's saying, though he doesn't speak.

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Cary looks confused and then shakes it off and sits back down as the couple exit the stage.

JEFF

They say the subduction zone is due.

ANGELA

Who says that?

JEFF

They. The experts. Seismologists.

JEAN

Have they ever predicted a big quake?

JEFF

They're getting closer to that point. Where they can, I mean.

ANGELA

I still want to move there. The air is calming. It really feels like it's where we should be.

JEAN

(to Cary) what was that about?

CARY

What?

JEAN

Kristen. Your sidebar.

CARY

Guest list stuff.

ANGELA

Was it about Greg?

JEFF

Right, because they- (makes a fist, thrusts it forward, and then twists it)

ANGELA

Just what in the hell is that supposed to-

JEAN

(covering her face and laughing) Oh no.

JEFF

(makes the motion again, continues repeating it) Intercourse, Right?

Made in Highland

ANGELA

Honey, stop (grabs his hand)

CARY

I followed. The twisting is a bit much.

JEFF

Jesus. I've been doing that for years.

JEAN

How do you two know about them, Greg and Kristen?

ANGELA

Please. Everyone knows.

The spotlight dims and begins moving over from the table to the couches. They are empty. The bathroom door is open, and a red glow fades up. An ascending sound of one voice begins singing random notes. The mask on the wall starts sliding up the wall slowly. Then two more masks start sliding up, and as they move, more voices join in, one for each mask. The singing grows louder.

Back to the Wedding table. Cary sits with Jean, Jeff, and Angela, all faceless. Their body language conveys a lively conversation, and Cary just stares at the table, swaying slightly from intoxication. The lights go down.

SCENE 2:

The singing continues and stops as the lights come up and the front door opens. Cary stumbles inside. He stands and sways.

CARY

(to Jean, who isn't there) You could have stayed. I don't know why sleeping next to someone who happens to be drunk is a no-go for you. I did touch your butt that one time, but I honestly thought you were awake, so...

Cary holds on to the back of the couch for support.

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He looks behind him, realizes Jean isn't there physically. He shakes his head and scoffs.

CARY

(to someone, maybe himself) Who was that woman? The one that would let me sit on her legs and touch them. Mom's friend maybe. Or a babysitter. There was a man there, too. I think he had a beard. Looked like hippies. (maybe to Greg) See? I have these memories or dreams as well. You're not unique in that. It's not like yours mean everything and mine mean nothing, you know? Probably some symbolism here. It wouldn't take us long to parse it out.

Cary tumbles forward and rolls onto the couch, attempting to be gracefully but failing. He settles on the couch and stares at the ceiling.

CARY

What did you miss? Let's see. Kristen looked good, man. I guess you shouldn't have come. (Laughs to himself). Did you know that everyone knew about you guys? I was surprised. Like, why would you walk around talking about it? You wouldn't. No chance. That means she did. She told people. Fucking crazy, right? Greg?

Cary looks on the other couch. No one is there.

With his eyes barely open, he get up and makes his way to the bathroom. He enters, using the doorway for support as he sways. He's in the bathroom away from view.

Cary exits the bathroom and holds the doorway staring out on the empty room. He looks confused. He makes his way to Greg's door. He peers in.

CARY

Greg?

He goes back to the bathroom and looks in.

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Then he looks out at the crowd.
Lights fade out. Cary goes to the
couch and sits in the darkness.

SCENE 3:

The sun is just coming up. Cary
sits on the couch. A gentle knock
at the door. Cary gets up and
opens. Jean comes in and embraces
Cary. There are now 5 masks on the
wall.

JEAN

Hey.

They hug for a moment. Then, Cary
breaks away and goes back to the
couch. Jean acknowledges the
oddness of Cary releasing her. But
she follows him to the couch,
taking a seat next to him.

JEAN

No word?

CARY

No. Phone goes to voicemail.

JEAN

Hmm. So you came in-

CARY

He wasn't there. The tub was full. There was
water all over the floor. That's it. Phone
isn't here. I can't tell if anything is
missing.

JEAN

Maybe's just on a bender somewhere? Maybe we
went out and met someone.

CARY

Yeah. Maybe. Not really his thing, but-

JEAN

Right. Doesn't seem like him.

CARY

No.

JEAN

Did he know you were planning to move out?

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CARY

Yeah.

JEAN

Ok, so this is highly unlikely, but maybe he just left.

CARY

I can see that he left.

JEAN

Like for good.

CARY

I don't think he was jazzed about me moving out, but I can't imagine-

JEAN

You're right. It's a stupid thought experiment. Sorry. Grasping. You wanna just stay at my place for a few?

CARY

I guess.

JEAN

He'll call you when he comes back and you're not here, you know.

CARY

Sure. I'll pack some things.

JEAN

I walked, but let me run home and grab my car, OK?

CARY

OK.

JEAN

Or maybe I stay with you while you pack, then we can get my car, then drive it-

CARY

No, I'm ok here. It isn't a crime scene or anything.

JEAN

Totally. OK. I'm creeped out. I don't know why. Sorry.

CARY

Stop apologizing.

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JEAN

Sorry. Right.

Jean hugs Cary again. Then she gets up and heads to the door. She looks back at the bathroom, then leaves. Cary stays seated, staring into the middle distance, then his gaze goes to the floor. The single-voice singing begins quietly, getting louder.

The closed bathroom door begins to slowly open. Then, Greg's pale face peaks around from inside the bathroom. As Cary slowly stands, Greg retreats back into the bathroom. Cary walks into his bedroom. The masks on the wall begins sliding down, with added singing voices, until the masks are about 5 feet from the ground.

Greg, pale white, his shirt and pants still soaked, opens the bathroom door fully and exits the bathroom. He sits on the couch. His face expressionless. The masks on the wall push into the room, pulling and stretching the black wall with them. Greg gets up and hides behind the TV. The walls of the room move inward, shrinking the area on stage by about 10%. Cary exits the room holding a duffle bag. He sits down at the couch and then looks up and notices the bathroom door. He gets up and stares at it.

CARY

Jean, are you back?

No answer. He looks into the bathroom, and then quickly shuts the door. He turns around as if he thinks someone is behind him. He's breathing heavily. He sits back down. A knock at the door startles him. He gets up. Jean enters.

JEAN

I'm double parked.

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Cary grabs his bag and leaves with Jean. The lights lower.

SCENE 4:

Singing begins. Night. The apartment is dark. Then, a light from behind the couch, shining on the wall. The masks on the wall move their way to the center of the wall, close to the window. The light hits the masks as they attempt to push through the wall. The swelling voices grow louder and louder until they are almost deafening. Then, the lights go out.

SCENE 5:

Day. The apartment is even smaller now, the walls pulled inward. The four masks are in the corner, same side as the bathroom door, two stacked on three, like a pyramid. The sound of jingling keys. Cary enters. He stands in the room. He listens for something. Then, he goes into his room. Then he quickly comes out and looks at the bathroom door, which is open again. He walks over to it cautiously. He closes it. Goes back toward his room. Before entering, he looks back at the bathroom door to ensure it's still closed. It is. The moment Cary enters his room and closes the door behind him, the bathroom door pops open.

A moment passes. Cary exits his room with a laptop charger and some headphones. He reaches for the doorknob to leave the apartment but stops. He turns back. He stares at the now open bathroom door. His eyes are wide.

Greg's pale face slowly peaks out from the bathroom.

CARY

Jesus fuck!

Cary falls to to the floor and drops his headphones and his charger. Cary gets up and laughs to himself. Greg is still wearing soaked clothing. Greg goes to the window and looks out. He doesn't acknowledge Cary.

CARY

You scared the shit out of-

Cary notices the water on the floor and then sees that Greg is soaked and pale. Greg turns, but still doesn't look at Cary. Greg sits on the couch and stares at the floor. Then, he looks up at Cary.

Cary takes a few steps toward Greg. He stops short of the couch, standing behind the opposite couch, using it as a barrier between them.

CARY

What's going on, buddy?

Greg continues acting like Cary isn't there.

CARY

I'm losing my fucking mind, man. What do you want me to do here?

Greg finally looks up at Cary.

CARY

Can you hear me?

Greg just looks at him, no expression. Then, he nods. The masks start spreading out across the wall. Amplified sounds of five breathing people begins and gets louder. The room goes black. The breathing continues for one more minute.

End of Act 2. Brief Intermission.

ACT 3.

SCENE 1.

The apartment is empty. Evening sun lights the brick outside the window. Four masks occupy corners of the wall with one above the window, and the room is slightly smaller than before. Keys in the door. Jean and Angela enter. Jean is wearing a loose-fitting sweatshirt. Angela is dressed casually. Jean walks hurriedly through the apartment to Cary's door, opens. Goes inside. Angela is reluctant to move more than a few feet into the apartment. She holds the front door open.

Jean exits Cary's room.

JEAN

Care? You here?

Jean opens Greg's door. Goes in. Then exits and enters the bathroom. She slowly exits the bathroom, defeated.

ANGELA

And you're sure he said he was coming back here?

JEAN

His computer died. I don't have the same kind of charger.

Angela closes the door finally. She steps in and grabs the back of the nearest couch, then lets it go and holds her hands up as if it's dirty.

JEAN

What?

ANGELA

It's wet.

JEAN

Huh.

Angela and Jean are uneasy.

JEAN

Sorry to drag you into this.

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ANGELA

It's fine. (It's kind of not) Let's talk it through again. Maybe you're missing a key piece of info.

JEAN

He said he needed to come back here. He was on foot. It normally takes only a few minutes' walk. I took a shower, assuming he'd be back before I was finished. He wasn't. Then a couple hours went by. His phone is going straight to voicemail.

ANGELA

So it's probably out of batteries. OK.

JEAN

Right. And then I called you.

ANGELA

But you haven't been anywhere else and haven't talked to anyone else but me.

JEAN

Right.

ANGELA

Simplest explanation is that Greg came home, and they went somewhere together, and his phone is dead, yeah?

JEAN

Sure.

Jean sits on the couch facing Angela and starts to weep. Then she quickly stops.

JEAN

My aunt did this, too, you know. She just disappeared one day, abandoned her family, and I was so fucking mad at her for- A long time, I was mad.

ANGELA

That not what is happening here.

JEAN

He seemed off. At the wedding he was off. He wasn't warm with me.

ANGELA

I didn't notice. Maybe you're just feeling a little isolated lately.

(MORE)

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ANGELA (CONT'D)

Sometimes, I think Jeff is pulling away, too. Oh, like the other day, I asked if he wanted pasta, and he was ignoring me, and I was like, this man is over me, how did I not see this coming, and then I bottled it up and waited until he was about to fall asleep, and then asked about the pasta, and he said he didn't hear me because when I asked he was apparently thinking really hard about why Captain Marvel was so different in Avengers vs her own film, and he started to google the shooting dates of each film, and he realized that they actually shot her Avengers scenes before shooting the Captain Marvel movie, even though that movie came before Avengers and, well. What am I trying to say? They don't think like us. And trying to think like them is probably a waste of time.

Angela goes to Jean and holds her on the couch.

JEAN

So what do I do then?

ANGELA

I don't know. But I do know something for sure.

JEAN

What's that.

ANGELA

Cary is definitely not here now, and he will show up... eventually.

Jean nods.

ANGELA

So maybe we go back to your place. Order some dinner. I'll wait with you until you hear from him, OK?

Jean nods again.

Angela and Jean get up and head for the door. Jean looks down. She picks up Cary's computer charger and his headphones from the floor and stares gravely at Angela. Theater goes black.

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SCENE 2:

The apartment. Evening. Cary and Greg sit on opposite couches. Cary has his hands over his face. He takes a deep breath.

CARY

What is this?

Greg shrugs. Some scuffling noises from from the back of the theater, behind the audience. Cary turns toward the audience and searches, then turns back to Greg.

CARY

OK, ok, ok. I must have-

Cary gets up and goes to the counter and picks up a mug. He turns it upside down. Empty. He looks back at Greg. Greg shakes his head. Another sounds of the back of the theater, like a dish falling. Cary looks again in the direction of the sound. Then, Cary cautiously takes his seat on the couch facing Greg.

CARY

Maybe it's a dream then. This would be how my mind would work. Maybe I'm still on that couch. Is it right after the wedding? I'm wasted, right?

Greg smiles and shakes his head. Another sound from the theater. The masks start pushing through the wall, stretching it.

CARY

Fine. Let's just do it. I was thinking about that song you wrote. I mean, I just mentioned it the other night. Where was that? Anyway, that song. Sorry. You wrote a ton of songs I'm sure. Not helpful. It was that sad song, after Deanna and you broke up? Like a pep talk? You know what I'm talking about?

Greg nods. Another sound. The masks push further.

CARY

I don't think I told you that.

(MORE)

Made in Highland

CARY (CONT'D)

How amazing it was, the song. And I never really investigated why I never said anything. But I'm approaching a transition in life, uh, well knowing that has me investigating more I suppose.

Cary gets up and starts pacing behind the couch.

CARY

First time you played it, I thought, "wow, he is a fucking genius. A bonafide genius" and then you finished, and I could tell you were so let down by something. And then I heard you tinkering with the fingering a little the next few nights in your room. And first time you played it live, you looked so ashamed after, or embarrassed maybe, and that's when I finally realized what made us different is that, on my best day, I could never write that song, but if I did, I'd be so proud of myself. I'd want everyone to hear it.

Greg tilts his head and considers this.

CARY

I guess I didn't say anything nice about your song because it proved to me that I was decidedly not a genius. Because when I make something, I'm usually happy with it. I think it's good. And here you are making something spectacular, and you are so miserable that it's not better, but, like it can't be, you know? It's already, to me, to us all probably, kind of perfect. And knowing that meant that I was mediocre.

(Beat)

I was always going to be mediocre at whatever I did. I'm not embarrassingly bad at anything that I want to be good at, but I'll never get better than just enough to be proud. I don't push myself past self-satisfaction. I imagine you've never felt that before in your life, have you?

Greg doesn't gesture any response. Then, from the audience, Cary's faceless Mirror-image slowly walks onto the stage. Cary backs himself into the corner away from the front of the stage, his eyes wide. The mirror image sits opposite Greg.

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Greg looks at him. Then, the mirror image gets up and begins quickly and aggressively walking toward Cary.

CARY
Oh my god, don't-

The mirror image stops before reaching Cary and turns, enters Cary's bedroom. Cary is left stunned, trying to catch his breath.

CARY
What the shit.

Cary is shaky. He slowly steps toward his room, looks in, and then enters. The door closes behind him. The light outside the window fades and the TV clicks on a gray screen as the lights go down.

SCENE 3:

On the side of the stage, a single flight metal staircase under a spotlight. Dance music plays in the background. Jean approaches in a summer dress. She has a glass of wine and a purse. She sets the glass down on a step in front of her and pulls a cigarette out of her purse. She lights and inhales. Then, she looks at the crowd and gets embarrassed. She looks at the cigarettes and considers putting it out, then she decides to embrace it. Cary, dressed in a button-up and slacks, holding a rocks glass, approaches from the crowd. She smiles at him.

CARY
Hey.

JEAN
Hi.

CARY
You're-

JEAN

Yeah. Chris smokes, and now I guess I smoke again.

CARY

You're fine.

JEAN

Maybe I'm not a full blown smoker actually. But when I drink-

CARY

I get it, totally.

JEAN

You were danceing funny.

CARY

Harsh.

JEAN

No, no, I mean your moves were like comedic sort of. It looked intentional.

CARY

Right, yeah, kinda.

They stand quietly and a bit awkwardly.

CARY

Chris seems nice.

JEAN

He's nice, yeah.

CARY

Very tall.

JEAN

Yup.

Awkward pause.

JEAN

And who is-

CARY

Dani. I think we're just friends.

JEAN

You think.

CARY

You're friends until you're more, right?

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JEAN
Or nothing.

CARY
But we're friends. Again. We're friends.

JEAN
I hope so.

CARY
Because we're different people now.

JEAN
I totally agree.

CARY
Not to say we were worse before as people.

JEAN
No, I understand.

CARY
Good.

JEAN
How do you think you're different? I mean,
what's specifically different about you now?

CARY
Maybe I'm a little more focused.

JEAN
That's good.

CARY
You?

JEAN
Probably more patient. More curious about how
things settle in the future than controlling
the present.

CARY
I like the way you said that.

JEAN
Thanks.

CARY
I think Chris seems nice.

JEAN
You said that.

CARY

I did? Oh, well he seems that way.

JEAN

He is.

CARY

Then maybe let's not feel compelled to tell him this, but- (drinks rest of drink) I think I'm probably a touch drunk here.

JEAN

OK.

CARY

But you and I have worked really hard to become friends again, and I wanted to say that I value that.

JEAN

Me, too.

Another awkward pause. They sip their respective drinks. Jean takes a drag.

CARY

The other day I saw a couple grocery shopping with a toddler with them, and I thought to myself, "you know, I don't think I want a kid" Is that crazy?

JEAN

It's kind of normal to have that thought.

CARY

Right, but I thought, yeah, I don't want one. I don't want to be a dad. I don't see myself parenting a kid or even want to.

JEAN

I think I agree. Do I? Yes.

Cary is nodding to himself. He's pondering something. Then-

CARY

I see these dead-eyed parents, and I'm like, why? How can this possibly be worth it, you know?

JEAN

I do.

(MORE)

Made in Highland

JEAN (CONT'D)

I saw a woman on the bus once whose kid was just screaming, and she was completely disassociating. Just staring out the window as if she was alone. Eventually, this old woman walked over and started singing "Jesus loves the little children."

CARY

That's made up.

JEAN

No, this is real. She started singing and the kid stopped crying, and the mother pulled the stop thingy and just stood up, grabbed her now-calm kid by the arm, and the got off at the next stop.

CARY

Yikes.

JEAN

Yeah.

CARY

So, right, I don't want to be a dad. Kids seem like they suck. And yet, when I really think about it, I would do it in a second as long as you're my kid's mom.

JEAN

Oh.

CARY

I don't think I would, I mean if it weren't for the booze loosening me up, I wouldn't tell you. And I kinda wish I didn't, because now this moment becomes a story you and Chris will tell each other. "Remember that time Cary came up to me at Paul's wedding and--"

Cary sets his drink down on the stair next to Jean's.

CARY

I really don't think I want a kid. But I can imagine it when you're in the picture. Like we have a daughter. She's a super picky eater, which drives us crazy because you had to overcome being a picky eater as a kid, and you're really impatient with her about it, and I want to support you, but I am convinced she's going to grow out of it, but you think I'm being lazy about it.

(MORE)

Made in Highland

CARY (CONT'D)

Or maybe she's genuinely allergic to, like, everything, right? Maybe she's picky because her subconscious knows just how dangerous food could be to her? But you and I aren't allergic to anything, and we're constantly asking ourselves why this is happening to us, you know?

Jean stamps her cigarette out on the stairs.

CARY

And she'd always be brokering for more time at bedtime to stay up, and we'd battle with her, and she'd manipulate us, and then she'd finally fall asleep, and you and I would just flop onto the couch together, exhausted. And you'd grab my hand, like pat it, like to say, "we did it, dude. We fucking did it." And then we'd argue over what to watch because you want to see that show about the woman who murdered her lover's wife, and I am more interested in that other show about day trading, even though I can't really understand what they are saying most of the time, I just think I'm into the cinematography-

Jean grab Cary's face and kisses him mid sentence. They kiss for moment. She pulls away and sips her wine. Cary slightly sways.

CARY

What are you thinking right now?

JEAN

First, I worried that you could taste my cigarette, and that made me a little self-conscious. Then, I thought that, what you said sounds nice, and that's what we should do.

The spotlight goes out.

SCENE 4:

The lights come up on the apartment. The walls are now pulled in and are encroaching on the back of the TV. The stage is cramped. It's evening. The five masks are moving on the wall. Greg, still wet, sits on the couch. He watches Cary's door.

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There's the sound of items being moved and tossed around in Cary's room. Then, silence. Cary's door opens slowly. Cary's mirror image peers out from the doorway at Greg. Then, the faceless Cary retreats back into the room and closes the door. Greg gets up and walks over to the window and looks out. Lights down.

SCENE 5:

Lights up. It's evening. Jean and Angela are still standing by the front door. Jean holds the headphones and charger in her hand, shaking her head. The room is still cramped, the masks are still writhing through the walls, and Greg remains at the window, staring out.

ANGELA

I'm not sure what-

JEAN

He wasn't ready.

ANGELA

What does that mean?

JEAN

I felt like I was barely holding onto him. Something broke him away from me.

ANGELA

I'm sure that's not-

JEAN

He came back and took stock and-

ANGELA

Honey, no.

JEAN

He doesn't want what he said he did. He changed his mind.

ANGELA

OK, we're just rushing to conclusions that are- They are- A lot of shit is happening lately, OK? Weddings, disappearances. Um, climate change.

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Jean sets the charger and headphones down on the couch. When she does, the headphones slide off and hit the ground. Greg looks up and notices Jean. When he notices, the writhing through the walls stops.

Jean looks at the floor, then, Cary's door slowly opens. Jean looks back and lets out a little yelp as the faceless Cary steps out.

JEAN

Oh my god. Were you hiding? (Enormous weight off her shoulders) Jesus. My fucking god, babe.

(beat)

Well, we came back because you said- No. No. OK.

(beat)

No, I'm. I don't know. I'm over-processing things. I know.

Angela looks on with confusion.

JEAN

I'm sorry to freak you out.

ANGELA

Where were you, dude? We looking in there. Not cool.

Faceless Cary just stands in the doorway to his room, holding a suitcase.

JEAN

(to Angela) I may have read too much into this.

ANGELA

Well, yeah.

JEAN

Should we head back to my place?

Faceless Cary nods.

ANGELA

OK. I'm gonna grab dinner. I can bring some by your place for you two as well?

Made in Highland

JEAN

Thank you.

They hug. Angela opens the door.
They walk out but Jean grabs the
door before it closes and stops.

JEAN

Don't forget your charger.

She hands the charger to faceless
Cary. He puts it under his arm and
walks out of the apartment holding
the suitcase.

Jean follows but stops short of the
door and turns back, looking
directly at Greg. He's looking at
her as well. A moment passes. Then,
she heads directly to the couch and
sits facing Greg. Greg looks
directly at her. Jean looks at the
floor.

JEAN

And it's here, that all time ceases. And it's
there, that you'll know the secret. That's the
chorus, Right? I probably only heard you sing
it a few times, really. I thought you were
singing that to me. Cary probably thought you
were singing it to him. My dad used to say
that humans can't live in the present. We can
only process what's happened or dread what's
coming. Even now, I'm here with you, but I'm
really thinking about what's waiting for us
all, why Cary sounded so different on the
phone just now, so far away. I wonder if he'll
even be there when I arrive.

Jean gets up, grabs the bag and
goes to the front door. She opens
it up, turns back toward Greg, and
while looking in his eyes-

JEAN

Goodbye, Greg.

GREG

Bye, Jean.

Jean closes the door as the masks
on the wall fall to the floor, then
with them, the black walls,
revealing a rusted corrugated steel
wall.

Made in Highland

The sounds of birds chirping fade in. Then the wind gently rustling the steel walls. Greg gets up and stands in the center of the stage. He closes his eyes and looks up at the ceiling. He inhales and exhales. The room goes black. The birds and the wind continue and then a boat whistle sounds in the distance. Finally, the sounds all fade away.

END.