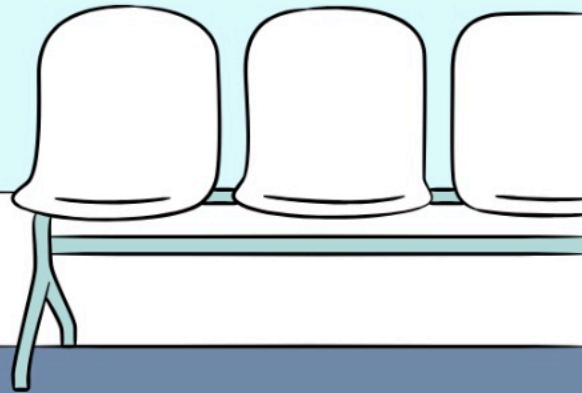
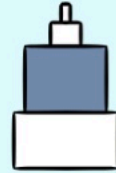


TBD Theatre Presents...

The Waiting

Room

A New One-Act
by Eden Leavey



THE WAITING ROOM

by

Eden Leavey

Fall 2024 Play

TBD Theatre Troupe

College of William & Mary

Playwright's Note

In December of my senior year of high school, I was approved to take on a senior capstone project in the final weeks of school before graduation. My proposed project was, evidently, to write a play. I had already planned to tell the story of a night in a hospital waiting room, but when my grandmother passed away that spring, the concept felt all the more raw. While learning to cope with the grief of my grandmother's passing, I found myself reflecting on other instances of sickness and death in my life.

Many of the characters and their narratives in "The Waiting Room" are inspired by these experiences, from young deaths to cancer to car accidents.

I became interested in the idea of characters being witnesses to life and death, rather than actively experiencing it for themselves. This is why I chose to set the play in a waiting room; the characters and the audience learn what is to become of the off-stage patients together. "The Waiting Room" was written to shed light on the feeling of running out of time, the unpredictable nature of death, and the human desire for connection in times of uncertainty and strife. Further, amid the sorrow, I hope joy can also be found, particularly surrounding Hallie's pregnancy and the tender relationships forged among the characters.

Finally, I would like to extend my gratitude to the rest of the production team, cast, crew, and the TBD Theatre Troupe. Thank you for the immense passion, dedication, and hard work you have exhibited over the past two months. Truly, it wouldn't have been possible to get this show off the page and onto the stage without all of you.

Cast of Characters
(in order of appearance)

Edward Higgins *Elderly man, anthropology professor at Harvard University, wife has a heart attack.*

Tessa Conley *Hospital nurse, delivers news to visitors in the waiting room, acts as a narrator of sorts.*

Laurel Burton *Resident training to be a cardiothoracic surgeon, boyfriend has surgery complications.*

Josh Hatzmann *Young man in a car crash, his brother has a brain hemorrhage and his best friend has a spinal fracture from the accident.*

Gabriel Yang *Computer hardware engineer, mother has surgery for pancreatic cancer.*

Hallie Rose *Middle school art teacher, single mother about to deliver her baby.*

Sawyer Murphy *Chef at a French restaurant, wants to open his own fine dining business, cuts off his finger while working in the kitchen.*

Scenes

Act I

Scene 1	Hospital waiting room, 8:14 p.m.
Scene 2	8:27 p.m.
Scene 3	8:30 p.m.
Scene 4	8:42 p.m.
Scene 5	8:53 p.m.
Scene 6	8:59 p.m.
Scene 7	9:04 p.m.
Scene 8	9:37 p.m.
Scene 9	9:41 p.m.
Scene 10	12:06 a.m.

THE WAITING ROOM

I-1 INT. HOSPITAL WAITING ROOM 8:14 P.M.

(Lights go up. The stage is illuminated in a light blue tint that mimics the harsh lighting of a hospital. Twelve chairs are aligned in a three-sided box that opens toward the house; a wall clock is hung with the time 8:14. All characters except EDWARD and TESSA are sat down. TESSA crosses the stage with a clipboard. EDWARD enters.)

EDWARD

(yelling for help)

Excuse me, excuse me! Can I get some help around here, please?

(TESSA does not respond to EDWARD'S cry. She arranges her papers and exits SR. EDWARD begins to run after her.)

EDWARD

Hey, you! Come back! I was phoned about my wife. I need to know if she's alright.

(EDWARD loses TESSA. He sighs and defeatedly enters the waiting room. LAUREL looks over at him.)

LAUREL

Have you checked in?

EDWARD

Pardon me?

LAUREL

Have you checked in?

(EDWARD stares at LAUREL blankly.)

LAUREL

(cont')

If you go 'round the corner there, walk down to the end of the hallway, on your right is the ER check-in. They'll have some information for you.

EDWARD

End of the hallway on the right. Thank you. Thank you!

(EDWARD exits in search of the ER check-in.)

I-2 8:27 P.M.

(The clock moves forward to 8:27, ticking loudly. JOSH stands up from his seat and paces. LAUREL and HALLIE watch. GABRIEL, who is holding his head in his hands and bouncing his legs lets out a sigh and looks up at JOSH. JOSH stops in his tracks.)

GABRIEL

Do you mind?

JOSH

S-S-Sorry. I didn't mean to--

HALLIE

(interrupting)

Oh, it's alright. You're not the only one who feels a little uncomfortable.

JOSH

Right.

(JOSH awkwardly returns to his seat.)

GABRIEL

(muttering)

Still, it would be great if we could all just stay in our own lanes a little bit.

JOSH

What did you say to me?

(JOSH meets GABRIEL'S eyes and the two share an uncomfortable look.)

GABRIEL

Don't work everyone else up.

(HALLIE adjusts in her seat, clearly in discomfort from her pregnancy)

SAWYER

So... how far along are you?

HALLIE

38 weeks.

SAWYER

Oh, wow!

HALLIE

Yeah. I'm scheduled to have my C-section in a couple of days, but I felt some unusual kicks this morning and wanted to make sure everything was okay.

SAWYER

I see.

(HALLIE leans into SAWYER.)

HALLIE

(whispered, pointing to JOSH)

What do you think his deal is?

SAWYER

I don't know.

HALLIE

When he came in here, he was with a couple of officers.

SAWYER

Like the police?

HALLIE

Shhh... Yeah, there were two of them talking about a failed breathalyzer test.

SAWYER

Oh my God. Do you think there was an accident?

HALLIE

Could be... Anyway, what brings you in?

(Sawyer laughs, nervously.)

SAWYER

A slight mishap in the kitchen, I suppose.

(SAWYER pulls out a plastic bag containing the tip of his finger on an ice bath and smiles weakly. The sight catches the others' attention. EVERYONE gasps.)

HALLIE

Oh, my!

SAWYER

I'm Sawyer, by the way. How do you do?

HALLIE

Hallie. It's a pleasure to meet you.

(SAWYER extends his four-fingered hand for HALLIE to shake and smiles sheepishly. HALLIE shakes his hand gently, giggling.)

I-3 8:30 P.M.

(EDWARD returns to the waiting room holding a stack of paperwork to fill out. He takes a seat, sighing.)

LAUREL

I take it there's no news?

EDWARD

Oh, there's news alright. Just, not the kind I was hoping to hear.

LAUREL

I'm so sorry. Did you say it was your wife?

EDWARD

She's had a heart attack and needs immediate surgery.

HALLIE

Oh, that must be such a shock. Are you alright?

EDWARD

No, no-- I can't believe it. I mean, One minute I'm teaching a room full of students, and the next thing I know I'm filling out paperwork about our medical insurance!

(EVERYONE stops to think quietly about their own situation. TESSA reappears with a coffee for LAUREL.)

TESSA

Hey, you. How are you holding up?

LAUREL

Oh, I'm doing fine. They've got him intubated, right?

(TESSA nods.)

TESSA

Any idea what caused the reaction?

LAUREL

Not really. I mean, Mike's allergic to tree nuts, but we can't figure out when he would have eaten them or what else it could have been. He's stable now?

TESSA

Not yet, I'm afraid. It seems like Mike's gone into protracted anaphylaxis, but it should start to slow down soon.

LAUREL

Oh, okay. Just keep me posted. Kirsten is on-call right now and insisted I take the night shift off, so I'll be here.

TESSA

(teasingly)

Lucky dog. I'll see you later, Laurel.

(TESSA exits.)

GABRIEL

You know her?

LAUREL

I'm working here - well, not right now. But most days. I'm a surgical resident training to be a cardiothoracic surgeon.

GABRIEL

So you understand all this... doctor talk?

LAUREL

(smiling)

I should.

GABRIEL

Thank God. Every time we come in here it's something else to look up: brachytherapy and biomarkers and pancreaticoduodenopancreaticoduodenectomy.

LAUREL

(curious, almost excited)

You're having a Whipple procedure?

GABRIEL

Not me, my mom. Laurel, was it?

LAUREL

Mhm.

GABRIEL

I'm Gabriel. My mom has been in and out of this hospital for recurrence four times now. We go back and forth between treatment and surgery and still nothing. Nothing helps.

LAUREL

I'm afraid that's often the way it goes with pancreatic cancer.

(GABRIEL'S phone rings. He stands up and moves away to take the call.)

GABRIEL

Jason, hi.

(GABRIEL mimics the actions of a phone call. Focus returns to the waiting room. EDWARD stands.)

EDWARD

I don't believe I introduced myself earlier. My name is Edward Higgins.

LAUREL

Hey.

HALLIE

Nice to meet you.

SAWYER

Hello, Edward.

JOSH

Josh.

(EVERYONE turns to look at JOSH, who has been very quiet until this point.)

JOSH

Since we're doing the names thing.

(EDWARD returns to his seat.)

EDWARD

Well, it's lovely to meet you all, even if it isn't under the best of circumstances.

(Focus shifts back to GABRIEL'S phone call. Gabriel begins to walk back toward the group.)

GABRIEL

Alright, I'll have the data analysis to you by noon tomorrow. Bye-bye, Anne.

(GABRIEL hangs up the phone and returns to the waiting room, still standing.)

GABRIEL

(both matter-of-factly and apologetically)

Work call.

LAUREL

What do you do?

GABRIEL
I'm a computer hardware engineer.

EDWARD
Ah, a man of science. I see.

GABRIEL
And yourself?

EDWARD
I am a professor of anthropology at Harvard University.

HALLIE
(smirking)
Fitting.

EDWARD
Pardon me?

HALLIE
Oh, I just mean I'm not surprised to hear you're in... academia.

EDWARD
And why is that?

HALLIE
Professors, they're all just so--

EDWARD
So?

HALLIE
Up themselves.

(LAUREL, GABRIEL, and SAWYER try to stifle their laughs.)

HALLIE
(cont')
No offense.

EDWARD
Much taken.

(Awkward silence. GABRIEL clears his throat and takes a seat next to LAUREL.)

GABRIEL

(to LAUREL)

You said you knew what all this medical stuff is?

LAUREL

I have a good handle on most things. You said your mom is having a pancreaticoduodenectomy?

GABRIEL

(sighing)

That's the one.

(There is a quiet stillness.)

Gabriel

(cont')

We caught it early - almost two years ago - but it didn't seem to make a difference. It spreads so fast.

(LAUREL nods gravely.)

GABRIEL

(cont')

Say uh, what are the chances she even recovers from this surgery? I've heard it's invasive and she's already so tired-- I don't know it's so hard to get a straight answer from people around here.

LAUREL

(puffing air through her cheeks)

Pancreatic cancer is... an unforgiving illness. But it would be highly unlikely for her not to survive the procedure, and about a third of patients encounter later complications.

(GABRIEL smirks cynically.)

GABRIEL

She has a way of always falling into those "small groups" of people with worsened effects.

LAUREL

Well, I'm sure--

GABRIEL
(interrupting, now distant from
the conversation)

Thank you.

(GABRIEL stands and exits. LAUREL watches him.)

EDWARD
(clearing throat)
I hate to burden you with any more questions...

(EDWARD trails off.)

LAUREL
(smiling)
Go on.

EDWARD
Is she going to be alright?

LAUREL
The fact that your wife made it here and can be seen
by a medical professional is good news.

EDWARD
You sound hesitant.

LAUREL
It... can be hard to know for sure in situations like
these.

EDWARD
(distressed)
Oh, Adele. My dear Adele. Please, don't leave me yet.

(TESSA enters the waiting room.)

EDWARD
(cont')
It is much too soon.

SAWYER
(calling to TESSA)
Sorry, excuse me!

TESSA
What can I do for you, sir?

SAWYER

You don't happen to know when I can get this looked at do you?

TESSA

We're moving as fast as we can Mr....?

(TESSA searches through the paperwork on her clipboard.)

SAWYER

(politely)

Murphy.

TESSA

We're moving as fast as we can Mr. Murphy.

SAWYER

(sheepishly)

No, of course. I suppose I'm just anxious to reunite this fingertip with my hand.

(TESSA is enchanted by SAWYER'S charm.)

TESSA

I'll check up on it and see what I can do for you.

(TESSA smiles at SAWYER for a second too long. She catches herself and begins shuffling her paperwork. HALLIE watches this.)

TESSA

(cont')

Uhh...

(TESSA scans the waiting room. Her eyes land on JOSH.)

TESSA

(cont', gravely)

Mr. Hatzmann, I need to speak with you.

(JOSH bolts out of his seat and goes to TESSA. She clutches his arm and takes him aside. The clock moves forward to 8:42, ticking loudly. A silent conversation between TESSA and JOSH transpires, and he begins to weep silently. TESSA

crosses back through the waiting room, leaving JOSH to grieve privately. Before TESSA exits, she and LAUREL share a saddened look. LAUREL stands up and walks over to comfort JOSH. She puts her hand on his back. LAUREL and JOSH exit.)

I-4 8:42 P.M.

HALLIE

(looking at the ice pack in SAWYER'S hand)

So, do you like to cook?

(EDWARD chuckles. HALLIE and SAWYER look at him.)

EDWARD

Isn't it fascinating how humans think of the most humdrum things to talk about in an effort to suppress their uncomfortable realities?

(Uncomfortable silence. SAWYER laughs nervously in agreement while HALLIE stares blankly.)

EDWARD

Well, do you?

SAWYER

Do I?

HALLIE

Like to cook?

SAWYER

(turning to HALLIE)

Ah, yes. Very much so. I'm a chef, actually.

HALLIE

A chef!

SAWYER

(sheepishly)

I work in this French place-- uh, Le Canard Argenté, if you're familiar.

HALLIE

Oh my God! I've heard that restaurant is fantastic--

EDWARD

(interrupting)

Why, my wife Adele and I love it there! And you're the chef! We simply love your work.

SAWYER

(embarrassed)

Thank you, yes. You've heard of it, Hallie?

HALLIE

Absolutely! It looks positively gourmet. You must love working there.

SAWYER

(hesitant)

Le Canard Argenté... is very successful.

EDWARD

But you are not happy there?

SAWYER

I have learned so much about consistency and precision and accuracy-- and that's great, really... but I, I want to experiment now.

(SAWYER rises from his seat, pacing into the center of the waiting room.)

HALLIE

What do you mean?

SAWYER

(sighing, begins to recite from memory)

The coq au vin at Le Canard Argenté is made with three cups of Burgundy and three tablespoons of Cognac, a carrot, an onion, two cloves of garlic - minced - a teaspoon of tomato paste, three large tablespoons of extra-virgin olive oil, a pinch of black pepper, a pinch of sugar and a pinch of salt - in that order - and two rosemary sprigs and two bay leaves.

HALLIE

That sounds incredible.

(SAWYER snaps his fingers.)

SAWYER

Exactly! And I know precisely how we make our duck confit and our mussels and our warm niçoise salad, and you will know that they are delicious when I tell you. But what of it makes you think? Makes you question whether two things that you never thought of together could actually go together?

(SAWYER grows excited thinking about food in this way.)

SAWYER

(cont')

I want my cooking to be eye-opening. I want you to taste something you've never tasted before! I want my kitchen to be a space for play and creativity, and my dining room not just a place to eat but to... experience.

HALLIE

So you hope to open your own place, then?

(SAWYER looks at HALLIE who is smiling. He smiles back, although he is now subconscious of his personal declaration.)

SAWYER

Perhaps I am getting carried away.

HALLIE

Certainly not! What you're describing is innovative and different, it's why I like being an art teacher so much. I'm surrounded by students who are drawing inspiration from things I know nothing about. It's constant new exposure.

SAWYER

You teach art?

HALLIE

Yes! In the middle school at McKinley.

SAWYER

That's where I went to school!

HALLIE

No way! Well... I can't wait for your new restaurant to open so that I can be the first to tell you what an amazing cook you are. I'll bring my students!

SAWYER

(teasing)

You've never had my food before. How do you know you wouldn't be repulsed by it?

EDWARD

Oh, if the girl has any taste at all she'll think it splendid.

HALLIE

For once it seems we're in agreement.

(GABRIEL enters with a coffee and takes a seat in the waiting room. SAWYER sits down next to LAUREL. They make small talk while GABRIEL uses his phone and EDWARD reads a newspaper. JOSH and LAUREL rejoin the waiting room.)

HALLIE

(cont', to JOSH)

I'm so sorry for your loss.

(JOSH nods and puts his head in his hands. EVERYONE is silent. SAWYER puts his arm around the back of HALLIE'S chair. The clock moves forward to 8:53, ticking loudly.)

I-5 8:53 P.M.

(TESSA enters and walks into the waiting room.)

TESSA

(politely)

Mr. Higgins, may I speak with you?

EDWARD

Yes, yes! Please, how is my wife? What do you know?

TESSA

Mrs. Higgins is going to be fine.

(EDWARD sighs in relief.)

TESSA

(cont')

We do strongly encourage her to stay the night so that we can monitor her vitals, though.

EDWARD

Of course! Whatever you suggest. Oh! But she is well?!

TESSA

(smiling)

Yes, Mr. Higgins. You should be able to see her shortly.

EDWARD

Thank you! Thank you so much.

(TESSA exits SL. JOSH is breathing shakily, rocking back and forth in his seat. LAUREL puts her hand on his back.)

EDWARD

Josh, I can't imagine what you're going through. I wouldn't know what to do with myself without Adele. My sincere condolences.

LAUREL, HALLIE, SAWYER

(overlapping, mumbled)

If there's anything I can do--
I'm so sorry--
My deepest sympathies--

HALLIE

Who did you lose?

JOSH

(quietly)

My brother.

JOSH

(cont')

We, uh... We were driving on the freeway, country music blasting outta the radio. Johnny sitting next to me, he cracks open a can of, umm... And Trevor's in the back with his feet sticking out the window.

HALLIE

You have two brothers?

JOSH

No, no... I only have Johnny. But I've known Trevor since high school.

GABRIEL

Had.

(JOSH sighs, wiping away his tears on his sleeve.)

JOSH

Had.

LAUREL

What happened?

JOSH

This Tracy Chapman cover comes on, "You Got a Fast Car" or something, and every time he says it, we speed up. Johnny's girlfriend calls-- it's for me. So Johnny passes the phone and says Cara's playing matchmaker again. She's always trying to set me up with her friends. I take the phone and she starts talking about Ariana, and I tell her I don't do girls with "A" names anymore, and she's like, "That's ridiculous." I say it's no more ridiculous than her not liking anyone in sales. And then... then we laugh, I think. I-I go to hang up the phone when Johnny yells and I look up but it's too late. I don't know how it happened but I guess I'm-- we're!-- going like 90 in a 65-zone and there's this car up ahead that moves into our lane but I-- we! -- don't see it until it's there and we're there and BOOM!

(EVERYONE jumps. JOSH is shaking.)

JOSH

And then it was just me and the radio.

(JOSH begins to mutter-sing, crying.)

JOSH

You got a fast car
Is it fast enough so we can fly away?
We gotta make a decision
Leave tonight or live and die this way..

LAUREL

(comforting)

Shhh, it's okay.

JOSH

It's not. Johnny's gone and I have no idea how Trevor is, meanwhile, I'm sitting here without a scratch-- it was my fault! It should've been me.

HALLIE

Don't say that.

(GABRIEL scoffs. EVERYONE turns to look at him, astonished.)

GABRIEL

Really? You're gonna sit here and tell him it's *not* his fault?

HALLIE and LAUREL

(overlapping)

Oh my God!--
Would you shut up?

GABRIEL

Oh c'mon! He's here for drunk driving and phone calls?!

LAUREL

Gabriel!

GABRIEL

No really, "Don't text and drive, don't drink and drive," has been forced down our throats since we were all old enough the get behind the wheel, and you're

going to tell him that *he's* a victim? You think this is comparable to a heart attack or cancer?!

(HALLIE holds her stomach in pain. TESSA enters and walks over to LAUREL.)

GABRIEL

(cont')

I mean, Christ! At least a heart attack is nice and quick. You haven't had to watch her fade away slowly in pain for two years!

EDWARD

That's enough young man!

HALLIE

(doubled over)

Ahh! Ow! Ohh! Help, it's the baby!

I-6 8:59 P.M.

SAWYER

(interrupting TESSA's silent conversation with LAUREL)

Nurse! We need a nurse!

TESSA

(running to HALLIE'S side)

Oh my goodness!

HALLIE

(in pain)

Ahh!

TESSA

(flipping through charts)

When are you due?

HALLIE

Now!

TESSA

Okay, hold on Ms. Rose. Let's get you to a hospital bed.

(TESSA exits SL and returns with a wheelchair.)

SAWYER

Are you alright?

HALLIE

(breathing heavily)

Mmm... goddamn contractions.

(TESSA and SAWYER help HALLIE into the wheelchair.)

TESSA

Good to go, Ms. Rose?

HALLIE

Yes, thank you.

TESSA

(to SAWYER)

You ready, Dad?

SAWYER

Pardon?

HALLIE and SAWYER

(nervously)

On no, he's not the father--
I'm not the father!

TESSA

(embarrassed)

I'm sorry! My mistake. Is there someone else I can call for you, Ms. Rose?

HALLIE

No, that's okay. It's just me.

(SAWYER looks at HALLIE, puzzled, wondering whether there is a Mr. Rose in the picture.)

TESSA

Alrighty then, let's get going.

(TESSA wheels HALLIE off, leaving SAWYER standing in the waiting room. He takes a seat glumly.)

GABRIEL

All alone now your girlfriend's gone?

SAWYER

She's not-- enough, man. At least now some good will come of today.

(GABRIEL scoffs.)

LAUREL

You're right. Childbirth is beautiful-- really, it's a miracle.

SAWYER

You ever seen it in here?

LAUREL

(smiling)

Yeah... And whenever I've had a really bad day, maybe lost someone on the table, I go to the newborns' nursery. It's softer in there... and the air smells like baby powder.

JOSH

Johnny always wanted kids. He loved 'em. So did Cara. Jesus, poor Cara. I'll have to tell her.

LAUREL

She doesn't know yet?

JOSH

She's in the air, flying out as we speak. They had been doing long distance the last couple of months. God, she never even got to say goodbye.

LAUREL

Nor did you, Josh.

JOSH

I don't deserve a goodbye.

SAWYER

You have every right to grieve.

JOSH

It should've been me. They didn't deserve this.

GABRIEL

They never do. Death has no jury. There's no due process or court hearing. Death's a cloaked figure, looking down on us

all, swinging his ticking pocket watch, thinking "Who's next?"

EDWARD

Are you suggesting that death is methodical?

LAUREL and GABRIEL

Of course--

I like to think it's not.

LAUREL

(surprised, confused)

Oh?

EDWARD

Why do you think it is, Laurel?

LAUREL

(matter-of-factly)

People come into this hospital when they're sick. Those who are young and fit and maintain a good lifestyle almost always leave healthy again. It's the people with weak bodies who struggle-- it makes perfect sense, really. If you don't take care of yourself, your chances of survival decrease.

GABRIEL

(pointing)

But see there it is, those words, "almost always." Sometimes, that person who goes on brisk walks and eats their "five fruits and veg a day" and has never touched a cigarette in her life gets sick. And she doesn't get better. Then what?

(LAUREL is silent.)

GABRIEL

(cont')

Death has to be random. It's the only way this makes sense. We did everything right - she did everything right - and still... God can't be that cruel.

EDWARD

Ah, the Epicurean Paradox.

Gabriel

Huh?

SAWYER

Epicurus reasoned that if God is willing to prevent evil but is not able to, then he is not all-powerful. But if He's able to prevent evil and isn't willing to, then he is not all-good. Assuming God is both all-powerful and all-good, then how can the evil and suffering in the world be explained?

(EVERYONE looked at SAWYER, baffled.)

SAWYER

(abashed)

What? Mr. Professor over there isn't the only one who reads.

EDWARD

You enjoy philosophy, Sawyer?

SAWYER

It was my degree before culinary school.

EDWARD

Oh, marvelous!

LAUREL

(to JOSH)

Do you think death makes deliberate choices?

JOSH

No idea... but it does change how I see being alive, you know? Like everything could just disappear so quick.

EDWARD

Mmm, carpe diem. Seizing the current day because the future is uncertain.

GABRIEL

And because death is inevitable.

(TESSA enters looking extremely troubled. She walks toward LAUREL. LAUREL meets her gaze and stands up.)

TESSA

Laurel, I'm so so sorry. I don't even know how to say this... Mike passed away.

I-7 9:04 P.M.

LAUREL
(total shock)

What?

TESSA
We thought he was stabilized, but then he went into a biphasic reaction and stopped responding to the epinephrine. I-I don't know what happened.

LAUREL
No. No-no-no-no-no. No!

(LAUREL collapses and TESSA guides her into a seat.)

LAUREL
(cont')
This isn't supposed to happen. He's meant to be fine, he should be fine! No one drops dead from an allergy like that, it's half a percent! This isn't fair!

(LAUREL begins to sob uncontrollably. Tessa crouches beside LAUREL and holds her in an embrace.)

TESSA
Nothing about the operating table is fair, Laurel. Think about when you're doing a heart transplant, and the patient's body rejects the transplant after surgery. It's not because of anything you did on the table or anything they did, their immune system just didn't take the transplant... We can't always explain medicine. We just have to believe as much of the science as we can manage.

LAUREL
(wailing)
Why?!

TESSA
Shhhh, it's okay. I got you. Breathe. Breathe, Laurel... You know, a study was recently published that suggested 45 percent of people with food allergies developed at least one additional new allergy in adulthood. If Mike was allergic to tree nuts, he would have been prone to reactions from other things. Maybe today something else happened to...

LAUREL

(still devastated)

It's not enough.

TESSA

Of course it's not. I know it's not.

(LAUREL puts her feet on the chair, tucking her legs up. She dries her face and shivers.)

TESSA

(cont')

Do you want a blanket, sweetie?

(LAUREL nods.)

TESSA

Okay.

(TESSA begins to exit. JOSH runs after her.)

JOSH

Umm, Ma'am. I was wondering if you could help me.

(TESSA sighs and re-establishes her role as a nurse rather than a friend.)

TESSA

What do you need, Mr. Hatzmann?

JOSH

I-I wanted to know if you have any update on Trevor Peterson. He's my best friend.

TESSA

No, Mr. Hatzmann. No news yet. If you'll excuse me.

(TESSA exits, leaving JOSH alone. He walks back to the waiting room.)

GABRIEL

(mumbling)

Still think that death is sensical?

SAWYER

C'mon man, drop it.

EDWARD

After all the advice she's given us today? Despicable.

(EDWARD strokes LAUREL'S back. She puts her head on his shoulder and closes her eyes. TESSA enters with a blanket. She spreads it out on top of LAUREL, kisses her forehead and exits. EDWARD pulls a newspaper from his back pocket to read. GABRIEL responds to emails on his phone. SAWYER rearranges the ice bag in his hands. JOSH sits with his head in his hands. The clock moves forward to 9:37, ticking loudly.)

I-8 9:37 P.M.

(HALLIE enters the waiting room -- still pregnant -- and tries to sit down in a chair. She is struggling.)

SAWYER

Here, let me help you!

(SAWYER crosses to the other side of the seats to help HALLIE lower herself into the chair. Instead of returning to his original seat, SAWYER sits down next to HALLIE.)

HALLIE

(warmly)

Thank you.

SAWYER

What are you doing back here?

HALLIE

(exacerbated, shrugging)

Braxton Hicks.

SAWYER

I thought your last name was Rose?

HALLIE

Huh?

SAWYER

Braxton Hicks-Rose?

(HALLIE looks perplexed.)

SAWYER

(cont')

The name of the baby?

HALLIE

What? No. Braxton Hicks. They're false contractions. I'm not in labor-- yet. It just feels like I am.

(LAUREL stirs, having nodded off. Seeing that HALLIE has returned, she attempts to refresh herself and sit up properly. LAUREL does not want to ruin the magic of HALLIE'S pregnancy with sad news.)

LAUREL

(dazed)

Hallie! You're back?

SAWYER, GABRIEL and JOSH

Braxton Hicks.

LAUREL

I see.

HALLIE

I just want this baby out!

LAUREL

Soon. Braxton Hicks contractions are a sign your body is preparing for labor.

HALLIE

I just wish it wasn't so uncomfortable.

EDWARD

(lecturing tone)

Oh, you're lucky it isn't worse, dear. Back in my day, women pushed out their babies without complaint and that was that. Welcome to motherhood. Now we have all these fancy epidurals and pillowy hospital cots, it's all a bit superfluous for my liking.

HALLIE

(clearly aggravated)

If you don't approve of modern medicine or my childbirth, the door's there, professor.

EDWARD
(outraged)

Ms. Rose!

SAWYER
(in an attempt to mitigate the tension)
So! Hallie, have you decided what you want to name the baby? Not Braxton, I assume...

HALLIE
(smiling)
No, not Braxton. Harold, actually. It comes from a children's book, "Harold and the Purple Crayon."

SAWYER
I remember that book!

HALLIE
Really? It was my favorite one as a kid, and it's about how your creativity can take you anywhere. Harold Rose-- I'm still working on a middle name.

SAWYER
It's a fantastic choice! Clearly the name of a future artist... is there a Mr. Rose in the picture? I noticed no ring, but maybe a boyfriend? Or-or a girlfriend?

HALLIE
(laughing)
No, I'm afraid not. It's just me.

SAWYER
Well, not for long.

HALLIE
What?

SAWYER
(awkwardly)
I-- your baby, I mean! He'll be with you soon. You'll be together, that is.

HALLIE
Right, of course.

(HALLIE takes a shaky breath.)

HALLIE

It's kind of nerve-wracking, now that it's all about to happen. And being a single parent, I thought it wouldn't be that bad, but what if it is? I don't know.

LAUREL

(reserved, LAUREL is still grappling with her personal loss and has forgotten her patience)

All new parents feel that way, and they all figure it out. Hallie. You're going to be wonderful. That maternal instinct is already inside of you.

HALLIE

How do you know?

LAUREL

Because you came into the hospital when something felt off. You could sense it, and you listened to the feeling. That's what a good mother does.

HALLIE

(smiling)

Thank you.

SAWYER

Yeah, and think of it this way. If you can manage a class of twenty children covered in paint, you can handle one little baby.

(HALLIE and SAWYER chuckle.)

HALLIE

I hope it is that simple.

I-9 9:41 P.M.

(TESSA enters the waiting room.)

TESSA

Mr. Higgins, I'm pleased to inform you that you may visit your wife now. She is awake and hoping to see you.

EDWARD

Oh, thank you so much! Thank you.

(EDWARD looks at LAUREL, sadly.)

EDWARD

(cont')

Will you be alright?

(LAUREL nods. EDWARD rises from his seat, gathering his things as he prepares to visit his wife.)

TESSA

Laurel, your dad is here to take you back home for the weekend.

LAUREL

What? No. I don't need--

TESSA

Yes, you do. I called him. C'mon, sweetie. It's time to go.

LAUREL

But--

TESSA

Laurel.

LAUREL

Okay.

EDWARD

(to TESSA)

I'll walk her out to the parking lot.

TESSA

Thank you.

(EDWARD and TESSA begin to exit.)

HALLIE

(to SAWYER, whispered)

Wait, did her boyfriend not make...?

(SAWYER nods gravely. HALLIE hauls herself out of her seat and rushes to catch up to LAUREL and EDWARD.)

HALLIE

Laurel! Laurel, wait.

(LAUREL and EDWARD turn to face HALLIE. Meanwhile, TESSA receives a call and steps outside the waiting room to answer it. TESSA mimics the actions of a phone call.)

EDWARD

(to LAUREL)

I'll meet you at the exit.

(EDWARD exits.)

HALLIE

I'm so sorry for your loss. I didn't know before, and-- you've been like a fairy godmother to us all today. With the advice and the comfort and everything. Of all of us here, well, you didn't deserve this.

LAUREL

Thank you.

HALLIE

His name was Mike, right?

LAUREL

Mhm. Short for Michael.

HALLIE

Laurel?

LAUREL

Yes?

HALLIE

I really like the sound of Harold Michael Rose.

(LAUREL smiles, tears trickling down her face. LAUREL and HALLIE embrace in a hug.)

LAUREL

If you spell it M-I-C-H-E-L, it's also a nod to Michelangelo.

HALLIE

Perfect.

(HALLIE and LAUREL look at each other, still holding hands.)

HALLIE

(cont')

I'll let you go. Goodbye, Laurel.

LAUREL

Goodbye.

(LAUREL exits. HALLIE returns to the waiting room. TESSA ends her phone call and returns to the waiting room.)

TESSA

Mr. Hatzmann, your friend Trevor is going to be okay.

JOSH

(disbelief)

What?

TESSA

He has suffered some severe injuries-- his leg is broken, and he will be in a wheelchair for several weeks. But--

JOSH

But he's okay?

TESSA

Yes.

(TESSA'S phone rings again.)

TESSA

(cont')

The two of you are very lucky indeed, Mr. Hatzmann. Sorry, excuse me for a second.

(TESSA returns to DSL for her phone call. GABRIEL checks his watch and sighs. JOSH looks at him, weeping tears of joy and guilt.)

SAWYER
(to JOSH)
Congratulations, man.

JOSH
(emotional)
Thank you so much.

HALLIE
I'm so happy for you.

TESSA
(on the phone)
Yes... Mhm... I understand. Thank you.

(TESSA hangs up the phone and returns to the waiting room. She clears her throat.)

TESSA
(cont')
Mr. Yang.

GABRIEL
Yes?

TESSA
Your mother did not survive the surgery. I'm terribly sorry. I know what a long journey this has been for you and your family, if there's anything I can--

GABRIEL
Is that everything?

TESSA
Wh--? Yes, I-I suppose so.

GABRIEL
Thank you. I need to make a work call.

(GABRIEL stands up and begins to exit.)

JOSH
(to GABRIEL)
I'm so sorry.

GABRIEL

(wistful)

Don't be. Just be grateful you have your friend.

(GABRIEL exits.)

JOSH

(to TESSA)

When can I see him?

TESSA

Now, he's on the second floor.

JOSH

Okay. Okay! Second floor-- thank you.

(JOSH gives a nod to HALLIE and SAWYER before exiting SR. HALLIE gives a small wave back.)

TESSA

Mr. Murphy, an OR room has now opened up. Are you ready to reattach that finger?

SAWYER

Oh, yes... just, give me one second.

TESSA

Of course. Collect your things and prepare yourself however you need. I'll be right over there.

SAWYER

(to HALLIE)

I guess this is it.

HALLIE

I guess so.

SAWYER and HALLIE

(overlapping)

I had a wonderful time talking with you--
I really loved spending time with you--

(SAWYER and HALLIE both laugh and smile)

SAWYER

Maybe we could do it again sometime.

HALLIE

Oh my God!

SAWYER

(worried)

Or-or not... I mean, only if you wanted to!

HALLIE

No, I mean, oh my God, I think my water just broke!

SAWYER

Oh. Oh! Nurse!

(TESSA runs back into the waiting room.)

TESSA

What happened?

HALLIE

My water just broke!

TESSA

I'll get the wheelchair!

(TESSA exits and returns quickly with the wheelchair.)

HALLIE

(to SAWYER)

Here we go again.

SAWYER

Hey, it looks like it might just happen this time! And about before...

HALLIE

I would love to see you again, Sawyer.

(SAWYER smiles. TESSA helps HALLIE into the wheelchair.)

TESSA

Mr. Murphy, I need to handle this, but if you go down that hallway and take a right, one of the nurses at the desk can show you to the surgery prep center.

(TESSA begins to roll HALLIE away, leaving SAWYER behind.)

HALLIE

Oh, Sawyer!

(TESSA pauses.)

HALLIE

(cont')

I figured it out. Harold Michel Rose.

SAWYER

I can't wait to meet him.

(TESSA continues to push HALLIE. They exit.)

SAWYER

(cont', to himself)

Harold Michel Rose. Hallie Rose. Hallie Rose-Murphy?

(SAWYER smiles to himself and exits with his ice bag and fingertip. The clock moves forward to 12:06, ticking loudly.)

I-10 12:06 A.M.

(TESSA enters the waiting room. She takes a seat in one of the chairs. TESSA pulls out her phone to call LAUREL. It goes to voicemail. She leaves a voice mail.)

TESSA

Hey, Laurel. It's me. How are you doing, sweetie? I'm sorry, that's a stupid question. I just finished my shift, so I'm headed home. Oh! Hallie delivered her baby, a healthy baby boy. She wanted me to tell you. Do you want me to come see you tomorrow? I'll bring sugar cookies and movie suggestions, or we could just chat, or we could not say anything at all... let me know. Goodnight.

(TESSA ends the voicemail and stands up. She walks over to the light switch and turns it off.)

(Blackout.)