

RAW PROVOCATIVE HUMANE PLAYS

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FORSAKEN
a play in one act
by
Kitt Lavoie

Sun pours into the window of the well-kept but relatively spartan living room/kitchen of a one bedroom apartment outside of Seattle. White walls and unmatched furniture. Creatively draped fabrics and neatly displayed knickknacks give it the feeling of home. The home of a young couple.

ANNA, 23, sits quietly on the couch watching JON, 25, as he scans through the books on a nearby shelf. He pulls a pair off the shelf and adds it to the stack he has tucked under his arm. He walks to the coffee table and places the stack of books into an open, nearly full cardboard carton.

He scans around the room, looking for something. He goes to the closet. Nothing. He paces into the adjoining office. A moment later he returns empty-handed. He stalks into the bedroom. The sounds of rummaging. He emerges from the bedroom and stands in the doorway, scanning the living room.

ANNA

What are you looking for?

JON

My jacket.

ANNA

Which one?

JON

The gray one. With the pockets.

ANNA

You never wear it.

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JON

It's my favorite and I want it.

ANNA

I wore it to Beth's last night. It's in my closet.

Jon disappears into the bedroom again. He returns pulling on a gray coat. He goes to the cardboard carton and picks it up. He looks at Anna for a moment, then turns and heads for the door. He gets to the door and stops.

A beat.

JON

This is the stupidest thing. This is the stupidest thing, Anna.

ANNA

Then why are you going?

JON

Because you don't want me here.

ANNA

Of *course* I want you here.

JON

You don't.

ANNA

I do.

JON

Then why didn't you call? Two weeks I've been gone and you didn't call.

ANNA

Because you *left*.

JON

I didn't want to go.

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ANNA

I didn't want you to go.

JON

Then why did you let me?

ANNA

How was I supposed to stop you?

JON

You could have said, "I don't want you to go."

ANNA

I didn't. I'm sorry I didn't say it.

JON

You could say it now.

ANNA

I don't want you to go.

JON

So...

ANNA

Are you?

JON

I don't know.

A beat.

ANNA

I love you, Jon.

JON

I love you, too.

A beat.

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ANNA
Are you going to go?

JON
I don't know.

ANNA
This isn't what a divorce is supposed to be.

JON
No.

They just look at each other a moment.

JON (cont'd)
I was happy, you know. A month ago, I was happy.

ANNA
I wasn't.

JON
Apparently.

ANNA
I was happy with you, Jon. But I wasn't happy with me.

JON
That's a nice way of putting it. Because you'll excuse me it feels an awful lot like you're not happy with me.

ANNA
I'm sorry you feel that way.

JON
I don't feel that way. *It* feels that way. This isn't me doing this.

ANNA
I'm not the one with the car full of boxes, Jon. You're ending it. I'm not ending it.

JON
You "wonder what it's like to have another guys thing in your mouth" and *I'm* ending it?

ANNA

I do. So what? I wonder.

JON

You just wonder?

ANNA

Yes. I wonder. Sometimes.

JON

But it's just a theory? A concept? You don't actually want to do it.

Anna is conspicuously silent.

JON (cont'd)

Don't you dare. Don't you dare put this on me. I made a promise to be faithful, and you made the same to me. So don't you dare say that because I'm the one with the car of boxes I'm the one whose leaving you. I *was* happy a month ago. And I'm sorry you weren't. But you should have *said something*. Because I am *dying* now.

ANNA

I did say something. I did say something and that's what started *this*.

JON

Well, that was the wrong thing to say, Anna.

ANNA

I never thought there would be a wrong thing to say. Not to you.

JON

I wouldn't have thought so, either. Not until you said it.

A beat.

JON (cont'd)

And you don't even have the decency to say you wish you didn't say it.

ANNA

I don't wish I didn't say it.

JON

So you're ending it.

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ANNA

No. I'm glad I said it, but we need to *deal* with it.

JON

How do we deal with that?

ANNA

Talking.

JON

I called Lauren last week. And two days ago. And yesterday. She hasn't called me back.

(a beat)

Why won't she answer my calls?

ANNA

You'll have to ask her.

JON

I can't if she won't answer my calls. What did you tell her?

ANNA

Nothing.

JON

You haven't talked to her?

ANNA

I've talked to her.

JON

You told her nothing?

ANNA

I told her we were having problems.

JON

And now she won't call me back?

ANNA

I told her you left.

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Really?

JON

Yes.

ANNA

I didn't leave.

JON

You went away.

ANNA

I didn't pack.

JON

You have now.

ANNA

I want to talk to her--

JON

She's not going to choose you, Jon.

ANNA

She's my family, too.

JON

Not if you leave. Not really anymore.

ANNA

So there's choosing to do.

JON

If you go, yes. And she's my sister. She's not going to choose you.

ANNA

Even if she knew why I left?

JON

I wish you wouldn't, but I think then even, no.

ANNA

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A beat.

ANNA (cont'd)

I also need to say to you again, Jon, I need to say, "I don't want you to go."

JON

And I don't *want* to go.

ANNA

Then let's figure this out.

JON

I want to.

ANNA

Well I don't know how we can with a car full of boxes.

JON

And I don't know how we can if you keep lying to me?

ANNA

How am I lying to you? When *have* I lied to you? I'm telling you the truth and that's the whole problem.

JON

You tell me who it is, and we can see if we can figure it out.

ANNA

Who what?

JON

Who is this about? Who is it? That you want to be with?

ANNA

There's no one.

JON

You don't end your marriage over some "disembodied maybe something." Who is this about?

ANNA

I'm not ending it.

JON

Who?

ANNA

No one. There is *nobody*. There is no person. There is me. There is what I want.

JON

And what do you want?

ANNA

I want you. I want to be with you. I want to be with you when I'm forty. I want to hold your hand while we watch our kids in their elementary school play. I want to hold your hand when one of us drifts away. I want you to be my life. But none of that will happen if I don't do something *else* now. You aren't supposed to be married for five years when you're twenty three. You're not supposed to be *married* when you're nineteen. You're supposed to be doing and living and growing and figuring out who you are. But I didn't do any of those things because I thought I knew who I was. And now here I am five years later and I'm still seventeen.

JON

I understand that. Okay? But you can do those things with me.

ANNA

I can't.

JON

You *can*.

ANNA

I can't, Jon. I can't look at you sometimes. And it's nothing you did.

JON

Then *why*?

ANNA

Because you are the death of possibility to me.

A beat.

JON

Wow.

ANNA

Sometimes. But I don't know how I can build a life with you if I think of you that way. It just feels... broken. Sometimes.

JON

It's not broken, Anna. You are.

She just looks at him, stiff-jawed. A beat.

JON (cont'd)

Have you done anything?

ANNA

What do you mean?

JON

With anyone?

ANNA

No.

JON

Just tell me.

ANNA

No.

JON

You haven't been unfaithful?

ANNA

No. And I don't want to be.

JON

You want to be with other people.

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ANNA

Yes. But I don't want to be unfaithful. I just want to be with other people. And that's why I talked to you about it. That's what love means. Love means you figure it out.

JON

Love means you don't go sleeping with other people.

ANNA

That's not what it means. I don't think that's always what it means. Do you love me, Jon?

JON

Yes.

ANNA

And you don't ever think about you want to be with someone else?

JON

Of course I do.

ANNA

So--

JON

But I don't *need* to. I *want* to, yes. I think about it. Yes. But I don't *need* to. And I *don't*. And *that's* what love is.

ANNA

Love is so simple?

JON

No. God, Anna, look at us, no. It's not "simple." It's hard.

ANNA

And so we work at it.

JON

I *want* to work at it. But "working at it" is something we do together. Us "working at it" is not something *you* can go do with some other guy. That's the opposite of working at it.

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ANNA

It isn't if that's what it takes to make it work.

JON

What work?

ANNA

Us work.

JON

That's not us making it work, Anna. That's *me* making it work. That's what *you* want. That's me making it work on your terms. And your terms are awful.

ANNA

What do you want?

JON

I want this to go away.

ANNA

You don't think I want this to go away? You think I haven't spent two years *wishing* this would go away?

JON

Okay. Look. *I want you.*

ANNA

And you can have me.

JON

Not if you're throwing me out--

ANNA

I'm *not* throwing you out.

JON

Away. You're throwing me away. To maybe-possibly-maybe be with someone else someday.

ANNA

I'm not throwing you away, Jon. I want to be with you. Always. More than anything. I want to be with you and share with you and have a life with you. But I also need to have a life. I need to feel like I haven't wasted these past five years not having a life.

JON

Spending these last five years with me have been "wasting them?"

ANNA

Compared to what I should have been doing? Yes. Sometimes I think so, yes.

JON

You don't answer a question like that with an answer like that.

ANNA

I do if I want to fix this. And it's not just me. You have, too. You *have*, Jon. There is a whole world. And our world has been this apartment.

JON

My world has been you.

ANNA

And mine has been you.

JON

And that's not enough?

ANNA

You are making this harder than it has to be.

JON

I don't know how it could be any harder.

ANNA

You don't have to take it so personally. It's not about *you*.

JON

I don't know how else to take it, Anna. You wish you never married me.

ANNA

That's not true. I want to be married to you, Jon. I want that more than anything. I just... wish I could marry you now.

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JON

But you didn't. You married me then.

ANNA

I want to be young before I'm old, Jon. I've been old for a long time.

JON

And being young means "being" with some guy. Just "being" with him. No strings attached. Just to see what it's like to have his "thing" in your mouth.

ANNA

I think it does. Or at least... being able to.

A beat.

JON

Well you can't. Not if you want to be married to me.

ANNA

Then you're the one who's throwing it away, Jon. And I wish you wouldn't. Please, I wish you wouldn't.

JON

This isn't what I signed up for. It isn't what we agreed to. It isn't what we vowed.

ANNA

"'Til death do we two part." That's what we vowed. Love, honor, comfort. Sickness. Health. Better. *Worse*, Jon. That's what we vowed.

JON

"Forsaking all others."

ANNA

And of all those things, that's the most important? That's the one you'll throw away all the rest for? For "maybe-possibly-maybe" something happening. And maybe it wouldn't, I don't know. Would you rather I stopped loving you, Jon? Or comforting you? Or--

JON

I would rather we do *all* the things we promised.

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ANNA

Well, we *can't*, Jon. Is what I'm saying. *I can't*.

JON

Then go. Screw some guy. Cheat on me. Then we'll deal with it.

ANNA

You don't want me to do that.

JON

No.

ANNA

Then don't ask me to.

JON

And don't ask me to do it. To tell you it's okay. Because it's not. You have no right. After five years. To ask me to tell you it's okay. For you to go off and be with someone else.

ANNA

I'm not saying "go off." I'm saying once--

JON

Just once?

ANNA

Maybe. I don't know. Maybe twice. Maybe never. *I don't know*. But to maybe once go out and do the things that everyone I know has done. The things that *you* have done. And I know it's a lot to ask. But it's *once*.

JON

Or *twice*.

ANNA

And that's *nothing* compared to what you are asking me to do.

JON

What's that?

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ANNA

To every single day have never been with someone else, every day, for the rest of my life.

JON

That's not what I'm asking. It's what I asked. In my little Honda in a Cosco parking lot five and a half years ago and you said *yes*.

ANNA

I know I did. And I meant it. But that was then. That was when I knew *nothing*. That's when I thought True Love Waited and I didn't have to wait any more because *there you were*. God, I was so old then, Jon. And I cannot go the rest of my life knowing that because of some accident of birth, because I was born to my mom and dad and in Gering, Nebraska and that I met you -- *you*, the love of my life -- when I was *fifteen*, that I am going to go the rest of my life without living a whole part of my life. And I need to. And I'm saying, let's do it now. Because we are *going* to have to do it *someday*. I am going to have to do it someday. And I could pack this away now, I suppose I could--

JON

Then do it.

ANNA

But it will come *back*. It will. And it will have to happen someday. So why not now when we're young and attractive and don't have kids and people our age are doing it *all the time*.

JON

Why would you say that? Now?

ANNA

What?

JON

"When we have kids." *Why* would I want to have a child with you? Now.

A beat.

ANNA

There is nothing more that I want in the whole world.

JON

Then keep your pants on.

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ANNA

(quietly)

Don't belittle me.

JON

I'm not the one who's belittling, Anna.

ANNA

I say I want to have your child and you tell me to "keep my pants on." I say I want to spend my *life* with you and you say--... How is it that what happens in our bedroom -- or some other bedroom -- for *one night* is more important than that?

JON

Because I love my mom, Anna. I do. I love her different than you, but I love her. And I love my sister and I love my dad. And I honor them. And I comfort them. And I comfort my friends. I have friends I would stand by... no matter what. And I trust them and confide in them. Maybe not the same way I do with you, but I do. But what happens in our bedroom... that is the one thing I do only with you, Anna. That is *ours*. Do you know what my favorite thing about you is, Anna? Do you? It's not how smart you are or how kind you are or how you're Billy's favorite aunt. It's that mole you have-

(pointing just below his hip, where his leg
meets his pelvis)

--Right there. Because I'm the only one who knows it's there. That may be stupid, and it may make me a caveman, but every time you come out of the shower and you're drying off and you're telling me about what you have planned for the day... every day while you're toweling your hair and I know you can't see me, every day I look at it and I smile because that's *us* to me. Up until two weeks ago, that is how I started my day every day for five years.

(a beat)

You are my favorite person, Anna. And that's my favorite part of you. And I don't get why you don't get why that's important to me.

ANNA

We would still have things that are just for us.

JON

Would we, though?

ANNA

So many things. You're *my* favorite person, too.

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JON

Then why can't that be enough?

ANNA

I don't know. I would like it to be.

JON

Then it is.

ANNA

But it isn't.

JON

This isn't fair.

ANNA

It isn't. But it is what it is. And we have to deal with it.

JON

No, *you* have to deal with it. *You* have to.

ANNA

That isn't fair.

JON

But it's what it is.

Jon sits near his packed box. A long silence.

JON (cont'd)

Is this really it?

ANNA

I don't know. It's up to you.

JON

It really isn't, though. I want things like they were. You're saying they can't be anymore.

ANNA

They haven't been. Not for a couple of years.

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JON

I thought they were.

Anna quietly shakes her head. A long pause as the enormity of what is happening slowly dawns on Jon. Then...

JON (cont'd)

I can change, I swear.

ANNA

It's not you Jon. I love you like you are.

JON

It's just that I'm... not enough?

ANNA

No one is.

JON

You are.

ANNA

You were with Jessa. And Hillary. Before me.

JON

And you hated that I was.

ANNA

I got over it.

JON

And that was... before you.

ANNA

I never had a before you, Jon. Not really. I was a little girl when you met me. I'm not anymore.

JON

No, you're not. You're a married woman.

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ANNA

And I missed all the stuff that was supposed to come between.

JON

“All the stuff that was supposed to come between.” That doesn’t sound like one night to me.

ANNA

Maybe it is.

JON

Maybe?

ANNA

And maybe it’s never. Maybe knowing I *could* would be enough.

JON

Then how about I say you can and then you don’t. Does that fix everything?

ANNA

It doesn’t work like that.

Jon rises and paces into the kitchen.

JON

It doesn’t *work*, Anna.

ANNA

Because you won’t let it.

He sees something on the counter -- a corkscrew wine opener. He picks it up. She looks away.

JON

What’s this?

ANNA

Nothing.

JON

You’ve been drinking?

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ANNA

I had wine. Jon. I had some wine with Beth. I asked her to come over. Because you were gone. And we had... a little bit of wine.

JON

I don't even know you anymore.

ANNA

You drink sometimes, Jon.

JON

I don't care if you drink, Anna.

(re: Anna's caring)

But *you* used to. And you don't anymore. You're not the same person I married.

ANNA

I'm not. I'm not *supposed* to be. You're not supposed to be the same person at twenty three as you are at eighteen. Or at thirty-three as you are at twenty-three. Or at forty-three. We're supposed to grow together. That's what everyone said, right? Well, I can't grow if I don't change.

JON

That's fine if you change. But I don't know how we grow together if you won't drink with me but you get drunk with your friend--

ANNA

I didn't get drunk--

JON

You spent the night--

ANNA

I didn't spend the--... I had some *wine*. You've had wine. Jon, I've watched you drink it. So. Don't.

Something has caught Jon's attention in the sink. Anna stops, watching him. He contemplates the corkscrew in his hand a moment. Then looks up at Anna.

ANNA (cont'd)

What?

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Jon looks at her a moment. He reaches into the sink, pulls out a pair of wine glass and places them on the counter with a clink.

He reaches in the sink and pulls out a third wine glass and places it on the counter next to the other two.

Anna looks away.

JON

Anna...?

She does not respond.

JON (cont'd)

Anna.

ANNA

A friend of Beth's. Came, too.

JON

And what was this friend's name?

ANNA

Jason.

A beat.

JON

And why didn't you mention him before? "Beth came over." Why not "Beth and her friend Jason?"

ANNA

You're right, I should have.

JON

He wasn't Beth's friend, was he?

ANNA

Yes, he was.

From where? JON

He lives in her dorm. ANNA

Is he someone you know? JON

Yes. ANNA

Is it him? JON

A beat.

I'm sorry? ANNA

Is it him? JON

Is it who? ANNA

Have you slept with him, Anna? JON

No. ANNA

Anna--? JON

No. ANNA

But you want to? JON

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A long beat. Then...

ANNA

Yes.

JON

You have, haven't you?

ANNA

No.

JON

But you *want* to.

ANNA

Yes.

JON

Why would you tell me that?

ANNA

I've been telling you that.

JON

As an idea.

ANNA

It *is* an idea--

JON

But you said there wasn't someone.

ANNA

There isn't. Really. Jason isn't someone. But he is the *kind* of someone who, yes, if there were someone he would be that kind of person. He's a nice guy. And he's cute.

Jon blanches.

ANNA (cont'd)

But it's not *because* of him, Jon. It's not *about* him. I have felt like this for *two years* and I met him two months ago.

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JON

And you told me two *weeks* ago.

(re: Jason)

Why would you *tell* me that?

ANNA

Because you're right -- I don't want to lie to you. I don't know how this can work if I lie to you.

JON

This *can't* work, Anna.

ANNA

It can. People make it work.

JON

What people?

ANNA

Just people. Regular people.

JON

What regular people?

ANNA

Just people. They make it work. And it doesn't mean I don't love you. If I didn't love you, I would be afraid of what it would mean. To even think about. But I've thought about it, and I'm not afraid. You're my best friend. And there is nothing that could happen that could change that. We can make this a project. An adventure. Something we do *together*.

Jon looks down at the gray pocketed jacket he is wearing.

JON

When you went to Beth's last night, did you see him?

A beat.

ANNA

I wouldn't have been at Beth's at all if you'd been home.

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Did you?
JON

Yes.
ANNA

With Beth?
JON

Most of the time.
ANNA

At Beth's?
JON

...No. In his room.
ANNA

Jon presses the wine opener, point first, at his chest.

Ooooooooooooooh!
JON
(a pained howl)

Jon--
ANNA

Jon slams the wine opener on the table and locks in on Anna, stopping her in her tracks.

Then...

Well, I know where I can find you.
JON

Jon charges past Anna, scooping up his cardboard box and heading for the door.

Jon--
ANNA

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JON

(wheeling around)

You have a choice to make, Anna. You're a big girl now, and you have to make a very big, very adult choice. Do you want to be with me, or do you want to end our marriage?

ANNA

Jon--

JON

Do you want to be with me, or do you want to end our marriage?

ANNA

I don't think it has to be a choice.

JON

You keep *saying that*. And I'm telling you it does. This is my marriage, too, and you don't get to spring on me now that being in it means I have to share you. I wouldn't have signed on if I knew that was the deal. So tell me. What's your choice?

ANNA

I don't want you to go.

A beat.

JON

But...?

ANNA

I'm not going to say it, Jon. You can't make me say it. I want you to stay.

JON

But...?

Anna is silent.

JON (cont'd)

Goodbye, Anna.

Jon turns and heads for the door.

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ANNA

You rescued me, Jon.

Jon stops.

ANNA (cont'd)

I just think about what my life would be if I never met you. I would be back in Gering. And I'd be married to Justin Carver or Benjy Macklin... or someone. And we'd have a baby and we'd have a house and my mom would be over every weekend. And I would be so *content*.

JON

That's supposed to make me...?

ANNA

But I wouldn't be *happy*. My entire life was on a track to be *fine*. And you changed that. You made it possible to be more than fine. To be *happy*. I could never have known what I could be. Because you were braver than me. And you showed me a world where I could be my own person. Where I didn't have to become my mom. And my sister. And every other woman I know. You did that. But I feel myself becoming *them*. Even here. And I need a way to be a me that isn't just part of us. Because if I can't, I don't know what I bring to us. I bring us to us. But not me.

JON

You couldn't have thought this before?

ANNA

I didn't know it before.

JON

So it's my fault.

ANNA

I'm gonna die some day, Jon. I'm twenty three and that's what I'm thinking about. That is what I lay in bed thinking about. Laying next to you. And without you the past two weeks. That's what I think about. That I'm gonna *die* someday, and I will have skipped a whole part of my life. And fair or not, I can feel it -- I'm gonna blame you. And I don't want to. I want to *live*. With you. I was so sheltered before you came along. Don't be the one that does that to me again.

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JON

That's not fair.

ANNA

Maybe. But that's what it is.

A beat.

JON

You could have saved us all this trouble. If you'd have figured out you could touch a guys thing without marrying him. I didn't need to marry you, Ann. At nineteen. I didn't *want* to marry you. That's what you wanted.

ANNA

I was seventeen.

JON

And I was nineteen. Do you know what it was like to see you every day? And hold you every day? And love you? Every day. And to not be able to *be* with you. To *really* touch you. And feel you. And know you the way I wanted to. "He has known her." I always thought that was such a stupid thing to say in those medieval sword fight movies. "He has known her, my lord." What did that mean? I never got it. Until I saw you. And how beautiful you were. And what it was like to hold your hand. And hear your voice. And to kiss you and know... I wanted to *know* you. I wanted to know every single thing about you. Everything no one else knew. And that wasn't something you were going to do until you were married. That you wanted only one person to know you like that. That was the price I had to pay. And I paid it gladly. I was nineteen and I paid it *gladly*. And every morning, you step out of the shower and I thank God I did. And I am going to stand by that, Anna. It was the best thing, the most important thing I've ever done. And I'm going to stand by it. And if you can't...

Anna walks softly up to Jon. She puts her hands on his jacket and runs them over his chest. Up to his neck. To his face. And back down again to her side.

They stand face-to-face, nearly touching. Slowly, almost imperceptibly they melt together into a kiss, that quickly grows intense, passionate deep, hungry. And long.

After a long moment, Anna suddenly breaks the kiss and buries her face in Jon's chest.

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She pulls him tightly to her.

A beat.

JON (cont'd)

And if you can't, you need to say it.

ANNA

I was seventeen, Jonny.

JON

You need to say it.

A beat. Jon pulls her tightly to him. They cling to each other.

ANNA

I never thought this would be over.

Jon pulls her somehow even tighter to him. He holds her a moment, then loosens his hold and steps away. She holds to his coat a moment, but lets it slip out of her fingers as he moves out of her reach.

He goes to the cardboard box and reaches for it. He stops. He pulls his hands to himself, and twists the ring off his left hand.

ANNA (cont'd)

No...

JON

If you can't choose me, Anna, I have to.

ANNA

I haven't done *anything*.

JON

But you want to.

ANNA

But I haven't.

Jon picks up the box..

JON

And until the day you do...

He tucks the ring into the breast pocket of his gray coat.

JON (cont'd)

...I'll be waiting.

He picks up the box and heads for the door.

ANNA
(re: the ring.)

You'll lose it.

Jon turns in the door.

JON

I won't.

He pats the pocket of his coat.

JON (cont'd)
(re: the coat, maybe...)

It's my favorite.

Anna and Jon look at each other a moment. Jon waits a long moment for her to -- please God -- say anything. She waits for the same thing.

Then Jon turns and heads out the door, leaving Anna alone.

Blackout.

END OF PLAY.