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Playwriting  
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Final Draft

## On The Roof

### CAST OF CHARACTERS.

JENNY. 21. A waitress who lives with her parents in her hometown, Milwaukee. She's on the up from a recent suicide attempt.

CAM. 22. Her brother. He is trying to make it as a writer.

SELA. 25. Their sister. She's married and has a young daughter.

NOTE: A slash ( / ) in the dialogue indicates the point where the next speaker should begin his or her line.

*[LIGHTS UP on a rooftop at sunset. There are two entrances, a door (SL) and a fire escape ladder (SR).]*

*CAM enters from SL with a drink. He's dressed nicely. He puts his drink down and takes a pack of cigarettes from his pocket. As he yanks one out, JENNY enters SR at a full run, heading towards the edge of the roof. She's crying. Before she makes it to the edge of the roof, though, CAM intercepts her.]*

CAM. Stop—stop!

JENNY. Let go!

*[CAM slaps her across the face.]*

CAM. Snap out of it. *[She sinks to the ground.]* Who's supposed to be watching you?

*[A silence.]*

JENNY. How long have you been up here?

CAM. A while. *[Beat.]* It's hell in there.

JENNY. You seemed to be having a good time.

CAM. So did you.

JENNY. Super duper.

*[Silence.]*

CAM. Let's go in.

JENNY. No.

CAM. Come on. I'll make it more fun, I promise. *[Beat.]* Why not?

JENNY. Sela's kid was literally running in circles around me.

CAM. She's doing that to everyone.

JENNY. I just don't want to go back in, that's all.

CAM. It's their thirtieth anniversary. Save it.

*[CAM gets his drink and sits next to her. She leans against him.]*

JENNY. Why didn't you come home?

CAM. What, do you want me to leave my job for a week?

JENNY. You did it when...

CAM. When what?

JENNY. Never mind.

CAM. Okay. *[Beat.]* You know, if you want to say something, just...say it.

JENNY. Right. Will do.

*[Silence.]*

CAM. It's kind of chilly up here.

JENNY. Just...hang out with me. For a little bit more.

CAM. Okay...

JENNY. What else are you going to do?

CAM. Drink more.

JENNY. Ooh! Me too!

CAM. Are you allowed to drink?

JENNY. I am legal, stupid.

CAM. Like that ever stopped you. Anyway, I meant—

JENNY. —Can my stomach take it? Fuck you.

CAM. Fuck your own self. You want a drink, go get it.

JENNY. No! I'm sick. Be my servant.

CAM. You're not sick, you're delusional.

*[They go off SL together. SELA enters SR on the fire escape. She's dressed like the others. She sees Cam's pack of cigarettes on the ground and kicks it aside. She checks every corner of the roof, lastly looking over the edge. Then she goes back to the middle of the roof and pulls a flask out of her purse.]*

SELA. Thank you, Jesus, for small favors.

*[She goes back to the edge of the roof and looks down again. She shudders. Then she takes out a pack of cigarettes, carefully chooses one, and smells it.]*

SELA. Oh, goddamn, that is good. That is the best thing I've smelled all day.

*[She lights it. JENNY and CAM enter, carrying drinks. They don't see SELA.]*

CAM. Did you hear what they were yelling about?

JENNY. Who cares, as long as they aren't yelling at us.

CAM. My cigarettes...

*[He pats all his pockets.]*

JENNY. Here.

*[She picks them up and hands them to him. He takes one, then offers one to JENNY.]*

JENNY. I'm okay for now.

CAM. Did Sela tell you if they're staying in town tonight?

JENNY. I'd be surprised.

CAM. Jason's drunk, though.

SELA. *[Under her breath]* Shit.

JENNY. Is Sela?

CAM. She was last night. You know how Jason was dancing? That's how she was, except times, like, twelve. So out of character. It was great.

JENNY. Everything has to be about character with you.

CAM. *[Sweetly]* And you're the hardest to keep from killing off.

JENNY. Can I have a cigarette now?

CAM. Too late. Smoke your own.

JENNY. Yours are better.

CAM. Don't you make tips or something?

JENNY. I hope you're kidding.

CAM. It's a Polish deli. Doesn't that count for something?

JENNY. Among the Polacks, the thrifty man is king. I'm poor. Give me one.

CAM. Fine.

SELA. You let her...just talk you into that?

CAM. How fucking long have you been there?

SELA. Jeez! Don't yell at me.

CAM. Hey, Queen of the Night, you wanna give us a clue next time?

SELA. Instead of listening to you talk about me?

JENNY. We didn't say anything nasty about you, so what's the big deal?

SELA. I didn't know you smoked, Jenny.

JENNY. I didn't know you smoked, Sela.

SELA. Well, surprise. *[Beat.]* Mom would kill you if she knew you smoked.

JENNY. I'm not afraid of her.

SELA. You're not very good at judging what's good for you or bad for you.

JENNY. Well, next time I'm having a shitty day, I'll call you. Obviously talking to Mom and Dad doesn't work out for the best.

SELA. You probably weren't screaming loud enough for them to hear you.

CAM. Your child is running amok downstairs. You should probably deal with that.

SELA. She's fine.

CAM. Is she?

SELA. What's with the attack?

CAM. It's not an attack. Maybe if you'd come down off your high horse/once in a while—

SELA. What are you talking about?

CAM. Oh, fuck off, Sela! You know/what I'm—

SELA. If I knew, then I wouldn't be asking, would I?

JENNY. What were you doing up here, anyway?

SELA. I was enjoying the silence when, oh, awesome, just like the good ol' days, here comes the gang.

CAM. We were out here first—

JENNY. —But we went inside to get drinks.

SELA. Why didn't you get me one?

JENNY. You didn't say you wanted one!

CAM. Like I said to Jenny about five seconds ago, get your own goddamn drink.

*[A pause.]*

SELA. Forget about it. Let's sit and enjoy the scenery.

JENNY. Nice view of the Lake.

SELA. Being up this high is terrifying.

JENNY. Just like the pine tree. *[To CAM]* Can I have one of your cigarettes now?

CAM. Take one from Sela. She's got Capris.

SELA. I just lit my last one.

CAM. Liar.

SELA. Am not!

CAM. You always say you just smoked your last one.

SELA. That is such horseshit.

JENNY. Oh, I know you. You're *that* girl.

*[A pause.]*

SELA. When do you think is too soon to leave?

JENNY. That depends. How much did Mom have to drink?

CAM. Where are you gonna leave to?

SELA. Home. I have a horrible headache.

CAM. Drink too much?

SELA. It's all the relatives.

JENNY. Maybe if you'd dance it wouldn't be so boring.

SELA. Whoo-hoo! The polka!

CAM. I told you she has to have at least three stiff drinks in her before she'll even twitch her leg. Five if you have any hope of seeing her nipple tassels.

JENNY. Eww, you have nipple tassels? What's that, some sort of fetish?

SELA. *[To CAM]* How did you know I own nipple tassels?

JENNY. That seems like more of/your thing, Cam.

CAM. Well, I didn't, but—shut up, Jenny!

JENNY. Why do you have nipple tassels?

CAM. They don't call her Seal the Deal for nothing.

SELA. None of your business.

CAM. How many drinks have you had, by the way?

SELA. Like, two.

JENNY. More like seven.

SELA. Or not.

CAM. Okay, you're drunk enough to dance. Get up! *[He stands and starts to hum a polka tune.]*

SELA. I'm smoking. Leave me alone.

CAM. *[Stops singing]* So you're choosing cigarettes over exercise?

JENNY. No, she's not.

SELA. Whatever, Mom.

*[JENNY stands and moves towards her.]*

SELA. No! I'm not getting up! You guys are such freaks!

*[JENNY grabs both of SELA's hands and pulls her to her feet. CAM sings the tune louder. JENNY puts her arms around SELA, who complies, and they begin to polka.]*

SELA. Oh, God. I can't believe you've gotten me to do this.

JENNY. Whew, somebody's got whiskey breath.

SELA. You stink like...what is that?

JENNY. Vermouth.

SELA. That's fancy.

JENNY. It's free.

*[CAM reaches a chorus. JENNY pushes SELA towards CAM, who, though surprised, begins to swing her. JENNY walks a few steps away from them, then sinks to the ground.]*

CAM. Hey, where'd you go, Jen? You're supposed to swing me—what the hell?

SELA. What's the matter with you?

CAM. Are you okay?

JENNY. Fine—just winded.

CAM. You weren't even dancing for that long.

JENNY. Yeah, I know, I'm just...winded.

*[She sinks even further, until she's lying down.]*

SELA. Do you need to puke or something?

JENNY. I'm fine.

SELA. You're in the fetal position.

JENNY. Can I have my drink?

SELA. Not until you tell us what's wrong.

JENNY. I just got out of the hospital.

SELA. Yeah, I know that.

JENNY. *[Beat.]* Never mind.

SELA. Don't even think about playing the martyr here.

CAM. If you knew dancing was going to fuck you up like this, maybe you should've—

JENNY. I didn't know! Duh!

SELA. Get up and let's go back inside.

*[JENNY turns away from them, towards the edge of the roof.]*

CAM. Come on, Jennyanydots. How much sympathy do you really expect from us?

JENNY. At least some.

SELA. Well, we gave you some, and now we're through.

JENNY. You guys didn't give me shit.

SELA. Okay, so maybe I am a heartless cunt for not dropping my whole life every time you decide to ingest an entire bottle of Tylenol. Maybe. But the third really lame, obviously-not-going-to-work suicide attempt is...I don't know, Jenny. Boring? Exhausting? Fucking get a life already. *[Beat.]* No pun intended.

CAM. *[Utters a small laugh.]* That was pretty bad, Sela.

SELA. Leave me alone, okay?

CAM. Don't have to snap my head off.

SELA. Get the hell up. *[Beat. JENNY doesn't move.]* This is obnoxious. I am so fucking fed up.

JENNY. Well, then leave!

SELA. Fine.

*[SELA walks towards the SL door. CAM rushes and stops her. The following lines start sotto voce, but they get louder quickly.]*

CAM. Don't leave me here by myself.

SELA. I have had enough of her shit—she made this whole event her personal pity party, or did you miss that when you were flirting with the barman?

CAM. I was not flirting.

SELA. You flirt with everything.

CAM. The point/is—

SELA. The point is, I am taking my family and saying fuck you to the Holiday Inn, because I want to sleep in my own bed and not have to go to fucking brunch with forty hung-over Polacks!

CAM. Quit running out on things.

SELA. I am not running out!

CAM. You can't have your cake and eat it too.

SELA. I've already stuffed my face.

JENNY. *[Teasing]* Fat ass.

*[SELA marches over to her.]*

SELA. Yes, Jennifer?

JENNY. *[Still teasing]* Butter butt. Rolly-poley pudding.

SELA. *[Trying not to give in]* You think you're so cute, don't you.

JENNY. Lardy, lardy, lardy, look who weighs 340.

SELA. *[Giving in and laughing]* Fatty Lumpkin. You're so fat you caused global warming.

CAM. You're both a couple of walruses.

JENNY. Stay out of this, Cam.

CAM. Whoa, chill out.

JENNY. You wouldn't get it.

CAM. What's not to get?

JENNY. A lot of stuff.

SELA. Leave her alone.

CAM. Why? You got your turn.

SELA. It's not a contest.

CAM. Is that the only comeback you ever think of? *[Beat.]* Oh, go ahead. Take your time.

*[A pause. CAM downs the rest of his drink, then starts on Jenny's. JENNY rolls over.]*

JENNY. What the hell! Put my drink down, Cam! You owe me a cigarette for that.

CAM. I thought you were having a heart attack a minute ago.

JENNY. I was just out of breath.

SELA. Yeah, and my anus is pure gold.

*[She takes the drink from CAM and finishes it quickly.]*

CAM. Hey!

SELA. Hey yourself. What are you going to do about it now?

CAM. You can't just steal other people's drinks.

SELA. You stole it from Jenny.

CAM. She's sick.

SELA. Oh, so now you steal from sick people? Is that your great artistic ideal?

CAM. Don't—don't.

SELA. You gonna write about it, Art Boy?

CAM. I said, don't.

SELA. Used up all the past, might as well use up the present.

CAM. I've already told you, it's not about/you guys—

JENNY. Bullshit.

SELA. Right.

CAM. It's called fiction.

SELA. It's called owning up/to your—

CAM. I do own up to who I am! I am one hell of a lot more honest/than you are—

SELA. You want honesty? I will give/you honesty—

CAM. I bet you were so excited when you got married and got to change your last name to Wright.

JENNY. Stop it, guys.

CAM. You can't ignore people for a year and then expect them to like you!

SELA. How can you claim to know anything about anything? You're never even around.

*[JENNY begins to crawl towards the edge of the roof. CAM advances on her.]*

CAM. Going someplace?

JENNY. No. *[Sotto voce.]* Faggot.

CAM. Better say that to my fucking face.

JENNY. I didn't say anything.

*[JENNY shoves him. CAM recovers, then lunges at her. SELA blocks him.]*

CAM. Don't ever—

*[He goes for JENNY again, kicking. SELA blocks him.]*

JENNY. Stop it!

CAM. Sorry I stopped you the first time.

*[JENNY starts to cry. Over the following dialogue she walks to the edge of the roof.]*

JENNY. You're a piece of shit.

CAM. Shut up!

SELA. For fuck's sake, leave her alone.

*[She pulls out her flask.]*

CAM. You've been drinking out of that? I've been up here, restraining Jenny from killing herself again, and you're boozing it up in the corner?

SELA. Why didn't you tell me that before? Jenny! /You tried—

CAM. You're always taking the easy way out.

SELA. The easy way out? Writing lies about your family is the easy way out. Trying to kill yourself is the easy way out.

CAM. Selfish slut!

*[SELA rushes at CAM and grabs him by the collar, tightly. CAM tries to push her off. In his struggle, he backs further and further DS. Neither one notices. As they back DS, JENNY, watching them, backs US.]*

SELA. Don't you ever, ever talk to me that way again.

CAM. Let go—you're choking me!

SELA. You're the selfish one—why do you think I left?

CAM. Let go! Let go!

*[SELA squeezes tighter and shakes him. They are at the very edge of the roof, about to go over.]*

JENNY. Hey!

*[SELA lets go of CAM's neck. JENNY goes to them and gently pushes them away from the edge. CAM sits SL, and SELA leans against the fire escape ladder. JENNY goes back to the edge and takes a long look down. Then she sits between her siblings.]*

JENNY. They're serving kielbasa for brunch.

SELA. Well, I guess that's enough incentive for anyone to want to live.

JENNY. You don't have to talk to each other.

CAM. So we get to talk to you? Hurray.

*[A long pause.]*

JENNY. At least stay with me until the end of the party.

*[CAM pulls out a cigarette. He pauses, then tosses it at JENNY. She picks it up and holds it. LIGHTS DOWN.]*