

Something to Say

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CHARACTERS:

ANGE the girl (early 20s, a college student)

JOE the guy (early 20s, a college student)

SETTING: the late 1990s at a university

(LIGHTS UP. ANGE is in a room, at a desk, reading a textbook. Lighting suggests nighttime. She is dressed in pajamas. There is a knock at the door. ANGE gets up to answer it. ENTER JOE into doorway only.)

ANGE: Hey.

JOE: Thank God.

ANGE: What?

JOE: Thank God you're okay. *(JOE ENTERS now completely, whether ANGE wants him to or not.)* Why didn't you tell me where you were going?

ANGE: I didn't think you were my keeper. *(ANGE shuts the door.)*

JOE: What's that supposed to mean?

ANGE: It means I'm old enough to take care of myself.

JOE: Are you? Walking, what, ten city blocks at two in the morning? Alone?

ANGE: Well, for one, I wasn't alone, and two, it was only midnight when we left.

JOE: Who were you with?

ANGE: Who do you think? Allyson and Corrie. Were you not at the bar with all of us? What kind of question is that?

JOE: Oh. *(JOE sits on the chair at the desk, making himself comfortable.)*

ANGE: Corrie has work at seven. She asked us to walk her back.

JOE: You still could have told me you were leaving.

ANGE: Could I? When you were surrounded by your fans?

JOE: Fans?

ANGE: Yeah. What are their names? Jess and Jenny?

JOE: Ginny.

ANGE: Ginny. Of course. Silly me.

JOE: What's that? You look a little yellow.

ANGE: Yellow? Are you calling me a coward?

JOE: Yellow. Jealous? Yellow stands for jealous.

ANGE: No it doesn't. And jealous? Of those two? No.

JOE: No?

ANGE: No. Should I be?

JOE: No.

ANGE: No?

JOE: No. They're just in that writing class with me.

ANGE: I know that.

JOE: Then what's the problem, Ange? Why are you picking a fight?

ANGE: I'm not.

JOE: You're not? Then, what's with the fifth degree?

ANGE: Excuse me? Who's the one knocking on the door at 3 am, probably a little drunk, with implying accusations?

JOE: I can't worry about my girlfriend?

ANGE: You can. (*A beat.*) When you feel like it.

JOE: What's that supposed to mean?

ANGE: It's always the same, Joe. Always has been. You worry about me when it suits you.

JOE: What—

ANGE: When you show off you've got a girlfriend. When you want validation of the greatness of your writing, or your massive music collection, or how well you play the drums even if you haven't played in a wedding singer band in years, or when you need me to summarize the reading for Medieval Lit you didn't do.

JOE: Whoa. Wait a minute.

ANGE: No. You know this whole relationship only fits you when you want it to. *(A beat.)* I've had it.

JOE: Had it?

ANGE: Yeah.

JOE: What does that mean?

ANGE: What do you think it means? *(Another beat.)* Come on. You're smarter than this. I shouldn't have to say it.

JOE: You want to break up? *(ANGE nods her head.)* Shit.

ANGE: That's all you have to say? Great. Time to go. *(ANGE moves towards the door. JOE stops her first.)*

JOE: Wait. Please. I -I didn't see this coming.

(ANGE and JOE look at each other a long moment.)

ANGE: Really?

JOE: Really. I thought we were just having a rough patch. Like after I graduated and came here the year before you.

ANGE: This isn't just a rough patch.

JOE: You're not happy?

ANGE: I haven't been happy.

JOE: I know.

ANGE: Then, what? You knew and it just didn't matter to you? That's great too.

JOE: I knew, but I didn't know what to do!

ANGE: I don't even know what to say to that.

JOE: I'm sorry.

ANGE: *(with a half laugh)* Apology accepted? I guess?

JOE: Why were you not happy?

ANGE: It's not clear already?

JOE: No. Tell me.

ANGE: You were listening to what I said earlier? Or do I need to recap?

JOE: No. I heard. I was selfish.

ANGE: Selfish. Self-centered.

JOE: In what way?

ANGE: You're the only one who's important here. I come to your apartment. I praise your poems. I ask you to help me and you only do it if you "have time." And I get to hear about your thousands of albums ad nauseum including, but not excluded to, your new Muddy Waters, Pink Floyd, Pearl Jam, and the Paul McCartney bootleg you got using the money I thought you'd use to take me out for my birthday instead. "We'll go out later, Ange." It's always later, Ange.

JOE: That's not true.

ANGE: No. It wasn't true. Once. That's not the case anymore. When was the last time we went to a restaurant I picked?

(JOE thinks. It takes some time.)

JOE: Angelo's!

ANGE: And when was that?

JOE: *(after thinking again)* November?

ANGE: Yes. And which November? Oh, that's right. TWO Novembers ago.

JOE: If you want to pick the restaurant you can. We don't have to break up over it.

ANGE: You don't get it still, do you? It's not about the restaurant. It's about getting to be a part of this couple.

JOE: You are.

ANGE: I am not. We do what you want to do. We go where you want to go. Even though I said, let's not go to Metro tonight, that's where we went. You don't even like Metro. I don't know how we even ended up there.

JOE: Dave picked it.

ANGE: Oh. There it is. You'll tag along after Dave wherever.

JOE: You like Dave!

ANGE: I do, but does he have to go out with us all the time?

JOE: You brought Allyson and Corrie!

ANGE: Because I figured you'd ditch me for Dave! You ditched me for two of your groupies instead.

JOE: They aren't groupies! We were talking about class.

ANGE: Good for you!

JOE: Ange--stop. Please. I didn't want to make things worse. I want to make them better. I'm sorry you don't feel important. Let me change.

ANGE: You said that before. Many times. When's this change?

JOE: I don't know.

ANGE: How long do I have to wait for it?

JOE: I don't know.

ANGE: Because, honestly, I'm tired of waiting.

JOE: I know. I'm sorry. *(A beat.)* I love you.

ANGE: I know. *(Another beat.)*

JOE: Not mutual anymore, I guess.

ANGE: I don't know.

JOE: Wait. *(ANGE looks at him. After another beat.)* Is this about Mike?

ANGE: What about Mike?

JOE: Is this about you seeing him the other night?

ANGE: What? When he took me out for dinner for my birthday?

JOE: Yeah. Is that why you want to break up?

ANGE: Because we went out...?

JOE: What happened? I didn't ask. Was it just dinner?

ANGE: What? Yes! Yes. It was just dinner. What do you think happened?

JOE: I don't know. Old feelings? I don't know. I wasn't there.

ANGE: We're friends.

JOE: You know what they say about men and women being friends.

ANGE: We're friends. End of story.

JOE: Uh-huh.

(More silence.)

JOE: OK. I believe you.

ANGE: Gee. Thanks.

JOE: I do. I'm not being sarcastic. Like you. I get it anyway if there was more.

ANGE: There wasn't.

JOE: OK. There wasn't. And I should have been taking you out. Not Mike.

(ANGE only shrugs her shoulders.)

JOE: Why don't we just—I don't know—why don't we just take a breath. *(JOE moves to her, puts his arms around ANGE.)* it's late. I'm a little drunk. Are you?

ANGE: A little.

JOE: Maybe we should talk about this when we're sober?

(A beat. And then another one.)

ANGE: I'm not going to change my mind. *(ANGE moves out of his arms.)*

JOE: But, come on. We've had good times, haven't we? Making out in Old Blue or in the basement when our parents were home. Sneaking in to the movies. That Radiohead concert. I thought you loved that.

ANGE: I did. Best concert I've been to.

JOE: Day trips to bookstores. You liked those too.

ANGE: I did. It's true.

JOE: I mean, just hanging out was good. Talking.

ANGE: Yeah. When's the last time we did that though?

JOE: Things have been busy. Classes. You know. *(There is silence. No one is sure what to say.)* Argh. Ange. I don't want this. I want to be with you.

ANGE: I can't do it.

JOE: Why?

ANGE: I can't just be Joe's girlfriend anymore. I want to try new things. I want to go out and do stuff. Not just wait for you to decide to take time out for me like I've done for you the past two years.

JOE: Please. Please don't end this. Four years. I thought this was it.

ANGE: You did. From the first week we went out.

JOE: I did. Remember? I talked Mr. Hoban into letting us have the Yearbook room during seventh period lunch. Brought you that chicken fried rice Mom makes. Contraband candles. Matthew Sweet in the background.

ANGE: I remember.

JOE: Gave you that necklace with the little birds on it.

ANGE: I remember that too. That wasn't meant for me. Was it?

JOE: What? Of course it was.

ANGE: No. It wasn't. You bought that for Vanessa.

JOE: No.

ANGE: And then she turned you down when you asked her out.

JOE: All right. You're right. But I never gave it to her or anything like that.

ANGE: Nope. Just used it on me. The leftover girl afraid of birds.

JOE: I didn't know that then. And you weren't a leftover.

ANGE: Fair enough.

JOE: I've done other good things, too, haven't I? Came to your shows in high school. Wrote you poems. Those were romantic gestures.

ANGE: Yeah.

JOE: What? They weren't?

ANGE: It's not really romantic to have your lips referred to as "cracked" and "mud-colored."

JOE: I don't think I phrased it that way...

ANGE: No? Well, maybe memory doesn't serve. But I'd wager it was pretty damn close to that.

JOE: If it was, I'm sorry. *(A pause.)* I still think we ought to talk about this later.

ANGE: There it is again. Later.

JOE: Ange, I'm exhausted. I bet you are too.

ANGE: I told you I'm not changing my mind. We're breaking up.

JOE: But why? What am I supposed to do here?

ANGE: There's nothing left to do.

JOE: You won't be swayed?

ANGE: No.

JOE: Just no? You can't say more than that?

ANGE: I'm just following along with what you said.

JOE: What I said? When?

ANGE: When I showed you that poem I was working on. Last week.

JOE: I remember that but I don't remember what I said. What was it?

ANGE: "Maybe you just don't have anything to say." *(A beat. Then, ANGE walks to the door and opens it.)* I've got something to say. *(ANGE point out the door.)* We're through.

(JOE hesitates. ANGE's pointing hand drops, but the door stays open. Slowly, JOE EXITS. ANGE shuts the door and turns her back on it.)

(LIGHTS DOWN.)