

Open Casket

By: Megan E. Tripaldi

CHARACTERS (In order of appearance):

MICHELLE (F, 30s) LINDSAY's Sister. Eldest daughter of the owner of the funeral parlor. Uptight and bitter about her sister's success until she meets CHARLOTTE.

LINDSAY (F, 20s) MICHELLE's sister. Selected heir to run the funeral parlor. She's flaky and has no idea what she's doing. Enjoys picking up strangers during funerals.

CHARLOTTE (F, 30s) LAWRENCE's younger sister. Her twin brother, Kevin is the one in the casket. She's drinking her feelings.

STEPH (F, 30s) LAWRENCE's wife. She knows something funny is going on with LAWRENCE, but can't admit it to herself.

LAWRENCE (M, Early 40s) CHARLOTTE's older brother. STEPH's husband. Can't keep it in his pants. Has a lot of bitterness built up from childhood that is just now coming out.

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SETTING: The viewing room of a funeral parlor, evening. A closed casket is on stage right facing the back wall. Next to the casket is a podium. Several stacks of chairs are off to the side.

AT RISE: MICHELLE enters and begins to set up the chairs for a service. She hums to herself, dances with the chairs; she is enjoying herself. LINDSAY calls from the next room. Her good mood is ruined.

LINDSAY (off):

(Sing-song)

Michyyy!

MICHELLE:

Oh, god...

LINDSAY (Entering):

Michy, Michy moo, moo!

MICHELLE:

Lindsay.

LINDSAY:

(Hugging her around the waist.)

How's my favorite older sister?

MICHELLE:

Busy. What do you want?

LINDSAY:

What, I can't come in and say hi?

MICHELLE:

Not when there's so much work to do.

LINDSAY:

Fine, Bitchy Michy, I'll leave.

MICHELLE:

Or, you know, you could help. Either or.

LINDSAY:

Ugh, *fine*. What are you doing?

MICHELLE:

Setting up chairs.

LINDSAY:

Ok. Seems easy enough.

(She half-heartedly starts to move a chair when her phone rings. She answers, as if expecting an important call – anything to get out of working.)

Hello? Oh, hey, Daddy!

(She exits, continuing the conversation. MICHELLE finishes with the chairs and begins arranging flowers. She slowly starts to hum again, dancing around the flowers humming something terribly jazzy. LINDSAY reenters on the phone at the end of her conversation. MICHELLE stops dancing.)

LINDSAY (Entering):

You're the best! I will. Tell mom I love her. Yes, yes I love you, too. Ok, bye.

(She hangs up. She's practically giddy.)

MICHELLE:

Um, hi smiley.

LINDSAY:

What? Oh, nothing.

MICHELLE:

Okaaaay...So how's dad?

He's good.

LINDSAY:

Just good?

MICHELLE:

Yeah. Just good.

LINDSAY:

Good. And mom?

MICHELLE:

Fine. The same. Sunburnt.

LINDSAY:

Just like every year.

MICHELLE:

Yup.

LINDSAY:

I put the sunscreen in her bag myself, but I guarantee she didn't even take it out.

MICHELLE:

Yeah, ok.

LINDSAY:

You're being unusually evasive.

MICHELLE:

What do you mean?

LINDSAY:

Evasive means –

MICHELLE:

LINDSAY:

I know what evasive means. I mean, maybe...I am...thinking about something, you don't know.

MICHELLE:

Well, you know our parents call and I get concerned. They're old, you never know.

LINDSAY:

I'm surprised you can bend over with that stick so far up your ass, Bitchy.

MICHELLE:

Can you *please* not call –

LINDSAY:

Ok! Jesus you're such a baby.

MICHELLE:

(Ignoring her.)

So. What *did* you and dad talk about?

(She leaves to bring in more flower arrangements as they talk. LINDSAY is fidgety like she's hiding something.)

LINDSAY:

The weather...and golf.

MICHELLE:

I didn't think you could get so excited over the weather and golf.

LINDSAY:

What are you talking about?

(She imitates her goofy smile.)

I don't look like that...

MICHELLE:

What did he promise you?

LINDSAY:

What? Nothing.

MICHELLE:

Lindsay.

LINDSAY:

No, no it's nothing.

MICHELLE:

We both know that you don't smile like that unless daddy gave you a new toy.

LINDSAY:

Shut up, I don't!

MICHELLE:

Come on. What is it?

LINDSAY:

Just ...he said I could borrow the BMW when he got back.

MICHELLE:

The BMW.

LINDSAY:

Uh huh.

MICHELLE:

Seriously?

LINDSAY:

That's what he said.

MICHELLE:

He doesn't even let mom drive that car.

LINDSAY:

Well I must have caught him in a good mood.

MICHELLE:

Dad's *never* in a good mood...

LINDSAY:

I'm just lucky I guess?

MICHELLE:

Uh huh.

(Beat. She stares at LINDSAY. She looks away. MICHELLE is suspicious, but lets it go.)

Well, I don't understand what you like about that car. It's poorly made and overrated.

LINDSAY:

You're just jealous because dad likes me more.

MICHELLE:

Oh, that must be it.

LINDSAY:

Whatever. You can hate it all you want. I'm the one that gets to drive around in a luxury car.

MICHELLE:

Did he say when they're coming home?

LINDSAY:

Soon. I think they want to stay an extra week or something...some golf tournament or whatever.

MICHELLE:

Mom must be *thrilled*.

(She finishes one of the arrangements and stands back to admire it.)

LINDSAY:

Right? Ooh, these are pretty.

(She picks at the arrangement.)

MICHELLE:

Don't pick at those! I just got them right.

LINDSAY:

OCD much?

MICHELLE:

You shouldn't joke about mental health -

LINDSAY:

Whatever.

MICHELLE:

Oh, and thanks for your help, by the way.

LINDSAY:

(Ignoring her.)

That's all of them, right? You don't need to bring in anymore?

MICHELLE:

Yup, that's it.

LINDSAY:

Cool. So, after that can you -

MICHELLE:

Oh...you want me to do something *else*?

LINDSAY:

Yeah.

MICHELLE:

Well, you know I did just set up all the chairs, vacuum the floors, clean the bathrooms –

LINDSAY:

But I'm not good at this stuff.

MICHELLE:

Can you at least finish helping me with these? Look, it's not hard.

LINDSAY:

But I –

(MICHELLE gives her a look.)

Fine, whatever.

(She barely attempts to set them up.)

How do these things normally look? I don't ever do the whole...flower thing.

MICHELLE:

Well, normally it's meant to surround the casket without choking it.

(She shows her, meaning she's doing the work for her.)

Almost hugging it; it looks comforting that way.

LINDSAY:

Perfect! You finish that and I'll go wait for the...

(She checks her pockets, pulls out several slips of paper, and finally finds it on written her arm.)

...O'Rourke family.

MICHELLE:

But I need to finish -

LINDSAY:

I know, but ...I have to do some stuff in my office before the family gets here.

MICHELLE:

Like what?

LINDSAY:

Um, I have to *meditate*. I can't meet these people without meditating. See, this is why I hate greeting families. They're always so sad, you know? Full of negative energy.

(She stares at her, unable to form words.)

Ok, so you can like, finish this and then bring out the picture collages for the hallway. They're next to the guest book sign in. Sound good? Cool? Ok! You rock!

(She rushes off. MICHELLE finishes arranging the flowers, shaking her head and mumbling to herself. CHARLOTTE enters in dark sunglasses, hung over, but functioning. She stares at the casket for a moment before addressing MICHELLE.)

CHARLOTTE:

Is that Kevin O'Rourke?

MICHELLE:

AH! You...I...I'm sorry, I didn't –

CHARLOTTE:

Jesus, calm down, I'm just asking about the dead guy. That's Kevin, right? I'm his sister.

MICHELLE:

Oh...oh! I'm so sorry, Lindsay was supposed to meet you at –

CHARLOTTE:

No, it's cool, I've been here for a few minutes. She's meeting my parents as soon as they get here, god help her.

(CHARLOTTE sits in one of the chairs and lifts up her skirt, pulling a flask out of her garter. MICHELLE stares at her as she takes a pull. She notices and holds the flask towards her. She shakes her head, going back to the flowers.)

Suit yourself.

(She takes another pull and puts it back.)

Rough night, rough morning, you know?

MICHELLE:

I'm not here to judge...

CHARLOTTE:

But you are, right?

MICHELLE:

What?

CHARLOTTE:

Judging.

MICHELLE:

No! Of course not, I –

CHARLOTTE:

Bullshit. I'd be judging you.

MICHELLE:

I'm sorry?

CHARLOTTE:

“I'm sorry...” Ha! You're a trip. I had you pegged from the moment I walked in here.

MICHELLE:

You did?

CHARLOTTE:

Sure. Stiff upper crust type. *Specific* about everything. Nervous. And *totally* judgemental.

MICHELLE:

That's...that's what I seem like to you?

CHARLOTTE:

Totally.

MICHELLE:

Oh...

(CHARLOTTE stares at her for a second.)

CHARLOTTE:

Will you sit with me?

(MICHELLE stares blankly at her.)

Sit.

(She pats the seat next to her. MICHELLE looks at her, anxious. It's uncomfortable for her; CHARLOTTE is unfazed.)

MICHELLE:

I'm sorry...for your loss.

CHARLOTTE:

Thanks.

(She nods towards the casket.)

He was great.

(Beat.)

He died in a skiing accident.

MICHELLE:

I'm so sorry.

CHARLOTTE:

It's cool.

(She looks down. Beat.)

You know, that's the third time you've said that in, like five minutes.

MICHELLE:

Said what?

CHARLOTTE:

"I'm sorry." You didn't do anything to be sorry for, so chill, ok? You'll know when you need to be actually sorry.

MICHELLE:

I'm so...um...right. Ok.

CHARLOTTE:

You really are a trip.

(Beat.)

So, you gonna sit, or - ?

MICHELLE:

Oh, I –

CHARLOTTE:

Just sit with me a second. I just...I'd really appreciate the company. I mean I'd rather sit with a total stranger than those assholes out there.

(Beat. She softens.)

Please?

(They make eye contact. MICHELLE looks quickly back at the flowers.)

CHARLOTTE:

Charlotte.

(She extends her hand. MICHELLE stares at it for a moment before he takes it.)

MICHELLE:

Pleased to meet you.

(They shake hands. CHARLOTTE stares at her, raising an eyebrow.)

Oh! Michelle. I'm Michelle.

CHARLOTTE:

Michelle. Nice.

(She takes another pull off the flask.)

So do you hate your family, Michelle?

MICHELLE:

Do I hate my - ? No, I –

CHARLOTTE:

You do.

MICHELLE:

I didn't say - !

CHARLOTTE:

No, you do. Come on.

MICHELLE:

I...ok, well I wouldn't use the word *hate*.

CHARLOTTE:

Ha, ok. Give me something good, here.

MICHELLE:

I...what do you want to know?

CHARLOTTE:

I don't know, just tell me about them.

MICHELLE:

Ok, well...my dad owns this place. My sister and I are taking care of things while he and my mom are in Florida. But I've been working here since I was twelve.

CHARLOTTE:

Twelve!?

MICHELLE:

Yeah...a bit young, I guess.

CHARLOTTE:

Fuckin' A...so you've been, like, surrounded by dead bodies since you were *twelve*?

MICHELLE:

Well, I wouldn't say surrounded, I - I didn't actually get to help work on them until I was sixteen, but -

CHARLOTTE:

Jesus!

MICHELLE:

I mean I was used to it by then.

CHARLOTTE:

So I mean...why stay? Why not do something else after high school?

MICHELLE:

Well, I wanted to. I want to. I like doing this.

CHARLOTTE:

Why?

MICHELLE:

I guess...death fascinated me?

CHARLOTTE:

Oh god, you're one of *those*?

MICHELLE:

One of...no! No, nothing like that. It's just...it's weird I...I find it interesting that people make such a big deal of preserving the shell of someone.

CHARLOTTE:

The shell?

MICHELLE:

Yeah. Nobody really knows where you go after you die. There's the go-tos; heaven, hell, purgatory, becoming a ghost, but we never really know for sure. All we know is that they're gone and all you have left for this brief amount of time is this shell of what they used to be; the body. And for some reason putting that to rest, and seeing that empty shell one last time brings people comfort and closure. I like giving that to people. I like being a part of their lives in that way.

CHARLOTTE:

Wow...

MICHELLE:

Yeah...

(They stare at each other. Beat.)

CHARLOTTE:

He was living in Europe, you know. Kevin. I'm not exactly sure where; he was all over the place backpacking and shit. He was on this skiing trip. He was always doing that daredevil outdoorsy stuff. And he always made a big deal of eventually making his way to Everest. He liked hiking, but it was his *thing*, skiing. He was so good at it, too, like black diamonds and shit. I wasn't very good; he tried to teach me so many times, but I just couldn't get it. He never gave up though, no matter how much I complained. I had just talked to him; he was so happy to be there; that the snow was great. Powdery. But...something went wrong and he fell. Broke

his neck. Like, he was so good it just seems so...you know, like it was just too easy. Like he shouldn't have made that mistake. We just found out two days ago.

(MICHELLE puts her hand on top of CHARLOTTE's unconsciously. She doesn't react. Beat. She looks up at her suddenly.)

Weird...

MICHELLE:

What is?

CHARLOTTE:

You don't seem so nervous now.

MICHELLE:

I don't?

CHARLOTTE:

Nope.

MICHELLE:

Well, good. That's good.

CHARLOTTE:

Yeah, it is.

(Beat. CHARLOTTE leans in ever so slightly.)

MICHELLE:

Oh, uh, I - I - I have to get the collages for the -

CHARLOTTE:

And we're back.

MICHELLE:

I'm sorry, I have to -

CHARLOTTE:

Of course you are!

MICHELLE:

I didn't mean to –

CHARLOTTE:

Yeah, fine. I get it.

(MICHELLE stares at her for a moment.)

Go.

MICHELLE:

I...

CHARLOTTE:

(Softer.)

Go.

(MICHELLE starts to say something, but then just leaves. CHARLOTTE looks at the flowers and starts rearranging them to be more spread out. Her phone buzzes. She looks down and leaves the room momentarily. STEPH enters in a rush, but stops dead when she sees the casket. She takes a step towards it when her phone rings.)

STEPH:

Hello? Hey, where are you? Lawrence, please - just tell them that... Well I don't care if you have a client - this is your brother's funeral!

(CHARLOTTE reenters. She and STEPH notice each other.)

CHARLOTTE and STEPH:

Oh shit...

STEPH:

Lawrence, I have to...Ok. Yes, ok. *I said ok. Thank you. See you then.*

(She hangs up. They stare at each other for a few moments.)

Hello, Charlotte.

CHARLOTTE:

Steph.

(Beat.)

STEPH:

That was your brother on the phone.

CHARLOTTE:

I could have guessed.

(Beat.)

STEPH:

It's been a while.

CHARLOTTE:

Two years.

STEPH:

Yeah, a while.

(Beat.)

You look good.

CHARLOTTE:

Yeah, ok.

STEPH:

You do.

CHARLOTTE:

You can cut the civil sister-in-law crap, ok? I'm all set.

STEPH:

Please, let's not –

CHARLOTTE:

Fine. How's Larry.

STEPH:

You know he hates –

CHARLOTTE:

How's. Larry.

STEPH:

He's, um...he's going to be late. As usual.

CHARLOTTE:

Well.

(Beat.)

STEPH:

Well, since you seem to be the expert on good behavior tell me, do you think it's ok to be late to your own brother's funeral because of work? You don't think it would be too hard to say, "I'm sorry, but my brother..."

(Beat.)

CHARLOTTE:

He's your husband.

STEPH:

Yeah, well...

(Her phone rings. She checks it.)

Speak of the -

(She answers.)

Hello. Ok. Good. Fine. Bye.

(She hangs up.)

STEPH:

He'll be here in five minutes.

CHARLOTTE:

I'm on the edge of my seat.

STEPH:

Could've just texted me that, but -

CHARLOTTE:

Mm.

STEPH:

He'll be happy to see you, I bet.

CHARLOTTE:

Ha! Sure he will be.

STEPH:

What, he's your brother, don't you think he...oh, god I can't even pretend.

CHARLOTTE:

I mean it's not like you had to drag his ass from work to come here. Oh wait...

STEPH:

Yeah, well it seems like I have to force him to do everything these days.

(She sits and puts her head in her hand. Beat. CHARLOTTE rolls her eyes, lifts her skirt, and pulls out the flask.)

STEPH:

What's that?

CHARLOTTE:

Whiskey.

(Beat. STEPH stares at the flask and makes a noise of discomfort.)

CHARLOTTE:

Here.

(She shoves the flask into her hand. STEPH hesitates then takes a long pull.)

Better?

STEPH:

Thank you.

CHARLOTTE:

‘Welcome.

(Beat.)

Larry is a dick.

STEPH:

He can get...aggravating.

CHARLOTTE:

Don't I know it. When we were kids he used to follow Kevin around like a puppy. It was pathetic. Especially because he's eight years older than us.

STEPH:

I may have noticed that when I first met him...

CHARLOTTE:

And yet here you are.

(STEPH fidgets uncomfortably.)

I never understood it. He always got these morons who will spread their legs after a few compliments and a tragic story of how he was the unwanted child.

(STEPH looks at the floor.)

Oh, uh -

STEPH:

No, it's...it's ok. I'll admit I was going through a tough time when I met him...bad breakup as you can recall...

CHARLOTTE:

Yeah that was pretty rough on everyone.

STEPH:

But you know, Lawrence was really sweet and understanding and –

CHARLOTTE:

Available.

STEPH:

It was what I needed.

CHARLOTTE:

So what do you need now?

(Beat. STEPH stares at her shoes. LAWRENCE comes in quickly.)

LAWRENCE:

Hey, baby I'm sorry I'm...oh. Hey, Charlotte.

(Beat. They stare at each other.)

Good talk. Hey, Steph I'm so sorry about earlier, the board called an emergency meeting - It's not the time to ruffle feathers, y'know?

STEPH:

Yeah, no it's fine. You're here.

LAWRENCE:

God, I love my job, but the people I work with...

STEPH:

Ok, honey.

LAWRENCE:

I swear to god Clark has it out for me. Picking at every little thing I do, like I'm not a goddamn partner -

STEPH:

Ok, well that's -

LAWRENCE:

I swear my salary isn't nearly big enough for this -

STEPH:

OK! Ok...I understand. Work sucks. But you're here now. You don't have to think about it.

LAWRENCE:

You're right. You're right! I'm sorry. Hey, listen, I know I just got here, but I haven't had caffeine all day; I am just going to run to the Dunks around the corner and get a coffee. You want anything?

STEPH:

...no, I'm good. There's coffee here, you know.

LAWRENCE:

Yeah, but it's never good. It always tastes like they made it in a rusty can.

STEPH:

You haven't even tried -

LAWRENCE:

You sure you don't want anything?

STEPH:

...No, I'm ok -

(He kisses the top of her head.)

LAWRENCE:

Thanks for being so great.

(He exits quickly.)

CHARLOTTE:

Wow.

STEPH:

What?

CHARLOTTE:

Just...wow.

STEPH:

I know he can be an ass sometimes, but he's not a *bad* guy. He takes care of me.

CHARLOTTE:

Oh, yeah...no, I get it.

STEPH:

What?

CHARLOTTE:

No, I totally get it. He *takes care* of you. It's cool.

STEPH:

Excuse me?

CHARLOTTE:

Hey. It's cool.

(Beat. STEPH hangs her head.)

Wait, aren't you getting any?

(STEPH stares at her for a moment.)

STEPH:

What? Why would you ask me that?

CHARLOTTE:

I'm not an idiot.

STEPH:

Well, it's none of your business. And completely inappropriate for -

CHARLOTTE:

Whatever. Not like I care anyway.

(Beat. STEPH looks around to make sure nobody can hear her and then speaks very fast.)

STEPH:

We haven't had sex in six months.

CHARLOTTE:

Shut up.

STEPH:

I've tried everything with him. I've read countless books about it, I've subscribed to an online workshop. You know he came home one night and I greeted him wearing just an apron. No matter what I do he - he never wants me. He's always "too tired" from "work." And you know what the worst part is? I haven't even told him how I'm feeling because I'm afraid of inconveniencing him. Isn't that ridiculous? It's so hard when you try and you try and you try, but all you get is shit on because you are trying too hard.

(Pause. They both stare at the ground. STEPH quickly changes the subject.)

So it's closed casket, then?

(CHARLOTTE looks at her, confused.)

The service, I mean.

CHARLOTTE:

Oh, shit...no, I thought it was supposed to be open...

(She goes to it; STEPH stands, but remains back. CHARLOTTE goes to open the casket, puts her hands on the lid, and opens it about an inch, then snaps it shut.)

STEPH:

Charlotte?

CHARLOTTE:

I...are my folks here yet?

STEPH:

Yeah, I just saw them.

CHARLOTTE:

I should...see if they need -

STEPH:

Yeah, no - of course. I'll just -

CHARLOTTE:

Yeah, thanks.

(She rushes out of the room. STEPH stares at the casket for a few minutes. She moves to it and places her hand on the lid. Silent tears start to fall. LAWRENCE enters with a coffee. He stands behind STEPH for a moment and takes a loud sip. STEPH wipes her eyes, but doesn't face him.)

LAWRENCE:

You ok?

STEPH:

...yeah, I'm fine.

LAWRENCE:

Babe, come on.

STEPH:

I'm just...sad, I guess.

LAWRENCE:

Hey, it's ok to be sad. It's a funeral.

STEPH:

Yeah, I know. I just don't want you to think –

LAWRENCE:

What?

STEPH:

Nothing... It's just so hard. He was really...great.

LAWRENCE:

Yeah, when we saw him.

STEPH:

Well, he moved around Europe all the time.

LAWRENCE:

Yeah, well that was his choice to do that backpacking shit. He did a lot of things he probably shouldn't have.

STEPH:

That's not fair.

LAWRENCE:

Why? Because he decided to go flying off to Europe and abandon his friends and family? He was selfish.

STEPH:

So, you're happy he's dead, then?

LAWRENCE:

No, I'm not saying - he was a great guy, and all that. I just don't agree with all his choices.

(Pause. They both stare at the casket)

STEPH:

Awful late for coffee.

LAWRENCE:

Huh?

STEPH:

Awful late for coffee.

LAWRENCE:

Are you serious?

(STEPH doesn't look at him, but moves to the flowers and starts rearranging them tightly around the coffin.)

STEPH:

A lot of late nights drinking coffee lately, don't you think?

LAWRENCE:

Are you seriously nagging me about coffee?

STEPH:

So what if I am?

LAWRENCE:

Look, work is crazy, I'm tired all the time –

STEPH:

I know how tired you are. Maybe if you tried to get to bed earlier...or at all...

LAWRENCE:

Steph -

STEPH:

Maybe you should just find a mattress that better suits your sleeping needs.

LAWRENCE:

Jesus –

STEPH:

I don't want to do this here, ok?

LAWRENCE:

Do what? You're the one that's going off on me for drinking coffee.

STEPH:

It's not really about - ! No. I'm not doing this.

LAWRENCE:

What? Come on, what are you saying?

STEPH:

I'm saying...I'm saying just go ahead and get a new mattress. Maybe this way you won't blow so much money on coffee.

(She starts to exit. LAWRENCE stops her.)

LAWRENCE:

Wait, wait! Look...maybe there's a way to make the, uh current bed more comfortable. Hmm? Come on, you know I'm crazy about you, baby...

(He kisses her. She softens.)

Look, it'd be much more *expensive* to buy a new one, right? So let's just pretend that this argument never happened and get over it, ok?

(She pulls away from him.)

What?

STEPH:

You know...you may just want to stay at work tonight.

LAWRENCE:

Steph, come on, I didn't –

STEPH:

Say hi to the intern...or was it the secretary? I can never keep track.

(She exits. LAWRENCE is stung.)

LAWRENCE:

Shit...

(He dials his phone.)

Hey, baby it's me...yeah, I know, I'm sorry...thanks. Yeah, look can I stay at your place tonight? Yeah...this might be it...I think so...thanks. Yeah, yeah you, too...See ya.

(He sits. LINDSAY enters, notices LAWRENCE and proceeds with caution.)

LINDSAY:

Hi.

LAWRENCE:

Shit!

LINDSAY:

I'm sorry!

LAWRENCE:

No I'm –

LINDSAY:

I really should have announced myself –

LAWRENCE:

No, it's fine...I was just –

LINDSAY:

I'll just leave you alone –

LAWRENCE:

Stop!

(She does.)

LAWRENCE:

It's totally fine. Please.

(He motions to a chair. She smiles and sits.)

LINDSAY:

Thank you.

LAWRENCE:

So...sorry, do I know you?

LINDSAY:

I'm one of the directors here. We may have spoken on the phone?

LAWRENCE:

Director, really? You seem so young...

LINDSAY:

Aw, that's so sweet, thank you! Actually, I'm the director's daughter. He's in Florida with my mom, so...I'm here until they get back.

LAWRENCE:

Ah, that makes more sense.

LINDSAY:

They go there every winter.

LAWRENCE:

Is he coming back soon? Not that you aren't great, I mean -

LINDSAY:

Ha, no it's ok. They'll be back at the beginning of the month.

LAWRENCE:

I see. Amazing that they'd leave this to you. What are you? Eighteen? Nineteen?

LINDSAY:

Ha! Wow, no I'm twenty-two.

LAWRENCE:

Twenty-two. That's a great age.

LINDSAY:

I mean, I like it. What are you, like...twenty-six?

LAWRENCE:

Twenty-six! I'm flattered, thank you. I'm thirty-eight.

LINDSAY:

Well, you totally don't look it.

LAWRENCE:

Thank you. So, what about that other woman? The nervous one?

LINDSAY:

What, Michelle? She's my sister. She...also works here.

LAWRENCE:

And it's just the two of you? No, like, spouses or - ?

LINDSAY:

Oh god, no. No time for dating in the death business, at least according to my dad. It's why he married my mom. She was an embalmer.

LAWRENCE:

Cool, cool, cool...

(Beat.)

LINDSAY:

So, how are you doing? Can I, like...get you anything?

LAWRENCE:

Me? No, I'm good.

(He extends his hand.)

I'm Lawrence.

(She takes it.)

LINDSAY:

Lindsay.

(Beat. They stare at each other.)

So...do you want to be alone?

LAWRENCE:

Of course not.

LINDSAY:

Ok. Good.

LAWRENCE:

You know, this is going to sound totally ridiculous, I mean I just met you...you're very pretty. Gorgeous. Beautiful. Just...stunning, really.

LINDSAY:

Wow.

LAWRENCE:

I'm sorry...

LINDSAY:

No, oh, no it's ok...

LAWRENCE:

That probably wasn't the best thing to say...

LINDSAY:

Really, it's...you really think so?

LAWRENCE:

I do.

(He brushes hair behind her ear. They are very close. Then he pulls away quickly.)

I don't mean to be so forward. It's just...with my brother...

(He starts to fake-cry. She falls for it.)

LINDSAY:

Oh...oh, you poor thing, no...come here...

(She hugs him. He looks up at her. They lean in towards each other and almost kiss when they can hear MICHELLE and CHARLOTTE in the hallway. They both back away from each other as they enter.)

Oh...Lawrence why don't we go into my office and talk, ok? It's the second door on the right, I'll be right there.

LAWRENCE:

Thanks, Lindsay. You're so understanding.

(He looks at CHARLOTTE.)

Charlotte.

(She rolls her eyes at him. He exits.)

LINDSAY:

Mich, can you handle things for a while? I have to –

MICHELLE:

What - ?

LINDSAY:

(Not hearing her.)

Thank you!

(She rushes out. MICHELLE is annoyed, completely aware of what LINDSAY is doing.

MICHELLE:

Always doing what she can to comfort people...*anything* she can. She's such a...I just...

CHARLOTTE:

Your sister?

MICHELLE:

My sister.

CHARLOTTE:

Huh. Interesting.

MICHELLE:

What is?

CHARLOTTE:

I thought you said you didn't hate your family?

MICHELLE:

That's not...I don't...*hate* isn't the right word...

CHARLOTTE:

She drives you nuts?

MICHELLE:

She drives me nuts. You can't choose your family, right?

CHARLOTTE:

Don't I know it.

MICHELLE:

So. This is supposed to be opened?

CHARLOTTE:

Yeah...I didn't just want to -

MICHELLE:

I understand.

CHARLOTTE:

I didn't want to ruin anything.

MICHELLE:

That's ok. I'm glad you came and got me.

(She moves to open it.)

CHARLOTTE:

Wait!

MICHELLE:

Yes?

CHARLOTTE:

I...never mind. Go ahead.

(She moves to open it again.)

No, wait!

MICHELLE:

Is everything ok?

CHARLOTTE:

No...

(She sits. MICHELLE follows her, but doesn't sit.)

I...I don't want to see him.

MICHELLE:

That's perfectly -

CHARLOTTE:

He was my twin.

MICHELLE:

Oh...I didn't know.

CHARLOTTE:

We were best friends. We always said that we were born friends, you know? We'd never stay separated for long, even when he was travelling. The day they say he died...I woke up with this...horrible feeling. I felt sick. Not like, flu sick, but like...something went missing when I was asleep; somebody took something out of me. I had this uncontrollable urge to call Kevin and he wasn't picking up. Finally one of his friends answered and... Now it's like I'm not a complete person anymore...

(MICHELLE sits putting her arm around CHARLOTTE.)

I don't know if I can stand living in this world without him...

MICHELLE:

Hey, hey...

CHARLOTTE:

I can't do this, Michelle...

MICHELLE:

Yes, you can. You are a strong person.

CHARLOTTE:

You don't even know me.

MICHELLE:

No, but I see this every day. I see the weak ones, I see the strong ones...and you're strong, Charlotte. It radiates off of you. You can make it through this. Then after you make it through this you will be able to make it through anything.

(Beat. CHARLOTTE looks up at her and kisses her, hard. She gives in for a minute, then pulls away.)

Charlotte...

CHARLOTTE:

Shut up.

(She moves to kiss her again, but she backs away.)

MICHELLE:

Wait, wait - look, I think you're - you're beautiful, I just - not that that should matter, but - and there is a casket and your - I don't think it's appropriate in this particular circumstance to - this is my *job* -

CHARLOTTE:

I think, you know, it's great that you feel this weird connection to the dead or whatever. It's sweet and all that shit. But don't you ever get tired of watching people die? Don't you ever want to watch people live?

MICHELLE:

I -

CHARLOTTE:

Oh my god just take a risk for once in your life!

(Beat.)

MICHELLE:

Oh...fuck it.

(They kiss again. She leads her into the next room without a word. STEPH enters, makes sure nobody else is there, and walks over to the casket. She tries to open it, but can't bring herself to. She puts her hand on the casket.)

STEPH:

Hi...

(Beat.)

Been a while, huh? Too long...

(Beat.)

You were always the adventurous one, weren't you Kev? Skiing in Italy? Come on, who does that? You only see that stuff on the Travel Channel. Hey, remember the time you tried to teach me and Charlotte how to ski that week during winter break and I broke my arm? You wanted me to keep going! You kept telling me that it was nothing. And you almost had me convinced...Why would you do this, huh? Everyone loves you; why would you leave? Why would you leave me?

(Beat.)

Oh god, why did I let you leave...

(She puts her head on the casket.)

I want to go back...I want to go back...I'm sorry...I'm so sorry, Kevin...

(Soon she hears people coming and runs out of the room. LINDSAY and LAWRENCE enter. LINDSAY checks that nobody is around and kisses LAWRENCE.)

LAWRENCE:

You're amazing.

LINDSAY:

So are you.

(He grabs her waist and starts kissing her neck.)

I can't believe we just –

LAWRENCE:

I know. I've never done anything like that before.

LINDSAY:

I've never done that during a *funeral* before...after hours maybe, but...

LAWRENCE:

Mmm...you're a little bit bad, aren't you?

LINDSAY:

I am. I really am...

(He kisses her.)

LAWRENCE:

Meet me in the basement in ten minutes.

LINDSAY:

Ten minutes.

(He kisses her quickly and exits. LINDSAY pulls out a hand mirror and checks her face and hair. She smirks. Suddenly CHARLOTTE streaks into the room, freaking out. LINDSAY is oblivious in her post-coituous high. She smiles like an idiot. CHARLOTTE stares at her, wide-eyed. LINDSAY is still oblivious. She continues grinning like an idiot and exits, smiling. MICHELLE enters quickly and she nearly runs into her. They scramble past each other. MICHELLE approaches CHARLOTTE. They stare at each other for a long time before CHARLOTTE speaks.)

CHARLOTTE:

Oh my god...

MICHELLE:

Charlotte...

CHARLOTTE:

Oh my *god*...

MICHELLE:

Charlotte, please –

CHARLOTTE:

Oh my *fucking god!*

MICHELLE:

Please calm down...

CHARLOTTE:

We just - at my - oh my god -

MICHELLE:

I know, I know –

CHARLOTTE:

Why the fuck did you let me do that?!

MICHELLE:

I –

CHARLOTTE:

My brother is right there! *Right fucking there!* And we - oh my god, what have done...

MICHELLE:

I understand what -

CHARLOTTE:

Oh, you understand? You understand my need to - *at my brother's funeral?! Is that what you fucking understand?!*

MICHELLE:

I'm just trying to –

CHARLOTTE:

You used me!

MICHELLE:

I used you? Are you kidding me?

CHARLOTTE:

Is this what you do, huh? You lure people in by being nice so that you can get them vulnerable enough to jump their bones?

MICHELLE:

Charlotte, I didn't lure you anywhere! I didn't force you to do anything you didn't want to do. Need I remind you? *You* are the one who kissed me. *You* are the one who practically pushed me down the basement stairs. *You* are the one who pulled *me* onto the embalming table and –

CHARLOTTE:

You didn't have to agree to it!

MICHELLE:

What are you so afraid of?

CHARLOTTE:

I'm not afraid of anything!

MICHELLE:

Look, I know that you think it was a mistake or that this was just grief, but it wasn't. It was more than that.

CHARLOTTE:

Oh my *GOD!*

MICHELLE:

Will you listen to me!? We didn't do anything wrong!

CHARLOTTE:

Fuck you. Just...fuck you.

(She grabs her flask and downs the rest, storming for the door.)

MICHELLE:

Charlotte, please just hear me out –

(She whips around and punches her on the arm. They stare at each other for a moment and then CHARLOTTE kisses her, hard.)

CHARLOTTE:

Oh...my god...

(She runs away just as STEPH reenters with a stack of papers.)

STEPH:

Hey, Charlotte, your mom's looking –

(But she is gone.)

Ok...is she all right?

MICHELLE:

Hmm? No, I'm sorry, I have to...

(She exits after CHARLOTTE.)

STEPH:

Ok...

(She moves to the podium and begins arranging the papers. She drops them just as LAWRENCE enters and kneels behind the podium to pick them up. He doesn't see her. He looks around to make sure nobody is there then dials a number.)

LAWRENCE:

Hey, baby, it's me again. Yeah... I can't come tonight after all. Yeah. No, look it's not...it's not...don't be like that. There's no...Come on, baby...No, she...Don't say that about her, she's my wife! You can't – Hello? Hello? Shit...

(STEPH stands slowly. LAWRENCE exits before he can see her. She moves to a chair and slowly sinks into it. MICHELLE enters, upset. She notices STEPH and moves to her. She's done caring about propriety.)

MICHELLE:

This day sucks.

(She pulls out a bottle from her jacket and drinks. She offers STEPH some. She wordlessly takes it and takes a couple large gulps.)

Wow...you, too, huh?

(She nods.)

MICHELLE:

Funerals are rough...

STEPH:

It's not just the funeral.

MICHELLE:

Oh? Well, I'll tell you mine if you tell me yours.

(She takes another long drink.)

STEPH:

Nope.

(She takes the whiskey from her and takes a long drink.)

You?

MICHELLE:

I guess not.

(They pass the flask back and forth in silence.)

Did you know they were twins?

STEPH:

Who?

MICHELLE:

Charlotte and...him?

STEPH:

Yeah. I married her older brother...I'm Steph.

MICHELLE:

Oh. What's his name?

STEPH:

Lllllawrence.

MICHELLE:

Lawrence...oh. *Oh*. I...wow.

STEPH:

So you know him.

MICHELLE:

Yeah, uh...I didn't know he was, uh...married.

STEPH:

No? Well, sometimes I think he forgets. Will you excuse me?

(She moves abruptly to the next room just as LINDSAY enters. She nearly bumps into her.)

LINDSAY:

Oh, sorry!

(But she is gone.)

Wow, what's up her ass?

MICHELLE:

Are you kidding me?

LINDSAY:

What? The bitch nearly knocked me over.

MICHELLE:

God, you know what, Lindsay, this is a funeral. Can you, for once, not be such a -
a - a *shrew*?

LINDSAY:

Excuse me?

MICHELLE:

Yeah, I said it.

LINDSAY:

A shrew?

MICHELLE:

Yeah. *A shrew.*

LINDSAY:

Are you a hundred?

MICHELLE:

You know all I'm saying is that these people are here to mourn for their loss. Can you tone down the profanity? That's all I ask. I know you have a problem with doing things for other people...well, heh, depending on the task.

LINDSAY:

Don't you *dare* slut-shame me. I have a healthy - at least I'm having sex!

(MICHELLE snorts.)

You know at least I'm not running around all, "Ooh, I do all the work, buuuuh..."

MICHELLE:

Well, I really do all the work while you're -

LINDSAY:

"Waah, I'm Bitchy Michy and *nobody* likes me!"

MICHELLE:

While you're busy treating this place like your old sorority house!

LINDSAY:

What the hell is that supposed to mean?

MICHELLE:

I've seen all the guys you bring in and out of that office. The walls aren't sound proof, you know.

LINDSAY:

I don't do –

MICHELLE:

Yes you do, do. Even today! That guy, Lawrence?

(Beat.)

LINDSAY:

So what if I did? What do you care what I do? You can't tell me how to live my life. This is *my* funeral home and I -

MICHELLE:

No, this is our *father's* funeral home. You just work here while he's away. Well. I work and you *meditate*.

LINDSAY:

No, fuck you, *I'm* in charge. Daddy said that he and mom may just stay in Florida and let me have the business.

(Beat. Something in MICHELLE's brain has snapped.)

MICHELLE:

That's...that's what you were talking about with dad earlier.

LINDSAY:

Yeah. Yeah, it was. We've been talking about it for over a week now.

MICHELLE:

I knew it...Oh, god I *knew* it didn't have anything to do with his car!

LINDSAY:

Yeah. Dad trusts me –

MICHELLE:

Ha!

LINDSAY:

Dad trusts me so he's giving me the business. So...you know what? If you don't apologize to me I...I may have to fire you.

MICHELLE:

Fire me?

LINDSAY:

Mmhmm. That's right. Fire you.

(She can't take it anymore and bursts out laughing.)

What the hell is wrong with you? Stop it!

MICHELLE:

You? He'd really pick you to take over the...Wow! Just...ha, wow...

(She is openly drinking now.)

LINDSAY:

Are you drinking?

MICHELLE:

Yes, I'm drinking! I'm drinking because I can't stand you or this day anymore.

LINDSAY:

You're the worst!

MICHELLE:

Well, I do try.

LINDSAY:

I hate you, Bitchy!

(She gets right up in her face.)

MICHELLE:

Do not. Call me Bitchy. Again.

(She flicks her on the nose and laughs. She's a bit buzzed.)

LINDSAY:

I...I'm totally telling dad you were drinking during a funeral!

MICHELLE:

Go ahead, tell him! I don't care.

LINDSAY:

Fine! You can wait for him to fire you.

MICHELLE:

You know what? If dad really does decide to let you take over when he comes back then I quit.

LINDSAY:

Wuh...you can't quit!

MICHELLE:

Oh can't I?

LINDSAY:

N...no...

MICHELLE:

Uh huh. Bye.

LINDSAY:

No, no, wait, Michelle, please –

(She grabs her arm.)

MICHELLE:

What are you doing?

LINDSAY:

Don't quit.

MICHELLE:

Uh, yeah, you can let go now.

LINDSAY:

Wait, wait, wait, please! Just wait –

MICHELLE:

For what, Lindsay? For you to beg me to stay and do all the work?

LINDSAY:

I wasn't –

MICHELLE:

You want to know something? You are not a good person. You...you are a spoiled brat. You use people. And I'm not talking about sex, that doesn't even matter. You can't do anything for yourself, but you expect the world to be handed to you. Well now you got what you wanted, right? You got the business even though I have worked my ass off for it since I was twelve. *Twelve*. But because you bat those sad little eyes and pout you know that *Daddy* will give you whatever you want. Well, I'm done with you. I'm done with this place. I have been doing this for two decades and I have gotten shit for it. So congratulations. You're on your own. Good luck.

(She's almost out of the room.)

And one more thing. That guy you fucked in your office, Lawrence? He's married.

(She exits. LINDSAY is crying. She moves to exit just as LAWRENCE enters.)

LAWRENCE:

Lindsay!

LINDSAY:

Hey...sorry, I have to...

(She exits.)

LAWRENCE:

Ok...

(He looks around the room. He looks at the casket. He checks to see if anyone is there. He steps up to the casket cautiously and awkwardly places his hand on the lid. He looks away, heads for the door, but changes his mind and goes back. He checks again to make sure he is alone.)

LAWRENCE:

This is what I'm supposed to do, just...talk to you, right?

(Beat.)

I don't like one-sided conversations.

(Beat.)

This is stupid.

(He starts to leave, but once he is in the doorway he stops, looks back at the casket, turns and sits in the back row, farthest from the casket.)

Ok, so I'm here, I'm talking. La, la, la...

(Beat. He moves up a few rows.)

So...what, am I supposed to, like...confess all my feelings now? Is that it?

(Beat.)

Yeah, well fuck that.

(Beat. He checks again to see if anyone is there. He sighs.)

I...am so mad at you. I am *eight years* older and you... Maybe that makes me a little resentful. Ok, a lot resentful. But you know what, you never even realized it. You never even asked... But you were just so nice and so...likable. Nobody hated you. It was infuriating. If something went wrong it was, "Oh, let's blame Lawrence. It's probably his fault anyway!" I mean, half the time it was my fault,

but you never, ever got blamed and that...just pissed me off. And after everything with Steph? You couldn't just...

(He tries to compose himself, but can't. At this point CHARLOTTE walks in. He doesn't notice her.)

You left and I was there for her, but it never mattered! She's supposed to be mine and it's like you fucking took her from me! You're the one that left, you are the one that abandoned her. And now you're dead, you're really, really gone and it's like she's still waiting for you. All I see every time I look at her is you. How the fuck is that fair? I just see her and, and I can tell. And then she just looks at me and she smiles, but I can't even... I'm sorry that I wasn't the brother you hoped I'd be. I'm sorry I was the fucking family disappointment. But how could I compete with you? All I wanted to do was be just like you...I wanted to know what it felt like to have everyone just...love me...

(He starts to cry.)

God damn it...

CHARLOTTE:

Lawrence...

LAWRENCE:

Fuck! Char, hey...

CHARLOTTE:

Sorry.

LAWRENCE:

...how much did you hear?

CHARLOTTE:

Enough.

(Beat.)

Did you mean it?

Mean what?

LAWRENCE:

I don't know...any of it?

CHARLOTTE:

(Beat.)

Yeah.

LAWRENCE:

I had no idea...

CHARLOTTE:

Yeah, well.

LAWRENCE:

I wish I knew.

CHARLOTTE:

I didn't want anyone to, so...you're off the hook.

LAWRENCE:

Larry –

CHARLOTTE:

Look, can you just forget it?

LAWRENCE:

How am I supposed to forget that?

CHARLOTTE:

Just...pretend you never heard it and go back to hating me.

LAWRENCE:

(Beat.)

CHARLOTTE:

I don't hate you...

LAWRENCE:

Oh, come on...you are never nice to me. You roll your eyes every fucking time I open my mouth. How is that supposed to make me feel? My own fucking sister –

CHARLOTTE:

I don't hate you!

LAWRENCE:

Yeah, whatever you say.

CHARLOTTE:

You can't play the fucking wounded child with me, I know better!

(Beat.)

Hey, I really didn't know –

LAWRENCE:

Oh, fuck you. You never gave a shit about me.

CHARLOTTE:

Are you kidding me?

LAWRENCE:

It was always *you* and *Kevin*...

CHARLOTTE:

He was my twin!

LAWRENCE:

Yeah, but it made no difference whether or not I wanted to be close to either of you. You *always* chose him over me.

CHARLOTTE:

If I had known –

LAWRENCE:

What? You would have changed? Come on, we were kids –

CHARLOTTE:

Yeah, exactly! We were kids! We were stupid kids, that's all it was.

LAWRENCE:

Do you know how excited I was when I learned that I was going to have a baby brother or sister? And then when I found out I was going to have two at the same time? I was fucking ecstatic. I finally got to be a big brother. But you two never let me in. And I felt like an only fucking child because of it.

CHARLOTTE:

You were eight years old when we were born, it's not like we had anything in common...

LAWRENCE:

Maybe that didn't matter to me.

CHARLOTTE:

Oh, fuck you, you didn't know that shit; you were a kid!

LAWRENCE:

Yeah, ok, fine! But I just thought...I just thought that...fuck, I don't know.

(Beat.)

CHARLOTTE:

What do you want me to say?

LAWRENCE:

You don't have to say anything.

CHARLOTTE:

I can't read your fucking mind, Larry!

LAWRENCE:

Stop calling me that!

CHARLOTTE:

Larry, Larry, Larry, La –

LAWRENCE:

SHUT UP!

(Beat.)

CHARLOTTE:

Oh, oh god. I'm so - Kevin called you Larry.

LAWRENCE:

Shut up...

CHARLOTTE:

No. That's why you're being like this -

LAWRENCE:

Please stop -

CHARLOTTE:

You can't admit that you miss him -

LAWRENCE:

Charlotte -

CHARLOTTE:

That this is just a really fucked up dream you can tell your therapist about later -

LAWRENCE:

Hey!

(Beat.)

I - I'm sorry, but I just can't...I can't do this.

(He starts to exit.)

CHARLOTTE:

No you fucking don't! You don't get to just unload like that and then walk away!

LAWRENCE:

Just leave me alone.

CHARLOTTE:

No!

LAWRENCE:

What do you want from me?

CHARLOTTE:

I want you to tell me what's going on!

(He stares at her.)

Look, I know you and Kevin had some shit going on between you. Whatever. I can't fix that. But you can't just scream at his casket and expect to magically feel better.

LAWRENCE:

I just...he was my brother, too.

CHARLOTTE:

Then how could you fuck him over like that?

LAWRENCE:

What are you talking about?

CHARLOTTE:

He hadn't even been gone a month. And then she just...ran into your arms and you let her. You encouraged it.

LAWRENCE:

What was I supposed to do? She was in pain...

CHARLOTTE:

No, I think that you wanted everything he had and you were willing to get it in the most underhanded way you could.

LAWRENCE:

That's not true –

CHARLOTTE:

Did you even love her?

(He stares at her.)

Well, he did. He was heartbroken when she didn't come with him. And he was even more heartbroken when he found out what you did. That's why he didn't come to your wedding. That's why he kept his distance. Because he didn't want you to see how fucking ruined he was. But it's over. It was a year ago. You got the girl in the end so you win.

(She starts to leave.)

LAWRENCE:

Charlotte!

(She stops.)

I did love her. And him. I didn't mean to –

CHARLOTTE:

Then why?

LAWRENCE:

I don't know...

CHARLOTTE:

Yeah, well 'I don't know' went out the window once you said your vows.

LAWRENCE:

Did I make a mistake?

CHARLOTTE:

It's too late to ask yourself that.

LAWRENCE:

Oh god I - I'm such a fucking mess ...

CHARLOTTE:

So am I.

LAWRENCE:

Was he?

CHARLOTTE:

In his own way, yeah.

LAWRENCE:

Yeah well, it never showed.

CHARLOTTE:

He was pretty cool that way. Always letting other people be not ok first. Might have actually been what killed him...

LAWRENCE:

Is there hope for us, you think?

CHARLOTTE:

I don't know.

LAWRENCE:

Well that sucks because I don't either...

CHARLOTTE:

We'll just have to see, I guess.

(Beat.)

LAWRENCE:

I'm uh - I'm going to go check on mom. See how she's holding up.

CHARLOTTE:

Good idea. Hey...

(CHARLOTTE squeezes his arm. They sort of smile at each other. He exits.
MICHELLE enters, quite drunk now.)

Oh god...

MICHELLE:

There you are!

CHARLOTTE:

Michelle...

MICHELLE:

I need to talk to you.

CHARLOTTE:

No, listen, I have to -

MICHELLE:

No! You are going to listen to me because you got your turn to talk...and hit, and kiss. Now you have to listen to me.

(CHARLOTTE sits and listens.)

I am a nice person. I always do the right thing. I *always* do the right thing... But then in walks you. All crass and tough...you are the opposite of me. You are... You take risks. I never do. You kiss a total stranger at your brother, your *twin* brother's funeral and you don't think that it's going to change things. And then you have sex with them and you get all regretty...the them, the me, not your...So you think you can just storm off and then it's over. But guess what? It's not! You forget that you left a nice person on the other end; a person who, yesterday would have thought that you were crazy. Well you are. Crazy. You are the best kind of crazy I've ever met. And I don't use that word because it's not a nice thing to call someone and mental health - and I think I...I really, really like you, Charlotte. I don't want to be this stuffy, "specific" everyone thinks I am. I want to be the kind of person who can find somebody like you. I want you, Charlotte.

(She kisses her. They stare at each other for a long moment.)

And now...I'm going to go throw up...

(She runs out of the room. CHARLOTTE sits for a moment dazed.
LAWRENCE enters with LINDSAY tugging his arm.)

LAWRENCE:

Lindsay what's so...oh! Char, you're still here?

(She nods.)

Um can you...uh...mom needs you. In the other room.

(She nods again, still dazed, and exits.)

So, what's going on?

LINDSAY:

Um, is now a good time?

LAWRENCE:

Uh, yeah, sure...are you ok?

LINDSAY:

Hmm? Oh, no I'm...

LAWRENCE:

You seem upset.

LINDSAY:

No, no I'm fine.

LAWRENCE:

You sure?

(He puts his hand on her shoulder.)

LINDSAY:

Please don't touch me.

LAWRENCE:

Whoa...

LINDSAY:

I don't want you to touch me.

LAWRENCE:

What did I do?

LINDSAY:

I...

LAWRENCE:

Just tell me.

LINDSAY:

I...are you really married?

LAWRENCE:

What?

LINDSAY:

Mi - uh - someone told me you were.

(At this point STEPH enters and stands in the doorway, listening to their conversation. Neither of them see her.)

LAWRENCE:

Who said that?

LINDSAY:

Some...guy.

LAWRENCE:

Well, don't listen to them.

LINDSAY:

You're sure?

LAWRENCE:

Of course.

(LINDSAY smiles uneasily.)

Don't you believe me?

(LINDSAY shrugs. He pulls her to him and tries to kiss her, but she resists.)

LINDSAY:

Look, I don't want -

LAWRENCE:

Hey, it's ok -

LINDSAY:

No, I don't -

LAWRENCE:

Oh come on. You were *really* into it earlier -

LINDSAY:

Now I'm telling you no -

LAWRENCE:

Lindsay, come on -

LINDSAY:

Stop it!

STEPH:

She said no, Lawrence.

(He pushes LINDSAY away.)

Are you ok?

LAWRENCE:

She's fine.

STEPH:

I wasn't asking you.

LINDSAY:

I'm - yeah, I'm ok...thank you.

STEPH:

Ok. Good.

LINDSAY:

Are you his - ?

(STEPH nods.)

I'm so sorry, I didn't -

STEPH:

I know you didn't.

LINDSAY:

I'm so, so sor -

STEPH:

It's ok. Really. But I have to talk to him so you need to leave this room, ok?

LINDSAY:

Please just let -

STEPH:

Go away. Now.

(LINDSAY looks from her to LAWRENCE. She exits.)

LAWRENCE:

Steph...

STEPH:

I knew. I always knew. *Baby.*

LAWRENCE:

How - ?

STEPH:

I just know.

LAWRENCE:

What do you want from me, Steph?

STEPH:

What do I want? I - Jesus, Lawrence..

LAWRENCE:

You know, ever since we met I knew that I'd never be enough for you...

STEPH:

Really.

LAWRENCE:

You can't accept the way I am!

STEPH:

And what is that? A creep?

LAWRENCE:

Maybe I'm crazy to think I could ever live up to your ridiculous expectations -

STEPH:

I just wanted you to be faithful, to be trustworthy! Because that is what we agreed on *in our wedding vows!* How am I turning into the bad guy here?!

LAWRENCE:

I should have just left you alone. I should have just let you pine over Kevin when he left.

STEPH:

Stop it.

LAWRENCE:

Tell me something, when he left who was there to pick up his mess? Me. Who was there when you cried yourself to sleep every night for a month? Me. And I never got any credit for it.

STEPH:

My pain wasn't some class you could audit, Lawrence -

LAWRENCE:

You never thanked me, you never appreciated me -

STEPH:

For what!?

LAWRENCE:

You just wanted him and I dealt with it. But, guess what? He's gone. And hey, look! I'm still not him! I'm not Kevin! I'm never going to be Kevin! You're never going to get -

(She slaps him. Beat.)

STEPH:

You want to know what I actually want from you, Lawrence? I want the last two years back. I want to live with someone who I can trust. And I want you to get your own fucking mattress.

(She turns away, but he grabs her arm.)

Let me go.

LAWRENCE:

No! Please, Steph - you can't leave me.

STEPH:

Oh, watch me.

LAWRENCE:

Please –

STEPH:

Look, I'm sorry you feel like you weren't good enough, I really am. And you're right. I do still love him; that isn't fair to you. And maybe, yeah I want you to be more like him. But I know that can never happen. Not because you're any less intelligent or kind or handsome. It's not because you are so much older than us; the age difference never mattered to me. But it mattered to you. You wanted me because you thought I was his. Well, I'm sorry, Lawrence. I'm my own person. I am not property. I wasn't his. And I'm not even a little bit yours.

(She starts to walk away, he still has a grip on her arm.)

LAWRENCE:

I'm sorry I'm not him.

STEPH:

You don't have to be sorry for that, Lawrence. So many other things, but not that.

LAWRENCE:

I hope someday you can forgive me.

STEPH:

(She cups his cheek.)

Someday. But today? Absolutely not.

(She punches him in the stomach. He finally drops her arm, looks up at her and stumbles out as CHARLOTTE enters, a little buzzed. STEPH stands stoically until he exits and then sinks into a chair.)

CHARLOTTE:

What the hell happened to him?

STEPH:

I punched him.

CHARLOTTE:

You're kidding me. Finally. What'd he do?

STEPH:

The intern...and the funeral lady.

CHARLOTTE:

Which one?

STEPH:

The younger one.

CHARLOTTE:

Fuckin' A...

(She sits.)

Are you ok?

(STEPH starts laughing.)

Uh...?

STEPH:

I am such an idiot!

(She buries her head in CHARLOTTE's chest and starts to cry hysterically.
CHARLOTTE awkwardly pats her head.)

CHARLOTTE:

Hey...

STEPH:

God, I should never have married him...I should have stayed with - it's too late
now...he's gone...I can't...

(Beat.)

STEPH (contd.):

Do you still hate me, Charlotte?

CHARLOTTE:

What?

STEPH:

Do you still hate me?

(Beat.)

CHARLOTTE:

He was so in love with you...and you just let him go. Do you know what it's like when your twin gets his heart broken? I felt it, too. He was miserable. He thought you didn't love him anymore.

STEPH:

I was *in* love with him...

CHARLOTTE:

Then why didn't you go with him?

STEPH:

It sounds so stupid now, but it scared me. So I had to break his heart.

CHARLOTTE:

You didn't have to. You could have done long distance, you could have -

STEPH:

I know! But I was young and stupid. I thought that we'd go this great place and he'd find someone newer and more...I don't know, experienced. Kevin always wanted adventure and I didn't know if I was going to be enough for him. I guess in my mind it made sense. So he left and I settled for Lawrence even though I knew he was bad for me, I knew...what the hell is wrong with me?

CHARLOTTE:

You're human.

STEPH:

Yeah...

(Beat.)

CHARLOTTE:

I don't hate you. I never did. It was just, you know...he was my brother and my best friend and my other half. Seeing him like that...

STEPH:

Yeah, I know. For what it's worth I'm sorry.

CHARLOTTE:

(Genuine.)

Yeah. I know you are.

(Beat.)

STEPH:

I ask myself the same questions every day...What if I had gone with him? What if we were still together? Would he still be alive?

CHARLOTTE:

You're torturing yourself.

STEPH:

I feel like I deserve it. I still love him, Charlotte. I don't think I ever stopped.

CHARLOTTE:

Neither did he.

(STEPH tears up again. CHARLOTTE smiles at her. Beat.)

Hey. You wanna hear something funny?

(STEPH nods.)

CHARLOTTE (contd.):

I fucked the the older funeral lady. Michelle.

(STEPH shoots up and stares at her.)

Well, it's not really funny...it's kind of horrible.

(They look at each other for a long moment then both burst out laughing.)

And...and I actually got mad at her even though I kissed her first!

(More laughing.)

We did it in the basement! On the embalming table!

STEPH:

Stop, stop, stop, I can't breathe!

(They eventually calm down.)

So what are you going to do?

CHARLOTTE:

What do you mean? What can I do?

STEPH:

Do you like this woman?

CHARLOTTE:

It's not that simple...I mean I guess I can question the ethics on her part, right? She's a funeral director, I'm a grief-stricken family member, but I don't know. Something about her, she just... She's this kind of uptight person full of worry and she just...I don't know. For just a second we both let go.

STEPH:

You should talk to her.

CHARLOTTE:

You think so?

STEPH:

What can it hurt?

CHARLOTTE:

I did hit her...and then kiss her...and then I ran away.

STEPH:

Huh.

CHARLOTTE:

I should at least apologize, right?

STEPH:

Look, if you really think it was just grief then let her go without a second thought. But if you think there's really something there...

CHARLOTTE:

You're right, I guess...I'll wait though.

STEPH:

Why? Why not seize the moment?

CHARLOTTE:

She's kind of smashed right now.

STEPH:

(She laughs.)

Understandable. After all...

(She pulls out a bottle.)

...I intend to be in the same condition.

CHARLOTTE:

Where did you get that?

STEPH:

Younger director's office.

CHARLOTTE:

I like this side of you.

STEPH:

Yeah...I kind of don't really care anymore.

CHARLOTTE:

That's the spirit.

(She takes a pull off the bottle. Beat. She stares at the casket.)

I don't want to see him...

STEPH:

Lawrence?

(CHARLOTTE nods towards the casket.)

Oh...

CHARLOTTE:

I can't bring myself to open it.

STEPH:

Why not?

CHARLOTTE:

If I open it, he's really gone.

STEPH:

You can't change that.

CHARLOTTE:

I know. I'm just not ready to accept it.

STEPH:
Honestly, I'm not sure I want to see him, either.

CHARLOTTE:
See?

(Beat.)
So what do we do now?

STEPH:
What if we do it together?

CHARLOTTE:
Open it?

STEPH:
Yeah.

CHARLOTTE:
I don't know...

STEPH:
Look, we need to drink a shot to his memory anyway. He would want that much.

(CHARLOTTE laughs softly.)
Come on. The sooner you do this...the sooner we *both* do this, the easier it will be.

CHARLOTTE:
Ok...no, you're right.

STEPH:
Here, hand me your flask.

(She does. STEPH pours some of the booze into it, saving some for herself.)

Good?

CHARLOTTE:

Good.

STEPH:

Ok.

(She takes her hand and they walk to the casket. CHARLOTTE places her hand on it and bows her head. She raises her flask.)

CHARLOTTE:

To Kevin.

STEPH:

Kevin.

CHARLOTTE:

Sláinte.

(They drink.)

Ready?

CHARLOTTE:

Ready.

STEPH:

On three?

CHARLOTTE:

Yeah.

STEPH:

One...two...three.

(They both open the casket. Blackout.)