

ITHAKA

By
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Time: The Present

Settings:

Lanie's House, Valley Center, CA
The Car
The California Desert
Desperado Roller Coaster, Primm, NV
Hospital Room, Henderson NV
The Car
The Nevada Desert
Evie's House, Stewart, Nevada

Characters: (5 actors needed 3W/2M)

Odysseus (doubles with Jacob)

Captain Elaine (Lanie) Edwards, USMC: Convoy Commander, 8th Logistics Battalion. 31 years old.

Lance Corporal Eve (Evie) Richardson, USMC: Driver, 8th Logistics Battalion. 25 years old.

Bill Edwards: Lanie's husband.

Jacob: A psychiatric technician in Henderson, NV (doubles with Odysseus).

E.M. Richardson: Evie's Mother

Pixie/Celeste The Cat (doubles with Evie)

Running time: 80 minutes, no intermission

Notes:

1. The actor playing Odysseus must also play Jacob. Although I leave the specific ethnicity and conflict from which Jacob hails open to the director, a specific place/ethnicity must be chosen. The characters speech is accented by this choice.
2. The actor playing Evie must also play the cat.
3. It is the playwright's wish that the play be cast as diversely as possible, reflecting the diversity of the American landscape and the makeup of the US military.

Synopsis:

Marine Captain Elaine Edwards has just returned from her latest tour in Afghanistan but this time things are different - home doesn't feel right and nothing makes sense. After a blow up fight with her husband propels her to skip town, she undertakes an Odyssean journey through the American landscape battling her monsters, trying to find her way home.

Stolowitz's work draws from interviews with veterans and their families. In Fall 2011, Stolowitz was awarded the Fowler/Levin Prize with this winning play concept.

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There are many people who brought the play and project to where it is. Besides thanking the generous donors who made the commission possible, my tireless artistic collaborators for this production Mead Hunter and Gemma Whelan, and Artist Repertory Theatre and Allen Nause and Dámaso Rodriguez, I would like to thank the following people:

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*Scene 0. Prologue: Odysseus in the
Phoecian Court.*

ODYSSEUS

It is without guile that I stand before you now.

It is well known I believe the struggles of the Trojan war.

And you have asked me to speak of it from what I know.

But how shall I tell it to you who have not been there?

Home. Home where I have longed to be since the ending of this wretched war. The sweet smell of Ithaka when the grasses bloom. The sea air. The rocky coast.

We are in Ithaka for a moment.

ODYSSEUS (CONT'D)

The war as you know it ended long ago. Ten years in fact, with everyone else arriving home, but not me. A punishment for me perhaps for my failures as a leader. And now I Odysseus have been swept here, to your shores.

You have asked for my story and I know I should spin a great tale of monsters and treasures of whirlpools and rocks and sun gods and Gods of wind and this story will so delight you that you'll take pity on me and bring me home.

But I cannot tell you this story. The truth is what I am here to tell. The song that forces men to stuff their ears. I am here to sing the siren's song. The true story of the Trojan War.

*Odysseus holds in that moment while lights come up to
reveal Lanie in her yard. He fades out as she fades in.*

LANIE

Pixie. Pixie. Pixie. Here girl. Here girl girl. Come on Pix.

Come on. Come on Pixie. Come on. Come on girl. God damn it. Come on Pixie.

Come on girl! Come on!

*Lanie pulls a cigarette and lighter out from her running
shorts. She looks back at the house, at her cigarette and
then decides to put it away.*

LANIE (CONT'D)

Fuck.

Come on girl! Pixie!

Bill enters in his work clothes.

BILL

Lanie-

LANIE

Yeah?

BILL

Come on in. Breakfast is ready.

LANIE

I went all the way across the big field at the end of the road. I didn't see her.

BILL

She'll come back. She will.

LANIE

You don't know that. You can't possibly know that.
She doesn't know what to do outside. How to protect herself.

BILL

We've already looked for her for two hours.

LANIE

I saw her sitting by the glass door, looking out and I stopped and then I opened it for her. Because when I was a kid I had this cat who went outside and for a moment I thought...I got confused. So I opened the door and she ran out.

BILL

It's OK.

LANIE

Why would I forget that?

BILL

It's nothing. It happens to everyone. And you're tired.

LANIE

I've been back nine days.

BILL

Remember when we went to Panama? It took us weeks to get back to feeling normal. We walked around like zombies. And that was only a three week trip. And that was only Panama.

LANIE

I forgot where the silverware drawer was yesterday. I opened every damn drawer in the kitchen trying to figure out where to put the spoons.

This could be it. This could be what it is. The cognitive functioning of a fucking chimp. This could be fucking it.

She starts to crack up. Bill stares. She stops laughing when she notices he's not laughing.

Sorry. Sorry. Not funny. Not funny at all.

Guess we just have a different sense of what's funny now.

BILL

Lanie, did something happen?

Lanie stares

BILL (CONT'D)

You know...over there?

LANIE

It's a war. Things always happen. Otherwise no one would bother to show up.

BILL

Right. It's just...You seem-

LANIE

What?

BILL

I don't know.

You could talk to someone, you know. They have people for you to talk to.

LANIE

Fuck you.

BILL

Lanie-

LANIE

Maybe you should go fucking talk to someone. Maybe you're the one with the problem.

Beat.

LANIE (CONT'D)

Look I'm sorry. I know you're just trying to help.
Just so you know, so you can cross that off your list, I did that already. Talk to
someone I mean. They make you do it when you get back. I did it; they checked the
little box and I passed ok?

BILL

OK.

LANIE

So please don't worry about me. I'm fine.

BILL

OK.

You ready to go in? The food's getting cold.

Beat

LANIE

I'll come in a minute.

BILL

Lanie-

BILL (CONT'D)

I will. I just need a minute.

Bill waits.

LANIE

You don't have to wait.

BILL

I know.

He waits.

BILL (CONT'D)

Lanie...I'm sorry I didn't write more. When you were gone.

LANIE

No you did. You did write. I got a letter a week. I just didn't...By the end I didn't have
much to say. To write back.

Bill nods.

BILL

Yeah. It felt dumb writing about how the gardener flooded the neighbors pond or that there was a new mall opening up.

Lanie nods.

So I'm sorry I didn't write more.

LANIE

Yeah. Don't worry about that.

BILL

Dave and Cassie are super excited your back. Cassie especially. She says she has so much to tell you. She wouldn't even tell me. They asked about dinner on Saturday.

LANIE

I don't know.

BILL

Dave said he'd bring those huge chocolate covered strawberries you like. And they have photos from their Costa Rica trip.

I think it would be good for you. To see some people I mean. Friends. Yeah?

LANIE

Ok.

BILL

Great. It'll be fun. You'll see. It'll help you feel like everything is getting back to normal.

LANIE

I'm gonna look around a little more. Around the block and stuff.

BILL

I have to go to work.

LANIE

Yeah. Yeah. I know. It's OK. I'll be OK.

BILL

Alright. I'll-uh-I'll leave your breakfast on your plate.

LANIE

Thanks buddy.

BILL

Well, have a good day.
I'll call you.

LANIE

OK. Thanks. You too.

Pause. Bill leans in to hug Lanie. She remains stiff but tries to hug back. It's awkward.

BILL

Call me if you need me.

LANIE

Will do.

Bill exits. Lanie looks after him. She pulls out the cigarette. She lights it.

LANIE (CONT'D)

Come on Pixie. Come on girl. Here Pix Pix. Come on baby. Come on back.

Scene 2. Lanie sleeps fitfully. Evie speaks a letter.

EVIE

Dear Mom and Chrissy-
I'm fine.

We've been through four and half months here and sometimes it feels like four and a half years and other times four and half minutes. The roads are so bad and we spend so many hours in the truck I can feel my teeth rattling even when we're not driving. I think of you guys a lot and I try to picture the house.

I look different now. I mean I cut off all my hair. Well a friend of mine did it for me. Chrissy, I got the photo of you and Bo and the wedding dress. Of course I'll sing.

We went to a wedding here once. We had to search everyone so it wasn't like we were guests, but it made me think of you.

I don't know if I'll ever send this. I write a lot of letters I don't mail. And sometimes my hand just gets tired in the middle and I stop writing. And sometimes I just think of the letter I would write if I had a pen.

It's hard for me to hear in my right ear. It feels like it needs to pop, like remember when you and me and Chrissy took the airplane to see Grandpa in Texas. Remember how Chrissy cried about her ear? That's how I imagine it feels.

Sounds of shelling as Evie starts to fade out. Sounds of shelling. Lanie screams. Bill wakes up.

BILL

Lanie? Lanie?

*She gets out of bed. She's up now and pacing. Nervous.
Looks out the window.*

Lanie. Are you ok?

LANIE

Yeah. Yeah.

BILL

What was it?

LANIE

Nothing. I thought I heard some-

Bill looks at her

A noise.

Probably a truck or something. Just startled me awake.

BILL

You want me to...Should I get you some water?

LANIE

No. No thanks. I'm just...I'm gonna just go outside for a minute.

BILL

It's dark.

LANIE

I know. I just want to get some air, outside.

BILL

I'll come with you.

LANIE

No. No. You should sleep. You need to be up for work.

BILL

I don't mind.

LANIE

It's fine. I'll be back in a few minutes. I will.

She rushes out. Bill looks after her.

BILL

Lanie-

She's gone.

*Scene 4. Evie's in a pool of light, driving.
She's talking as if she's talking to the person
next to her in the truck.*

EVIE

I know a joke about death. What? Don't look at me like that. You have to laugh at it.
It's like a big fuck you to death.
Alright. Fine. I'll tell it to Carlito then.
He likes jokes about death.

She turns her neck around to talk to Carlito.

Hey Carlito? Wanna hear a joke about death?

She turns back to the passenger.

See. He wants to.

BILL (IN DARKNESS)

Lanie-

*Evie starts to fade into darkness and the light expands to
Bill and Lanie who are cleaning up a messy post-dinner
party kitchen. Dishes all over. Empty wine bottles.*

LANIE

I'm sorry-

BILL

I'm trying to talk to you.

LANIE

I-I'm sorry.

BILL

Why did you...

LANIE

I didn't mean to-

BILL

Lanie why would you say that to Dave and Cassie?

LANIE

They asked.

BILL

They were making conversation.
He was joking.

LANIE

But it happens to be true. They do explode.

BILL

It's obvious he was just joking.

LANIE

I don't get the joke.

BILL

He was joking about the flavor of MREs.

LANIE

How would he even know what one tastes like? And how am I supposed to know it was a joke?

BILL

It's fine. It's fine.

LANIE

Obviously it's not.

BILL

Just please please don't talk about people's legs being blown off.

LANIE

He brought it up.

Bill stares at her

BILL

He did not.

Beat

And you don't want to go to the movies with Cassie.

LANIE

I said sure. I said I'd go. I told her I would.

BILL

It would be nice if it seemed like you wanted to go.

LANIE

Well I don't want to go.

BILL

Why not it's just a movie--everyone goes to movies. It's what people do.

LANIE

I tried to say it but-

BILL

No you didn't, you just looked bored.

LANIE

Well those movies sound boring. And Cassie is boring. And baby clothes are boring. You'd think she's the first fucking person on the planet to get pregnant the way she talks about it. It's not that fucking hard. People have been doing it for millennia. Anyway that's boring too.

Bill stares.

LANIE (CONT'D)

More fucking people on the planet. What for?

BILL

I see.

Well something's got to be interesting. There's got to be someone you want to see. Something you want to do.

LANIE

I want to find the cat.

He clatters around the dishes. It's loud.

LANIE (CONT'D)

And I don't want to sit in a movie theater in the dark. There are too many people.

Bill looks at her

LANIE (CONT'D)

Forget it. You wouldn't get it.

BILL

That's all you ever say. You never give anyone a chance.

LANIE

All of you people sitting here with great cares about nothing. Shitty stupid jokes about things you don't understand. I hate all of you smiling and pretending you know where it's at. Like you can even understand.

BILL

Well I'm sorry we didn't all have your experiences.

LANIE

That's stupid.

BILL

Well maybe I'm just stupid then. Look at me, your stupid fucking husband trying to make it all ok. Do you even know what it's like trying to talk to you?

LANIE

Don't-

BILL

Why? Are you the only one who gets to express opinions? You sit around all day moaning about how no one understands but when anyone tries to do anything, be nice, whatever, you just make everyone feel bad.

LANIE

I don't-I didn't mean-

BILL

Every time you see me you leave. And I think, I do, I think maybe there's somebody else you'd rather be with and that's why-like maybe when you were gone you-all that time away-

LANIE

No-I-
No.

BILL

You scream at night but you don't want me there. If I even try to touch you, you back away.

LANIE

That's not-

BILL

And then you're obsessed with the cat and finding the cat and asking all the neighbors about the cat. People talk you know-they all think-you know what they think-

LANIE

Stop-

BILL

I know shit happened over there and you won't talk about it. So I wonder if it's me, or the circumstances, or what, but everything anyone does or says-

LANIE

Please-

BILL

I understand you're having a hard time but other people have-

LANIE

Stop talking now.

BILL

You don't get to decide who gets to talk. You can't write me up-

LANIE

I don't want to talk-

BILL

Listen-

LANIE

About any of-

BILL

Listen to what I'm-

LANIE

Stop-

BILL

You think it's all about you-Well it's not, it's not all-

Suddenly Lanie lunges at Bill. She grabs him and pushes him up against the wall hard.

LANIE

Stop. Stop fucking talking. Stop.

As Lanie holds him steady she pushes her forearm against Bill's throat. He gasps. Lanie continues to push and then realizing what she's doing, stops. Blood drips out of Bill's nose. He looks at her. He wipes the blood away with his hand and stares at it. She stares at him in horror. She takes a step away from.

LANIE (CONT'D)

Oh my god. Oh my god.

He wipes his nose again and looks at the blood. He glares at her and exits.

LANIE (CONT'D)

Wait-

Lanie slides down the wall and collapses on the floor.

Wait-

Scene 5. Morning. Lanie is asleep on the kitchen floor dressed in her clothes from the night before. The kitchen is a disaster. Evie enters. She looks at Lanie. She shakes her awake gently with her foot.

EVIE

Captain Edwards, you're drooling on the dash.

Lanie wakes up.

LANIE

Richardson?

Evie smiles.

EVIE

God fucking damn it, demobilization is a bitch. All the hurrying up and waiting.

LANIE

I know. Days of waiting in lines.
You see the shrink?

EVIE

Checked that box.

Evie looks around

EVIE (CONT'D)

You ready?

LANIE

For?

EVIE

Don't try to get out of it. You said you would. This was the plan and here I am.
It'll be fun.

LANIE

Yeah right.

Lanie looks at her

LANIE (CONT'D)

You look good.

EVIE

You don't.

Lanie laughs

LANIE

Always you with the honesty.
No really. You're fine?

Evie spins around.

EVIE

Still a little hard to hear in the ear but other than that, all ok.

Evie looks around.

EVIE (CONT'D)

What happened in here?

LANIE

Don't ask.

EVIE

Looks the same as in the pictures. Except for the mess all over.

LANIE

Oh my God, you've got to see what I got. You're gonna love this.

She pulls out eight boxes of different breakfast cereals.

I bought them. All eight of them.

EVIE

The list of top 8 breakfast cereals. Where were we when we made that?

LANIE

Leatherneck to Fiddler's Green.

EVIE

That's where we had to wait like ten hours for them to clear the road.

LANIE

Not that trip.

EVIE

The one with the exploded goat?

LANIE

No, the one with the state department guy who got sick in the back. I don't know why they don't just fly those guys around.

EVIE

They like to scare 'em so they don't want to come back. Or at least make it so they'll want to travel with the Army next time.

LANIE

Really?

EVIE

You didn't know that?

LANIE

I'm sorry. I was in charge of convoys not strategic thinking about state department passengers.

EVIE

That was the trip where Carlito was telling us about how his latest girlfriend was the prettiest girl ever. That guy dated more people in country than anyone could possibly date at home.

LANIE

And you sang LOVE IS A BATTLEFIELD.

EVIE

Yeah. For his new girlfriend. Poor her.

Lanie takes out the froot loops from the box and holds a few in her hands.

LANIE

Aren't they pretty?

Evie starts to sing LOVE IS A BATTLEFIELD. She hams it up using the milk as a mic.

EVIE

“We are young, heartache to heartache we stand”

*She hands Lanie the mic/milk. Motions for her to sing.
Tells her the words.*

EVIE (CONT'D)

Come on. “No promises, no demands.” Come on.

Lanie sings.

LANIE

“No promises, no demands”

EVIE

“Love is a battlefield”
What were we carrying then?

LANIE

Cement. Building supplies.

*Lanie takes out frosted mini-wheats. She gives one to
Evie. Evie eats it. Lanie eats one too.*

Isn't that amazing?

EVIE

Let's eat them all. Like a sample tasting or something.

*Lanie gets out bowls and spoons and milk. They have
many little bowls. They pour different cereals into each
bowl. They eat with wild abandon.*

LANIE

I had to go to three stores to get the cap'n crunch with crunchberries. But you know,
there's plenty of time these days.

EVIE

Yeah.
Oh my god. Cinnamon toast crunch.

Beat

EVIE (CONT'D)

You have a map?

In the car. LANIE

I'll check that. EVIE

You're driving? LANIE

Of course. EVIE
You remember that canal?

It was a ditch. LANIE

It had flowing water in it used to irrigate fields. I think it'd be called a canal. EVIE

There were a lot of buttons and levers on the dash. LANIE

You drove it into a canal. EVIE

And who got the thing out of the canal? Who saved the \$250,000 vehicle? I think I did. EVIE (CONT'D)

Fine. LANIE

I like you in the navigator's seat. Away from the controls. And bring all the cereal. EVIE

We'll need sleeping bags. Tent. Food. LANIE

Beef Jerky. EVIE

Really? LANIE

I love that stuff. EVIE

LANIE

Really?

EVIE

Oh yeah. Just like old times.

Lanie looks around the messy kitchen. She pulls out a pen and paper.

LANIE

I should leave a note. But what would I say?

EVIE

Say you're taking a vacation from your respite.

Lanie writes

Say you're following an already made plan. Say you're driving out of state lines. Say you'll be home soon?

Lanie writes. She looks up at Evie.

LANIE

I have all the letters and pictures that were by your bunk The ones you always wanted to mail to your Mom...
I'll bring them. You can have them back now. You can give them to her yourself.

Lanie turns back to the letter she's writing

"Don't worry. From Lanie"

EVIE

You can't finish letters with "don't worry". It's like an invitation to worry.

LANIE

Oh. Well. Wouldn't it be worse if I crossed it out now?

EVIE

Fine. Let's go.

LANIE

Now?

EVIE

Why not?

LANIE

I let the cat out.

EVIE

Well she'll get back in.

LANIE

No I mean she's not supposed to be out.
I've been looking for her.

EVIE

And she's gone?

Lanie nods.

You want to look again?

Lanie nods. She pulls out the binoculars.

Alright, let's go.

Come on. Lighten up.

We've got an adventure to go on, 15 months in the making.

Lanie nods.

"We are young, heartache to heartache we stand"

Evie sings the rest of "love is a battlefield" as they exit.

Scene 6. Lanie and Evie in the car. Evie is driving. Mirrored sunglasses on. Lanie is looking through binoculars with the map spread out on her knees. They are eating beef jerky and drinking bottled water. Lanie is smoking a joint.

LANIE

Three o'clock. Joshua tree three o'clock.

She points

There.

EVIE

Got it.

Lanie looks through binoculars.

LANIE

Keep the speed constant. Don't slow up on the hill. Truck coming up on the left.

She observes.

Truck passing on the left. Nothing remarkable about the truck. One driver. No passengers.

She drinks water. She passes a joint to Evie. Evie takes it and smokes.

EVIE

This makes me feel like I'm 15 again. Driving through the desert high. Such nice roads here. You can just drive and drive.

LANIE

No checkpoints.

EVIE

No explosions.

LANIE

No state department people in the back.

She looks in the back.

No one in the back.

Lanie looks through binoculars.

Cop up ahead. Slow up. Slow up. More. Keep it steady now.

EVIE

Wave to him when we pass.

They pass the cop and smile and wave.

LANIE

Look he waved back.

EVIE

Law enforcement seems so sweet after being in the marines. Kind of like a kindly uncle or something.

She smokes.

LANIE

Left side, 10 o'clock in the sky. Red tailed hawk.

EVIE

We've already seen like ten of them. Don't you know any other birds?

LANIE

Road runner. Turkey vulture. Desert sparrow.

EVIE

Well tell me when you see something that's not a red tailed hawk.

Lanie looks at the map.

LANIE

53.4 miles till we're over the pass. 350 miles to destination. Steady pace till then.

She looks with her binoculars.

One desert to another huh.

EVIE

You wanna finish this? (re: joint).

Lanie takes it.

LANIE

I like that no one's shooting at us.

They eat the beef jerky.

EVIE

Or yelling at us.

LANIE

Or telling us where to drive, with whom, and when.
So big out here ya know.

EVIE

Yah.

LANIE

Home is too small. Closed in. I like to have space. When you have space you can see everything. The whole terrain. You'll know what I mean when you get home.

EVIE

Oh I know what you mean.

LANIE

Yeah. At home it's just like one day goes into another.
And all the people you see are shopping or smiling or doing some dumb bullshit thing and you think what the fuck is wrong with these people because they seem really happy and you wonder, "did I used to be happy doing some dumb bullshit thing? Is it all really just a succession of more bullshit things?" And I want to shake them. Like say, "Don't you know? Don't you know? We're at war. There's a war." I try not to go out too much. Sometimes people know you've come back and they're all like stopping you and saying "thanks for your service" like they've done this amazing thing by noticing you and you're thinking, "don't fucking thank me, I was just doing my job. Now you do your job and I'll do mine."

She pulls out her phone.

Here look. I took a picture. There was this mall with an indoor skating rink, like in the middle of summer. Here, look--

She passes the phone. Evie looks.

That's what people do all day. Ice skate inside during the summer in the desert.

Evie hands the phone back.

EVIE

It wasn't your fault you know.

LANIE

I don't want to talk about that.

Do you think in ten years that stupid fucking health center is going to be there?
It'll still be half-built.

EVIE

That's not the point.

LANIE

No?

I led people in there- I was responsible for them. And for what?

I- I don't want to talk about this.

She looks out with binoculars

LANIE (CONT'D)

Century plant. Two o'clock.

After it happened that stupid shitty lieutenant tried to take over my convoy. Asshole. I stood up to him. I told him, "You get the hell off of that vehicle *Lieutenant*, this is *my* convoy and I'll make the decisions here". You were already in the helicopter. He jumped down. It was a mess. Such a mess. That's the story I should tell the people who thank me.

She looks at the phone. She throws it out the window.

EVIE

Did you just drop your phone out the window?

LANIE

No. I threw it.

EVIE

Well how will we know what time it is now?

LANIE

We'll tell time by the sun like the cowboys of old. I hated that picture anyway.
Jerky?

EVIE

Sure.

Lanie breaks it in half and gives it to her. They eat.

LANIE

Remember how Carlito was always going on about dead people?

EVIE

Yeah.

LANIE

Saying like he could see them and all that and like that they hung around for some undetermined length of time while they separated from their bodies?

EVIE

Yeah.

LANIE

That's how I feel sometimes. Like I'm separated from my body.

EVIE

But you're not dead.

LANIE

I'm not talking about the dead thing I'm talking about being separated from your body.

EVIE

Are you really high?

LANIE

No. I'm being serious.

EVIE

So you think he was right?

LANIE

What, about dead people?

No. You?

EVIE

I don't know. Maybe.

LANIE

So you think that maybe there are all these half-dead people hanging around that only Carlito could see? What a fucking nightmare. The living people are annoying enough, now I have to worry about pissing off the dead ones too? Think of all the half-dead people who like to hold a grudge.

EVIE

Have you seen him?

LANIE

Carlito. No. I heard he's doing OK though. Adjusting. I'm sure he doesn't want to see me.

One o'clock. Palm canyon.

EVIE

You should go see him.

LANIE

And say what? "Hey Carlito, sorry about that leg." What, am I gonna bring him a new one? Anyway, I don't want to talk about this. And I'm not going to see him and I'm not going to think about any of this. So tell me more about the whatever it's called.

EVIE

The Desperado.

LANIE

I can't believe I ever agreed to this.

EVIE

Length: 5, 843 feet. Max speed 90 miles per hour. Duration: two minutes and 43 seconds.

They drive.

Music?

LANIE

No radio reception. And I just threw my phone out the window.

EVIE

Just like old times.

LANIE

Oh no.

EVIE

We got to have some music.

LANIE

No more Pat Benitar.

Evie thinks. She sings Beastie Boys.

EVIE

“Just plug me in like I was Eddie Harris
You’re eating crazy cheese like you think I’m from Paris”

LANIE

Uhhhhh. Not Beastie Boys.

*Scene 7. Thirty miles outside Primm,
Nevada. It’s dark, before sunrise.*

EVIE

Are we there?

LANIE

Almost.

EVIE

You didn’t crash the car.

LANIE

I can drive you know.

She hands Evie a granola bar. Evie takes it.

EVIE

Thanks.

LANIE

What now?

EVIE

What do you mean?

LANIE

Sleep more or go on?

EVIE

Is that the sun?

LANIE

Yeah.

EVIE

It’ll be up soon.

LANIE

So go on?

Evie looks at Lanie

EVIE

You're tired.

Lanie nods

I told you you should have let me drive.

LANIE

I'm fine. I don't sleep much. I don't need to sleep much.

Evie looks at her

EVIE

Sleep.

LANIE

We're almost there.

EVIE

It's been there since 1996. It's not going anywhere.

LANIE

I can't sleep.

EVIE

Of course you can. You close your eyes and think of nothing and let your body relax.
Here.

*She pulls a sleeping bag out of the car and makes Lanie
a bed.*

Lie down.

LANIE

Here?

EVIE

Why not? We're way off the road. No one's here.

LANIE

The sun'll be up soon.

EVIE

It's not up yet.

LANIE

It'll get hot here real quick.

EVIE

It's not hot yet.

LANIE

You think I should lie down here and sleep?
Right now?

EVIE

You have to sleep when you're tired or it doesn't work.

LANIE

What?

EVIE

Lie down and I'll tell you.

Lanie lies down.

The trick to sleeping is to lie down when you're tired. Don't try to sleep when you're not tired.

LANIE

That's a little asocial isn't it?

EVIE

You just got back from a war and you're worried about being asocial?

LANIE

No I just mean you know, like long term. Life wise. You can't just lie down and sleep when you're tired. It's like hard to function in society and all. "I'm sorry Mr. Boss person but I'm tired now so I need to lie down and take a nap even though I just got to work. My body just says it's tired you know?"

Evie stares at her

What?

EVIE

You're talking when you should be sleeping.

LANIE

The sun is coming up. It's day.

EVIE

You slept fine over there.

LANIE

I got used to sleeping there. It's quiet here in the wrong ways.

EVIE

Close your eyes.

No. LANIE

Close them. EVIE

I- LANIE

I'll watch you. EVIE

I don't like closing them. LANIE

I know. EVIE

Evie sits down and puts Lanie's head on her lap. She strokes her eyebrows.

EVIE (CONT'D)
I used to do this for my nephew.

Justin? LANIE

Yeah. EVIE

Your sister's kid. LANIE

Yeah. EVIE

I loved that birthday photo you had of him. LANIE

EVIE
He called it the eyebrow trick. Here's the trick: If you put your fingers on somebody's eyebrows they close their eyes. Every time. And the first step to sleeping is closing your eyes.

Evie holds her hands over Lanie's eyes.

LANIE
They said I should take pills.

Shhh. Shhh. EVIE

LANIE
I don't like them. They do make me sleep but then I wake up all terrified.

Shhh. EVIE

LANIE
How come you can sleep?

Shhh. EVIE

LANIE
No, how come?

EVIE
Because I never had great responsibility.

LANIE
What does that mean?

EVIE
That means you can't control everything. Now shhh.

LANIE
It's funny isn't it?

EVIE
No.

LANIE
Maybe it's like the spider/snake thing.
Don't you want to know about the spider/snake thing?

EVIE
Oh my God. You can't sleep if you don't stop talking. You don't need sleeping pills
you need stop talking pills. Now shhh.

Beat.

LANIE
Sing.
Please.

Evie looks at Lanie.

EVIE

There's a land that is fairer than day
And by faith we can see it afar
For the father waits over the way
To prepare us a dwelling place there

In the sweet by and by
We shall meet on that beautiful shore
In the sweet by and by
We shall meet on that beautiful shore.

*Scene 8. Lanie and Evie in line at the
Desperado Roller Coaster, Primm, NV. They
are watching it.*

EVIE

Look at that.

LANIE

It's big.

EVIE

I told you it was big.

LANIE

It didn't sound that big.

EVIE

It's called the Desperado. How can it not sound that big?

LANIE

But it wraps around the whole building.

EVIE

I told you that.

LANIE

Seeing is believing.

EVIE

You scared?

LANIE

No. Well. Maybe.

**THIS MARKS THE END OF THE 30 PAGE EXCERPT. TO
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