

FOOL ME TWICE

“A Dysfunctional Dispute”

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Characters

Lottie/ Actor 1: A warm, successful woman who is constantly taken advantage of by her family because she has the ability to help them. She's extremely loyal and devoted to her family. However, she's feeling the stress of always saying "yes" and letting them have control over her life.

Mom/ Actor 4: Matriarch of the family. She pits her children against each other. She is manipulative and wields guilt like a sharp knife but comes across as innocent and childlike.

Mathilde/ Actor 2: The youngest child. She's successful, fiercely independent and worldly. She gives off city sexy "girlboss" vibes Mathilde has the wisdom to see her family for what they truly are and can verbally battle them with better than Lottie. She wants better for Lottie.

Spencer/ Actor 3: Only boy in a family full of girls. Consistently has a need to prove his masculinity. Has that Y2K, listens to Eminem, redneck feel of white trash. He is ignorant of manners, and snubs education because it makes him feel inferior.

Sloane/ Actor 5: Eldest child who has had a string of bad luck, which has made her bitter over the years. She lives in the past and is unwilling to move on. She is slowly turning into the Mom, and the similarity makes them hate each other.

Liam/ Actor 6: Lottie's boyfriend. A stoic, intellectual man who is always paying attention to everything around him. He sees what is happening to Lottie and feels powerless to help her.

Set

Dining Table with 6 chairs

Buffet cabinet

Props

Pumpkin Pie

Empty beer, wine, whiskey bottles

2 can of coke

6 glasses

6 plates- made up with a dinner on them

Silverware

(Please fill in the space of ACTOR 1-5 with the name of the actual actors cast in these roles.)

(Stage is dimly lit. (There's No Place Like) Home For The Holidays by Perry Como starts to play. Slowly in a single file line, our players come in in a single file line. They bring with them their own props for the table. Their steps are timed to the music as if a bridal procession is taking place. The only exception to this robotic display is Lottie, who is running around placing bottles on the side table and putting the pie in the cupboard. She is exasperated and stressed. The players take their seats at the table and blankly stare ahead. Lottie realizing nothing will get done without her, runs around the table doing their place settings for them. The music ends and the stage lights go to full power as she finally takes her seat. At this point the characters come to life.)

SPENCER: *(with snark)* What? I don't get a drink?.

(Lottie stands and goes back to the bar to pour a coke. Liam gets up and joins her at the bar.)

MIKE: Hun, is there anything I can do?

LOTTIE: No. I think I got it. Can you just get them started?

LIAM: Yeah. *(He takes the drink over to Spencer before retaking his seat. Sloane starts chatting at Liam.)*

(Mathilde; seeing Lottie hanging onto the bar for dear life, gets up and goes over to her. Mathilde pours her own whiskey.)

MATHILDE: You look like you could use one of these.

LOTTIE: You mind?

(Mathilde pours a second whiskey.)

SPENCER: *(to Lottie)* You got any cold ones?

LOTTIE: *(to Mathilde, taking a drink)* So, what have I missed?

MATHILDE: Well, let's see. Spencer's already pulled my ear. Sloane's been ranting to Liam about her divorce. I got snubbed by her the moment I walked in and tried to hug her. And I'm guessing that you put Liam between her and Mom to make certain they wouldn't strangle each other.

LOTTIE: So, it's business as usual.

MATHILDE: They're all warmed up for you.

LOTTIE: Great.

MATHILDE: Ready?

MOM: *(to Lottie and Mathilde)* What are you two whispering about?

LOTTIE: *(to Mathilde)* Are you?

(Mathilde holds up her drink. Lottie chuckles and they clink their glasses before turning around and retaking their seats.)

MOM: Sloane, stop hogging the young man. Liam, what do you do?

LIAM: I'm a project manager for Bidomex Technologies.

(Everyone takes a beat and stares at him as if he started speaking Latin.)

LIAM: Robotics.

SLOANE: *(Flirty)* That's fascinating! You must be a rocket scientist then?

(Mathilde snorts on her drink. Sloane shoots her a dirty look.)

LIAM: Actually, I work in the finance sect—

SPENCER: -What's the pay?

(Liam is thrown by this line of questioning. Spencer stares him down.)

LIAM: It's decent.

SPENCER: How much?

MATHILDE: *(To Lottie)* This casserole is delicious! Where did you find the recipe?

LOTTIE: Uh uh. I'm taking this one to the—

SLOANE: -It's just Campbell's Cream of Broccoli.

LOTTIE: *(Dumbfounded)* Well, not just that.

SPENCER: *(To Mathilde)* Sis, how's your love life?

(Beat.)

SPENCER: *(Continuing)* You didn't bring anyone again.

MATHILDE: I'm in a very happy relationship with myself at the moment; thank you for asking. How's your wife?

SPENCER: Ex.

MATHILDE: That's right. I heard about that. So sorry. And how many kids now?

SPENCER: Four, and they're all brats, just like their old lady.

MOM: This turkey is so damn dry. I can't chew it. Can someone pass the gravy?

SLOANE: *(Interjecting)* You should be grateful, at least you were blessed to have them.

(She turns to Liam.) When I broke my back, the Doctor told me I would never be able to

have kids. *(Liam is horrified by this)*

MOM: *(To Sloane)* Well, that's your own damn fault for drinking all that soda as a kid. You softened your bones.

LOTTIE: Mom.

SLOANE: My fault? It's my fault Chris left because he wanted them, and I couldn't give them to him?

MOM: You wouldn't have been a good mother. You're too much like Aunt Mary, you're both Leos.

SLOANE: And you're the model of the perfect mother?

MOM: I did the best I could.

SLOANE: No, you didn't.

MATHILDE: Jesus, can't we just let it go?

MOM: Don't take the Lord's name in vain.

SLOANE: *(To Mathilde)* Why should I?

(Lottie takes a large gulp of her drink.)

MATHILDE: Sloane, it happened seven years ago. You need to move on and actually do something with your life, instead of just living in the past. That's death.

SLOANE: The past is the only place I was happy, where I had a life. And it was all taken from me.

MATHILDE: You've all but given up. You're not even living anymore. You're just existing.

MOM: And she wouldn't even be doing that if it wasn't for Lottie. She takes care of everything she wants. Right leech?

(Liam looks at Lottie, who gets up and goes to the bar.)

LOTTIE: Would anyone like another drink?

SPENCER: I'd like a beer!

LOTTIE: No.

SPENCER: Come on! If I have to sit through this...

LIAM: Buddy. She said no.

SPENCER: Ohhh... So, you do have a tongue?

LIAM: I have one, yes.

MOM: *(To Spencer)* Don't you have hepatitis?

(Lottie plops a can of coke in front of Spencer before sitting back down.)

LOTTIE: Yes. And the Doc told him he needed to stop drinking.

SLOANE: *(To Mathilde)* You have no right to say anything to me. You don't even want kids.

SPENCER: Oh, we're still on this?

(Lottie looks at Liam, who is small and awkward in his chair. She mouths "I'm sorry" to him. He takes a sip of wine and goes back to his food.)

MATHILDE: That's my choice to make. If I could give you my uterus, I would. You'd get more use out of it.

SPENCER: I'm surprised you haven't already made use of it.

MATHILDE: If you're going to call me a slut, do me the courtesy of saying it.

SPENCER: Ok, you're a slut.

LOTTIE: Guys?

MATHILDE: Unlike you at least I'm smart about it. Four kids you can't support?

LOTTIE: Guys?

MOM: *(To Mathilde)* I thought I raised you better than that.

MATHILDE: Don't start with the Catholic guilt. That stopped working on me after calling me a whore in the middle of the street on Mother's Day for the whole neighborhood to hear. I still have PTSD from that. You ruined sunflowers for me because I was holding one for you!

MOM: Well, if the shoe fits.

MATHILDE: Our mother, ladies and gentlemen!

MOM: You have more of your father in you.

MATHILDE: We all have different fathers, Mom. What's the common denominator?

SPENCER: God, I love coming here! Hey, what's for dessert?

(Sloane hands her plate to Lottie.)

SLOANE: Can you pack me up some of this to go home with?

(Lottie stands up and goes to the buffet with the plate.)

MOM: *(To Sloane)* Didn't you get enough?

(Sloane runs her finger up Liam's arm, flirty. He jumps at this. Spencer makes a face.)

SLOANE: *(To Liam)* Did you?

(Stage lights dim on the table as they come up on the buffet. Mom gets up from the table and joins Lottie. Liam throws his napkin on the table and leaves the stage.)

MOM: I'm going home.

LOTTIE: Mom, there's still dessert and we haven't even done presents yet.

MOM: I'm not going to sit there and be abused by those bitches.

LOTTIE: Those bitches are your daughters.

MOM: I knew you would take their side.

LOTTIE: I'm not taking anyone's side.

(Lights go out on the buffet and come on the table, mid fight.)

SLOANE: *(To Mathilde)* There's no virtues that God didn't bestow.

MATHILDE: Oh, screw you and your bible thumping. I was taught that ambition was something to aspire to. But the moment I succeed you all snub me!

SPENCER: Because you act like you're better than us. You rub your money and success in our faces!

MATHILDE: So, you're saying that I'm not allowed to enjoy the spoils of my hard work because it'll make you feel bad?

SPENCER: There you go again, acting superior. Twisting my words.

MATHILDE: No, I'm just trying to understand what you mean.

SLOANE: You flaunt your money by coming dressed up to everything! I had to tell mom to stop admiring your top because she could never afford it!

(Mathilde snort on her wine.)

MATHILDE: Actually, she could've. I thrifted it.

SPENCER: Cheapskate.

MATHILDE: Hypocrite.

(Stage Lights dim on the table and come back up on the buffet.)

LOTTIE: Is it so wrong to want to spend Christmas with all my family around me? Please! I never ask you for anything!

MOM: Neither do I. And don't see me trying to force you around people.

LOTTIE: No one should have to spend Christmas alone. Which is exactly what Sloane would've done had I not invited her here. Everyone at this table would be alone tonight if I didn't invite you.

(All the stage lights come back up.)

MOM: At least we wouldn't be miserable.

LOTTIE: You don't need an excuse for that. You just are.

MATHILDE: I agree with that! Go Lottie!

MOM: No one asked you, Mathilde!

SPENCER: Hey Lottie! Where's your boy toy?

(Lottie finally realizes that Liam is missing.)

SLOANE: There's a hair in my potatoes.

MATHILDE: That's your own hair.

MOM: *(To Lottie)* Can you come over this week and help me clean the kitchen?

LOTTIE: I'm really busy this week.

MOM: Please? I can't climb the ladder to wash the cabinets anymore.

SLOANE: *(To Lottie)* Could you throw in some of this kielbasa as well?

SPENCER: *(To Mathilde)* It is good, right sis?

(Spencer makes a blowjob movement, and Mathilde rolls her eyes.)

MATHILDE: That's a good look on you.

(Sloane laughs.)

MOM: *(To Lottie)* Please.

LOTTIE: I'll try to come over one night.

(Mathilde shakes her head and goes over to the buffet to refill her glass.)

MOM: And can you grab me a burger from Wendy's too? I've been craving one.

LOTTIE: Sure.

MOM: *(To Mathilde)* Take it easy on that. No one wants to date an alcoholic.

MATHILDE: Why don't you tell that to your son?

(Mom storms back to the table.)

MATHILDE: *(To Lottie)* Hanging in there?

(Lottie is clearly not okay.)

LOTTIE: I'm trying... I'm really trying.

MATHILDE: You're doing better than us.

MOM: *(To Sloane)* Why can't you be more like Lottie?

SLOANE: Because I'm not Miss Perfect with the perfect house, and the perfect job, and the perfect boyfriend.

SPENCER: You didn't have any of those things. You were more like Miss Trailer Trash! Chris counts himself lucky he got away from you.

(Sloane starts crying.)

MATHILDE: That's a new one.

SPENCER: Oh, stop it! You're not fooling anyone with that.

MOM: Maybe I will take that glass of wine.

SLOANE: I just want to be loved!

MATHILDE: *(To Lottie)* Don't we all.

SPENCER: *(To Sloane)* Tough.

LOTTIE: *(To Mathilde)* I think this might be my last year hosting. I can't do this anymore.

MATHILDE: I don't blame you.

(Lottie is becoming emotional.)

LOTTIE: It's too much, Mattie. I think I'm losing my mind.

MATHILDE: I admire you for keeping it together this long.

LOTTIE: When did this become our family?

MATHILDE: We were never a family. We just call ourselves that. They don't know the meaning of the word.

(Liam Enters)

MOM: Lottie?

LOTTIE: Coming!

(Lottie starts pouring the wine. Liam goes to her.)

LIAM: *(To Lottie)* I think we should get them moving and start serving dessert.

SPENCER: Can I get a beer now?!

(Lottie grabs the beer without thinking, flummoxed.)

LIAM: Honey?

LOTTIE: Liam, please! I'm trying to do a million things right now.

(Lottie takes the drinks over to the table. Liam and Mathilde share a look. Liam gets the pie out of the cabinet and puts it on the buffet to be sliced.)

SLOANE: *(To Lottie)* Can I get a refill?

(Sloane hands her glass to Lottie. Lottie walks towards the buffet in a daze and sees a look on Mathilde's face.)

MATHILDE: Oh my god. They have you whipped.

SLOANE: Lottie?

LOTTIE: *(To Mathilde)* How did you survive? How did you get out?

MATHILDE: I got really good at saying "Fuck off." You should try it.

(Liam is becoming physically aggravated and is close to snapping. He picks up the pie, slowly making his way over to the table.)

LOTTIE: I don't know if I can.

MOM: I can't drink this. It's too dry.

SLOANE: Lottie?

SPENCER: Lottie? Where the hell is dessert?

LIAM: RIGHT HERE!!!!

(Liam throws the pie all over Spencer, shocking everyone! Chaos ensues! The players scramble to their feet to clean the mess off themselves. Spencer is livid.)

SPENCER: The hell is your problem?!!

LIAM: You're my problem!!

(Mathilde laughs and toasts.)

MATHILDE: Welcome to the Family!!!

MOM: He's insane!

LIAM: And would you like another drink to go with that?

(Liam picks up a glass of some form of liquid and throws the contents at Spencer. Spencer takes a swing at Liam. Lottie, seeing the mayhem in front of her, finally snaps and throws her glass across the room.)

LOTTIE: ENOUGH!!!!!!

(Everyone stops and looks at her with disbelief.)

LOTTIE: WHAT IS WRONG WITH YOU PEOPLE? I'M NOT YOUR PARENT! YOU'RE ALL GROWN ADULTS!!! STOP ACTING LIKE GODDAMN CHILDREN OR GET THE FUCK OUT OF MY HOUSE!!!

(Lottie is shaking in rage. The scene has completely stopped. She sees her castmates and realizes THEY ARE TERRIFIED of her.)

Actor 1: Oh my... I don't know... I'm so sorry.

(Actor 1 runs off the stage into the audience followed closely by Actor 2. Actor 1 stops and leans over, holding her knees. She's trying to stop herself from hyperventilating. Actor 2 enters and goes over to Actor 1.)

Actor 2: Are you ok?

Actor 1: *(unbelievably)* I'll be fine.

Actor 2: What the hell was that back there? That wasn't in the script. I mean, it was beautifully timed, so I don't think anyone noticed.

Actor 1: I don't know. Is everyone ok?

Actor 2: They'll survive. Actor 1, I'm all for improving, but what you did back there was dangerous.

Actor 1: I know. I know! Can you just like not crowd me?!

(Actor 2 sees how tense Actor 1 is and sits down on the black top in front of her. Actor 2 softens.)

Actor 2: Come here. Talk to me. I promise I'll just listen.

Actor 1: If it were that easy people would do it all the time.

Actor 2: Listen?

(Actor 1 nods.)

Actor 2: Sometimes it takes doing something drastic for people to actually pay attention. *(Actor 1 lifts her head, starting to calm down.)*

Actor 1: They're sitting in there watching a mirror of themselves, and I'll bet they can't even see it. I don't understand. No one is that blind.

Actor 2: People are blind because they choose to be. It's easier to blame others than to recognize your own faults.

Actor 1: So, anything I say or do doesn't matter?

Actor 2: Of course, it matters. It matters to you.

Actor 1: This toxicity is going to kill everything good in us, Actor 2.

(Actor 2 stands and puts her arms around Actor 1 leading her back onto the stage.)

Actor 2: We're not going to let that happen.

(The stage lights come back up. The players unfreeze as Actor 1 and Actor 2 come back up.. The players come over and start to crowd around Actor 1. They hug her as she apologizes to them. Actor 2 gives Actor 1 a nudge and gestures to go downstage. Actor 1 nods and reluctantly goes. She takes a deep breath and begins to address the audience.)

Actor 1: Ladies and Gentlemen. I'd like to apologize for what you just saw up on this stage. For a moment I wasn't an actor because this became very real. But the truth is that for many of us this is a reality that we suffer through every year, and no one is talking about it. At a time that is supposed to be about peace on earth and good will towards men, we're all just trying to survive. We've all been someone up on this stage. We've been Actor 4, 5, 3, 2, 6, and myself. We've been stressed and stretched to a breaking point before the starters are even done. And we always come back every year and put ourselves through it again. I'd like to call us masochists, but it's really just hope. Hope that it'll get better. Hope that things will change. Unfortunately, that's the definition of madness; doing the same thing and expecting a different result. It makes you emotional punching bags for people who prey on those just wanting to be loved. And when that love is rejected, you try to settle for approval. We kill ourselves for it, and it never comes. To those who do that to us I say shame on you. No. I can't even say that. You don't think you have anything to be ashamed of. I think what I meant to say was, I feel sorry for you. For

all of you. For...

(Actor 1 pauses and sighs.)

Actor 1: I've lost you. I know what you're doing. You've stopped watching. You're playing on your phone. You prefer to talk about pop culture and the news instead of listening to your sister or daughter who feels like she's drowning just trying to be that for you. I know where I stand. Shame on me. Go home. Show's over. Bring up the lights.

(The players look at each other. Actor 1 is broken.)

Actor 1: Bring up the house lights!

(The lights don't come up. Actor 2 starts to sing Auld Lang Syne as she walks up and takes Actor 1's hand. Slowly the players join in the song as they crowd around Actor 1, holding each other in a cathartic outpour of emotion. The cast has now become a single entity, a family. Actor 1 is the last to sing.

Blackout. It's Time by Imagine Dragons plays as the outro.)