

Gnaw Bone

By: Connor Ermir Bradshaw

THE CHARACTERS:

ANGEL. Mid 20s. Transfemme. Lynn's child. Dropped out of community college and moved out four years ago. Hates cops. Keeps a bat under her bed. Afraid of the dark but loves horror movies. Hates the new construction going on.

LYNN. Early / mid 40s. Cis woman. Mother to Angel and Abel. Likes her chicken fried and her burgers rare. Has \$1,092.54 in her savings account. Resourceful. Part of the local church's altar guild. Hates the new construction going on.

ABEL. Late teens / early 20s. Identifies as a cis dude, but doesn't think of himself as a "man." Lynn's child. Part-time community college student. Regularly throws out his back deadlifting. Hates the new construction going on.

LOCAL NEWS ANCHORS 1 & 2: Omniscient harbingers. Killer smiles.

THE LOCATION:

Gnaw Bone, IN. Unincorporated farm land. A place between heaven and hell.

NOTES ON LANGUAGE:

A // indicates the beginning of overlapping dialogue.

A – indicates the interruption of speech, whether from the character currently speaking or from another character.

The play makes use of indents to denote beats and pauses. The further the indent, the longer the intended beat.

ACT ONE

SCENE ONE.

ABEL (Late teens), ANGEL (Mid 20s), and LYNN (40s – their mother) sit outside in white plastic lawn chairs around a dimly-lit fire. Cicadas trumpet in the background, scoring the scene. ABEL pops marshmallows into his mouth. LYNN works on her daily sudoku puzzle. ANGEL fidgets with a skewer.

ABEL. We got more marshmallows?

ANGEL. You got like half a bag in your lap.

ABEL. I'm tryin' to figure out how many of 'em I can eat though. If // there's more, I'll

ANGEL. You're gonna eat half a bag of marshmallows?

ABEL. S'that a problem? They're like all air. Right, mom?

LYNN. I'm not gettin' in the middle a' this.

ABEL. How Swiss of you. [*Looks at LYNN's sudoku puzzle*]
Can I see?

Hm.

Maybe if ya put a one there and a six there.

LYNN. I thought that too but then we gotta move the five.

ABEL. Oh dang, okay. Shoot. Tough one today.

LYNN. Yer tellin' me.

You wanna take a crack at it?

ANGEL. I'm good.

LYNN. Thas' right. You never was all that good at math.

ABEL. Or science. Or history. Or // English.

ANGEL. Wanna chill out?

ABEL. I'm chill personified.

ABEL pops a marshmallow in his mouth. Then, through his chewing:

ABEL. Mom, we were discussin' this in the car but I wantchu' to settle it: do I have'ta sleep on the couch?

LYNN. Why would yeh have to sleep on the couch?

ABEL. Well I wasn't sure if I'd have to make room for our // esteemed guest

ANGEL. I can sleep on the couch.

ABEL. Oh. Okay.

Cool.

Quite the change in tune.

LYNN. Looks like it's settled.

Did yeh bring any clothes with ya?

ANGEL. Yeah.

LYNN. They sensible?

ANGEL. Do you consider this sensible?

LYNN. Not partic'ly.

ANGEL. Then prob'ly not.

LYNN. Mm. Summa yer old clothes is in a garbage bag in my closet. You can rummage through and find what suits ya.

Yeh look 'bout the same size as ya did when ya left so. Shouldn't be too snug a fit.

ANGEL. Okay.

LYNN. And if they're too small, I'm sure Abel won't have a problem lendin' you a pair a' shorts or a shirt or whatever yeh need.

ANGEL. Cool.

Thanks.

LYNN. Mhm.

ANGEL. I don't have to stay the entire time, either. I know this was...kinda sudden.

LYNN. Death tends to be that way. Can't schedule it. Not in this country anyhow.

ABEL. Coincidentally, you *can* do that in Switzerland.

ANGEL. Great tie in.

ABEL. It's what I do.

So what was the final verdict on Operation Marshmallow?

LYNN. Eat whatcha got in yer lap and if yeh want more you can always run to the Walmart.

ABEL. It's so far away thoughhhhh.

LYNN. I'm just providin' options.

ABEL. [to *ANGEL*] Can you drive?

ANGEL. If you really need marshmallows // later then I guess so.

ABEL. Dooooope.

LYNN. Well in case ya wanna go while I'm asleep, I'll leave my purse out. Keys're in the front zipper pocket.

ABEL. Sweet.

You buyin' then?

LYNN. There's a ten'n there somewhere. Yeh find it you can spend it.

ABEL. Nice.

LYNN. So I hear yeh been bartendin'.

ANGEL. Oh.

Yeah. Here and there.

LYNN. Survivin' on tips then?

ANGEL. Yeah, it's goin' okay.

LYNN. Dunno how yeh do it.

ANGEL. Make enough money on tips?

LYNN. No just – I dunno how you settle inta that kinda thing.

ANGEL. I'm good at it.

LYNN chuckles.

ANGEL. I mean I know it's not like, engineering.

But it's not easy. Ya got people screamin' at you, tryna rip you off, gettin' too drunk. Fighting.

LYNN. Fightin'?

ANGEL. Sometimes.

LYNN. Mm.

ABEL. I don't think I'd be a good bartender. Ya gotta be good at talkin' to people.

ANGEL. You're good at talkin' to people you wanna talk to.

ABEL. Me and everybody else.

ANGEL. Gotta start somewhere.

ABEL. Maybe.

LYNN. That's my shirt innit.

ANGEL. I'm sorry?

LYNN. The shirt yer wearin'. I been starin' at it and was thinkin' "Now wait a minute, thas' like one I had in my closet not too long ago."

ANGEL. I mean it might look the same // but I don't think

LYNN. Abel, does that look like my shirt? I swear it's mine. Cuz you can see the neckline's stretched. And the fabric's thin so it's pretty noticeable.

ABEL. Um.

ANGEL. It's not your shirt.

LYNN. Looks an awful lot like it.

ANGEL. Well it's not.

LYNN *sucks her teeth.*

ANGEL. Okay, I'll play. Why would I steal your shirt and wear it // in front of you?

LYNN. Oh I gave up tryna understand what you do and why a long time ago. Yer a...yer an enigma. Just floatin', bartnedin', breakin' up fights.

Who's ta say you din't pick that shirt *specifically* because ya knew you'd see me?

ANGEL. I just – what's the payoff? In that scenario. What do I get out of it?

LYNN. Well thas' exactly what I'm attemptin' to ascertain.

ANGEL. You and me both.

LYNN. Yer' really tellin' me thas' not my old shirt?

ANGEL. No! Obviously not.

LYNN. Abel, you said you wasn't sure?

ABEL. Yeah, I dunno. Guess it looks familiar.

ANGEL. Seriously?

LYNN. See! Abel knows. He's just tryna be nice about it so you don't feel embarrassed 'bout stealin'.

ANGEL. Mom, why would I steal your old shirt and wear it in front of you when I can just go buy one myself?

LYNN. Well could be because you been strugglin' to make enough on tips.

ANGEL. I literally said I was doin' fine not two minutes ago.

LYNN. Anybody with two functionin' eyes could see through that..

I mean you look like yer survivin' on a pack of Maruchan a day. [*Looks ANGEL up and down*] Barely survivin'.

ANGEL. Why don't you just try on the shirt? Y'know if // it fits then you

LYNN. No no no; eh you see what's goin' on, Abel? This is a – a gesture. Cuz' this way if I say yes, I'll have one of my children takin' the clothes off their back huddlin' by the fire for warmth. Thas' the story that gets told if I just say // I wanna try on my shirt..

ANGEL. What are you talking about? That doesn't make any // sense. Who's tellin' these stories that you're

LYNN. It makes perfectly good sense if yer sittin' where I been sittin' the past four years I can tell ya that much.

ANGEL. I don't have to stay here. I can leave if ya want.

LYNN. Oh, good lord.

ANGEL. I can, though! You're upset! And you're clearly // projecting this deep-seated – whatever it is – onto me!

LYNN. I'm not upset! All I been askin' is if thas' my shirt. And yer gettin' all wound up and yellin' about projections and Switzerland and // whatever it is you talk about with yer bartender friends.

ANGEL. Okay I didn't even bring up Switzerland, that was literally Abel!

ABEL. Don't bring me into this, I'm just tryna enjoy // this bag of marshmallows

ANGEL. Could you be any less high right now? Like holy fuck! How can you not see that Abel is // stoned off his ass?

ABEL. Whoa friendly fire, dude what the fuck.

LYNN sits back and slowly starts mashing the heels of her palm into her forehead, like she's attempting to relieve a pressure headache.

ANGEL. Friendly fire? You understand how that's like, the most apt description of the way you've treated me today, right?

ABEL. What?

ANGEL. Yes! Oh my god, yes! *Minutes* after a fucking funeral service that I traveled hours to attend, you ask me where I'm plannin' to stay // as if I'd have anywhere else

ABEL. Dude, I already apologized like it obviously wasn't // me tryna be shitty

ANGEL. And stop fucking calling me “dude” all the time! It's annoying and you know that!

LYNN's forehead mashing grows in intensity.

ABEL. Jesus christ, I call everyone dude! And you do it, too, like, I dunno what yer tryna // prove right now

ANGEL. I'm not tryna prove anything! I'm just pointing out that you're being mean to me.

ABEL. I'm being "mean" to you? The fuck is this, elementary school?

ANGEL. Fuck you.

ABEL. No, dude, fuck you. Seriously, you come back and yer doin' what you always do: actin' like yer the only person who's capable of seeing the "bigger picture" as if that means fuckin' // anything at the end a' the day.

ANGEL. I got here *today!* This is the second conversation we've had since I've been back. What do you mean I'm "doing what I always do"?

ABEL. It's just your vibe. You like, make sure everyone knows you're miserable and shit.

ANGEL. Okay but have you considered that the reason I'm miserable when I'm here is *because* of everyone here?!

ABEL. You just got here today! How could everyone be making you miserable already?

ANGEL. I shouldn't have to explain this to you! You know why!

ABEL. You're like, screaming right now.

ANGEL. I'm not screaming! I'm pissed but I'm not screaming.

ABEL laughs derisively and rolls his eyes.

ABEL. Okay.

ANGEL. What do you think is happening right now? Like this isn't an elaborate bit. Nobody's having a good time!

ABEL. I know.

ANGEL. So then why are you arguing? Don't you feel bad knowing the **only** nice thing you've done is let me bum a fucking cigarette after the funeral? And that's not even a good example because I offered to buy you a new—

LYNN suddenly slaps herself in the face. Hard. Fast and angry. The build up of her mashing. Her face instantly begins to redden.

ABEL. Shit. Grab ‘er sudoku // book before it catches.

ANGEL. What the fuck.

LYNN almost seems catatonic.

ABEL. Can you just put out the fire? Please. Just put out // the fuckin

ANGEL. How am I sup//posed to

ABEL. The cover’s back there. Just clamp it on top.

ANGEL goes to grab the cover. Then LYNN says, almost inaudibly, to ABEL as he passes:

LYNN. You know I don’t like doin’ that, baby.

ABEL. No I know I know. I’m sorry, mom. We won’t fight. It was just’n accident. We won’t do it no more.

ANGEL puts the clamp on the fire. LYNN remains seated.

ABEL. Can you get up, mama?

LYNN. I dunno.

ABEL. Here, lemme help.

ANGEL stands to the side as ABEL lightly holds his mother’s hands and helps her up.

ABEL. Can ya make it in the house okay?

LYNN. I can manage. But I might need help closin’ the door.

ABEL. I’ll just come with.

LYNN. Ya sure? I don’t wanna be a bother.

ABEL. No no no, it’s fine. S’my fault anyway.

LYNN. Thank you, baby.

LYNN and ABEL start to walk out.

LYNN. Thas' what we called you, ya know: Baby Abie.

ABEL. Yeah, I 'member.

LYNN. You were such a good baby.

ABEL. I know, mama.

The two exit. ANGEL stands alone. BLACKOUT.

SCENE TWO.

SPOTLIGHT. LYNN stands alone onstage. The only thing next to her is a bathroom sink with various makeup products and a hairdryer stacked on both sides. She's doing her makeup in the morning, facing the audience, looking into them like a mirror. She purses her lips, applies lipstick. Decides she hates that color. Wipes it off with the back of her hand. Applies another redder coat. Better. LYNN fishes for blush in her makeup bag. Finds it. Quickly stamps it into her cheeks. Forgot to put on concealer. Furiously scrubs the blush off with her thumbs. Lets out a deep agitated sigh.

SPOTLIGHT. ANGEL sits on the the stage, parallel to LYNN, about two feet away. The only thing next to her is a small black bag. She's doing her makeup in the morning, facing the audience, looking into them like a mirror. Mother and daughter perform the rest of these actions concurrently. ANGEL pulls a black lipstick from her bag and applies it. Cleans the edge with her nail. Looks good.

LYNN pulls out concealer and starts dabbing it under her eyes, around the corners of her mouth, and under her bottom lip. Fishes for another blush. Finds one and presses it into her cheeks. She tuts. It's better but not good.

ANGEL pulls an eyeliner pen from her bag and carefully draws. One eye. Then the other. It looks professionally done. She grabs a tweezer and starts deliberately, meditatively, plucking her eyebrows.

LYNN grabs an eyeliner pen from her makeup bag. She shakily draws. She lets out a breath, that sounds more like a whistle. A tea kettle starting.

ANGEL migrates the plucking from her eyebrows to her lips.

LYNN grabs her mascara and hastily rakes it over her eyelashes.

ANGEL migrates the plucking from her lips to her arms.

LYNN sprays herself with a bottle of perfume. Once. Twice. Three times.

ANGEL continues plucking her arms.

LYNN stares at herself hard, scanning for any unaccounted imperfection. She sighs.

ANGEL continues plucking.

LYNN closes her eyes, opens them. Tries to admire her handiwork.

ANGEL continues plucking.

LYNN can't admire her handiwork.

ANGEL continues plucking.

LYNN lets out a frustrated, disgusted grunt and swipes everything off the sink. The brushes, palettes and hairdryer hit the tile.

ANGEL flinches at the sound of the crash and accidentally plucks out a chunk of her skin. She lets out a breathy yelp.

LYNN feels suffocated by this bathroom. It's too small. She runs the faucet.

ANGEL investigates her wound, applying pressure. It's not bleeding too badly.

LYNN grabs a washcloth, submerges it into the water, and starts scrubbing her face.

ANGEL grabs her things and exits, with one hand covering her arm.

LYNN finishes scrubbing her mistakes off her face, dries her face with a hand towel, and scans the floor for her concealer. She finds it. Picks it up. Starts over – dabbing under her eyes, around the corners of her mouth, and under her bottom lip before:

BLACKOUT.

SCENE THREE.

We're inside the home. It's small, though Lynn might call it "cozy." But it's not. The home feels stripped. Gutted even. There's no dining room set – or even a kitchen table – it's just folding chairs and three tray tables leaning against a wall. Near the folding tables and chairs is a rain bucket that's about a quarter of the way full. It's positioned underneath a softball-sized hole in the roof. The only other notable pieces of furniture in the living room are the couch and the TV. The couch, a peeling leathery thing, floats in the middle of the space. A boat out at sea.

The TV, far too big for the space, sits on cinder blocks that have been stacked on top of each other. It faces the audience. A lighthouse.

The rest of the home looks unfinished, as though someone is moving in or moving out.

LYNN's in the kitchen, leaning against the counter, drinking a cup of coffee and watching the local news on mute.

ABEL walks in.

ABEL. Mornin'.

LYNN. G'mornin'. Sleep okay?

ABEL. Yeah. Thought I heard something fall in the bathroom earlier. Everything alright?

LYNN. Oh, you know me. Clumsy.
Knocked over my hair dryer.
D'I wake you?

ABEL. Nah, I was already up.
Where's...?

LYNN. Outside.

ABEL. Gotcha.

ABEL looks at the TV.

ABEL. Can you unmute it? I wanna hear this.

LYNN. Yeah.

LYNN grabs the remote and unmutes. NEWS ANCHOR 1 is heard from the TV.

NEWS ANCHOR 1. –bean harvests hit record highs in previous years. But local farmers point out that new suburban sprawl could substantially limit harvests for years, even decades, into the future. Spokespersons from Cain Development firmly push back on these claims, noting the firm's decades-long history of sustainable commercial development and its recent efforts to electrify a portion of Indiana's power grid. For years, the power grid has drawn from coal as its primary–

LYNN mutes the TV.

ABEL.

What the—

LYNN. Yeh got whatcha wanted. Soybeans. Developers. Sustainable.

Now yeh want anything for breakfast? We don't got eggs but we got pancake mix. Want me to get some batter started?

ABEL. I'm not hungry. Any coffee left?

LYNN slides a full mug over to ABEL.

LYNN. Din't put creamer or sugar in it. S'just black. And I used the Brita water, so you don't gotta worry about it bein' *tainted*.

ABEL. Thanks.

LYNN. 'Course.

Now I'm goin' to Saint Peter in a bit. There's some altar guild work that I needa do.

Denise and summa the other girls is plannin' to do a potluck too. So I'll prob'ly be there 'til...nine?

That okay?

ABEL. Yeah, fine with me.

LYNN. Doin' anything today?

ABEL. Who knows?

Playin' it by ear. Micah and I might swing by to lift some weights.

LYNN. Long as it's just you two and there aren't, uh, any stragglers.

ABEL. Yeah, I know.

LYNN. I don't mean that in a — you know // what I'm gettin' at

ABEL. Yup.

LYNN. 'Kay. Good.

So ya think you'll still have time to help move my dresser before I go?

ABEL. Uhhh//hhhh

LYNN. I know yeh just woke up but I oughta be goin' soon and I'll be wonderin' about this dresser all day if we don't get it outta my room. Or at least try, y'know?

ABEL. Okay.

LYNN. And this way, we'll know whether we can move it just the two of us. We don't gotta take it outside or nothin' like that. Just gotta see if we can get that thing to budge. And it's solid. That's not particle board. It's a hundred percent oak. Or birch maybe.

ABEL. How much ya sell it for?

LYNN. Got two people biddin' on it. Posted it to eBay cuz' people was sayin' on Google that if yeh got higher-quality items, thas' where collectors go to find 'em.

ABEL. Gotcha.

LYNN. Yeah. One of 'em said he don't like the paint we done up on it but I 'member when we painted that thing and he's in for a rude awakenin' if he tries to peel it off. The grain on that dresser ain't right. S'ugly, honestly. S'why we painted it in the first place. To cover it up.

ABEL. I like the color we did. Sky blue.

LYNN. Cornflower. Yeah, it's nice. But. When ya got two people who're prepared to throw more'n a hundred bucks at it. Starts lookin' mighty replaceable.

ABEL. Replaceable?

LYNN. Yeah. Replaceable. What, you don't agree?

ABEL. I just. We're not really *replacin'* anything.

LYNN. Well not right now. But we will. Just need the money to do it.

ABEL. Right.

LYNN. That's what all these restorers do, Abel. They buy low and sell high. Then they buy high and sell higher. And it keeps goin' up and up and up. Thas' how this all works.

ABEL. I know.

LYNN. Okay. Dun't sound like yeh do but. I'll reserve my judgment so long as ya help me move the dang thing.

ABEL. Maybe we could get some help...*[ABEL looks offstage]*

LYNN. Whas' that one gonna do? Sittin' out there. Talkin' on the phone. Rail thin. Prob'ly snap a bone just tryna lift a corner of it. No no, we got this handled.
And if we don't, you can get Micah over here tomorra and the three of us can lift it.

ABEL. Okay.

LYNN. Great. You finish that coffee and I'll start gettin' my things together.
Y'all din't ended up going anywhere last night, didja?

ABEL. Nah. Keys're still in the front pocket of yer purse.

LYNN. Just answered the next question I was gonna ask.
Same wavelength.

LYNN exits. ABEL sips his coffee, looks offstage to where ANGEL is presumably sitting outside. He unmutes the TV.

NEWS ANCHOR 2. –alling on city council members to do something about the rash of drug overdoses in recent months, highlighted by the –

LYNN returns, purse thrown over her shoulder.

NEWS ANCHOR 2. – death of 21-year-old Billy Phelps, a graduate of Brown County High School, who had recently returned to his hometown of Gnawbone.

LYNN. Yeh finish your coffee?

ABEL throws the rest of it back.

ABEL. Yup.
Les' go.

*ABEL and LYNN exit. We hear them talking offstage. Meanwhile, the NEWS ANCHORS continue their exchange. These conversations happen concurrently, with the beginning and end noted by asterisks (**).*

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NEWS ANCHOR 2. Brown County High School principal, Jeff O'Shaugnessy, released the following statement to the community: "The recent passing of Billy Phelps is tragic, to say the least. And in a community as tight-knit as ours, one doesn't need to look far before finding a person who was directly impacted. The entire staff of Brown County High School embraces its mission to contribute to our students' social and emotional development. This is a difficult time for everyone, but I know our students and staff will be able to lean on each other as they remember not just a former classmate, but a friend, brother, and lifelong Brown County eagle. Fly high."

NEWS ANCHOR 1. Fly high, Billy.

NEWS ANCHOR 2. Turning over to related flying news, two local bird spotters have recently captured footage of a large winged creature sweeping across the night sky. This has Gnawbone avian enthusiasts

wondering: do we have a bald eagle in our midst? Or, and I hope you don't mind my saying this, Jerry, is this perhaps Billy coming back one final time?

NEWS ANCHOR 1. Don't mind at all, Tina. You raise an interesting point. It's such an interesting point, in fact, that I'll raise your question with another: What *is* a fallen angel?

Suddenly, NEWS ANCHOR 1 & 2 turn their bodies to the camera and direct all of their lines to it. Their demeanors shift.

NEWS ANCHOR 2. We do have an Angel in our midst, don't we, Jerry?

NEWS ANCHOR 1. Indeed we do, Tina.

NEWS ANCHOR 2. Why don't we ask her?

NEWS ANCHOR 1. I would, but we're not in the habit of asking questions we know the answer to, are we?

NEWS ANCHOR 2. Perhaps I can answer your initial question with another question, Jerry. What is it they say about Gnawbone? That you don't hit rock bottom; you just get used to the feeling of falling?

The TV goes static-y. It's as though locusts are swarming the NEWS ANCHORS.

NEWS ANCHOR 1. That's right, Tina. You just get used to the feeling of falling.

NEWS ANCHOR 2. Poor falling Angel.

NEWS ANCHOR 1. Poor falling Angel.

The static stops and the two snap back to normal positions and demeanors.

NEWS ANCHOR 2. Well here are some other animals that could be in the sky, Jerry: cats and dogs. That's right. For the first time in weeks, it looks as though central Indiana will be getting enough rain to feed a field of sunflowers.

NEWS ANCHOR 1. Let's turn it over to our weather correspondent, Darrell, for the details. Darrell, you hearing any meowing or barking in the distance?

LYNN. Now yeh see thas' where there's a good handhold. But the drawer's there so just make sure // it dun't go closin' on

ABEL. I know how to move furniture, mom.

LYNN. No I know, I know. I jus' don't want yer' fingers gettin' caught is all.

ABEL. Where're you grabbin'?

LYNN. I'm holdin' it here.
Whatta you think?

ABEL. I think thas' a bad spot.

LYNN. Why's that?

ABEL. Because if I'm tryna pull, I need you to push. We can't both be pullin'.

LYNN. I figured we'd both needa // pull to start

ABEL. This is stupid. Micah and I should just move it.

LYNN. Is' not stupid. You agreed to try. And if it don't work then you and Micah can try on yer own time but I just wanna see if we can // get this thing

ABEL. Why? Why does it matter that we can move it?

LYNN. I don't know why yer actin' so annoyed all of a sudden. You was perfectly happy to try and move it 30 seconds ago.

ABEL. Because I thought you was gonna come in here, look at it, and realize it's too big for you and me to move.

LYNN. Well you thought wrong then.
I'll carry whole stupid dresser myself. I don't care.
A back well used is a back broken.

ABEL. Mom.

LYNN. You gonna move this with me or not?

ABEL. Fine.

LYNN. Great.
And I'm movin' over, see? Pushin' not pullin'.

ABEL. Okay.

LYNN. Yeh ready?

ABEL. Yeah.

LYNN. 1...2...3!

Grunting.

ABEL. Okay stop stop stop.

LYNN. What?

ABEL. Yer still pushin'.

LYNN. No, I'm not.

ABEL. Yes, you are. I'm watchin' it with my own two eyes.

LYNN. Okay well tell me where I need to put my hands then. Literally, place my hands where yeh want.

ABEL. See?

LYNN. Abel, thas' right where they were.

ABEL. Do you want help or not?

LYNN. I do! But—

ABEL. Then you gotta listen to me.

LYNN. Fine fine fine.

ABEL. See how I'm liftin' right now? Try that.

LYNN. Alright I'll give it a shot. Look okay?

ABEL. Yeah, but move yer hand...there. Perfect.

LYNN. Okay. 1...2...3!

Grunting.

ABEL. S'not movin'.

LYNN. I *swear* it budged.
What?

ABEL. Just let me and Micah take care of it.

LYNN. All those weights and ya can't help yer mom lift a dresser?
Vanity. Thas' what those muscles are. A vanity project.

ABEL. Yeah alright, mom.

LYNN. Don't. Don't do that. I hate when yeh do that.
I dunno where yeh learned that snarkiness from but it sure din't come from me.

LYNN reenters. She grabs her purse, checks the front pocket for the keys. Looks around, trying to find something amiss, before landing on the TV, she grabs the remote and slams it down in frustration. It mutes the TV.

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LYNN. Ya can't be leavin' the TV on all the time!

ABEL reenters.

ABEL. I don't. We // were only outta the room

LYNN. Yeh just did! Now turn it off. I don't want the picture burnin' onto the screen.

ABEL crosses to the remote, grabs it, turns off the TV.

ABEL. Ya only gotta worry about that with static images // on OLED displays.

LYNN. I don't need an explanation, Abel, I just need ya to do what I'm tellin' you to do.
Now. There's a frozen pizza if yer eatin' here tonight. I don't got any money for ya // so if you wanna

ABEL. I don't need yer money.

LYNN half-chuckles half-scoffs.

LYNN. Yeh do, actually. But I don't have any right now so, I guess yer S-O-L regardless.
Okay, now I feel bad. Gimme a hug before I go.

ABEL trudges over to LYNN and leans against her.

LYNN. Thas' not a hug, thas' a lean. I want a hug.

ABEL wraps his arms around LYNN and gives her a hug.

LYNN. Alright. Love you. I'll talk to yeh later tonight.
Lemme know if ya end up coming over with Micah.

ABEL. Will do.
Love you, too.

LYNN exits. ANGEL enters not long after. She's wearing cargo shorts and an oversized Harley Davidson tee. It hangs off her shoulders. Swallowing up her belly and hips.

ANGEL. Hey.

ABEL. Mornin'.
Good to see the clothes fit.

ANGEL. Oh yeah. Like a glove.

She swishes the shirt around her like one would a dress. It'd be huge on ABEL, too.

ABEL. I have smaller shirts.

ANGEL. I know. This is fine.

ABEL. Ya need a shower or anything? I din't hear ya taking one this mornin'.
But you're wearin' makeup so...

ANGEL. Yeah, it's just eyeliner and lipstick. Nothin' crazy.
And I'd rather take a shower than keep it intact so.

ABEL. What happened to your arm?

ABEL gestures to the bandaid ANGEL has placed on her plucking injury.

ANGEL. Honestly I don't even know.

ABEL. Okay.

That's...kinda weird but I'll drop it.

Um, there's towels in my room. Dunno if mom grabbed you // any but I

ANGEL. She didn't.

ABEL. Yeah, I din't think she would.

Towels are in my closet. Top shelf. I've got soap you can use, too, if ya need it.

ANGEL. Cool.

Thanks.

ABEL. Yeah totally.

I can brew some more coffee if ya want. Dunno if yer still a caffeine junkie.

ANGEL. Not a "junkie" but yeah, I could use some.

ABEL. Cool. I'll get that started while you shower up.

And um.

Don't drink the water while yer in there.

ANGEL. What?

ABEL. I just. Mom says it's fine but it's been kinda weird lately. So.

Like I don't think it's got lead or anything. But like. Ya know. It's backwoods tap water. Pipes are old.

Water comes out a little yellow if it hasn't run in a bit.

Again, prob'ly being overly cautious. But. Wanted ya to know.

ANGEL. Gotcha.

Thanks for the heads up. I'm gonna shower and try to avoid letting any water get in my eyes, ears, or mouth.

ABEL. Perfect. Solid plan.

ANGEL starts to leave.

ABEL. Oh also! Um, I don't know what mom told you but she's gonna be at Saint Peter mosta' the day.

Gotta clean the church robes and shit. Said there's a frozen pizza for dinner. But it'll basically just be the two of us today.

ANGEL. Cool.

ABEL. Yeah. So. If you wanna wear one of yer outfits, you can.
Unless you like the shirt // in which case

ANGEL. I don't like this shirt.

ABEL. Okay yeah I figured.

ANGEL. Yeah, it's baggy. And that's like, all it has going for it.
But I'm sure when you wear it you look *super*...

ABEL. Gonna complete that sentence?

ANGEL. Can't think of a word.

ABEL. How sweet of you.
Go take a shower before I burn your coffee on purpose.

ANGEL jokingly flips ABEL off and exits. BLACKOUT.

END OF SAMPLE.