

ANXIETY

by Lauren Brown

CAST OF CHARACTERS:

LANETTE, 30

MORRIS, 33

BARBARA, 60s

SHAUN, mid-20s

WALTER, 34

DR. Peters

NURSE

FRONT DESK LADY

DR #1

DR #2

SCENE 1

SETTING:

LIVING ROOM (SR) and KITCHEN (SL) make up one big room. The house is a bit untidy with cups, plates, etc. from the night before.

LANETTE: (wearing a red flannel pajamas and slippers, she enters the kitchen from the offstage bedroom following MORRIS) So are we going to talk about this?

MORRIS: (wearing a button up and slacks, fixing his tie) Not if you're just going to fight with me about it.

LANETTE: So, me asking you a question is fighting.

MORRIS continues fixing his tie.

LANETTE: Morris. Do you think I'm a good wife?

MORRIS: (tiredly) Lanette, we've already talked about this. We *just* got married and there's a lot of things we both still have to learn.

LANETTE: I heard that comment you made with Rick last night.

MORRIS: What are you talking about, I didn't make any comments.

LANETTE: I don't know, you said something about the Thanksgiving meal I *tried* to make nice for you and your friends. Was it not good enough for you?

MORRIS: That's not what I said.

LANETTE: Then what exactly did you say? Because somehow, I feel like this is all my fault.

MORRIS: (sigh) I said... things are... different now that we're married.

LANETTE: How so?

MORRIS: You used to dress up. You used to cook more... and better. You used to-

LANETTE: Just to name a few, right? Morris, you know I don't have the time like I used to, especially since now I'm helping mom with the store.

MORRIS: (HE kisses HER forehead, puts on his suit jacket and grabs his briefcase. HE starts to exit the front door and looks back at LANETTE) Lan, you've got nothing to worry about, okay? We've got bills piled up to here (he makes a gesture). We just moved into this house. Believe me, there is much more on my mind than the clothes you wear or whether dinner is on the table at 6 o'clock. (beat) I gotta go. I'll see you when I get home.

LANETTE sits there for a moment still pouting, then gets up from the couch and begins to tidy the place. Barbra on her way in, exchanges hellos with Morris. She closes the door behind MORRIS.

BARBRA: Honey is everything alright with you and Morris? I heard you yelling all the way from outside.

LANETTE: Mom, what are you doing here?

BARBRA: (innocently) I came over to... check and see how things were going. (beat) I was in the neighborhood, so I deci- What?

Barbra comes inside and looks around the house.

BARBRA: Lord, this place is a mess! Honey, why don't you... let me help you clean up a bit, huh? (SHE gives LANETTE a pat on the shoulder and begins folding a blanket that was left on the couch)

LANETTE: (arms folded, hand on forehead) Mom? I was just doing that before you came over. (politely) I got it. Seriously. Don't worry (taking the blanket from BARBRA).

BARBRA: Are you sure you don't want me to just-

LANETTE: (sharply) Mom. I'm sure. (starts to clean) Thanks.

BARBRA: Oh, alright... Fine... (she sits gracefully on the couch)

LANETTE: What is it?

BARBRA: It's your brother. I don't even know who or where he is anymore. I mean, *I* can't get a hold of him, your *father* can't reach him. (Beat) Have *you* spoken with him lately?

LANETTE: No. (continuing to clean)

BARBRA: Well, have you tried to call him?

LANETTE stops cleaning and walks over to the kitchen.

LANETTE: (as a matter-of-factly) No. (she pours herself a cup of coffee)

BARBRA: You really need to call him, Lanette. You all were so close when you were little. It's sad to see you not talking anymore. He'll answer if you call. You ever thought about that?

LANETTE: (sips coffee, leaning on KITCHEN counter) Mom, he's a grown man. Why not let him live his own life? He's in his prime. I mean you remember those days, don't you? I'm sure you didn't call *your* family everyday either.

BARBRA: But ever since he's been talking to that (making a face) Cindy girl, he's been MIA... and treating me- I mean *us* differently, because the two of you used to talk every day. (beat) It's Cindy, right? Or was it Sarah- or Sonya? I've lost track!

LANETTE: It's Sophie.

BARBRA: (approaching LANETTE) *If* he's even still with her. (beat) Is he still with her?

LANETTE: I don't know. That's none of my business. (sitting at a bar stool in the KITCHEN, SHE picks up the newspaper to read) Besides, I have enough going on in my life as it is. I mean, Morris and I are already on rocky grounds and we *just* got married. These bills are piling up... There's just a lot going on right now. Do you think we got married too soon?

BARBRA: Look. I know you and Morris are having a difficult time right now, but I guarantee you, it's not as bad as it seems. You're only what, three months in? Trust me, you don't know what struggling is yet- but your brother on the other hand, he's just so... all I am saying is that it should at least concern you that your he-

LANETTE: Why don't you just visit him?

BARBRA: Don't you think I would if I knew where he wa-

The phone rings.

LANETTE: Oh, looky. Saved by the bell. (answering phone, she puts a finger up for mom to wait) Hello? Yes, this is... What?!... Are you- Oh, my goodness... I'm on the way! I'm on the way!

BARBRA: Honey, what's going on??

LANETTE: (almost breathless) It's Morris! He's been in a car accident!

LANETTE throws on a trench coat and some sneakers near the door. THEY leave urgently.

BLACKOUT

SCENE 2

SETTING:

LANETTE and BARBRA arrive at the HOSPITAL, which is made up of a dingy, small waiting room, a reception desk, and a door that leads to patient rooms (SL). The waiting room has little to no people in it. The lights flicker.

LANETTE: (urgently approaching the reception desk) Excuse me, I need to see my husband, he was in a car accident.

FRONT DESK LADY doesn't respond. She appears preoccupied with documents of paper.

LANETTE: (SHE smacks the desk) EXCUSE ME! Do you know where he is. Can you help me find him?

FRONT DESK LADY: (mechanically) All incoming patients are taken back there (she points at the door that leads to patient rooms). You can check to see if he's back there.

LANETTE gives the LADY a look and storms toward the patient door. BARBRA follows quickly behind LANETTE to the door that leads to MORRIS' room. In it are his bed, a chair, and a nurse's station. MORRIS lies on his back stiff, asleep. When SHE enters the nurse has just finished checking his vitals.

LANETTE: Excuse me, that's my husband. How's he doing?

NURSE: He's okay for now, but we'd like to keep monitoring him. (she looks at MORRIS) On the outside he's got a few bruises, so we're going to run more tests to make sure he didn't damage or rupture anything internally. But as of now he's stable.

LANETTE seems lost in her own world as she walks over to her husband and strokes his arm. SHE grabs his hand and hugs it to her chest. BARBRA watches from the door, silent.

BLACKOUT

SCENE 3

LANETTE: (LANETTE finds a seat in the waiting room and sits. Slouching over, her hands brush her hair back. To self) How could I be so stupid?

BARBRA: You're not stupid, Lanette. Stop blaming yourself (SHE sits next to LANETTE).

LANETTE: The last conversation we had was an argument that I started. It just makes me wonder if any of it was even worth it. This is all my fault. I should have just shut my mouth. I always seem to say the wrong things.

BARBRA: (Reassuring her) Well, sweetheart, he didn't look so bad. Just a few bruises, he'll be fine. Okay?

LANETTE looks up at her, stressed as if asking "Will he?"

BARBRA: He *will*, honey. He will.

LANETTE: ... Thanks. (Beat) I uh... understand if you have to get going.

Beat.

BARBRA: Sweetheart, if you need me to stay, I'll stay.

LANETTE: (hesitantly. Awkwardly laughing) I-I don't want to make you wait here until they're done.

BARBRA: Alright... Well, I'm gonna go and make sure you're your father's taken his medicine. (she stands. beat) *Call* me if you need me. I will come right back down here.

LANETTE: Thanks, I will.

THEY hug. BARBRA exits. LANETTE sits there for a moment, then gets up and walks over to the front desk.

LANETTE: Um, excuse me? Is there a vending machine nearby? I was just going to get a water.

FRONT DESK LADY: (with phone to ear, not looking up at LANETTE, she points "that way" towards a water dispenser station that is in the waiting room)

LANETTE: (annoyed) Thank you.

LANETTE makes herself a cup of water. Not watching where she's going, she turns around and bumps into a tall, handsome man, spilling a bit of her water on his shoes.

LANETTE: Oh, no! I am so sorry! Here, let me help you.

SHE grabs napkins from a tissue box. They make eye contact.

WALTER: (smiling) It's alright, I got it.

He cleans off his shoes and stands.

WALTER: Wow. (examining her in admiration) You look as good as you did in college.

LANETTE: (loss for words) Walter...

WALTER: How've you been?

LANETTE: Good. Good. I, um... I got married. (SHE shows him her ring)

WALTER: Is that right? Finally met Mr. Right, huh? (SHE doesn't answer) Well, that's good. He's a lucky man. You always had a way of making a man feel like the luckiest in the world.

LANETTE: (awkwardly) I um...

WALTER: So, what brings you in?

LANETTE: My husband. He was just in a car accident.

WALTER: That's terrible. (concerned) Is he alright?

LANETTE: Yeah, he's doing fine. They're going to run more tests on him but, he's fine... What are you doing here?

WALTER: Here pick up my wife.

LANETTE: W-wife?

WALTER: Yeah. She just delivered our- wait for it... *twins*. A boy and a girl! We got the two-for-one special!... I've always wanted twins. (*He chuckles. Beat*) But anyway, they should be releasing her shortly today.

LANETTE: Wow... congratulations. (she tries to brighten herself up)

WALTER: Thank you, we're so excited.

WALTER examines her outfit. LANETTE still wears the red flannel pajama set, with sneakers and a trench coat.

LANETTE: Oh! It was- I was just in such a hurry, I didn't even think to change clothes... Wow, I am so embarrassed.

WALTER: (he chuckles) Well, I gotta get going. Gotta grab some things from the house so when they release my wife, she'll be good to go. (looking at her with affection) But, it was really good seeing you.

LANETTE: You too.

WALTER exits. LANETTE goes to make another cup of water. She sits, placing her cup down. Still embarrassed about her outfit, she ties her trench coat tightly shut.

Lights fade out.

SCENE 4:

AT RISE:

Lanette stares off into the distance. Enter WALTER. Lights go dim and blue.

WALTER: Why are you covering up your flannel PJ's? (HE laughs) I've already seen them. Let me tell you a little secret. No man wants his wife walking around like this in public. I mean, emergency or not, this (he gestures at HER outfit) is just laziness. My wife would never dress like that. *(beat)* You know, I thought I was missing out when you and I ended things, but I'm glad we did. And I know you took it hard, but c'mon. There's no need to downgrade yourself out of agony by dressing like a-

ENTER DR. PETERS, interrupting WALTER's "session". Lights come up to normal. DR. PETERS walks past WALTER as if he's not really there... WALTER casually exits. She goes straight to LANETTE. It should be noted that DR. PETERS is very beautiful and very womanly. She seems to know this full well.

DR. PETERS: Mrs. Fletcher?

LANETTE: (taken off guard, she stands) Yes?

DR. PETERS: Hi, I'm Dr. Peters. (extending her hand) I just wanted to introduce myself, since I'll be the one examining your husband.

LANETTE: (shaking HER hand) Please, call me Lanette.... How is he?

DR. PETERS: We've checked your husband's vitals, and everything seems to be normal, but the accident did, however, leave him quite banged up. We're going to check and make sure there's no internal bleeding. If there isn't, we'll get him cleaned up and ready to go home, alright?

LANETTE: Okay, that sounds good. (pause) I know I was told to wait out here, but if you guys need me to come back and talk to him or give blood- I think we're a match- whatever you need me to do, please just let me know.

DR. PETERS: I will. And I will be back to check on you as soon as we have an update.

LANETTE: Thank you, Dr.

DR. PETERS: (she looks LANETTE up and down) My pleasure.

DR. PETERS exits. SHAUN enters while LANETTE isn't paying attention. His touch on her shoulder startles her. She gasps.)

SHAUN: Relax, it's just me. Mom told me what happened... You alright?

LANETTE: Well, if it isn't Mr. Playboy. You finally answered mom's texts, huh?

SHAUN: She sent me a bunch of texts in all caps. But as soon as I saw "Morris" and "hospital" I dropped everything I was doing to come and check on my big sis. (pause) So, how is he?

LANETTE: He's... stable... for now. That's what they said. Obviously, they want to run more tests, and I'm not sure how long that's going to take.

SHAUN: Need anything?

LANETTE: No. I'm fine. (beat) Mom um... really wants you to move back here. She feels like you abandoned her.

SHAUN: I haven't! And I haven't moved away, I've just been traveling, and working, and... *dating...*

LANETTE: BINGO! (snaps fingers and points at SHAUN) That's the culprit.

SHAUN: Look, my dating life is not the concern here. She should have been here to look after you instead of poking her nose in my business all the time. Anyway, how's the store going?

LANETTE: Business is slow. I keep trying to tell her to revamp the place, but she says she likes the old, rustic atmosphere. That "old" "rustic" atmosphere is driving customers away, and we're not making ends meet.

SHAUN: Why doesn't she just sell that place?

LANETTE: I'm guessing it's because she likes to stay busy.

SHAUN: Yeah, well it's not keeping her busy enough. I'm 24.

LANETTE: Maybe you should try explaining that to her.

SHAUN: Don't you think I've tried that? She doesn't listen!

LANETTE: Well, I don't want to have to keep mediating for you two. You need to call her. She misses you. (pause) *I miss you.*

Beat.

SHAUN: I miss you too... Anyway, I didn't come here to talk about me. I came here to see how *you* were doing.

LANETTE: I don't know how I'm doing, Shaun! I've never been this scared in my life. I have no idea how the accident happened. All I know is that he's back there lying in a hospital bed that I can't get him out of- and we had a stupid argument right before it happened.

SHAUN: About what?

LANETTE: Absolutely nothing. (beat) Well he did mention that I can't cook.

SHAUN: (trying to suppress his laughter) You still can't cook? I thought you took a cooking class. That didn't help? (he laughs)

LANETTE: Look, I've been *improving* over the years.

SHAUN: Yeah, well that's probably the reason he's here. He probably lost sight of the road because he felt nauseous from last night's dinner!

LANETTE: (suppressing a smile) I'm warning you, Shaun.

SHAUN: There's that smile.

LANETTE: (beat) I'm terrified.

SHAUN: (reassuringly) I'm here. You have nothing to worry about. And besides. God has the final say. Remember, we were taught to trust him and lean not to our own understanding.

LANETTE: (Sigh. She rambles) But what if the answer is no, and he *dies*?

SHAUN: Lanette-

LANETTE: Or what if- what if he lives and loses his job because he's disabled and then he dies of failure and regret??

SHAUN: Lanette-

LANETTE: How am I going to plan for a funeral with no money?

SHAUN: Lanette!... He's not dead.

Beat. LANETTE snaps back into reality.

SHAUN: Remember that time when we were kids and mom found out that I buried her grandma's necklace in the backyard, and you covered for me?

LANETTE: Are you kidding? You almost got me grounded.

SHAUN: (laughing) I was scared for my life!

LANETTE: She wouldn't have punished you. You were always her glory child.

SHAUN: But you defended me regardless of the consequences. (beat) Where's *that* Lanette? Brave Lanette?

LANETTE: I haven't gone anywhere, Shaun. (beat) But you have.

Beat.

SHAUN: You're probably hungry. Let me get you something to eat.

LANETTE: I can't eat anything right now.

SHAUN: Lanette, you need to eat *something*. And you're all sweaty. How 'bout I pick up some food, then swing by your place and get you some clothes?

LANETTE: No, I'm fine.

SHAUN: ... Well, you could at least take the trench coat off, Lan. I mean, you *are* sweating.

LANETTE: Oh! (taking off the trench coat. Beat) Thanks for coming to check on me. That means a lot.

SHAUN: You can count on it. (beat) Why don't I take you home to get changed and then I'll drop you back off here.

LANETTE: (annoyed) Why does everyone keep talking about my clothes!?

SHAUN: (carefully choosing his words) I just... figured you'd want to get out of your night clothes and rest up a bit. (upon her facial expression) No?

LANETTE: No.

SHAUN leans back in his chair, giving up.

LANETTE: You better get going before mom comes back.

SHAUN: (sigh) I'm not *avoiding* her. I just don't want to deal with... you know.

LANETTE: No, I don't know.

Beat. They look at one another.

LANETTE: You can go, I'll be fine.

SHAUN: Alright, I'm gonna get going, I guess. But I *am* only a phone call away. (walking away, he stops and looks back) Love you.

LANETTE: Love you, too.

SHAUN exits. LANETTE lays her head back then sits up straight. She stares off into the distance, alone in the waiting room. Enter WALTER from one of the side doors. WALTER and LANETTE are alone in the room. Lights go dim and blue. Smoke projectors release smoke on the floor.

WALTER: Lanette?... You're still here?

LANETTE: My husband is still being cared for. (beat) I thought your wife was about to be released.

WALTER: Well, what if I just came back to see you?

LANETTE: You wanted to see me? (beat) What about your wife?

WALTER: You were always the only woman for me.

Beat. They stare deeply into one another's eyes. They kiss passionately. It gets hot and steamy.

WALTER: I've missed you. I can't hide how I feel about you, Lanie.

LANETTE: But, what about my PJ's?

WALTER: I think you look amazing.

THEY kiss again.

WALTER: Now get some rest, Lanie, I'll be back to see you soon. *(beat)* Trust me, you'll need all the energy you can get for later.

WALTER exits. LANETTE happily lies her head back, props her feet up and drifts off into a deep sleep.

BLACKOUT

SCENE 5

AT RISE:

Lights are still dim and gloomy. It appears LANETTE hasn't budged from her deep sleep. SHE lies there uncomfortably, body sprawled across two chairs. SHE uses her trench coat as a cover. After a moment, DR. PETERS enters from the patient rooms door.

DR. PETERS: Mrs. Fletcher?

LANETTE: (jumping out of her sleep) Ye- What's going on??

DR. PETERS: (sitting next to, or across from LANETTE) Mrs. Fletcher, your husband is bleeding a bit, from the accident and we are working now to stop the bleeding.

LANETTE: Where is he bleeding from? Oh, God! Do you need blood? Can I see him? What can I do?

DR. PETERS: (she chuckles) You have nothing to worry about. (beat. calmly) I'm afraid Mr. Fletcher is not able to have visitors right now; however, we will keep you posted. (beat) You look cold, would you like a blanket?

LANETTE: (in disbelief) I can't believe this is happening.

DR. PETERS: Please know that we are doing everything we can to get your husband cleaned up and stop the bleeding-

LANETTE sits there staring off with a trance-like expression. The doctor's words fade to mumbles (this can be done with a recorded audio played over speakers. All the audience will see is DR. PETER'S mouth moving). LANETTE comes back to reality after a few moments.

DR. PETERS: Is that alright with you, Mrs. Fletcher?

LANETTE: Is what alright?

DR. PETERS: Your husband is awake as of now, but we'll need him to be asleep or numb so we can stop the bleeding. Is it alright if we put him in a small coma?

LANETTE: Do whatever you need to do to save him. But please. (she grabs the doctor's arm, begging) Don't hurt him.

DR. PETERS: (pause) I'll be back to update you soon, Mrs. Fletcher.

DR. PETERS exits, leaving LANETTE sitting alone in the waiting room. A moment passes by. WALTER re-enters. Blue lights and smoke.

WALTER: Lanette?... You're still here?

LANETTE: I thought your wife was about to be released.

WALTER: Well, what if I just came back to see you?

LANETTE: You wanted to see me?

Beat. They stare into one another's eyes. It becomes awkward fast as he looks at her in disgust.

WALTER: Maybe you should um... go home, you know? Get some rest... Change your clothes.
(HE picks at her flannel set)

LANETTE: What's wrong with what I'm wearing? I thought you liked it.

WALTER: Have you looked in the mirror lately? (HE laughs a wicked laugh)

LANETTE: We're not together anymore. Why do you care?

WALTER: *You* need to care more. And you should *really* change your clothes. (he laughs a gruesome laugh)

HE walks out. LANETTE begins to feel conscious about wearing her pj's and sneakers to the hospital.

{Many spotlights of different colors and angles flash about the stage. (music plays) Suddenly the waiting room appears busy, as visitors flood the waiting room all walking in different directions like robots. When each of them walks past LANETTE he gives HER a look of disgust. Everyone is dressed normal, except LANETTE. We hear a recording of many voices saying a variety of things at once like, "You need to change your clothes" "She must be crazy" (adlib things like that); however, no one's mouth is moving. LANETTE begins to hide herself from their view with her coat... with a magazine... behind a pillar, etc. The people disperse from the waiting room, and LANETTE is left hiding behind a plant as the lights slowly come back up. SHE and the FRONT DESK LADY make slow eye contact. The FRONT DESK LADY looks at LANETTE as if it's not the first time she's seen a visitor act that way. LANETTE slowly peels herself away from the plant and walks back to her seat.}

BLACKOUT

SCENE 6

AT RISE:

LANETTE is found zoned out in her chair by DR. PETERS. Lights are dim.

DR. PETERS: Mrs. Fletcher?

LANETTE: (urgently) Yes?

DR. PETERS: How are you. (SHE stares at her blankly)

LANETTE: (snapping) I don't know, you tell me.

DR. PETERS: I- um... I am not sure what you mean by that.

LANETTE: (as if SHE's dumb, slowly) HOW. IS. HE?

DR. PETERS: We are still running tests on him.

LANETTE: How long is this going to take? What other tests do you still need to run on him?

DR. PETERS: I am not sure. We are still trying to figure things out as we go. (beat. She almost smiles) Your husband is a... tricky fella.

LANETTE: You know, for a doctor, you don't seem to know much about anything. All you've told me is that he's bleeding. Will you PLEASE just tell me what's really going on here?

DR. PETERS: (calmly) Yes, that's why I'm here.

LANETTE: Wha- (gathering herself. Antsy) Well, what's going on?!

DR. PETERS: (robotically) We are still running tests on him.

LANETTE: You already said tha- what were the results?

DR. PETERS: (robotically) I- um... I am not sure what you mean by that.

LANETTE: (beat) Is this some kind of joke? (SHE looks around, but no one else is there) Why are you doing this to me?

DR. PETERS: (suddenly coming to self. Somewhat condescending. She speaks slowly and femininely) Mrs. Fletcher, I know you want to see your husband, but we are not allowing visitors right now. Trust me. (pause) It's just not a safe environment for visitors.

LANETTE: I'll just stand outside his room. I won't even go in. I just need to see him. *Please.*

DR. PETERS: (blankly) I'm sorry. (SHE starts to head back to the patient's area)

LANETTE: Wait! (a long pause, not knowing what to say)

Beat.

DR. PETERS: I'll be back later to check on you, but in the meantime, you should really go home for a bit and get some... rest.

LANETTE: (breaking down) I've been waiting here for *six* hours. I have no idea what's going on with my husband, and the best advice you have for me is to go home?

DR. PETERS: (professionally, kindly) Yes. Just to get some rest. I'm sure your husband would love to wake up to his wife fully rested and cleaned up. (She starts to leave again)

Beat.

LANETTE: You ever been married?

DR. PETERS: (turning back to face LANETTE) Yes.

LANETTE: What if the roles were reversed. How would this situation make you feel?

DR. PETERS: Not good, I suppose-

LANETTE: Not good. Right.

Beat.

DR PETERS: Mrs. Fletcher. Please, have a seat. (gesturing to chair)

LANETTE sits. DR. PETERS sits next to her.

DR. PETERS: I know you're concerned, and as his wife, you have *every* right to be. But, for now, all you can do is wait for him to recover. Now, it's up to you whether you want to do that from here... (SHE gestures at the empty, sketchy waiting room) or from *home*, where we would be happy to call you from.

LANETTE: Let me explain something to you. I've been sitting here waiting patiently *all day*. I'm not going *anywhere* until I see him.

Beat.

DR. PETERS: Mrs. Fletcher, I'm *really* not supposed to take you back there. I could lose my jo-

LANETTE: Just LET ME BACK THERE-

DR. PETERS: I can't do that!

They stare at each other.

LANETTE: (stands and walks a few steps forward until her back is completely facing DR. PETERS) Woman to woman. Forget the professionalism. What do I have to lose if I decide to take *myself* back there? If I just burst through those doors and see what's really going on here?

DR. PETERS: There's no need to-

LANETTE: You don't get to tell me how to feel! (pause) Now, I'm going to ask you this one last time. Will you take me back there to see my husband?

DR. PETERS: (robotically) I'm sorry. I cannot do that. (she stares at LANETTE as if trying to send her a message) I wish I could. I'll be back to check on you shortly.

DR. PETERS exits. ENTER BARBRA. Lights go up.

BARBRA: (coming to hug LANETTE) Honey, I was so worried about you, that I just had to come back and see you.

LANETTE: Mom, I told you I'm fine. You didn't have to come all the way back here.

BARBRA: What did the doctors say?

LANETTE: (pause) Morris is bleeding.

BARBRA: Where?!

LANETTE: I don't know. The one thing in my life that seemed to be consistent is now leaving me.

BARBRA: I prayed all the way here. Sweetheart, something's *going* to change.

LANETTE: I've been praying too. Praying for peace. They won't even let me go back there to see him. I've just been sitting here for hours and hours. They didn't tell me what kinds of tests they're running, or what they're gonna do with him next, and I- I don't know what else to do!

BARBRA: How about I stay here with you and we'll both talk to the doctor when she comes back?

LANETTE: What if he's bleeding from his head? How is that going to affect him?

BARBRA: Well, Lanette we don't know that ye-

LANETTE: (pacing the floor) I think there's something going on that they're not telling me. I need to get back there. I need to see for myself.

BARBRA: (sharply) Lanette.

LANETTE snaps out of it and looks at her mother.

BARBRA: Sit. (beat) There's something we need to talk about.

She does so.

LANETTE: Okay. I'm just trying to gather my thoughts. (breathing quickly) So, you know, and Shaun knows because he came by to check on me-

BARBRA: He came by here and you didn't tell me??

LANETTE: He came to check on *me*, mom. Anyway. I was gonna ask about dad. I haven't heard from him.

BARBRA: (she brushes off her pants) What *about* dad?

LANETTE: I know he must be worried; I mean, Morris is like his second son.

Beat.

BARBRA: I haven't told your father about Morris.

LANETTE: Why? Do you want me to tell him?

BARBRA: If you can reach him.

LANETTE: Mom, what does that even mean? You're not talking much and it's scaring me.

BARBRA: Nothing! Nothing. Everything's fine. Everything is ooo-kay.

LANETTE: It's me you're talking to.

BARBRA: Honey, sometimes things are more complicated than words can describe.

LANETTE: Okay, well, could you at least try?

BARBRA: (sigh) I haven't spoken to your father in three months. That's why you haven't been seeing him at the house when you all visit. He's not out golfing, he's out... *cheating*.

LANETTE: Cheating? How do you know that?

BARBRA: Every chance he gets he leaves the house for a period of days. Says it's for "business" or something. And we've obviously had our fights about it, but this time... he just didn't come back. I guess he got tired of lying about where he was.

LANETTE: Mom, that doesn't mean he's cheating.

BARBRA: No man just leaves unless his wife he's being fulfilled by another woman.

Beat.

BARBRA: Don't worry though I'm fine.

LANETTE: So, that's why you're so hard on Shaun. (pause) You don't want him to be like dad and wind up leaving you.

BARBRA: Lanette, you were right. He's young. And he's got his whole life ahead of him-

LANETTE: But he's still your son. And he has no idea this is what you're going through. If you tell him, maybe he'll come back.

BARBRA: Let me explain something to you, Lanette. At some point in time, you've got to learn how to stand on your own two feet and stop depending on everyone around you to bring you peace.

LANETTE: What are you saying?

BARBRA: Sometimes we don't get the things we want simply because we don't want them bad enough.

LANETTE: Are you saying, I'm not fighting hard enough for Morris?

BARBRA: You want it bad enough, you'll fight for it. Whether you have someone fighting with you, or not.

Beat.

BARBRA: Anyway, I'm going to get going. There are some things at the house that I need to take care of. I'm packing all his stuff. (beat) Lanette, look at me. (LANETTE does) There is a fighter in you. Sometimes you just have to get mad enough to see results.

BARBRA exits. Beat. LANETTE gets up (alone in the gloomy waiting room) and sneaks to the patient's swing door (SL). As she is about to push the swing door open, two male doctors come out carrying charts. SHE hides behind the swing door when THEY enter, and behind them as they speak. They don't notice her.)

DR. #2: How do you know that?

DR. #1: (reviewing charts. Sounding tired) Because Dr. Peters is in there with him right now. Honestly, I didn't think she was going to-

LANETTE: (suddenly appearing before them. They jump.) Excuse me, do those charts happen to belong to a man named Morris Fletcher?

DR: #1: Umm... and you are?

LANETTE: I'm his wife. Can I see them?

DR #2: (interjecting with his country accent) Uh, ma'am, this chart includes a lot of jargon that I'm sure would not be very useful to your understanding.

LANETTE: No, you don't understand. (at a loss for words) I um... used to be a doctor...? So, can I see his charts?

DR #2: Used to be a doctor? Ma'am, how do we know you're even his wife. I mean, you could just be some homeless woman off the streets for all we know. (they laugh) I mean, look at how you're dressed.

DR: #1: Hey, let's get out of here before this woman tries something.

As they attempt to exit, Lanette snatches the chart from the doctor's hand, runs and jumps on top of the reception desk.

DR: #1: Hey?! What are you doing?

DR #2: Ma'am, give us those charts back, or we're gonna call security.

LANETTE: Oh please! There is NO security in this place because this isn't even a real hospital!! What kind of hospital can't tell a patient's wife what's going on?!?

DR #2: (speaking into lab coat) Security, we have a lunatic in the waiting room who has stolen a patient's charts. She is standing on top of the reception desk.

LANETTE: Call them!! *Please*, call them!

DR #1: (trying to calm her) Miss, please get down from there. Maybe we can help you in some way. What is your name?

DR. #2 is still on the radio with security mumbling things.

LANETTE: (still standing on the counter) You wanna know how you can help me? LET ME SEE MY HUSBAND!

DR #2: (to LANETTE) Security is on the way.

DR. #1: Ma'am, unfortunately we are not allowed to let you back there. Please get down from the counter-

LANETTE bursts past them towards the patient's door. They catch her before she succeeds.

DR #2: Oh no, no, no, no, no. You're not getting off the hook this easy.

THEY place her in a chair.

LANETTE: WHAT IS GOING ON HERE?!?

LANETTE sits between the two doctors, staring off into the distance. Hair disheveled, clothes a mess, face beat from restlessness. The doctors guard her like two security guards. The lights flicker.

BLACKOUT

SCENE 7

AT RISE:

LAURA sits alone in the waiting room. There are others in the room waiting as well. No flickering lights. Everything is oddly normal.

MORRIS: (coming up from behind. cheerful) Hey, you ready to go?

LANETTE: What?

SHE jumps up in disbelief.

LANETTE: How'd you get out here??

MORRIS: They let me go.

LANETTE: They just let you go?

MORRIS: Yeah... Why wouldn't they?

LANETTE: Did they stitch you up? Where are your scars?

MORRIS: What scars? (beat) It was just a fender bender.

LANETTE stares at him extremely confused.

MORRIS: ... Although I will admit the car is pretty jacked up... (beat) Are you ready to go home?

LANETTE: (slowly) Yeah...

They start to exit the HOSPITAL. Beat.

LANETTE: Morris, can you do me a favor? (*THEY stop walking*).

MORRIS: What?

LANETTE: I don't want you to ask any questions, I want you to just do it, okay?

MORRIS: Do *what*?

LANETTE: I need you to punch me in the face right now.

MORRIS: *What?*

LANETTE: Just do it.

MORRIS: Lanette, I'm not gonna punch you in the face.

LANETTE: I need to know that this is really happening.

Beat.

MORRIS: You'll know when we get home. By the way, no Japanese tonight. I think I could settle for a homecooked meal.

THEY exit.

BLACKOUT