

1217 IS HAVING FAITH & BELIEF IN YOUR GUARDIAN ANGELS

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ACT ONE

Scene 1: Katie's bedroom

Scene 2: Katie's bedroom

Scene 3: School hallway

Scene 4: Guidance counselor's office

Scene 5: Guidance counselor's office

ACT TWO

Scene 1: Katie's bedroom

Scene 2: School hallway

Scene 3: Katie's bedroom

Scene 4: Katie's bedroom

CHARACTERS

Katie 15-16 //a sophomore who just transferred to a religious high school// their profound disbelief in themselves is destroying their life//still religious but on the cusp of losing it//queer but still unaware of this fact//distances themselves from others in an attempt to protect them//has seen far too much for their age

Nick early 30s// a pastor teaching at a religious high school focusing on Church History and Hermeneutics//shows a depth of love that scares the school board and is constantly under pressure for his beliefs that are different than theirs//not like most Christians you will meet and takes the love teachings of Jesus incredibly seriously

M late 40s// white woman// a religious fundamentalist who works for a church, but attends a different one//Katie's mother who is intensely emotionally and physically abusive// has parented alone for some time

Morgan late 30s// white woman// the guidance counselor who acts on her beliefs instead of policy// a mother// a religious fundamentalist

NOTATIONS

Ellipses are used to indicate the trailing off of a thought. This is dictated by the actor whose line it is.

Dashes at the end of phrases are used to indicate the abrupt stop of a thought. This is usually controlled by a different actor than the one speaking interrupting with a new thought, but this is not always the case.

Italics are used to indicate the stressed words occasionally.

A beat is used to indicate the change in a thought. It is longer than a comma but not terribly so.

A silence is used to indicate the absence of speech. Someone should be talking, but no one is. They are the longest pauses.

Scene 1

(The show opens to KATIE on their bed typing in silence for a long time. They periodically glance at the door to make sure it is still closed. The bed and door are the two necessary elements in this room. Any additions can be made at your own discretion. KATIE finally read the email back to themselves quickly and impersonally to make sure it is what they want.)

KATIE: Hi Mr. Manchester, This is going to be a really long email, so I guess I am sorry in advance. I really don't know how to start this. There isn't really an easy way in, so here we go. I think my mother is (Deleting that phrase and retyping) My mother is abusive. I mean maybe I'm wrong, but I don't know it just is hard to be around her sometimes. I don't know. Everyone just keeps telling me that I am overreacting about it all, and like, maybe I am. I just don't want to go home, and I wish I could never go home again. She really scares me sometimes. I don't know if I have ever like actually talked to her. Like I know most people don't talk to their parents, but she knows nothing about me. I don't even say vaguely real things to her. I am a whole other person with her. She is there being whatever, and I am there just being whatever she wants. She still doesn't love me though, and I'm doing a pretty good job at being the listless copy of a no-one that she seems to want from a kid. She doesn't yell at me or anything. I don't know. I am probably just being silly. There is something that feels wrong about it deep down somewhere, but I am wrong a lot. This is probably another one of those cases. My pastor told me that I just need to pray more and that I am a bad person for talking to him about it. He knows my mom and says that she is a good person. Everyone always says I'm so lucky because I have such a good mom who loves me so much more than most parents love their kids. They say that she is the best parent they have ever met. I don't know. It just really hurts to hear that. I have been praying, but my mom is so much more religious than me, more than anyone I've ever met. I think her prayers might get more priority than mine. I'm sorry. It probably isn't abuse. That was a pretty dramatic way to start this email, and I am always told that I'm just being dramatic. She hurts me. She doesn't beat me or anything, but it just feels like she doesn't care. I don't think she does. I just wish I felt safe again, but I honestly forget what that feels like. I am sorry for writing this. I just don't know what to do, and you have seemed so kind. I just feel like I can trust you, and I wish you could help. Maybe we could talk more about it in person. I am kind of afraid to have too much in writing because I am scared she will find it, but I am so much more eloquent in writing, even though I'm still not good at articulating things. I don't talk about it all a lot, and it is still really hard for me to talk about it. Let me know if we could talk about it sometime. I know you are really busy though, so I understand if you just don't

want another thing on your plate. I also probably should have just asked you after class, but I've been trying to do this for a week and I keep losing my nerve. It was hard enough to start this email, let alone tell you this in person. I think I have a lot more of my life to share if you would like to hear about it, but a baseline like this might help if that were to happen. I am so sorry. You can ignore this email if you need to. I don't mean to be a burden, but I am afraid I might be. Thank you. I'll see you in class. Katie Dorne

(KATIE quickly clicks send and closes their laptop. They lay back on their bed. We watch them try to calm a panic that never seems to fully surface.)

Scene 2

(M knocks on the door and doesn't wait for a reply. M is a woman who hasn't slept, but they are still in a ratty tank top and shorts that clearly serve as pajamas. They are seething but trying to keep their temper in check. There is a dangerous air about them. They wield their power mercilessly, and there is some sort of enjoyment in the way they craft their words for pain. At their core, they are a basic white woman that no one would ever look twice at because there is nothing special about them. M sits on the edge of the bed facing KATIE who is pretending to sleep in their bed. It is early, too early. They know that things have gone very very wrong.)

M: (Demanding) Katie. (A beat) Katie. It's time to get up. (A beat) We need to talk. (A beat) Katie.

KATIE: (Now starting to "wake up") What?

M: We need to talk.

KATIE: (Their words continue to ride the line between casual and pleading) It's so early. I'm so tired. Please just let me sleep.

M: It's 5 am. You've slept enough.

KATIE: Please. I'm so tired. I didn't get enough sleep.

M: (Coldly) No. We need to talk, and if you are *good* enough, you can go back to sleep before church.

KATIE: I just want to sleep.

M: (The tone has sharpened to a point) Get up.

KATIE: (Harsh and fully aware of how stupid this is) No.

M: Okay fine. Be like that then.

(M stands up and heads towards the door before quickly pivoting and ripping the blankets completely off the bed. KATIE recoils in fear. They might yelp and probably shake. It is abundantly clear that this relationship is more abusive than they would ever admit. M bundles the bedding and shoves it by the foot of the bed.)

KATIE: (Quietly pleading) Now I'm cold.

M: Well isn't that just so unfortunate?

(M sits down on the edge of the bed. KATIE pulls a little away.)

KATIE: (Sincere but rooted in fear) I'm sorry.

M: Good.

KATIE: I'm sorry.

M: Do you know why I am here?

KATIE: (They do) No. No, I don't.

M: (Almost garish) Well let me tell you. I was going through your laptop. (A beat) You know just the usual. (A beat) Nothing too interesting, but then I started reading your emails. (A beat) You know what I found?

KATIE: (Scared) No....

M: Oh really? Well, that's so funny. Let me remind you. (They head for the door but turn back to smile.) Don't worry I'll be back.

KATIE: Okay...

(M leaves shutting the door behind them. KATIE immediately releases the composure they have been holding. While they weren't doing a great job, we can see just how much they were holding back. They exist in this incredibly vulnerable state for maybe thirty seconds before something shifts and they revert back to a more polished version of themselves. A moment later M steps into the room, this time without knocking. They are holding a laptop in their hand precariously, showing no respect for it. They resume their previous spot on the edge of the bed. They open the laptop and push it in KATIE's direction.)

M: Log in.

KATIE: (Uncharacteristically strong) You know the password. Go ahead. Do it yourself.

M: Fine. (They grab the laptop log in and hand it right back.) Go to it.

KATIE: (Weak again) I don't want to.

M: Do it.

KATIE: (Pleading) I can't.

M: (Close to lashing out) Are you really going to be this *difficult*? You are making this so much harder than it needs to be.

KATIE: I'm sorry.

(M takes the laptop back, and after a few clicks, the email is pulled up. They once again hand the laptop back to KATIE.)

M: (The most malicious we have seen thus far) Now read it. (Silence.) Read it.

KATIE: I don't think I can.

M: Think?

KATIE: I can't...

M: *You can't? You can and you will.*

(KATIE stares at the screen. They are rereading their words. They keep trying to start reading the email out loud, but they cannot get the words out. This continues for some time.)

KATIE: (Defeated) I can't.

(KATIE goes to hand the laptop back to M.)

M:(A threat) Do you want me to read it for you?

KATIE: No.

M: Then read it for me.

(There is again the attempt to read with the failure to do so.)

KATIE: I can't.

(They hand over the laptop to M. M grabs the laptop and without hesitation starts reading. They stress all the wrong words, and while the email might have never been beautiful, it is absolutely desecrated and hard to listen to. KATIE attempts to be somewhere else but is painfully present and feels the hit of every single word they wrote. There is a lot of emotion but it is incredibly contained in the smallest gestures. Most importantly, they do not cry.)

M: *Hi Mr. Manchester*, this is going to be a *really long email*, so I guess I am sorry in advance. I really don't know how to start this. There isn't really an easy way in, so here we go. My *mother* is *abusive*. I mean maybe I'm wrong, but I don't know *it just is hard* to be around her sometimes. I don't know. Everyone just keeps telling me that I am overreacting about it all, and like, maybe I am. *I just don't want to go home*, and I wish I could never go home again. She really scares me sometimes. I don't know if I have ever like *actually* talked to her. Like I know most people don't talk to their parents, but she knows *nothing* about me. I don't even say *vaguely real* things to her. I am *a whole other person* with her. She is there being *whatever*, and I am there just being whatever *she wants*. She still doesn't love me though, and I'm doing a pretty good job at being the listless copy of a no-one that *she seems to want* from a kid. She doesn't yell at me or anything. I don't know. I am *probably just being silly*. There is something that *feels wrong* about it *deep down somewhere*, but *I am wrong a lot*. This is probably another one of those cases. My pastor told me that I just need to pray more and that I am *a bad person* for talking to him about it. He knows my mom and says that *she is a good person*. Everyone always says I'm lucky because *I have such a good mom* who loves me so much more than most parents love *their kids*. *They say that she is the best parent they have ever met*. I don't know. It just *really hurts* to hear that. I have been praying, but *my mom is so much more religious than me*, more than anyone I've ever met. I think her prayers might get more priority than mine. *I'm sorry. It probably isn't abuse. That was a pretty dramatic way to start this email*, and I am always told that I'm just being dramatic. *She hurts me*. She doesn't *beat me* or anything, but *it just feels like she doesn't care*. I don't think she does. I just wish I felt safe again, but I honestly *forget what that feels like*. I am sorry for writing this. I just don't know what to do, and you have seemed so *kind*. I just feel like I can trust you, and I wish *you could help*. Maybe we could talk more about it in person. I am kind of afraid to have too much in writing *because I am scared she will find it*, but I am *so much more eloquent in writing*, even though I'm still not good at articulating things. I don't talk about it all a lot, and it is still *really hard* for me to talk about it. Let me know if we could talk about it sometime. I know you are really busy though, so I understand if you just

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(Silence.)

KATIE: I know.

M: (Demanding) Thank me.

KATIE: Thank you.

M: (A threat) I still could.

KATIE: I know...

M: (Almost a joke) I might if you don't get your act together. (Silence) (Harshly) What do you have to say for yourself? (Silence) Are you going to apologize? (Silence) (Pointed) Do you realize what you did to me?

KATIE: (Swallowing some pride) Yes.

M: And are you sorry?

KATIE: Yes.

M: (Demeaning) Are you going to say more than one word at a time?

KATIE: I don't know.

M: Wow, she speaks.