

BRODY SIDE

(Transition to Brody standing on a bare stage, smoking a cigarette. Suggestion is of an empty parking lot along the side of a highway, between a Motel 6 and a Popeye's Chicken place. We hear the sound of passing traffic.)

Brody is leaning against an industrial metal storage box. On it sits a paper shopping bag from Discount Drug Mart pharmacy. He seems anxious, looking alternately from his phone to the highway. Carla enters from the direction he hasn't been looking in.)

CARLA

Hi Brody.

(Brody startles, maybe even making a small audible expression of alarm.)

BRODY

Oh! God!

CARLA

Sorry.

BRODY

I didn't see you there. Carla, right?

CARLA

Yeah. We had to park on the other side, so—

BRODY

Can we first just. For security. Do the two-factor authentication thingy? So I texted you a photo.

CARLA

Yeah.

BRODY

How many stoplights were in that photo?

CARLA

Stoplights?

BRODY

Yeah.

CARLA

Um, it was a photo of two kittens. So zero stoplights, I guess?

BRODY

That checks out. Great.

(off Carla's skeptical look)

Two-factor authentication. Helps me know that you are who you say you are.

CARLA

But you've met me before.

BRODY

No, I saw you from the side in my aunt's dining room. And you did not have a ponytail.

CARLA

Okay.

(Referring to the bag)

So is that the ah... "taco"?

BRODY

(Pause)

I don't think taco was the last one I told you—

CARLA

The pasta primavera.

BRODY

Ahhh...

CARLA

Sorry, there were so many voicemails. The birthday cake?

BRODY

Yes! It was birthday cake. Good job. I thought that was a better...throws the scent off more.

(He looks at the bag and starts to curse, but stops himself.)
Ffffff—! I shouldn't have used this shopping bag! What was I thinking?!

(Carla stares blankly. He surreptitiously points at the word "Drug.")

CARLA

Maybe the quicker we get through this the better.

BRODY

Yeah, so...where's the lady?

CARLA

(pointing off-stage)

ATM. Had to get some extra cash for you.

BRODY

(looking toward Vivian)

Oh I see, with the walker. She's in bad shape, huh?

CARLA

Well you know she's—old. A lot older than us.

BRODY

Right. That's why I'm here. I believe in helping older people.

CARLA

Oh come on.

BRODY

No I do. I mean, you and me have that in common. Acts of service, right?

CARLA

Sure. So much graffiti on that ATM. If it doesn't work, do we call this off?

BRODY

It'll work. Sounds like she's lived a full life. From what she says?

CARLA

Oh yeah, she's full of it, full of life. But now she's declining.

BRODY

(looking toward Vivian)

She got the cash! And she's going to die anyway really soon, right? Her doctors think so?

CARLA

I...try not to think about it.

BRODY

You know, I don't believe in guilt.

CARLA

No?

BRODY

I mean, even if you boost a car once when you're young, or like, ditch the military, if you mostly try to do stuff right, then you have nothing to feel guilty about.

CARLA

Ditch the military sounds bad.

BRODY

Well...I was barely in it. See, I'm not a fan of blood, but I kinda forgot until I was halfway through boot camp. So I told them right away.

CARLA

At least you were honest, I guess.

BRODY

Right, it's not like I was faking! How can you fake puking after your bunkmate drops his phone on his face and gets a bloody nose?

CARLA

Well, people fake a lot of things.

BRODY

I don't believe in that. Oh man, does she have a limp?

CARLA

She does today
—and here she is, at last!

(Vivian enters, walking very slowly with a walker, faking physical frailty. Over the following, she exudes uncharacteristic warmth, which Carla sees right through.)

VIVIAN

Hello. Brody. Nice to meet you, dear.

BRODY

Yeah, yeah, hi. Sorry to make you...clump over like this.

VIVIAN

It's fine. Who knows how many more days of clumping I have left?

CARLA

Isn't the whole point of this so you will know exactly?

VIVIAN

Yes, you're right, Carla. A smoker?

CARLA

Just when I'm really stressed about something.

VIVIAN

Carla lost her mother recently. So she's still grieving.

BRODY

Yeah, I know. My aunt told me. I'm sorry for your loss.

CARLA

Thanks.

BRODY

I made sure you got good feedback on that.

CARLA

What?

BRODY

I was helping my aunt fill out the hospice survey. I added a comment, telling them how cool it was you were helping dying people so soon after your mom passed.

CARLA

So *you* narc'd on me.

BRODY

What?? I didn't–

VIVIAN

She's joking. Oh–

(She closes her eyes and winces.)

BRODY

You okay?

VIVIAN

It's just...the cancer advancing. There's not much time left.

BRODY

How much do they say you've got?

VIVIAN

Seven miles. Or meters.

(Brody looks confused.)

CARLA

Metaphorically speaking. She's got about seven months, but feels like seven miles...to clump along.

VIVIAN

Yes, thank you, Carla. Carla, maybe you can give Bobby the purse? I don't think I have the strength.

(Carla comes over to unclip the fanny pack that Vivian is wearing. She hands it to Brody, but he doesn't take it.)

BRODY

Just before we, you know, wrap up this "birthday party." I have to...

(He gets a little emotional.)
You know, this is a big deal.

VIVIAN

Yes, it is. You're very sensitive.

BRODY

By not getting rid of it, I've already broken the law.

VIVIAN

You're not going to get caught. Carla will destroy all the packaging so there's no trace. She's going to be right there with me.

(Clearly this is unwelcome news to Carla.)

BRODY

That's good. She seems like someone you can trust.

CARLA

(pointedly, fixed on Vivian)
Well, for this to be ethical, she has to be able to take the drugs by herself. Luckily she's planning to do that.

BRODY

Oh yes, you have to be able to make the decision.

VIVIAN

I am capable of making the decision.

CARLA
(to Vivian)

She knows exactly what she's doing.

BRODY

I just want to make sure this can't come back to me.

VIVIAN

And Carla would never allow you to get into any trouble because of something I do. She'll be right there to remove all evidence, right Carla?

CARLA

How can I say no?

(Val and Di approach Brody and flank him, an arm around his shoulder, one around his waist, perhaps tracing a finger down his ear, etc. He doesn't seem to notice or feel them.)