

ACT II

Scene 1:

Lights up on EMILY sitting alone in a chair, facing the audience. In each of her monologues, she is addressing the general space: facing the real audience, but not making eye contact or engaging in any way. Because she participates in the scenes between her monologues, there should always be a chair in the scene on stage for the actor in order to minimize time between scenes.

Now we've solved the puzzle. Part of it. We know what happened, and what didn't happen, and we can move on with the rest of our lives. Except I'm sitting here in this fucking chair, and I don't know why I'm STILL TALKING WHEN IT'S EVIDENT THAT NOBODY IS LISTENING.

And I don't know what's supposed to happen now.

Scene 2:

Lights up. ALEX and EMILY are sitting across from each other. Sound cues may or may not indicate the presence of others in BELLEVUE INSTITUTION. Both are wearing standard issue bathrobes, with casual clothing underneath. The mood is subdued, slightly awkward, perhaps.

ALEX

I didn't think you would come back.

EMILY

Didn't want to, really.

ALEX

After the thing with Dr Carpenter...
Pause.

EMILY

Yeah.

ALEX

Yeah.

EMILY

Pause.
You started talking again. To them, I mean.

ALEX
Yeah.

EMILY
You always talked to me.

ALEX
I didn't really know where I was, until the other day.

EMILY
But now you do?

ALEX
Yeah, now I do.
Pause.
The food is awful.
Both laugh, a slight break in the tension.
Now that...

EMILY
What.

ALEX
Did—did that ever happen to you, that everything in your head was completely different than what was actually happening?

EMILY
According to you, all the time.

ALEX
Em—

EMILY
I know what you meant.
Pause.
Sometimes. Not the same way it happened to you, but I get it.

ALEX
Pause. I'm sorry.

EMILY
Pause.
I know.
Beat.

ALEX

Now that I'm talking again, now that I'm 'acknowledging reality', they're thinking that I'm doing better. They're going to let me go home soon.

EMILY

That's great.

ALEX

Yeah.

EMILY

You don't think so.

ALEX

No, I do. I—how do you always know?

EMILY

You're a terrible liar.

ALEX

God, don't I know it.

EMILY

How the hell did they let you out of law school?

ALEX

Got me.

Silence.

EMILY

Do you want to get out of here?

ALEX

Yes.

EMILY

So what's the problem?

ALEX

Pause. This is hard to say.

How can I go home when I'm still crazy?

EMILY

You just said you know what's going on, that the doctors think you're getting better—

ALEX

Interrupting

They're not here right now, though. Are they.

EMILY

So you think...oh.

ALEX

Yeah.

EMILY

That...that could be bad.

ALEX

What if this isn't real? I mean, I think it's real, you're here and we're talking, but what if I'm just imagining it all, and this is some grand, constructed hallucination I'm having?

EMILY

I've got a scarier one.

ALEX

Yeah?

EMILY

I'm dead, right? I died three months ago.

ALEX nods in affirmation.

What if it's mine?

Scene 3:

Lights up on EMILY

EMILY

I was nineteen when I went crazy.

We moved around so much when I was young, never staying in any one place for too long. Rootless, like dandelions plucked from the earth. Tumbleweeds on the road. Julie put an end to the wandering when she was twelve—she needed to go to the same high school for all four years, she said. And she did. I would have—I don't know. She stuck to her guns, and got what she wanted. I wanted....something. I'd never been further north than Pennsylvania, but all the schools I applied to were up near the Canadian border. I had this romantic, poetic image of snow and frost, glacial beauty and my breath in clouds in the air. People would wear scarves and drink cocoa, and I'd curl up in sweaters next to my window and write papers on classic literature while the snowflakes danced outside the glass. I needed ice, the silence of winter.

Ithaca, New York.

Ithaca, New York, is a shithole, a barren wasteland of geniuses too wrapped up in their science and philosophy to notice the cesspool of meteorology they're sunk in. It's cold, a more biting cold than I've ever known. It's dying trees, and rusted, abandoned machinery on the side of the road. Mud and wet and getting sucked down into the earth. I could have transferred, should have transferred. But I had nowhere else to go. I didn't know how deep I was wanting until I was empty. It took awhile to get to me, get under my skin, in my pores and hair and brain and blood. Depression. Despondency. No solutions, no problem solving. Not wanting to die, but not wanting to live, either. Existing, not living, dragging my still beating heart out of bed some days. A still beating heart with a body attached to it by tenuous threads. Some days just staying in bed. Breathing. Watching my pulse in my wrist, beating a sluggish blue in my veins. I started taking antidepressants on the advice of one of my professors—the nice one, who read us T.S. Eliot and gave me an extension on my unfinished midterm paper. She's seen it all before, she said. When they didn't work, I tried another kind, then another and another until I was—this, medicated ball of nerves and anxiety. Pills flowing out of my mouth when I exhaled, stuck in my throat, making me choke. Drowning. I drank gallons of coffee, trying to get warm. I stopped showering; the color is swirling in pools at my feet, flowing through the drain with infusions of gardenia and sanity. The pallor of my skin—I'm not yet dead, why do I look like a corpse. I broke all of the mirrors in my room so that I wouldn't have to see. Dead girl walking.

February. February is the north pole. When I went to class, I didn't see the sun at all. When I didn't go, I was glued to my window, waiting pressed up against the glass for the couple of hours that the thin, watery sunshine would peak through the grey. If I was lucky. If it wasn't pissing sleet or hail, if it wasn't grey and desolation because the sun decided it didn't want to get up either. I went eight days without seeing the sun. Eight days of waking nightmare, craving with the deepest part of me for something more. Grasping. Drowning. Eight days, and part of one night. When they were stitching my arm up at the hospital, the doctors and nurses were so—mechanical. Like they'd seen me a million times, and would see me a million more times. And I was just another face of another kid caught in the machine. Drowning in a sea of pills and a winter that would never end. The next week I dropped out of school. Julie had just put her foot down, and she and my parents had settled in North Carolina. I left New York and moved back in with them, older and wiser, more scarred and fragile, than I had left. The week after I left New York, I met Alex. My scars were still dripping with blood.

Scene 4:

ALEX's hospital room. It is rather stark and bare, perhaps with just one piece of furniture being used by ALEX. SAM enters, and keeps busy checking his chart, making notes on and referencing her clipboard. She carries a tote bag, from which she takes out the white paper bag with baked goods later. She may even bring out a Diet Coke and pop it open in the scene, if appropriate.

SAM

Morning sunshine.

ALEX

Good morning, Sam.

SAM

How'd you sleep?

ALEX

Not too bad. How are you?

SAM

Covered in paint and desperate for a shower, but otherwise fine. You're on my schedule for three o'clock today, yes?

ALEX

Yes ma'am, I'll be there,

SAM

Excellent. Take your meds today?

ALEX

I hid them under my tongue until Angie left, then dropped them down the airshaft.

SAM

'Atta boy. So, two more days.

ALEX

Yeah.

SAM

You don't sound too excited.

ALEX

Should I be?

SAM

I would be. The food here sucks.

ALEX

Small smile.

Yeah.

SAM

Actually...*She looks around, sneakily, before divulging a juicy secret...*I smuggled in some croissants from a photo shoot this morning. *She offers him a croissant from a white paper bag.* Buy your silence?

ALEX

He hesitantly takes it, but doesn't eat it.
Coffee shop in Greenwich Village?

SAM

Surprised, but not alarmed
Yeah. How'd you know?

ALEX

I don't think I'm ready to leave.

SAM

Alex...
No response from ALEX, who won't look at her.

Alex, leaving inpatient brings up a lot of different emotions. Nobody's expecting you to be 100% cured when you walk out the door. Besides, with your outpatient treatment, you're going to be here quite a bit anyway. We're not hanging you out to dry.

EMILY appears in the doorway. She doesn't interrupt the scene, but merely watches, going unnoticed by ALEX for several lines.

ALEX

I know, I just...I don't think I'm doing as well as you and Dr Carpenter think I am.

SAM

Still have some inner demons to work through?

ALEX

Pauses. An admission:
I still can't remember what happened that night.

SAM

Does that bother you?

ALEX

I guess. In some ways.
Pause.
I don't...really want to talk about it.

SAM

Would you feel safe talking about it to Dr Carpenter in your session today?

ALEX

That didn't go so well last time.

SAM

Well, last time you were catatonic. Things might go differently now that you're back in the land of the living.

ALEX

Notices EMILY in the doorway. Smiles sadly, ironically.
Yeah. Yeah, maybe.

SAM

It's completely your choice, Alex. I don't want you to do anything you're uncomfortable with just because I say it.

ALEX

I know. Don't worry about me.

SAM

I never do. See you at three.
Indicates the croissant:
Don't tell anyone about that, you're my partner in crime now.

ALEX

Bye, Sam. Thanks.

SAM exits. ALEX and EMILY look at each other for a couple of seconds before the lights drop.

Scene 5:

Lights up on EMILY:

We'd been married for three months when it happened.
When he happened.
I woke up one morning in the spring. It was raining, drizzling down the windowpane. Tuesday. Alex had already left for work, and I was staring at the raindrops trickling down the glass from our bed, listening to them rustling the leaves in the trees outside the house. And I knew.
I called in sick to work. Didn't take my pills when I got up, my latest battalion of medications that keep me from veering too far off the beaten path. Soldiers lining the road, shoulder to shoulder, to keep me from stumbling. "Hup, steady now, miss."

I knew.

I saw the life he would live, in perfect clarity. He would be born in midwinter. I knew he was a boy, knew it like I knew my heart was beating. He would grow and laugh and play like the Others, but he'd be a little bit different, and he'd know it. He'd grow, and the quirks of his youth would become phobias and affectations and behaviors. He'd self medicate, self destruct, self harm, trying to beat back a self that was wounded and without. Fighting an impossible battle against his own mind, and not understanding why. Not knowing that I did this to him. Until he understood. And in understanding, grew to know that he was destined to lose the war.

That was one life. But there had to be others. Alex was his father. The All American Golden Boy. He never knew what it felt like to have demons: monsters under the bed, skeletons in the closet. Our son could grow up to be like Alex, instead of like me.

He would still be born in midwinter, but when he grew and laughed and played, he would be exactly like the others. He would go to school and church and play with his friends, be curious about the world. Love animals. Want to be just like his father.

He would start to worry about his mother around age seven, on the days when she couldn't take him to the park because she couldn't get out of bed. He would grow quiet during her fits of rage or mania, cry silently during her tearful apologies or depressions. Pretend not to notice when the recycling bin was heavy and harder for him to carry to the curb with the weight of glass bottles. He would get angry at times that she couldn't be like the Other Mothers, but fiercely protective of her at all other times; guarding their dysfunction from prying eyes. He would be afraid to stay out late, scared of what she would do to herself if his absence were too prolonged. He'd crave guidance from his father, and be left ravenous and wanting for the explanations that would never clarify, never adequately illuminate. He'd spend his adult life meticulously watching himself for signs that her affliction was also his. Never sleeping for fear of doomsday.
My son.

I stood at the top of the stairs, my hand on my stomach. He was too small for me to feel, but I felt him. I swear I did. A tiny little fish, swimming within me. Waiting to sleep, waiting to dream of the life he would live. Turning, moving, poised to begin.

I let go of the railing.

When Alex came home that night, he cleaned the bruises and cuts from the fall, and gave me some aspirin for the fever I'd had all day.

He never knew that I murdered our son, because I couldn't tell him.

Scene 6:

EMILY and ALEX sitting in ALEX's room. There is silence. She is staring intently at him; he refuses to look at her.

ALEX

I'm not doing the hypnosis thing again.

EMILY

Alex—

ALEX

No.

EMILY

Well, what's your brilliant suggestion?

ALEX

....I don't have one.

EMILY

It was freaky and disturbing on about ten thousand levels, yeah. But it broke you out of crazy-Alex land. Maybe it'll make you remember.

ALEX

I don't want to remember.

EMILY

Why not?

ALEX

Well, what are my options? Either I'm the type of person who's capable of killing his wife, or I'm the guy who drove her to kill herself. Why on earth *wouldn't* I want to remember that?

EMILY

Slightly bitter:

Please, Alex. We both know what we're going to find out. Batshit crazy Emily pulls yet another stunt while good guy Alex does his best to help, but just can't quite pull her back.

Silence.

ALEX

I didn't.

EMILY

Didn't what?

ALEX

I—I didn't always try to help, the way I should have. Never tried to understand. I don't know when I stopped trying, or why...but. I'm...I'm sorry.

EMILY

I can't leave here.

ALEX

What?

EMILY

I remember fighting with you. I remember the gun going off. I remember reliving it over and over. Bits and pieces of seeing you, talking with you, knowing that something was off, that it wasn't real. Then the next thing I remember is that whacked out Doctor Guy yelling at you, and us being here.

ALEX

But—but there were months...

EMILY

I know. I don't know what's happening, Alex. But this...this, my being here, feels wrong. Like, fundamentally, bending the universe wrong. And the only thing I can think of...

ALEX

Emily—

EMILY

We're holding on. I don't know if it's you or me, or both of us, but I'm stuck. And I think I'm going to be stuck until we just get it over with and figure out for sure that I shot myself and scarred you for life.

ALEX

We don't know that.

EMILY

Please, Alex. Which one of us has the history of insanity here?
Raises her hand.

ALEX

Mocking her gently:

Whose mental hospital are we in? Who went catatonic for two and a half months after his wife died?

Raises his hand faintly.

EMILY

Grudgingly:

Touché.
Silence.

ALEX

Sighs. Swallows. Exhales.

Ok. All right. But we're not bringing Dr Carpenter into this. I can't do that again. It's going to just be you and me, ok?

EMILY

Ok.
Silence.

ALEX

So what do we do?

Lights down.

Scene 7:

Lights up on EMILY.

I'm a difficult person to live with. I am. I'm batshit crazy, I drink too much and I smoke indoors; I forget to make dinner all the time and I usually fuck it up if I remember. I'm a slave to the pills I take and if I forget one, or take the wrong one at the wrong time—there was this one time, I mixed up my Lamictal with my Klonopin. Alex found me sitting in the shower, fully clothed, tapping my head against the tiles because the percussion was soothing.

I have no idea—it can't be an easy thing, living with me. Alex never seemed to care. I told him straight off that he would regret it if we moved in together. I warned him again before we got married. That I would drag him down with me, he'd get caught up swirling in the vortex of my insanity until it wrecked him, wrecked him like it wrecked me. He didn't care. Nothing phased him, ever. He was so...solid. I would spiral out for days, would smash things, rage at him. None of it touched him. He was just Alex. All of this meant nothing.

Until all of the sudden, it meant everything.

I don't know if I broke him, or if one of us changed, or if he just stopped living in denial. Maybe all of the above. But he moved out, and I imploded.

Scene 8:

Some time has passed since scene 6. ALEX and EMILY are in a small pool of light, with the chairs and table positioned like their home in Act I. They sit, facing each other, much like Act II scene 1.

ALEX

Without enthusiasm:

I think I said something about it being completely your fault. After I asked you if I made you that depressed.

EMILY

What exactly did you say?

ALEX

I—I think—*Closes eyes, concentrates*—“This is completely and totally, one hundred percent your fault.” That was it.

EMILY

Fuck you.

ALEX

I didn’t mean it.

EMILY

No, no, I didn’t—that’s what I said next.

ALEX

God, this is so weird.

EMILY

We can do this. We fight all the time, we’re great at it.

ALEX

Half laughs.

Yeah. I guess. It’s just different this time.

EMILY

You have to mean it. Really yell at me.

ALEX

I just...I don’t think this is going to work.

EMILY

We don’t have a choice, Alex.

ALEX

I know.

Pause.

I can't remember what it was.

EMILY

What?

ALEX

When we fought. It never got to me, for so long. It was...it was like, you'd be screaming at me, and part of me would just step out of it and be like, 'That's my wife. Yelling at me.' And I just wouldn't get mad.

EMILY

And I'd get even more mad that you could be so stoic when I was so completely out of control.

ALEX

I don't know when I stopped doing that. I can't remember what it was.

Silence. EMILY takes a noticeable pause, before deliberately trying to goad ALEX into anger.

EMILY

Your taste in music sucks. I broke the stereo on purpose last year just so I wouldn't have to listen to it anymore.

ALEX

You said the speakers shorted out.

EMILY

I lied. I lied about the champagne being stolen out of the fridge in the garage last New Years Eve too. I drank it all and knew you'd be pissed.

ALEX

Stop it. I know what you're trying to do, and it's not working.

EMILY

I think it is.

ALEX

A bit more forceful

No, it's not.

EMILY

Me lying to you all the time doesn't make you the slightest bit angry?

ALEX

I—you were sick. It was part of the disease, not part of you.

EMILY

I am my disease, Alex. You can't splice me up into pieces like that.

ALEX

It makes a difference.

EMILY

So what's your excuse, then?

ALEX

For what?

EMILY

Lying to me.

ALEX

About what?

EMILY

Anything. Everything. Don't pretend like you never did, I always knew.

ALEX

Everybody lies sometimes, Em. At least I never lied about anything important.

EMILY

And there he goes, ladies and gentlemen. Lying again. I told you, Alex, I always know.

ALEX

Fine. Name one important thing I ever lied to you about.

EMILY

The time you drove over that glass bottle and ruined the tires on the truck.

ALEX

That's not a lie, that actually happened.

EMILY

I know it actually happened, Alex, I smashed the bottle behind the back tire.

ALEX

Why the hell would you do that?

EMILY

Oh, don't even pretend like you don't remember where the truck was parked at the time.

ALEX

I was having dinner with a friend.

EMILY

Who you were fucking.

ALEX

I was not—we were just—

EMILY

STOP LYING, Alex. You were so jealous, so suspicious when I went back to work and started spending more time at the office. Fucking hypocrite.

ALEX

She was not—

EMILY

Begins to meld into the fight from Act I:

Yeah fucking right. And you went right on, fucking her and blaming me for fucking everything, everything's always my fault! Why can't you man up for once in your life and accept some goddamn responsibility instead of blaming me for every little thing that goes wrong?

ALEX

Accept—are you kidding me? This is completely and totally, one hundred percent your fault!

EMILY

Fuck you! And yes!

ALEX

Yes what?

EMILY

Yes, you make me that fucking depressed! I wish I were dead when I'm with you!

ALEX

Yeah? Well I wish you were dead too!

EMILY

Oooh, big words. That's the nastiest thing you've ever had the balls to say to me, you fucking pussy.

ALEX

Shut up!

EMILY

You shut up! You play the god damn martyr card every day, like I'm this huge burden on you. You wanted to leave for a whole fucking year before you even said anything, and then blamed me because you were too scared to walk out the door!

ALEX

Raging at her, knowing she is spot on:

Well what the fuck was I supposed to do?! Leave you when you couldn't get out of bed for days at a time? Maybe I should have waited until you were raging and insane and not listening to a word I said because you were too busy drinking like a fish! Or taking handfuls of pills that apparently didn't do shit because guess what—you're still fucking crazy!

EMILY

You should have done something other than be such a passive aggressive piece of shit! You want me dead? Do something about it!

ALEX

I said shut up!

EMILY

Make me!

Takes an imaginary gun out of an imaginary drawer and throws it at him.

Gun's right there, Alex; pull the fucking trigger!

EMILY spreads her arms out like a target.

ALEX

Stop it.

EMILY

The next lines are precarious, as EMILY goes from furious to desperate to broken in less than 60 seconds:

Can't do it, can you? Can't even hit me. Why do you even own it, Alex? You don't hunt, you don't shoot, you don't do anything but keep it in that drawer and hope that one day your crazy, suicidal wife will shoot herself in the fucking head when you're not home and solve your problem for you! Don't you Alex?!

ALEX

Stop it!

ALEX points the gun at EMILY for two long seconds before dropping it on the table, hand shaking. He stares at his hand, horrified.

EMILY

Alex, please. I...I can't do this anymore. Just...please.

ALEX

Hoarsely:

Stop.

ALEX turns away from EMILY, trying to come to terms with what he almost did.

EMILY

So that's it, then. That's how it's going to be.

EMILY sits. Pause. She picks up the gun and points it at her head about half a second before ALEX realizes he's left it on the table in front of her. He turns and lunges for it.

ALEX

No!

EMILY pulls the trigger; a sound cue indicates a gunshot. She falls facedown on the table.

Beat.

Slowly, EMILY sits up, looking at her hand with the same horror that ALEX previously showed.

EMILY

Oh, God.

ALEX

Emily—

EMILY

I really did it. I really—

EMILY starts to cry. ALEX holds her, soothing her as best he can. Lights down.

Scene 9:

Lights up on EMILY, alone in her chair.

EMILY

Julie. My Julie.

I remember the day she was born. So clearly, effortlessly.

Julie was born when I was eight. I'd been so scared, the entire eight months I knew she was growing and would be born the same month as me. December.

My December baby.

I'd cried and prayed and bargained and wished, hoped and hoped against all hope that she would be different. That she would be better. I was already cursed. My story, my ending, was already written, set in stone.

Please, I pleaded to a power I knew not but prayed was listening. You already have me. Please don't take her too.

Julie was born five minutes to midnight on a cold, starry night in December. I held her in my arms, and she looked at me with those beautiful eyes. They were huge, brown. Brown eyes, brown hair, brown eyelashes, little tiny wisps of little tiny eyebrows. Brown. And I knew. I knew that she was all right. That whatever dark paths I was destined for were not for her. She would live a life I never would, would see the color and light in the world, would marry and have children and grow old and die peacefully, smiling. She shared my beauty and my name, but she was better. Whatever mistakes had been made in me were fixed in her.

She was perfect. A queen. Everything that mattered.

She never understood why I did anything. She'd ask question after question, trying to get to the heart of me.

She had my heart. That's why I could never make her understand, why I'd lie and evade and distract, never answering her innocent questions with a real answer.

There are some things you have to understand from the inside to understand them at all.

Scene 10:

ALEX and EMILY, back in the mental hospital. ALEX is holding his bathrobe, wearing his normal clothes, and is about to check out of the hospital.

EMILY

So this is it.

ALEX

Yeah.

EMILY

You're free.

ALEX

I know.

Pause. Silence.

I can't do this.

EMILY

Yes you can.

ALEX

No, I can't, Em.

EMILY

Alex, they're letting you out. You're fine. Go!

ALEX

Em, what if I really am crazy? Just the fact that I'm standing here having this conversation with you is a very bad sign, I don't know, I—

EMILY

Alex, stop! Just stop it, ok? You're not crazy, you never were. The only—the only part of you that was ever crazy was me.

ALEX

Em—

EMILY

Don't. It's true. Don't you get it? You're free without me. You can get up and walk out of here and be normal. You can have a job, and go on vacations, and meet some really nice girl and fall in love with her, and start a family and watch your kids grow up and—and have the rest of your life without me to—without me. Ok?

She's choked up, crying as she speaks.

But you have to let go. You have to let me go, and get up, and walk out that door. You have to do it right now.

ALEX

You were always the bossy one.

EMILY

Shut up.

ALEX

I love you.

EMILY

I know. Go get 'em, champ.

They kiss—deeply, soulful, a goodbye forever. EMILY takes ALEX's bathrobe.

I need you to do one more thing for me.

Scene 11:

EMILY

Once upon a time, a beautiful, ethereal girl was born to a tragic ending on a cold, starry night in December. She knew it like she knew how to breathe; it was etched into her

body--carved into her bones, flowing in her blood. She ran and played and laughed and grew like the Other Children, but she was not the same, and she knew it. She saw her life like a vision in front of her, and her horrific death at twenty-six. She saw, and she knew, but she was trapped by her own destiny, stranded on a path with no choice, no fork in the road, no turning back from the inevitable. When the teachers in school asked her what she wanted to be when she grew up, she told them the truth:

“When I grow up, I’m going to be a ghost.”

Scene 12:

JULIE walks into a room, sparsely furnished; perhaps just the table and chairs from the last few scenes. She drops her purse on the table and sorts through the mail she’s carrying, pausing when she gets to a medium sized manila envelope. She opens it and reads to herself. ALEX enters stage right to narrate:

ALEX

Dear Julie,

I found this yesterday when I was going through some things from the house in North Carolina. I don’t know if Emily ever meant to send it, but I thought you should have it, particularly given the date on the envelope. I miss you, love you, and can’t wait until next month when you’re here for the holidays.

Alex.

PS- Sam says hi.

EMILY enters from stage left to narrate, still holding ALEX’s bathrobe.

JULIE

March 8th...

Reads from EMILY’s letter:

My dear, sweet baby sister,

JULIE + EMILY

You were born when I was eight years old. I was the first one to hold you out of everyone, even before Mom and Dad.

EMILY

You were the most beautiful baby I’d ever seen, and I knew in a second how incredibly special you were. I know if I told you that in person, you’d laugh or wouldn’t believe me, but it’s true. I knew it then, and in all your seventeen years, you’ve never proven me wrong. You are wonderful, incredible, and the best sister I ever could have wished for.

I’m writing this down now because I’m not sure how much more time I have. I’ve been spiraling for a while now, getting closer to the end. I don’t expect you to understand what

I'm talking about, but trust that even if I'm gone, I'm okay. The earth will break away like a shell, and I will rise.

Take care of Alex when I'm gone. He's kind of a dork, but he's sweet and well intentioned, and loves both of us very much. He's not as strong as you, though, and he'll need someone to help him through everything for a while. I know you'll be there for him, the way you were always there for me.

You were the first person in my life that I ever loved, and the only one I ever knew how to love completely. Please know that I'm not leaving you, and that in my own way, I'll always be with you. I love you.

Em.

Lights down, leaving a spot light on EMILY. She buries her face in the robe for a moment, before hanging it on the back of the chair. She rests her hand briefly on the shoulder of the chair, then exits the stage. END.