

ELLIE, 21, is frantically searching around a basement full of old boxes. A partial staircase can be seen on the side of the stage. BEN, 25, is off stage.

BEN

Ellie! Are you ok?

ELLIE

Yeah! Just looking for something.

Ben walks down the stairs, sees Ellie running around, and tries to go back upstairs without her noticing.

ELLIE

Help me out for a minute.

BEN

I can't.

ELLIE

Yes, you can.

BEN

I told Nana-

ELLIE

You haven't talked to Nana since Sunday.

BEN

Fine.

ELLIE

We're looking for that little box that used to be on her bedside table.

BEN

Ok.

Ben looks at phone while Ellie searches.

BEN

Not in this box.

ELLIE

Come on, you aren't even looking.

BEN  
Come on, I have better things to do.

ELLIE  
Like what?

BEN  
I don't know.

ELLIE  
Exactly, now--Oh I found it!

BEN  
Thank God I was here, right? I was an integral part of-

ELLIE  
Shut up.  
(Mockingly)  
I'm such an integral part-- seriously who uses words like  
integral.

BEN  
People who aren't stupid like you.

ELLIE  
Oh I'm stupid? You're the stupid--

Ben grabs the box from Ellie as she  
starts to go into a rant.

ELLIE  
Give it back!

BEN  
Sorry! You only get to open the box if you're above 5'2."  
Hmmm, it doesn't look like you are.

ELLIE  
You asshole.

BEN  
Me? Really-

ELLIE  
Give it back! You're not supposed to have that!

BEN  
What? What's in it?

ELLIE  
Just give it back!

Ben tries to open the box but  
fails.

BEN  
Damn it. How do you even open it?

ELLIE  
I'm not telling you. Give it back!

BEN  
Come on.

ELLIE  
No.

BEN  
Eleanor Samantha-

ELLIE  
Oh my God, you sound like Dad.

BEN  
Hey!

ELLIE  
You do!  
(pause)  
Fine. Sorry.

BEN  
Whatever.

Ben walks over to another set of boxes.

ELLIE  
What are you looking for?

BEN  
If you won't tell me how to open the box, I'll get creative.

ELLIE  
What do you mean?  
(pause)  
What are you doing? Seriously?

Ben finds a hammer in the box.

ELLIE  
No! You can't!

BEN  
Too late.

Ben smashes the box with the hammer.

ELLIE  
(very upset)  
How could you?

BEN  
It's your fault. You were the one being an asshole.

ELLIE  
God, is it broken?

Ellie runs over to the wooden  
shards and starts picking them up.

BEN  
Yeah, duh, that was the point of the whole hammer thing.

ELLIE  
You are awful. You know that? She really liked this box, and  
she only wanted to help you.

BEN  
Help me? It's an old box Ellie. She can barely remember a  
damn thing anyways. She doesn't care.

Ellie picks up a diamond ring out  
of the shards.

ELLIE  
Here it is!

BEN  
Woah woah woah, what's that?

ELLIE  
It's Nana's Mom's ring.

BEN  
What the hell? You let me use a hammer on that box! With  
that inside of it?

ELLIE  
I didn't let you! I tried to stop you!

BEN  
Well you should've tried harder!

ELLIE  
Oh shut up!

A beat as they both calm down.

ELLIE

You really do sound like Dad when you're yelling.

BEN

Well, so do you. I guess we couldn't avoid inheriting some of the bastard's traits.

(pause)

Why does Nana even want this ring anyways? It's not going to fit on her finger?

ELLIE

It's for you.

BEN

What?

ELLIE

It's for you. You can give it to Ann.

BEN

Woah, wait, what?

ELLIE

Come on. You had to know this was coming.

BEN

Ellie-

ELLIE

Just do this for her. So maybe it's a little bit soon, but it's not that soon.

BEN

I can't.

ELLIE

Come on. Dad, well, he wasn't great, so she wants to see you happy. Can't you step up? You know she'd be relieved if you proposed.

BEN

I'm not going to propose for Nana's sake.

ELLIE

Please.

BEN

You can't just-

ELLIE

Look, I know she wasn't there for you as much as she was for me. But after Dad died, she took care of me. Please just give her this one thing. You know it's coming anyways.

BEN  
I can't.

ELLIE  
Why not?  
(pause)  
Are you two fighting or something?

BEN  
More than that.

ELLIE  
What? What happened?  
(pause)  
Did you break up?!

BEN  
Yeah, a few weeks-

ELLIE  
What?! What the hell happened? I thought you were going to marry her!

BEN  
Me too!

ELLIE  
So what happened?

BEN  
We just had our differences.

ELLIE  
You just had your differences? You expect me to believe that?

BEN  
We did.

ELLIE  
Well then, fix them. What is so different that you can't just change. You love her.

BEN  
It's more complicated than that.

ELLIE  
How is it more complicated?

BEN  
I can't explain it.

ELLIE

Well, you better try.

BEN

I came home late the other night. She was upset. She thought I was out-

ELLIE

I swear to God, you idiot, were you cheating on her?

BEN

No, no! I wasn't.

ELLIE

Then why were you out? Why was she mad?

BEN

I was at work late. She was mad because she... she says I'm focusing too much on work and not enough on her.

ELLIE

You barely work.

BEN

I got a new job.

ELLIE

Or you were cheating.

BEN

I swear to you; I wasn't cheating on her. I wouldn't do that.

ELLIE

Uh-huh.

BEN

I mean it.

ELLIE

Then what's your new job.

BEN

I'm back in sales.

ELLIE

I thought you got promoted to management?

BEN

I did.

ELLIE

So why did you just get a new job to get demoted back to sales?

BEN

This company fits me better.

ELLIE

Yeah, sure.

BEN

I mean it! Plus there's way more opportunities for promotion. I had gotten as far as they were gonna let me go at-

ELLIE

Whatever. I believe you. For now. So you got a new job and now she's mad.

BEN

Yeah.

ELLIE

That doesn't sound like Ann.

BEN

I don't know what to tell you.

ELLIE

Why don't you just go back to the old job? So you'll wait for another opening and then you can switch to somewhere else? You could work less? Is it really worth losing Ann?

BEN

I can't go back to the old job. Not now anyways.

ELLIE

Why not?

BEN

Burned too many bridges.

ELLIE

That's insane. You're the most likable person I know. Except for when you're angry. Then you're almost as bad as--

BEN

Hey!

ELLIE

Like that. So what happened? Were you angry a lot?



BEN

No.

ELLIE

Yes you were, weren't you? That's why you lost the job, isn't it?

BEN

(worn down from fighting with Ellie)

Sure, I guess.

ELLIE

What do you mean I guess?

BEN

I don't really know.

ELLIE

Why don't you really know?

BEN

I just. It's sort of blurry.

A pause as Ellie reflects.

ELLIE

Were you drinking? When you got fired.

BEN

What?

ELLIE

You were drunk weren't you? You started drinking again? That's why you "can't remember."

BEN

It's not-

ELLIE

It's not what? It's not a big deal? That's why you lost your job isn't it? That's why Ann broke up with you! You're drinking again!

BEN

It's not like it was. You don't need to worry. Look, I got a new job. I'm better now.

ELLIE

Are you still drinking?

(pause)

Are you still drinking?

BEN

Yes. But I'm keeping this job. I'm making rent. Plus, I made it here, didn't I?

ELLIE

But just because you're ok right now, doesn't mean you're really ok. Remember how Dad would have good months and bad months?

BEN

I'm not Dad!

ELLIE

You say that right now. But soon enough you'll get drunk too, you'll be driving home from-

BEN

No I won't! I'm not like him.

ELLIE

You're both alcoholics.

BEN

I told you I have it under control.

ELLIE

I need you to stop drinking.

BEN

I can't.

ELLIE

I need you here with me. I need you to support me. You know Nana's not doing well, we need--

BEN

Why do you think I started drinking in the first place? I care about Nana, too, you know. It's not easy to hear about her dying. You're not the only one who loves her.

ELLIE

I know it's not, but we still have each other. At least for now. I need you here for me.

BEN

And I can do that.

ELLIE

Not if you're drunk.

BEN

I swear to God!

ELLIE

I'm going to call Dr. Phillips. I'll make an appointment for you. I'll even go with you. We'll figure this out.

BEN

I don't want to go to Dr. Phillips; I'm fine.

ELLIE

Well, you have to.

BEN

What?

ELLIE

I won't stop bugging you until you agree to go.

BEN

That's not--

ELLIE

You can't leave this house til you agree to go.

BEN

I'm 25.

ELLIE

And I know every way you know to try to sneak out.

BEN

Fine. Whatever. Go book the appointment. One appointment. That's all you get. Just leave me alone.

ELLIE

Thank you.

(pause)

I need you here to keep me sane.

Ellie hugs Ben then goes up the stairs.

BEN

(calling after her)

One appointment!

(to himself)

You know, I need to keep myself sane, too.

Ben takes out a flask and starts drinking.