

Stoplight

A PLAY IN ONE ACT

By

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Cast of Characters

| | |
|--------------|---------------------------|
| Alex Meyer: | A woman in her early 30s. |
| Matt Anders: | A man in his late 20s. |

Scene

A lazy town in upstate New York.

Time

The present. 12:30AM

SETTING:

The play is set at an intersection in a small town. A stop light dangles over the street, methodically switching colors (displayed on stage by different color lights periodically, repeatedly flashing: Green, yellow, red. The light is imaginary and "hangs" over the audience).

AT RISE:

ALEX is sitting on the curb to the left of the traffic light. She's wearing jeans and a baseball cap. Her face looks like she's been crying. The alternating colored light from the stop light paints the left half of her face. MATT walks towards her from off stage.

(MATT walks from stage right behind Alex, looking at her as he passes, continuing to stage left and walking off stage. Alex is looking ahead but notices him in her periphery. She doesn't think much of it however and continues to look ahead. A moment passes and then MATT comes back on stage and passes ALEX again on his way off stage right, again looking at her as he passes. ALEX notices him passing again and is a little more weary of him, but still remains seated. Another moment passes and ALEX notices MATT coming back on stage.)

ALEX

Uh, hello?

MATT

(Turning away from ALEX to look behind him and then looking back at her.)

Me?

ALEX

No, the other creepy guy.

(MATT doesn't respond, embarrassed, but continues to look at Alex.)

Can I help you?!

MATT

Well, uh, yes. I was hoping you could.

ALEX

You can't be serious.

MATT

The thing is-

ALEX

Can you bother someone else?

MATT

(Walking closer to her.) I just-

ALEX

Whoa, Whoa. You're fine right there.

MATT

(He stops and backs up a few steps.) I'm lost.

ALEX

You're lost?

MATT

(Points across the road.) I'm only here for the weekend. I was supposed to meet my sister at that diner. It closed a few hours ago. My phone died on the train and I don't know where to go. I'd love to ask anyone else for help, but you seem to be the only one still awake in this town.

ALEX

Jesus.

(MATT looks like he wants to speak but doesn't.)

Look man, I'm not trying to get involved with your shit.

MATT

If you could just let me use your phone, I can call my sister and leave you alone.

ALEX

Doesn't your sister live here? Shouldn't you know your way around?

MATT

I don't come up here much.

ALEX

Perfect.

One call.

MATT

I don't have it.

ALEX

You don't have your phone?

MATT

Nope.

ALEX

But, how-

MATT

Don't you have your phone?

ALEX

Well yes, but I told you, it died on the train.

MATT

Of course it did.

ALEX

Please, I've been wandering around forever. I'd only need it for a second.

MATT

What part of I don't have it don't you understand.

ALEX

How could you not-

MATT

I. Don't. Have. It.

ALEX

Okay, okay.

MATT

(There's a pause. Then, MATT moves to sit next to ALEX.)

Well, looks like you're stuck with me then.

(ALEX looks at MATT as he lights a cigarette.)

ALEX

What are you-

MATT

My sister'll show up eventually.

ALEX

(Gesturing at MATT to explain.) So....

MATT

I'm done looking for help. It's scary wandering around. There aren't any street lamps! It'd be pitch black out without that traffic light.

(ALEX is silent. MATT holds the cigarette box up to her.)

Want one?

(Alex looks at MATT skeptically.)

You really want to be alone that bad?

(MATT motions for ALEX to take a cigarette again. Alex opens her mouth in protest but then changes her mind. ALEX takes a cigarette from the box and allows MATT to light it and the pair sits in silence for a long moment.)

MATT

You really weren't lying to me about not having your phone?

ALEX

(Puffing her cigarette.) Nope.

MATT

But-

ALEX

Don't trust me?

MATT

It just-

ALEX

I didn't come all the way out here to stay in touch, okay?

MATT

Okay...why are you out here then?

ALEX

(Ignoring MATT.) Is that light bothering you?

MATT

What?

ALEX

(Raising her hand to block her eyes.) The light from the traffic light.

MATT

No, not really. Are you gonna tell me why you're here or...?

ALEX

Green, yellow, red. Green, yellow, red. It's killing me.

MATT

I guess not.

ALEX

(Almost talking to herself now.) Maybe it's red, yellow, green. Red, yellow, green.

MATT

Uh....

ALEX

Or, or! Yellow, red, green. Yellow, red, green.

MATT

(Matt waves his hand in front of ALEX's face. This catches her attention.)

(Slowly.) Why. Are. You. Here?

ALEX

(ALEX responds but is still clearly concerned with the light.)

A good question.

MATT

(Waiting for answer.) So....

ALEX

(ALEX begins walking around the stage looking for something.)

I don't know.

MATT

You don't know?

ALEX

I don't really know where *here* is.

MATT

What do you mean?

ALEX

Do you have a rock?

MATT

What?

ALEX

A rock. Anything like that.

MATT

(The pairs looks around for a moment, then MATT picks up a small stone from the ground)

Uh, here.

ALEX

(Alex stands and hurls the rock at the traffic light. The light continues to change color.)

Damn, not even close.

MATT

(As though he's genuinely concerned.) What is wrong with you?

ALEX

(There is a pause as ALEX sits back down.) Plenty.

MATT

Jesus.

(Pause.)

ALEX

Why do you care?

MATT

About what?

ALEX

About why I'm here.

(Pause)

MATT

Well, you're struggling.

(ALEX gives MATT a look. MATT throws up his arms innocently.)

People who aren't struggling don't sit on a curb in a town they don't know all night.

(Pause.)

They just don't....

ALEX

Okay, so what if I am?

MATT

I just wanna know if there's something to be done about it.

(Pause.)

Also, I don't know if you've noticed, but there's not a whole lot to do at the moment. Talking seemed like a good choice, but fuck me I guess.

ALEX

There's not something to be done about it.

MATT

Try me.

(Long pause.)

(Sarcastically.)Or, yeah lets just sit in silence, that's good too.

ALEX

(Begrudgingly.)Fine, fine.

(Pause.)

I just started driving. I drove until I didn't recognize anything. Then I drove some more. I wasn't going anywhere in particular. I just wanted to be anywhere other than where I was. My car's transmission blew a few miles back. The car is in the shop and...here I am.

MATT
You just left?

ALEX
Yup.

MATT
So why did-

ALEX
Don't.

MATT
But-

ALEX
Don't make me switch curbs. I'll do it.

(MATT falls silent. There is a very long pause.)

So, you think your sister's like, dead or something?

MATT
Jesus! Why would you say that?

ALEX
Oh come on, it had to have crossed your mind at some point.

MATT
Now it has!

ALEX
You said you wanted to talk.

MATT
Starting to regret that.

ALEX
She's probably fine.

MATT

That makes me feel a lot better, thanks.

(Long pause.)

ALEX

Do you think I could somehow
get up there and unplug
them?

MATT

She probably just lost
track of time, the kids
are a lot.

MATT

Seriously? Again with the traffic light?

ALEX

It's blinding.

MATT

Just don't think about it.

ALEX

Impossible.

(MATT picks up another rock and stands, looking up at the
light. Alex looking at him.)

I'd kiss you.

MATT

What?

ALEX

Not like actually.

(MATT looks at ALEX confused.)

Just throw your rock.

(MATT throws.)

MATT

Could've been worse.

ALEX

Could've been better.

MATT

You are just-

ALEX

Just what?

MATT

Nothing.

(MATT sits back down. There is a long pause.)

ALEX

Sorry I said your sister might be dead.

MATT

It's okay. Maybe just keep your other theories to yourself.

ALEX

Got it.

(Pause.)

Why are you visiting again?

MATT

My sister needs help with the kids. She's already got three and is pregnant with another.

ALEX

My god.

MATT

I know. Here I am, the older brother and not even married.

(ALEX stands and chucks another rock at the light. It misses.)

ALEX

Marriage isn't all that you know.

(MATT looks at her as she searches for more rocks.)

MATT

Oh yeah?

ALEX

You've got so much to worry about when you're married.

(Pause.)

You know how many end in divorce?

MATT

Doesn't mean I don't wanna try.

ALEX

You've got the best of both worlds right now.

(Throwing another rock.)

MATT

What do you mean?

ALEX

Forget it.

MATT

No no, tell me.

ALEX

Your sister. Her kids. There's already a whole family right in front of you.

MATT

Huh. Well,

(Throwing a rock at the light.)

I'm not marrying my sister.

ALEX

That's not what I meant.

MATT

I know.

(A long pause.)

You're really not gonna tell me why you started driving?

ALEX

Nope.

(Pause.)

MATT

Cancer? Death in the family? Bad divorce?

ALEX

I don't know, pick one.

MATT

Pick one?

ALEX

Yeah, or don't.

(MATT looks confused.)

Does the why really matter? I left. I'm here. I had a reason.

MATT

I guess not.

(Pause.)

Well, whatever it is, I'm sorry.

ALEX

(ALEX hurls another rock at the traffic light.)

Don't be.

(A car honks on the left side of the intersection. The pair turns to identify the car.)

MATT

I think that's her.

(MATT stands.)

Come with us. Stay until your car is ready.

ALEX

(Alex sits back down.)

I'm good here.

MATT

Come on, I promise I won't ask any more questions.

(ALEX shakes her head, not looking at MATT. MATT shrugs.)

Suit yourself, I guess.

(MATT turns to leave. ALEX grabs his arm. MATT stops.)

ALEX

(Quietly.) Thank you.

(MATT smiles and sits back down next to her.)

MATT

Sure you won't come?

(Alex nods, now looking down at the ground, not wanting him to see her face. MATT looks at ALEX. There is a long pause.)

Just make sure whatever it is your running from is worth all that running.

(Alex nods again, still not looking up. Matt stands and walks a few feet away before stopping. There is a pause. Matt turns to look at ALEX.)

I think I'm gonna be up here more often, give that family thing you mentioned a shot.

(ALEX looks up. Her face is pained, like she's fighting back tears.)

If you ever end up around here again...my name's Matt Anders.

ALEX

(Choked up.) I'm not-

(ALEX stops herself and forces a smile.)

I'd like that.

(MATT smiles back, pausing briefly, before exiting stage left. ALEX watches MATT leave and then turns back towards the traffic light. It continues to change methodically: Red, yellow, green. Red, yellow, green. Sadness in her eyes, she picks up a rock and stands, cocking back her arm to throw it. Her arm falls to her side and drops the rock. She exits stage right.)

(BLACKOUT)

(END OF PLAY)