

A girl, a boy, and a gun.

Christine

Seth

The Man

Scene I

Int. A nondescript room. There are two lounge chairs, facing centre-stage, where there is a solitary desk. Two beds sit soundlessly at each end of the room. Christine sits in one of the chairs, and across from her sits Seth. The lights come on for both of them.

Christine Ugh... My head. I didn't think he'd need to get me here in that way...

Seth You're awake! You've been out for quite a while.

Christine What? Who are you?

Seth I'm Seth.

Christine Have you just been watching me sleep?

Seth No... Do you know where we are?

Christine looks around. There are two doors, one that leads stage right and one that leads stage left. Christine walks over to the one on stage left.

Seth Toilet. Quite nice actually.

Christine begins walking over to the door, stage right.

Seth It's locked.

Christine Why are you here?

Seth I don't know. I just woke up sitting across from you.

Christine And you're so calm?

Seth I've been awake for at least an hour. There's no point being flustered.

Christine So you don't want to find a way out?

Seth I'm... Well I'm in no rush. If someone brought me here I'm assuming they have a use for me. What about you?

Christine Typical. You make deals with the wrong company and... you wind up in a place like this.

Christine sits down again.

Seth I don't...

Silence.

Christine You must have done something to land you here as well, what was it?

Seth Nothing. I was just at work, then on the way home from a grocery trip and then... I woke up here.

Christine Oh, I see.

Seth You don't talk much, do you?

Christine And you talk too much. Aren't you scared at all? Whoever did this is going to kill us.

Seth I don't think they will. Why would they give us beds if they wanted to kill us? And a toilet? What's the point?

Christine It could just be a convenient room.

Seth I doubt that.

Christine doesn't reply.

Seth Excuse me for a moment.

Seth gets up to use the toilet. Christine stands up and takes stock of the room.

Seth Hmm? Why are you standing?

Christine I was just looking around the room.

Seth I haven't gotten your name.

Christine I know.

Seth Are you not going to tell me?

Christine I don't see why I should. We might die here, introducing myself is the least of my concerns.

Seth And I'd like to know the name of the person I die with.

Christine Well... That's too bad.

Silence

Seth You see this chair? It reminds me of something I made when I was younger. Heh. Even when I was bad at these things; IKEA furniture is supposed to be truly simple to assemble, and I thought it was, until my father sat on the chair. I hadn't screwed something in properly or forgot a screw? So it broke under his weight.

Christine You did say you were young.

Seth Quite young.

Christine Then you were just young.

Seth Young or not...

Silence. Seth looks at Christine's hands and notices her wedding ring.

Seth You're... married?

Christine avoids eye contact.

Christine I was.

Seth Ah. Sorry.

Beat.

Seth I was too.

Christine Mmm, wow. Great.

Beat.

Seth goes over to lie on his bed. Christine goes to the toilet. She speaks to herself, but Seth cannot hear her.

Christine It will be harder the more I know about him. He seems like a nice person... Innocent.

Christine steps out of the toilet. Seth is back on the chair, looking at the table in front of him.

Christine Where are you from?

Seth Hudson Valley.

Christine I see.

Seth And what about you?

Christine Cali.

Seth Oh, what's it like living there?

Christine It's nice.

Seth I've never been there, my –

Christine Mmm.

Christine gets up and tries to open the locked door.

Seth It's locked.

Christine Don't you care about getting out at all?

Seth To work in my dead-end job?

Christine And what do you work as?

Seth (Surprised) A translator. I learned Japanese when I was younger, so I translate Japanese books. I recently translated a book called 'Odes', have you heard of it?

Christine faces the audience and her face lights up for a brief moment, she turns to speak to Seth, but thinks better of it and the room falls into silence once more.

Seth I didn't like it very much.

Christine WHAT – *clears throat* – Wh, why?

Seth It was a very typical story – one that I'd read a thousand times over and over. Or maybe it was because of the fact that I've read it a few times to translate it properly.

Christine Oh, right, I've heard it was really g... never mind.

Seth Have you read it?

Christine Maybe.

Seth Look, I know we're strangers but –

Christine That's right. We're strangers. I don't know you, and you don't know me. Stop being so friendly. Two strangers in an even stranger situation – and you... you're.

Seth I get it, I get it.

Christine This is not working.

Seth I'm sorry?

Christine I'm tired. I'm... going to sleep.

Seth Oh... uh. Goodnight.

Christine flips a switch and the main lights go off. Both go to their beds and there is silence. There is the silhouette of Christine looking at her gun. Fade to black.

Scene II

The front lights come on, illuminating silhouettes of both Christine and Seth. Christine gets up and walks over to the toilet. She returns to the room, looking over at Seth, and brings the pistol that she's kept under her pillow to the toilet. She is looking at the pistol and splashing her face with water. She stares at the mirror, then at the audience. Christine steps out of the toilet, bracing herself. She strides over to Seth's bed with slow, deliberate steps. She hovers the gun over Seth's head.

Silence.

Christine lowers the gun, shaking her head. She walks over to her bed, and goes back to sleep.

Christine Stephen...

Fade to black.

Scene III

The lights come back on, Christine is on her bed, and Seth is sitting at the table.

Seth Good afternoon. Or morning, who knows.

Christine turns on her side, showing Seth her back.

Seth You want to get out, don't you?

No reply.

Seth We stand a much better chance of surviving whatever comes if we work together.

Christine I can work together with you if I need to, but I don't need to talk to you, right?

Seth So you just want to wait out this time in complete silence?

Christine That works for me.

Silence ensues. Seth goes to the toilet, then returns to the still room. He goes over to try out the locked door.

Seth ... You've read Odes, right?

Christine ... No.

Seth That's good. It's a terrible book. Shit standard writing, subpar characters and the plot was drenched in cliché –

Christine Fuck off, it was a brilliant book! The characters were beautifully crafted, and the plot was so imaginative!... Why are you goading me?

Seth So that I'd get you to talk.

Christine And why are you so insistent on that?

Seth I've said it before, I want to know about the person I die with.

Christine And if I tell you, you'll shut up?

Seth Maybe. Is that so difficult?

Christine gets off the bed. She walks curtly over to the chair opposite Seth and sits down.

Christine Fine, what do you want to know?

Seth What did you do in California?

Christine I inked for most of my life.

Seth Do you have any tattoos yourself?

Christine No. I didn't want any.

Seth Why not?

Silence

Christine When we escape, what do you want to do?

Seth I don't know, just do what I've been doing before, getting by. And you?

Christine (Stage Whisper) You won't be alive to know...

Seth Did you say something?

Christine I'd go home and... eat a sub I guess.

Seth Parmesan oregano?

Christine That's the only bread I'd bother with.

Seth Yeah, it's that or bust.

Christine Well, I guess I'd also go for Ciabatta.

Seth Heh, that's not a bad choice too. See? We're having a conversation.

Christine notices the pistol that's in her pants pocket. She rests her hand on it, a gesture the audience can see from their side of her profile, but not Seth because of the table.

Christine We shouldn't be.

Seth Why not?

Christine Do you really have no idea at all why you're here?

Seth No, why would I? Do you?

Christine You... ask so many questions, why are you interrogating me?

Seth Don't be paranoid. I'm just trying to -

Christine Trying to what?

Seth Get to know who you are. What's so wrong about that?

Christine There's nothing wrong with that – normally. But we're not in a normal situation, what kind of fucking psycho is so calm and thinking about such mundane things?

Seth It's because we're in this strange situation that I'm like this! I'm trying to –

Christine Seth... I don't. I don't want to know. Asking so many questions, acting so interested... You're just like him.

Seth Like who?

Christine Like nobody. Forget I said anything.

Seth But –

Christine Forget it.

Silence.

Seth She liked Odes too.

Christine I don't want to hear –

Seth I'm talking to myself. She liked these things that I didn't like. I thought it was intentional at first – but she would always be so insistent on telling me why she liked them. On and on, at first I hated it. Why bother trying to tell me about these things I hate? Yet she kept on doing it, kept on telling me why she liked the idea that fate dictated our lives, that cats are better than dogs because they weren't dirty and – I loved dogs actually... but it was endearing. She gave enough of a damn to tell me all those things, and still I left her. I couldn't live with her, she reminded me of my shortcomings and I ended up hating her for it.

Christine Are you done? What the hell are you trying to pull? I don't want to hear all this. I don't want to know more about you.

Seth I'm just talking to myself.

Christine And it's annoying. I already said I don't want to hear it.

Seth You don't have to listen.

Christine You're speaking so goddamn loudly -

Seth I'm just trying to have a conversation.

Christine We haven't had any conversation. You just love the sound of your own voice.

Seth Well I'm trying to –

Christine You wanna know something about me? Huh? I can't remember what my husband even looks like. This... This fucking fog that's – I can't see past it, okay? Not without help.

Christine is shivering.

Christine So I'm done trying to pacify you. I have my own shit to deal with.

Christine turns away from Seth, returning to her bed. Seth looks down at the ground. The lights fade, a spotlight returning on Christine. She clutches the pistol in her chest as she shivers, fade to black.

Scene IV

The front lights come on again, illuminating silhouettes of Christine and Seth. This time, Seth gets up and walks over to the toilet, stopping to look at Christine for a few moments. He shakes his head and goes into the toilet. Christine wakes up, sighing. She brings the pistol along with her, then goes over to Seth's bed. In the darkness, she raises the pistol to the bed before realising there is nobody there. Seth comes out of the toilet.

Seth What are you doing?

Seth flips the light switch next to him, and the stage lights come on as Christine hides the pistol in her pocket once more. Christine doesn't reply.

Seth I'm sorry.

Christine Yeah.

The sound of metal rings through the air. A tray of food and water is slid under the locked door.

Seth What the –

The sound of metal once again, the another tray of food. There is a long silence between the two, as Seth slowly creeps over. He bends down to pick up the tray of food, then slowly makes his way to the table. Almost instinctively, he begins wolfing down the food with his hands.

Christine Are you sure we should –

Seth If they wanted to kill us... they would have by now.

Christine sits down next to the door and begins eating. She eats slowly at first, then, like Seth, starts to eat voraciously. She begins to cry. Seth hears her crying and stops eating.

Seth Why are you –

Christine Did... he even cook? What did we eat together?

Christine eats, clutching at her knees with a pained expression.

Seth I'm so sorr-

Christine He's dead. I'll never get to see him again.

Seth Are you -

Christine holds up her hand and shakes her head. She leaves the food on the floor and walks back to her bed. She's still sobbing in her bed, but her crying becomes softer over time, until she is curled in a foetal position and still sobbing. Seth finishes up his food, and begins walking over to Christine, but instead goes over to turn off the light.

Christine Stephen... Why did you leave me? I just... To see your face once again, I'd do anything. Anything at all...

Scene V

The lights go on. Seth is sitting in the middle of the room, when Christine comes out of the toilet. She sits across from him and they motion like they are conversing. Trays of food are slid under the locked door. Seth brings over both the trays, but Christine refuses to eat. Seth eats the food, and the meal passes in silence. The lights go off, and then turn on again – the trays have been cleared and Christine is walking to the toilet as she bumps into Seth.

Christine Go ahead.

Seth N-no, please, go ahead.

Christine enters the toilet. Seth continues talking to her through the door.

Seth Are you alright?

Christine doesn't reply. She's taken the pistol out and is bracing herself to shoot Seth.

Seth I... I didn't want to piss you off. And I know it was selfish to just... tell a stranger my problems, not actually wanting a reply. Pathetic, isn't it?

Christine It is, but... okay.

Christine keeps her pistol once again and gets out of the toilet, smiling at Seth. She sits down on one of the chairs, and Seth takes a seat across from her.

Seth I think we've been here for four days now.

Christine It seems like it.

Seth When do you think they'll stop feeding us?

Christine I don't know.

Seth Maybe we can grab the person's arm before he pulls it away.

Christine You can try that, though I doubt it'll work.

Seth Can you think of anything else?

Christine You were quiet yesterday, it was nice to be left to my thoughts.

Seth I won't disturb you anymore –

Christine What was her name?

Seth Who?

Christine Your wife.

Seth Rebecca.

Christine Is she gone too?

Seth No, I left her. And everything that reminds me of her just... makes me feel like I've failed her again. I can't even properly dissociate myself from her in my own mind.

Christine Then why did you leave in the first place?

Seth Rebecca was a flower in the field of flowers that was my life. My family was supportive of our relationship – and I always did my best for them all. Good grades. A good track record. Good leadership. All to... feel like I deserved their love and care. An accident led to us being married... and an accident that I could have stopped... spelt the end of our family of three.

Christine And after all that, you just left her?

Seth I know it was wrong, but I didn't see another way out.

Christine At least you still remember her. I don't even recall his face anymore.

Seth Oh... how I wish I could forget.

Christine And you'll wish you could remember if you did.

Seth I knew that if I had stayed, it would have torn both of us apart even more.

Christine You don't know anything.

Seth Maybe I don't, what do you know?

Christine I know that she's left with questions and insecurities – that you have given her. And I know that I still haven't answered any of mine.

Seth And after all this, I just return to her?

Christine You're both still alive after all. That's something.

Seth Thank you.

Christine Hah. I think you're an irritating piece of shit.

Seth I'm sorry wha-

Christine You've got no sense if someone else doesn't want to talk – and you'll air your personal problems to a complete stranger... even if they don't listen.

Seth Are you just going to continue –

Christine Let me finish. I think you're a complete and utter fool and this entire time you've given me so many reasons to hate you and yet... you're the most earnest piece of shit i've met. And you don't deserve this.

Seth What do you mean?

Christine Seth... even after all this... I still have to apologise to you.

Christine takes out her pistol and puts it on the table. Seth heaves a heavy sigh of relief.

Seth Oh, that's a load off my shoulders. I had a hunch but... I'll apologise too.

Seth takes out a gun from his pocket and puts it onto the table. Christine's eyes widen, staring at the pistol, then at Seth.

Seth You see, I made a de -

A gunshot crackles through the air, grazing Seth's shoulder.

Seth Jesus Christ – what the fuck are you – why would you shoot me now?

Christine You son of a bitch – all this time I thought you were innocent but -

Seth You fucking – you agreed to the same deal, didn't you? You little -

Seth reaches out for the gun, but another shot from Christine and Seth recoils in pain, clutching at his hands.

Christine If I'd have known from the beginning this would have been much easier.

Seth (In great pain) You fuck... Stop it, I no longer want to -

Christine And neither did I, but if I had been different – it would be me on the ground wouldn't it? Wouldn't it, Seth?

Seth I don't think I ever could have –

Christine When I was young. My mother told me of a cold blooded murderer – he would kill every soul without a word, until a particular man asked his name. Foolishly, the murderer whispered his name, and that man’s immortal soul came seeking revenge, haunting the murderer. Until soon, the murderer descended into madness and died. But I won’t make the same mistake.

Seth You don’t –

Another gunshot, a quick fade to black.

Scene VI

Spotlight only on the table and two chairs, Seth is sitting across from Christine, in the middle of the two of them, facing the audience and behind the table sits an ominous suited figure, The Man.

The Man So I see that you’ve come to me with a particular desire in your heart. It won’t be easy, it won’t be pretty, but I will see it fulfilled.

Seth Nobody else could help me like you can. I don’t deserve to live, but... I don’t deserve to die for nothing either. Please, kill me, but let my death help someone else.

Christine I’ve heard that only you can give me the drug I need... to remember.

The Man The price is equal for all. Your wish will be granted when you have killed someone else.

Seth I couldn’t kill –

Christine Please... I don’t want to do that. I just want to remember what he felt like... one more time. I don’t want to kill anyone for this.

The Man You must. That is the price, and if you are unwilling to pay for it, then your wish will only be a wish.

Seth Then I won’t do it. I’m out, I guess.

Christine If I really must... I’d do anything to see him again. Just... make it easy for me. Make him a criminal, someone that’ll be easy to kill.

The Man He will be an innocent man.

The Man What do you have to lose? Nothing. What’s one death, when you so easily contemplate killing yourself?

Seth It’s different... this is my life, I think I can decide what to with it... but not someone else’s.

The Man Then I’ll allow you to get to know that person... to decide if they should be killed.

Seth You want me to play god? Hah. I need to fulfil that wish but... I don’t want to kill someone.

The Man Then you'll turn around, walk out that door; and you'll live the rest of your life in regret of what you could do today, but can never do by yourself.

Seth ... If I agree... can I at least get to know them before I kill them? I couldn't kill a... good person.

Christine And the drug will be mine if I kill them?

The Man dangles a small Ziploc with a white crystal in it.

The Man You have seven days to kill them. If not, I will kill you.

Seth I - ... okay. If I must...

Christine stares at The Man in silence, who, after a time, slides a pistol across the table. Christine picks up the gun.

Christine Then so be it.

Scene VII

Seth lies motionless on the ground. Christine sits on a chair that faces the audience. Behind her there is a discarded Ziploc bag with some white crystals still in it. Her eyes are glazing over and she is mumbling to herself.

Christine I remember an afternoon in the fall, when he asked if I was hungry and I said no. He returned later with two ham and cheese sandwiches that we had no problem finishing off. He did cook, I remember now. A little. His stubble, sharp nose... blue eyes. I remember holding him... I remember this stupid thing we used to argue about. We had this little aquarium in our house that had a bunch of fish. I named one of them Diana, and for some reason... Stephen hated that name. I loved fish, and I looked at them and talked to them a few times. 'Diana, Diana' I would call, and Stephen would do his best to chide me for it. Diana... I still remember that name... and my insistence to keep it. I know how it tortured him, and I think I knew why. All these things I know I'll forget soon...

Christine glances over at the white crystals on the table.

And yet, I know there's something I'll never forget even after all these years... what the noose looked like around his neck.

Fade to black.

A phone rings, it is picked up, and you can hear Christine's voice in the darkness.

Christine I heard that you can fulfil any wish. A price that must be paid? What I want – need – nobody else can give. You say I must pay a price, I am willing to pay anything. Whatever the price is, I am prepared to pay it. Please. Help me.

The phone line goes dead.

Fin

