

Maneuvering Purgatory

A One-Act Play

By Ken Ruddiman

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DEDICATION

To the 3,142 people that died as a result of distracted driving in 2019.

STORY OF THE PLAY

After a car accident that killed her best friend, Lucy Taber is trapped in a coma. In her hospital bed Lucy hears her family discussing the severity of her situation. Unable to distinguish reality from fever dreams, Lucy must maneuver her very own purgatory in hopes of uncovering the truth. Luckily, she does not have to face it alone. A visiting ghost or a figment of her imagination, Lucy's best friend Milo aides her in overcoming his death, and then accepting her own. With family and friends by her side, Lucy will face reality and exit purgatory. Approximate runtime: 20-30 mins.

CAST OF CHARACTERS

(2 m, 3 w, 2 flexible)

AUNT MAUDE: Late 40s, a kind-hearted woman who holds her family together.

MOTHER (VIVIAN TABER): 40s, although generally pessimistic, she wants only the best for her daughter's future, and couldn't imagine anything happening to Lucy.

FATHER (DANIEL TABER): 40s, although away at his job as a police officer most of the time, he loves his family more than he knows how to show.

DR. ROSENKRANZ: A doctor who wishes med school taught them how to stitch up broken hearts.

NURSE ALVAREZ: A nurse of any age who works too hard and sleeps too little to put up with anyone's crap. Has a young daughter that their world revolves around. (Preferably Spanish speaking)

LUCY TABER: in her late teens, she is always stuck in her head. She thinks too much for her own good. She is simple and kind but gets frustrated very easily. Lucy has trouble accepting her best friend's death.

MILO MOURA: in his late teens, the boy who isn't ready to face adulthood. Although he masks his feelings often, his best friend Lucy is the one person in his life whom he really cares for. He will let his guard down for only her.

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SETTING

The play is set in the mind of Lucy and her hospital room. It is wintertime in Minnesota.

SFX

heart monitor sounds and soft music

COSTUMES

LUCY: Hospital gown and then a semi formal dress

MOM, DAD, and AUNT: Can easily “change” their costumes by adding a sweater, scarf, etc.

NOTES

In the script, a slash means the lines overlap.

Example:

MAN: Dinosaurs are cooler than dragons.

WOMAN: I can’t believe you! You know /I love dragons!

MAN: /Don’t get mad at me for being right.

Directors may substitute any adult language (a few words) within the script to comply with their community standards.

Scene 1

(AT RISE: LUCY TABER'S hospital room. Her head is wrapped in a bandage, and she is unconscious in a hospital bed. AUNT MAUDE and MOTHER are sitting at a small table surrounded by three chairs. They are having a quiet but serious conversation.)

MAUDE: You must be terribly worried, Vivian. She's not even my own daughter, and I'm worried that we may never get to see her up and moving again.

MOTHER: Lucy will be fine. She has to be fine. It hasn't been a whole day since the car crash, it's too early to make any assumptions... But if my only daughter never wakes up, Milo's family will have more than one funeral to plan.

MAUDE: Now, now. We've known Milo since he and Lucy were young. His family has always been good to us. Now they have an empty room in their house, and a Milo-shaped hole in their hearts that will never be filled again. You don't mean to wish them even more suffering, do you?

MOTHER: No. I don't. I just feel like I'm losing my mind waiting for her to move, to wake up, anything. If she wakes up, what if she isn't the same?

MAUDE: Then we'll get to know the new Lucy and love her the same as always.

(FATHER enters with a coffee or soda.)

FATHER: Hey Viv, I'm back with your drink. *(HE kisses his WIFE'S cheek.)*

MOTHER: Thank you. *(SHE manages a weak smile.)*

FATHER: *(Moves a chair next to Lucy's bed, sits.)* You never think something like this is going to happen to you.

MOTHER: *(Sips drink.)* Nope. It's always close to you, but not this close. *(Takes a sip.)* It's all my fault.

MAUDE: The crash was an accident, there's no way you could have /known.

MOTHER: /I let Lucy go with Milo. I *encouraged* her to go. She wanted to stay in and study for her history test, but she can't even take it now because I wanted her to "go out and live a little."

FATHER: You just wanted to see Lucy have some fun for once. It was an accident...

MOTHER: It was in the middle of a snowstorm for God's sake! Maybe that was Milo's first time driving in such heavy snow, that's why his car veered off the road. I should have driven them to the stupid concert. (*Crosses to LUCY.*) I'm so sorry, Lucy.

MAUDE: You're driving yourself crazy over this! You have to remember what it was. An accident. Obviously, he didn't drive the car into that gnarly old growth on purpose, right? Just like you didn't think twice about him driving in Minnesota weather. You couldn't have known. (*Beat.*) Anyway, we shouldn't be so negative in front of Lucy. I read a study that while comatose, some people can hear what's going on around them.

FATHER: Your sister is right. If Lucy can hear us, we should focus all of our energy on being positive.

MOTHER: I'm sorry! (*Pause.*) I'm sorry. From now on, this room is strictly for positivity. (*SHE holds up her drink, toast style.*) For Lucy.

FATHER and MAUDE: For Lucy.

(*The trio shares a moment, before SFX: A knock.*)

DR. ROSENKRANZ: (*Knocks on door and enters.*) Hello, I wanted to update you all on Miss Taber's condition.

MAUDE: Of course, doctor.

(*There is a tense beat as FATHER, MOTHER, and MAUDE exchange glances.*)

DR. ROSENKRANZ: The results from her FDG-PET scan conclude that Lucy's glucose metabolism rate is higher than that of a patient in a vegetative state.

End of Freeview

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