

Spring 2020

this is the knot in my stomach

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this is the knot in my stomach

A Senior Project Submitted to
The Division of Arts
of Bard College

By
Cheyenne Conti

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I. And Then There Were Four (Origination of the Group)

When I returned to Bard in the Spring semester of 2019 after having completed my Fall semester abroad in Berlin, the only thing that I could think about was the fact that Senior Project proposals would be due in April. I only had about three months to decide who I wanted to partner with in order to be in the 2020 Senior Project Festival (I knew groups could consist of 2-4 people, but I had only ever seen groups made up of 2 seniors collaborate, so one partner seemed like the only realistic and doable option), and to decide what this project would be about. The moderation requirements for the Theater and Performance program required me to break out of my comfort zone of acting and explore the different components of theater, such as playwriting, directing, and theater-making. While I enjoyed finding my voice in these facets of theater, I knew that ultimately, I wanted to showcase my strengths as an actor in my Senior Project, meaning that I needed to find a director to collaborate with.

The first person that came to mind was Macey Downs. I had worked closely with Macey in our Theater-Making class, as well as in Bard Musical Theater Company's production of *Little Shop of Horrors*, so I knew that we worked well together on long-term projects and I respected and responded well to her thoughtful and precise style of directing. I was elated when she agreed to partner with me for the festival and happy to be able to check one thing off of my Senior Project to-do list. However that feeling of relief immediately turned into anxiety when Macey dropped a bombshell several days later: another Senior Project team had approached her about collaborating. Philip Carroll and Violet Savage had formed a playwright/actor duo that was in search of a director for their Senior Project and Macey fit that role. I was feeling lucky that I had already approached Macey and we had locked in our partnership, when Phil and Violet proposed a new idea. What if the four of us combined our groups and formed one Senior Project team? In

terms of roles it made sense, we had one director, one playwright, and two performers. I had experience working with Violet and Phil both in classes and student-run theater and knew that we also operated well in a creative setting together. Astrologically, we each represented one of the four elements, reflecting the balance of our roles in this project. Initially, we were met with some criticism about this proposed idea, comments that we were being too ambitious and that it might be too difficult to make one piece count as four different student's Senior Projects.

However we found that the best way to work around these potential issues was to keep the project confined to the four of us. We wouldn't cast anyone else and would each contribute to the devising process while maintaining our original roles. We decided to trust our gut feelings as well as each other, and take a risk.

II. Here Lies Our Entire Adolescence (Early Ideas and Inspiration)

Once our group was formed, the next step was to figure out the topic of our piece. Aside from Macey's request to include a confetti snow shower into the final product, none of us had any immediate impulses when it came to making a decision and answering the question, what do we want our Senior Project to say? Phil's role as the playwright meant that he would be the one writing and editing the final script, however we all wanted to be a part of the creative process that comes with writing a new play in order to create a piece that resonated with all of us while also containing contributions from the perspectives of our distinct roles. The shared Google document titled "SPROJ Ideas" was created shortly after our team came together, consisting of each of our various interests in hope that we would find some overlap. As each of us added to the document and commented on each other's suggestions, the themes of memory and growing older came up repeatedly.

It was exciting to finally be at the point of developing my Senior Project, even if it was only the very beginning. All of my experiences at Bard both in the Theater and Performance program as well as in student-run theater had helped to prepare me for this point of my college career, and I was eager to continue on this journey with my group. However with this excitement came a sense of nervousness in that each bit of progress in this project simultaneously meant that I was one step closer to graduating from Bard and entering a completely new chapter of my life. It became difficult to hear the words “Senior Project” and not immediately start reflecting on every aspect of my time in college and how soon that would be coming to an end. As the “SPROJ Ideas” document grew, it became apparent that I was not the only one feeling sentimental about my time at Bard, and about growing up in general. We all seemed to be grappling with the fact that we were slowly watching our entire adolescence fall further and further into the past, existing only as memories, while being pushed towards a future that we had no clear picture of yet. Our experiences with these feelings repeatedly entered our conversations, even if we didn’t initially intend to include them in the discussion. Rather than ignore these concerns and push them aside, we came to the realization that our Senior Project was the perfect medium to confront the overwhelming sense of loss and change that comes with growing out of earlier stages of life and entering what feels like the unknown.

As we headed into the summer before our final year at Bard, we had a basic plan of how we’d continue to work on our Senior Project despite all physically being in different locations for the next three months, with the goal of beginning the upcoming semester with a completed first draft of the script. Seeing that we all wished to be involved in the devising process of the actual content of the piece, our advisor, Jonathan Rosenberg, suggested that we utilize the Joint Stock method to gather research and inspiration for the script. It was with this method that Caryl

Churchill wrote her play *Cloud Nine* using the material generated from improvisation, shared readings, interviews, and other means of collaboration with members of her company, including the actors, director, writer, and designer¹. If each member of the group were to conduct their own research throughout the summer and share it with the rest of the team while remaining in constant conversation about the goals of the piece, we'd be able to provide Phil with relevant content to facilitate his writing of the script, while actively being involved in the creative process to ensure that the piece resembled our original intentions and reflected our personal connections to the topic.

III. Am I Remembering This Correctly? (The Research)

As we delved into the Joint Stock process, Macey, our director, began to assign weekly tasks for each member of the group to complete. All of the information that we came across or generated was to be added to the "SPROJ" Google Drive folder so that we could all access each other's work and continue the ongoing discussion regarding memory, relationships, and the concept of past versions of the self. The weekly assignments took on multiple forms, but were connected by the common theme of memory in order to get a better understanding of how different individuals interpret and recall their own working cognizance. While the assignments originated as a way for us to stay actively working on the piece throughout the summer, they continued well into the school year as Phil revised the script.

Each component of our research was conducted with the intent to aid the writing process and help to provide inspiration for future character work by exploring different facets of memory and perspective. From a psychological standpoint, we were interested in learning more about

¹ De Angelis, April. "Caryl Churchill: Changing the Language of Theatre." *The Guardian*. Guardian News and Media, September 7, 2012.

how one perceives a memory and why one individual may remember an event differently than someone who experienced the same event, as well as how memories may affect the growth and development of a person. All memories are either procedural, in that they are how the body and brain remember to perform specific actions, or declarative, giving us the ability to recall information and events from the past². For the purpose of our piece, we were interested in exploring declarative memory by staging several scenes as memories from one character's perspective, and exploring procedural memory by creating an underlying subtext for the relationship between the two. While we tend to think of memory and experience as similar or even the same thing, it's important to note that our memory of an experience can be much different than the experience itself³. In order to create a shared experience between two characters while allowing them to have differing memories regarding the details of said situation, it's necessary that we have an understanding as to why they would have conflicting memories and the feelings each character possessed in the moment to lead to this difference.

The first step was answering the question of "why?" by investigating the concept of memory from a scientific point of view. Once that had been examined, it was time to focus on the "how" of memory, as in how different individuals personally experience and process their memories. In order to do so, we developed and conducted interviews that revolved around memory on a personal and more casual level. The purpose of this stage of research was to get a sense of how people talk about memory and learn the language that is associated with the topic in order for the script to sound as natural and realistic as possible, while also gaining insight into

² Kolod, Sue. "Your Memories Make You Who You Are." Psychology Today. Sussex Publishers, August 8, 2017. <https://www.psychologytoday.com/us/blog/psychoanalysis-unplugged/201708/your-memories-make-you-who-you-are>.

³ Murray, Peter Noel. "How Memories of Experience Influence Behavior." Psychology Today. Sussex Publishers, October 3, 2012. <https://www.psychologytoday.com/us/blog/inside-the-consumer-mind/201210/how-memories-experience-influence-behavior>.

the various nature of friendship. By listening to friends and family describe the earliest memory that they could recall, memories associated with the senses and different emotions, and memories revolving around a person who they no longer considered a friend, we were able to gather a vocabulary of both phrases and feelings related to the subject. One of the prompts involved separately interviewing two people who had a shared memory of one event in order to analyze the discrepancies between the recounts, and analyze which details were deemed important enough to include, or minute enough to exclude. The outcomes of these specific interviews aided in the creation of the only scene to be included twice in the script, each time portraying a different character's perspective of a shared memory.

By the time the Fall semester started, the framework for the piece was becoming more and more solidified and we had a clearer vision of how we wanted the final product to look, even though we were months away from the actual performance. The four of us were able to start holding in person meetings to go over all of the research that we had already gathered, as well as begin weekly meetings with Jonathan. As we became more interested in this idea of perspective in relation to memory and incorporating two different perspectives into the piece, Jonathan recommended that we watch the film *Rashomon* by Akira Kurosawa, a piece that also explores the task of telling one story through multiple different lenses based on different points of view⁴. *Rashomon* follows four different testimonies regarding the death of a samurai and the events leading up to the death. This scene is shown four times, each time from the perspective of one of the four characters who claim to know the exact sequence of events. While there are similarities between each recount in order to show the fact that this is the same shared memory, the point of view of each character differs enough to raise skepticism regarding which version was the

⁴ Kurosawa, Akira, director. *Rashomon*. RKO Radio Pictures, 1951.

accurate or “true” version of the story. The way in which Kurosawa depicts the contrasting testimonies helped provide a visual as well as textual example of how to write and stage the same memory from conflicting viewpoints. We entered the Fall semester of 2019 with Phil having written about six drafts of the script over the summer. Even though we were at the point of being able to start reading through and working with the text that we had, the research and writing didn’t stop there, each meeting we had from there on out bringing new discoveries and revelations that helped to transform the piece into the final product that was presented in the Senior Project Festival.

IV. Odds Are We Run This Scene Again (The Rehearsal Process)

Throughout college, I participated in a broad range of theatrical projects, all of which had one thing in common: my sole role in these projects was that of an actor. I was used to having to delve deeper into a character and put in the time and effort outside of rehearsal to do character work and scene analysis in order to make informed choices in the moment of the performance. However in all of these projects, the character had already been created for me. I was already given basic information about these characters and their lives to work off of, never having to originate a persona and backstory from scratch, that is until we began rehearsing our Senior Project piece. From the very first draft of the script, the characters of our piece existed as “1” and “2”. Phil hadn’t written the play with any particular casting in mind, leaving Violet and I to explore both of these characters and how they interacted in a broad and instinctual sense until I was cast as 1 and Violet was cast as 2 around October. Although Phil had technically created the characters and wrote them into existence, when Violet and I were officially cast, it became our responsibility to give these characters a story and truly embody the subtext that the four of us constructed.

As the script gradually transformed from consisting of content derived solely from the interviews, to beginning to take on the shape of a nonlinear puzzle composed of various memories in the form of scenes, our process began to resemble the systematic yet sporadic form of our play. Rather than wait until the final draft of the script was completed to conduct table work and put the piece on its feet, we began to intermingle all of these different components, letting the writing, tabling, and staging begin to inform each other as we worked and allowing room for changes to all aspects of the piece, including edits to the script, altering of blocking, and open discussion about the content and backstory. Seeing that the narrative didn't follow a normative, linear trajectory, we were able to focus in on and rehearse each scene independently before deciding its permanent place in the timeline of this world that we had created.

When one creates a new play, not only are they responsible for telling this story both on paper and on stage, but they are also tasked with developing the subtext behind each scene and the background for both of the characters. We knew that on the surface, we wanted this plot to follow the relationship between two childhood friends, 1 and 2, who eventually grow further and further apart as they grow older, a disappointing yet common reality that so many experience as they are encouraged to leave behind what they know and explore what the world has to offer, often times this occurring when an individual leaves for college. Even though this is the journey that we wanted to portray on stage, we had to have just as deep of an understanding of every event that occurred outside of the scenes, as we did the events that were actively performed. This backstory didn't necessarily need to be shared explicitly with the audience, but was more than necessary for us as the creators to develop so that each scene could be as specific and intentional as possible, while still requiring the audience to put in effort to follow the relationship of these two characters.

The Timeline

One of our most utilized tools throughout the rehearsal process was the physical timeline we made that followed each character's life from birth to the last time they see each other in person (the second to last scene of the show). What started as a long, blank roll of paper that stretched across Studio North eventually turned into a detailed timeline, each color-coded crayon marking depicting a significant event specific to either 1 or 2. We started by finding each scene's chronological place on the timeline, even if the scene was not necessarily finished or refined yet. After having a visual of when each scripted event occurred and being able to see the gaps on the timeline, we were able to start filling in the empty space as we developed the history of 1 and 2. What did this friendship consist of that made it last for so long? What was the friendship lacking that prevented it from moving even further forward? What did 1 and 2 do when they spent time together? Some of the answers to these questions came easier than others as Violet and I used the context of the already written scenes to gain a feel for the personality of our characters, ultimately deciding that a large contributing factor to 1 and 2's relationship is their shared sense of humor and ability to joke around with each other. The combination of written facts within the play and personal instinct allowed us to further develop characteristics such as birthdays, birth order, and which college they each attended. Once these details were added to the timeline, we began to develop more detailed scenarios that either led up to the written scenes or gave context behind the events shown on stage, an example being the "grape scene"⁵. When watching this scene, the audience knows that 1 and 2 are together getting ready to go to the beach, that 1 has a crush on one of the lifeguards, and that 2 is disgusted by frozen grapes. What the audience

⁵ Carroll, Philip. *this is the knot in my stomach*, 2020. P. 9.

doesn't know, is that both 1 and 2 are both 15 years old in this memory, and it takes place in Bath, Maine. They are on their annual summer vacation to 2's grandparents' house and are preparing to go to Popham Beach for the day. It's during this specific trip that they try alcohol for the first time when they are left alone in the house. Even though the audience doesn't know this information, they are still able to watch the scene and understand the events both on their own and in the context of the whole play. What may be considered a cute and fun memory from a third party point of view, was a pivotal moment to 1 and 2. It is crucial that we developed this detailed backstory in order for Violet and I to fully understand the stakes of the scene and how to act in these specific circumstances as 1 and 2.

Improvisation

While some of the information that we added to the timeline was derived from group conversations based on our collective understanding of the characters, the rest was largely developed through improvisation exercises that were performed in character in order for us to explore these personalities in a space outside of the written scenes. One of these exercises involved Violet and I leaving the studio while Macey and Phil used whatever props and furniture was available in the space to construct a setting for us to work off of, only being able to interact with the chosen props and having to stay in our respective characters of 1 and 2 during the entire scene. During one instance of this exercise, the chosen props were a chaise lounge, several chairs pushed together, and a crutch. It was through this improvised scene that Violet and I developed the content that 2 had broken her ankle during the Fall of her sophomore year of high school after coming home from a party. What had started as a simple acting exercise turned into content that was added to the timeline despite not being a scripted scene, thus providing us with even more information about these individual characters and the history of their relationship.

In addition to the structured improvisation exercises used to help generate subtext, another acting-based exercise that we utilized as per the suggestion of Jonathan, was a game inspired by the film *Rashomon*. While this game also required a bit of improvisation, the purpose was to experiment with portraying the same scene from different perspectives. This exercise gave us the opportunity to involve the entire group as a way to not only allow each of us the opportunity to connect with the piece and the process, but to connect with each other in general. We played several rounds of this game in which three of us would decide the context of the scene and our character's relationships to each other, not worrying about keeping it related to our piece. After having the basic structure of the scene figured out, the three actors would choose an order to perform the scenes for the fourth member of the group, each scene depicting the same scenario, but told from three different perspectives. Once all three were performed, we would have the fourth member match each scene to a character's point of view. Afterwards, we would reveal the answers and have a discussion about why we thought each scene was an accurate representation of the corresponding character's perspective. Although this exercise distanced us from the actual piece in the sense that we weren't developing or experimenting with content from the script or working with the characters of 1 and 2, it helped us gain a deeper understanding of what knowledge is required in order to determine that something is from one individual's particular point of view. Not only did we need to solidify what was going to happen in the scene itself, but we had to think of each character's feelings about the scene, whether they liked or disliked the events happening, how they felt about the other characters in the scene, etc. When we started to apply what we had learned from this game, in combination with the ongoing research being conducted, to the development of what became known to us as the "snow scenes"

we gained a better understanding of why 1 would remember this memory differently than how 2 remembered it, especially given the context of their entire relationship⁶.

As an actor, I've had a lot of experience with improvisation and improvised games in classes, summer camps, and rehearsals for shows. It's safe to say that prior to our approaches to improvisation for our Senior Project, I was not a fan of these exercises. Every time someone mentioned the word "improv", I immediately felt a sense of panic. I didn't consider myself necessarily great at reacting on the spot and often feared that I would ruin a scene or mess up my scene partner during an improvisation exercise simply because I doubted my ability to carry on the developing events of the scene. I felt comfortable with the permanent nature of a written script, even if the script wasn't finished, because I took comfort in knowing that there were always words on the page for me to look back to, rather than having to think of them myself on a whim. So when Macey revealed that she wanted to experiment with using improvisation during the rehearsal process, I allowed myself to trust that she had what was best for our piece in mind, but silently felt my heart skip a beat every time I entered a rehearsal knowing that Violet and I would be required to veer away from the script at some point. However, I found our improvised exercises to be different from the traditional games and scenarios that I was used to and associated with the word "improv". Seeing that most of our exercises ended up being based on the script or were ways for us to explore our characters, I felt slightly more grounded than if we were just thrown into a random scenario and had to build an improvised scene from scratch. As we continued working in this way, I found myself becoming more comfortable with improvisation and more confident in my ability to successfully act in an improvised piece.

⁶ Carroll, Philip. *this is the knot in my stomach*, 2020. P. 12 & 25.

Rather than dreading the days that we were expected to work on these exercises, I began feeling excited to use this as an opportunity to become more in tune with my character and to discover more about her personality and how she'd react to different situations. As the script developed over time, Phil found several places where he included opportunities for Violet and I to improvise the lines, including during the beginning "ice cream scene", the "grape scene", and the "second snow scene"⁷. While the task felt somewhat daunting, I was eager to take on these scenes in rehearsals as well as during the final performances, for being able to successfully improvise in front of a full audience felt like a huge personal accomplishment given that I was terrified to improvise in front of my three Senior Project partners just months earlier. Our use of improvised games and scenes throughout the rehearsal process as well as in the final product not only contributed greatly to the script and the overall creation of the piece, but helped build a sense of confidence and pride within myself as a performer.

Scene Analysis & Character Work

As the rehearsal process continued, our meetings often consisted of all four of us, for we found it important that everyone be involved in the discussions related to the characters and the direction of the piece seeing that we each brought unique contributions due to our differing roles in the project. Each rehearsal that we held seemed to differ from the others in that we cycled through numerous tactics, exploring the project through physical rehearsals of blocking and running the scenes, more context based rehearsals which included in depth discussions about our personal experiences and thoughts in relation to the content of the piece, and research oriented rehearsals such as building onto the timeline and crafting the backstory of the piece. An approach

⁷ Carroll, Philip. *this is the knot in my stomach*, 2020. P. 1, 9, & 25.

that remained consistent throughout each rehearsal involved the analysis and tabling of the scene or scenes that we'd be working on during that meeting. Most of the scenes were relatively short in length, meaning we'd be able to get through at least two or three in one rehearsal if we worked efficiently. The scene analysis existed in the form of several questions that were to be answered by each character, for each scene. These questions required listing the given circumstances for each situation, as well as listing what is literally happening in the scene, what one character wants from the other in this scene, and an action for both characters. All of the answers were recorded onto individual google documents and placed in the "SPROJ" folder so that every member of the group could reference back to this information. Even though the script wasn't completely set in stone and Violet and I were able to take some liberties with the actions of the scenes as we got more familiar with the plot both physically and mentally, the act of carefully analyzing and discussing each scene as an individual component of the piece helped us to dig deeper into the motivations, causes, and reasons behind the scripted memories and gave us a foundation to fall back on when making decisions in the moment.

Along these lines of taking the time to investigate and explore each scene individually, Violet and I were also required to complete character sheets. This task came towards the end of the process when we entered winter break, knowing that we'd only have about three weeks upon our return for the Spring semester to rehearse and refine our piece before the performance. At this point, we had done so much work and had had so many discussions regarding the details of our piece that I was surprised that we hadn't thought of completing character profiles earlier, however looking back on it, it made sense that Macey had waited to give this last assignment. I found that when filling out the sheet, I was reminded of all of the little details, quirks, and traits that made 1 the character that she was in the final piece. This assignment was especially personal

because it gave me the responsibility of completing this character that had been explored and developed as the result of a group process. Every other aspect of 1 and her backstory had originated through group discussions, however it was now up to me to determine the more detailed characteristics of 1 such as her biggest fear, her favorite word, her relationship with her parents, and more. Details that up until this point I hadn't even realized existed, but now that I was aware of them, it was hard to imagine 1 without all of these traits. This process made me start to wonder what it would be like if one day, someone else were to play the character of 1 in this piece, and what choices they would make about her and her background. I had become so attached and close to this story and these characters that the thought of any other interpretation other than the one I had developed on my own as well as what we had developed as a group seemed almost incorrect.

V. We Just Don't Like Being Married to a Script (Discoveries and Challenges)

Props

By the time December came around, our group had spent so much time researching and discussing the plot and subtext of our piece that we knew each element of it as well as the back of our own hands. Although just because the storyline was clear to us, didn't mean that it was as easy to grasp for the audience. Our biggest concern was regarding the clarity of the piece, therefore we felt it was necessary to show a draft of the full play at the midway showings. This meant finally putting a majority of the scenes on their feet and blocking the entire piece in about one week. We had been leaning towards a minimalistic set, if any, and as far as props, Macey was interested in using one key prop per scene. We weren't sure of the logistics regarding the staging of the props yet, but there were ideas floating around of leaving all of them on stage at the same time, each memory leaving its physical mark as it passes. Before midways, we invited

Jonathan to one of our rehearsals so we could show him about four or five scenes that we had blocked in order to get his feedback, one of these scenes being the “bee scene”, which included Violet and I using rocks as the key prop to throw offstage⁸. When we finished our run and Macey explained her ideas for the rest of the piece to Jonathan, he brought up an interesting point that hadn’t occurred to any of us. What if we didn’t use any props? The rationale behind this idea was that given the stripped down nature of the play’s aesthetics, the props seemed almost unnecessary, and getting rid of them would as a result cause the use of the snow later on in the show to become even more visually striking in contrast. At the time, I think this suggestion took us all by surprise. I don’t think there was ever a moment that we had considered not using props because including them seemed like the natural thing to do. But Jonathan had made a good point, especially since we were already having reservations about using certain props. He reminded us that we had the option of adding them back into the show if we decided they were necessary, so we decided to try out Jonathan’s suggestion, unsure of how it would play out for midways, but curious to see what would occur as a result. We experimented with continuing to block the show sans props, miming certain actions like talking on the phone during the “skirt scene” and throwing rocks during the “bee scene”, while refraining from any sort of choreographed movement in other moments such as the “car scene”⁹. After blocking the whole show with this suggestion in mind, we decided to take Jonathan’s advice and get rid of all physical props other than the snow (and eventually the \$1 bill 1 uses to pay 2 back). Not only did this choice help to solidify the imagery and overall tone of the piece, but posed a challenge to Violet and I by

⁸ Carroll, Philip. *this is the knot in my stomach*, 2020. P. 3.

⁹ Carroll, Philip. *this is the knot in my stomach*, 2020. P. 3, 7, & 16.

forcing us to truly embody and place ourselves in the different scenes, seeing as we were unable to rely on any visuals or tangible objects.

The Monologue

As midway showings came and went, we were able to finish tabling and blocking each scene enough to run a draft of the whole piece start to finish in front of the Theater and Performance faculty before leaving campus for winter break. Even though the idea of physically leaving our piece for five weeks after spending the past three and a half months working together almost every day on it was a bit nerve wracking, we felt we were in a good place and planned on returning to Bard about three or four days prior to the start of the Spring semester in order to hold several extended rehearsals while we had the free time. Once classes had started for the semester, we felt confident with the piece and only had a few things left to work on, those things being 1's opening monologue and the ending of the play. While we had planned on rehearsing six days a week up until tech week and the final performances, we had hit a bit of a bump in the road early on. About one week into the semester, I came down with strep throat, and although I healed relatively quickly and it didn't drastically disrupt the rehearsal process, it was a reminder that amidst everything going on with classes and Senior Project, that it was more than necessary to step back and listen to my body every now and then. I'm very much the type of person who, unless I'm on my deathbed, refuses to miss any commitment or obligation, making it difficult for me to justify taking time for myself to relax and step away from work or school. We quickly got back on track and continued to work through some of the less polished moments of the piece, one being my monologue.

Originally, both 1 and 2 had monologues written in the script, however after a group discussion and hearing critiques about the midway showings, we decided that it was only

necessary to keep 1's monologue¹⁰. I had performed monologues before and felt fairly confident with them, but for some reason, this one was different. No matter how many times Macey and I worked together to analyze the text and pinpoint a specific person to talk to, I kept getting the same note: it wasn't clear who I was talking to or why I was telling this story. Truthfully, I don't think I knew the answer to those questions. Even though we had come up with the scenario that I was talking to 2, telling her about this time that I had felt vulnerable while stranded on my family's boat, I never felt like I truly knew *why* I was telling her this, and there was no hiding this lack of clarity, especially since the show opened with me performing this monologue alone on a bare stage. After many attempts at connecting to the monologue and exploring different ways to approach it, Macey and I realized, maybe 1 *isn't* telling this story to 2. Maybe 1 is telling this story to Ethan, the boy that she likes in college. With this new direction in mind, Macey and I restarted this process and wrote down a separate thought behind each sentence of the monologue. As it became more apparent that I hadn't initially intended to tell this story to Ethan, much less describe these feelings of vulnerability and helplessness out loud, I started to feel more in tune and connected with the words that I was speaking. Rather than thinking of it as a story that had to be told, I began to think of the monologue as an exploration of this memory and these feelings that I hadn't visited in a long time, allowing myself to relive this experience in the moment both in the made-up scenario of telling it to Ethan, as well as onstage, telling it to a live audience. One integral factor that aided the monologue more than I expected it to was when we chose an opening song for the show. We had already agreed that Lorde's "Ribcage" would close the piece, as it was the perfect song to sum up all of the emotions about friendship and growing up

¹⁰ Carroll, Philip. *this is the knot in my stomach*, 2020. P. 1.

that had surfaced throughout the entire half hour beforehand, with lyrics like “you’re the only friend I need, sharing beds like little kids” and “I’ve never felt more alone, it feels so scary, getting old”¹¹. However we struggled to find a song to open the show that resonated as strongly. After listening to several different songs and not feeling especially drawn to any of them, the group turned to me and asked if there were any songs that triggered a strong emotional response when I listened to it, seeing that my monologue would directly follow the music. The first song that came to mind was “Waiting” by Norah Jones, solely because my association with this song was that it plays at the beginning of an emotionally charged episode of my favorite television show, and every time I hear it, I immediately think back to the opening scene. Even though I thought nothing would come of it, we listened together as a group and as the song played from the speakers of Resnick Studio I immediately found myself tearing up, almost involuntarily. As we listened, certain lyrics stuck out as they captured the feelings of vulnerability and loss, such as “When will I ever learn, if I wait it doesn’t mean you will return”¹². We all kind of just looked at each other and knew in that moment that this was our opening song. After combining the elements of this musical interlude with the new research and analysis that Macey and I had done with the monologue, it finally made sense to me. I finally felt connected to every word that came out of my mouth and what started as in my opinion the most frustrating part of the piece, became one of my most anticipated.

¹¹ Lorde. “Ribs”. By Ella Yelich-O’Connor and Joel Little. Recorded 2013. Track 4 on *Pure Heroine*. Universal Music Group. Compact disc.

¹² Norah Jones. “Waiting”. By Norah Jones. Recorded 2009. Track 6 on *The Fall*. Blue Note. Compact disc.

The Ending

It sounds cliché that the beginning and the ending of the piece were the two moments that seemed to bring the most challenges, but once the monologue had been conquered, our focus turned to the last two scenes of the play, the “car scene” and the “second snow scene”. Upon returning to Bard after winter break, the endings of both of these scenes, while sentimental, weren’t completely heartbreaking in the sense that both 1 and 2 shared a moment of acknowledging an old memory together, and 1’s exit from 2’s perspective of the snow memory was somewhat gradual. Although after speaking to Jonathan about the work to be done in the three weeks leading up to the festival, this sentimentality was brought into question in regards to whether or not it was needed in 1 and 2’s present day relationship. In order to explore a world in which this reconciliation didn’t take place, we experimented with altering the moment when the two characters reminisce about the hornet’s nest memory. Rather than have 2 contribute to the recollection of this memory, we began to experiment with having her be more unresponsive to 1’s initiation. As we were playing around with different ideas of how to do this, Violet and I came up with a secret handshake between 1 and 2 that we imagined carried a sense of obligation. If one character started the handshake, the other had to join in and complete the gesture, no matter what. Somehow, Violet and I came up with a movement that involved us touching our fingers together while saying “ET phone home”, to which Phil laughed and said it was stupid¹³. That’s when we realized that stupid was just what we needed. It’s one thing for someone to not recall a shared memory from when they were seven, however it’s an entirely different kind of disappointment and rejection for someone to either forget, or purposely choose not to

¹³ Spielberg, Steven, director. *E.T., the Extra-Terrestrial*. Swank, 1982.

acknowledge a repeated gesture that was carried all the way through a friendship. To have 1 extend the gesture of the childhood handshake that was once such an important part of their relationship, only to be met with no response from 2, was the ultimate sign that their friendship had reached its end for the time being, and any hope of salvaging what once was had been lost as soon as the two started to grow apart from each other.

In order to justify 2's built up frustration and disappointment in 1, we had to rethink the ending of the "second snow scene" once the car scene had changed¹⁴. With tech week and the performances approaching it was important to keep up with rehearsals and run through the changes we had made. However, 2020's reign of terror struck once more when Violet caught the flu. Luckily, all of the work that we had put in prior to this point resulted in us being able to afford a couple of days off from rehearsal while she rested. By the time we were able to reconvene and work on the ending, we were only about one week away from beginning tech, which was a little anxiety provoking to say the least. The unedited version of the last scene ended with 1 gradually leaving the stage as she continued the ongoing conversation with 2, eventually exiting completely, leaving 2 on stage finishing the dialogue by herself. Seeing that this scene depicts how 2 remembers the snow memory, we wanted to highlight the fact that 1's exit was less formal and amicable from 2's perspective than it was from 1's, while also keeping the dialogue and blocking similar to the first snow scene to indicate that both scenes represent the same memory of one event, rather than two separate events. Jonathan had helped point out that even though this is one version of the same memory, it didn't need to be identical in the sense that the dialogue had to continue after 1 left. We had become so worried about making it clear

¹⁴ Carroll, Philip. *this is the knot in my stomach*, 2020. P. 25.

that each snow scene represented the same memory from two perspectives that we forgot to focus on what 2 had been feeling in that moment. From 2's perspective, it didn't matter at what point 1 left, all that mattered is that 1 left and 2 remembers the feeling of being alone. It was after this realization that we decided to cut the dialogue between 1 and 2 from the moment 1 begins to exit, and instead have 1 leave the stage abruptly in order to allow 2 the time to recognize and process these feelings of growing apart and being on her own. It may have taken us almost nine full months of research and work, we may have changed the blocking of the last scene an hour before spacing the show in the LUMA Theater, and we may have submitted the final version of the script during tech week. But we had done it. "this is the knot in my stomach" was finally ready to be performed for an audience.

VI. And I Would Do It All Again

I look back at my Senior Project proposal, submitted in April of 2019, and I'm surprised at how many of these thoughts I still have today, especially regarding the impulse to reflect on the past when feeling pressure to move towards the future. From the very start, we sought out to explore the relationship between memories and the self as a way to cope with the feeling of mourning the past and the versions of ourselves that only exist in our memories. As the project progressed, all of these emotions regarding growing up and feeling sentimental for the past were expressed through the characters of 1 and 2 and their journey. It became almost impossible to think about our past selves without also thinking about all of the people associated with these selves who now may also only exist as a memory. One of the most exciting things about growing older and exploring new facets of life is the prospect of meeting new people and creating new experiences and memories to live and share with others. However, with this comes the harsh reality that not everyone involved in your life will remain in it forever, and by the time we reach

the stage of life where we are ready to move away from home and begin the next phase, we have already left so many people in the past, whether we're aware of it or not. Some of these relationships experience a big falling out, some mutually dissolve as time passes, and some disintegrate before we realize that it's too late to save them. The story of 1 and 2 is one that resonates with every individual to some extent. Whether it be the feeling of outgrowing your surroundings, feeling as if someone has outgrown you, or a combination of both, these emotions and their repercussions are simply a part of life.

The journey of 1 and 2 was inspired by our own personal experiences and the stories we shared with each other, creating an even greater attachment to these characters and the memories they shared. Each one of us could pinpoint a moment in our lives where we felt as if we were the 1 or the 2 in a past friendship. Through the progression of the piece, we had eventually gotten to the point where we felt that there wasn't much else to add or change. The countless amount of hours in rehearsal gave the illusion that all of the hard work had been done and the play had gone as far as possible. So when Jonathan suggested that we take a look at the last two scenes, we struggled for a bit with figuring out what changes to make. We had become so involved with the story of 1 and 2 and the portrayal of their relationship, that for a moment, it seemed we had forgotten that the initial inspiration for the piece was our own personal feelings regarding memory and nostalgia. As we sat in a circle on the floor of Resnick Studio, we decided to take a look at the proposals that we had written at the very beginning of this process, and reminded ourselves why we wanted to create this project in the first place. Even though the plot revolves around two specific characters, this story was as much about Violet, Macey, Phil and I as it was about 1 and 2.

When we came together with the intentions of collaborating to create our Senior Project, I had a good feeling about what was to come. Fast forward to almost one year later, and I can confidently say that “this is the knot in my stomach” is my proudest accomplishment at Bard. From an acting standpoint, this play challenged me to put in a great amount of effort in order to develop and portray this character at various different ages, allowing me to showcase, in my opinion, some of my most thoughtful acting to date. Even though my primary role in this project was that of an actor, I will forever be grateful that I was allowed to take on the role of a collaborator as well. When the four of us first talked about devising a piece together, I was excited, yet had absolutely no idea what the final product would look like, or even how the collaboration process would operate. There is always that chance that when working with other people, ideas will clash, arguments will occur, and the end result may not resemble the original idea, or please all members of the team. It might sound unrealistic or too good to be true to say that our group didn’t experience any of these issues, but I truly have no complaints about our process. If I were given the chance to go back in time and start this entire project over from scratch, there isn’t a single thing that I would have done differently. I was lucky enough to join a team of some of the most creative, respectful, and hardworking individuals I have ever met and our combined passion for this project created a supportive and enjoyable environment that allowed us to thrive not only as collaborators, but as friends.

Epilogue

After the fifth and final performance came to an end, the four of us took down the Christmas lights from our dressing room, packed up our costumes, and picked the snow out of our hair one last time. To celebrate the success of a play we had all become so close to, we made our way to Rhinebeck to enjoy a group dinner at Cinnamon Indian Cuisine, something we had been looking forward to for weeks. Even though we had a reservation at 6:30 pm, we were told to come back in 20 minutes, as the restaurant was packed. To kill some time, we took a walk through Rhinebeck. About two weeks earlier, we had stumbled upon a discussion regarding the fact that 1 and 2 have never existed as anything but 1 and 2, to which Violet and I revealed that we had each individually been brainstorming names for our characters. We decided that after the final performance, we would finally reveal our chosen names to the rest of the group. As we walked around Rhinebeck, we each took turns throwing out guesses. Some came close, others were completely off the mark. After hearing each of the guesses, we revealed the answers. 1 and 2 would forever exist as 1 and 2 on paper, but to the four of us, they became Jenna and Kat.

this is the knot in my stomach
a memory play

By Philip Carroll

I is alone on stage.

1

I can feel it still, very tangibly. I spent a lot of time on boats as a kid. We had this small lake just adjacent to our backyard and my dad always rowed me around it for fun. We'd spend a lot of time out there. Me and my dad would talk. It was like our own little world. Every time we went out onto the water I'd always ask him to let me row but he never let me. I began to wonder why. One time, when I am feeling especially driven, I go out into the backyard and see our dinghy floating, tied to the dock. I run over to it and jump in, untying it as quickly as possible and pushing off of the dock. I feel like a pirate, hijacking a boat. It feels good, at first. The boat begins to float further out into the lake. Our house gets smaller, slightly. I realize, pretty quickly, I'm not strong enough to row. I just float there. I get scared, and I panic. I develop this overwhelming fear of what's in the water below me. I don't remember any of this, actually. I think it's just one of those things I've heard so many times I kind of formed it in my head. I can feel it, though. The knot in my stomach. I feel alone. I feel truly lost, scared. I feel helpless. My father came and rescued me. He tells this story a lot now. And he always ends it with "the craziest part was, she wasn't even moving or trying to help herself! If not for the ebb and flow of the water she wouldn't have moved at all!" That's the punchline. It usually gets a laugh.

1 and 2 meeting each other again for the first time. 2 is working. They do not realize each other at first. 1 notices 2 first.

1

Oh, my gosh, hi! How are you?

2 ponders 1 for a moment

2

Hi! Yes, hi! How're you?

1

I'm good, yeah, I'm good. But how about you?

2

Also good, I mean, you know how it is. Just summer job and such.

1

Yeah, of course.

2

Can I get you anything?

Actors may improvise around this awkward interaction. No matter what, it must include a beat in which 2 pays for a portion of, if not all of, 1's order. In the original production, 2 worked at an ice cream shop and 1 tried to pay with a credit card, but they did not meet the "card minimum" of the shop.

2

Yeah, well, I'd love to chat more but my boss is an asshole and always gets mad when we socialize too much

Damn that sucks 1

Yah it does. 2

But maybe I'll see you around? 1

Yeah, see you around. 2

Would you want to like do anything, while I'm home? 1

Oh, um, yeah maybe. I mean I'm busy, but. 2

Yeah of course. 1

Um, I was thinking about Eli's party tonight. 2

Oh Eli's having a party? 1

Yeah 2

Oh, those are always fun. 1

Yeah 2

Yeah, maybe I'll see you there. When is it? 1

Just text him about it. 2

Yeah, ok, See you then. 1

See you. 2

Transition memory. I revisits the last time they spoke to 2 (1/3)

Hello 2

I want to talk to you 1

Ok 2

About last night 1

Ok 2

New memory. 1 and 2 throw rocks at a tire swing.

There it is. 2

I can't see it. 1

They're there. Every time I go on the swing they attack me. 2

My sister is allergic. 1

Are you? 2

I don't know. I've never been stung. 1

I'm not allergic. 2

That's good. 1

You ready? 2

...yeah 1

They count down from 3. 2 leads the counting. 2 throws the rock and misses the target. 1 does not.

Darn. 2

You missed. 1

You didn't even throw! 2

I wasn't ready! 1

We counted down! 2

You counted down! I wasn't ready. 1

When are you going to be ready? 2

I'm getting ready right now! 1

Ok, fine, get ready then. 2

I'm trying to! 1

Beat. 1 breathes.

Ok, let's get ready. 2

Ok. 1

I'm gonna count. 2

Ok. 1

2 begins counting. 1 joins in. They throw and hit the target. Moment of tension. Nothing happens.

You're sure there's one in there? 1

Yes! I get stung every time I use the swingset! 2

Do you need my help with this? 1

Yes. I can't do it myself. We need to do this now because I want people to be able to use the swingset at my birthday party. I wanna play the game where you jump through the tire swing and I had a really good plan and it is gonna be really fun but I can't do it without getting stung. 2

Ok. 1

One more try. 2

They count down from 3 again. They throw rocks. Moment.

New memory. 1 and 2 make a secret handshake. This can last as long as it wants to, but it must begin with the two of them touching their pointer fingers and quoting the line "ET phone home."

New memory. 1 and 2 are hiding.

This will work 2

I don't know 1

It will. Trust me. The teachers never look over here. 2

They're going to notice we're not back. 1

Who cares? 2

Yeah 1

See, they're rounding everyone else up but they don't even realize where we are. Once everyone else is inside, it'll be eternal recess for us. 2

1
That does sound fun.

2
Ok, I'm gonna go get a better look. You stay here and wait for the signal.

2 stealthily moves from one part of the stage to another. They have trained for this. 1 waits there for a few moments, watching attentively. 2 waits a few more moments and starts making hand signs to 1.

1
Um, what's the signal?

2
(Hand signs)

1
Is that the signal?

2
(2 furiously says "no" with hand signs. They re-emphasize what they originally said)

1
Just tell me what you want me to do!

2
(makes a "hush" motion towards 1)

They wait a few more moments. 2 gives 1 the signal. They do not respond. 2 gives 1 the signal again. This time is more exaggerated. They do not respond. 2 stares at 1. After a moment:

1
Is that the signal?

New memory. 1 and 2 lay on opposite sides of the stage. They talk on the phone.

1
I want to wear a skirt tomorrow

2
I don't want to wear a skirt tomorrow

1
Why not?

2
I want to wear my new pants tomorrow

Well I want to wear my new skirt tomorrow 1

I want to wear my new pants tomorrow 2

I want to wear my new skirt tomorrow 1

I want to wear my new pants tomorrow 2

I want to wear my new skirt tomorrow 1

I want to wear my new pants tomorrow 2

I want to wear my new skirt tomorrow 1

I want to wear my new pants tomorrow 2

Well I want to wear my new skirt tomorrow 1

Fine, I'll wear a skirt tomorrow. 2

Yay thank you! 1

But then can we wear a blue shirt? 2

I don't want to wear a blue shirt 1

Transition memory. 1 revisits the last time they spoke to 2 (2/3)

Thank you so much for understanding, honestly. Did you get home ok? 1

Yeah I did 2

Yeah I was worried about you because of the storm and everything so when I saw your text I felt relieved 1

2
Yeah I'm completely good.

New memory. 1 straightens 2's hair with a flat iron. This can go on for a few moments. Eventually:

2
(grabbing their neck) Shit!

1
Oh shit. Did I burn you? Did I burn you?

2
Owwwwwwwwwwwwwwwwww

1
Oh shit I burned you didn't I?

New Memory. 1 and 2 get ready for the beach. At some point, the two find a time to do their secret handshake again.

1
Do you think that lifeguard will be there?

2
Which lifeguard?

1
The lifeguard.

2
Yes, they're always working on weekends.

1
(taking a deep breath)
Oh my god ok.

2
What, do you have a crush?

1
Uh, yes. Are you kidding me? They're so hot. They've got such great teeth. And their eyebrows my god.

2
I don't know they're just not my type.

1 reacts with disbelief. They both continue to get ready.

1
Well we're gonna fall in love and get married and raise a family of Olympic swimmers so its fine.

1 eats a grape.

1
Do you want a grape? They're frozen.

2
You freeze your grapes?

1
Not always, but sometimes yeah.

2
That seems weird.

1
No it's good

2
I don't know...

1
No I swear try it!

2
Why do you want me to try it so bad?

1
Cause you'll like it! Come on, just do it.

2 eats it. They hate it.

2
Oh god! Ugh! It's like a human finger!

1
(laughs)

2
My god this is the worst thing I've ever experienced!

1
(laughs)

2
You like these?

1

Yeah they're good!

2

No, it was psychologically similar to eating a human finger. It was horrendous.

1

(laughs) I like them! They're refreshing and good in the summer!

2

I can feel the grape in my mouth, still. I can feel myself biting down on it, and it feels like I'm physically repulsed by the whole sensation of it.

1

Ok, ok. I won't make you eat another. All I'm saying is on a hot day, you're sweaty, you're smelly, all you need is to be refreshed, a frozen grape can really do the trick. Maybe you'd like it more with a different kind of grape. I'll have different ones tomorrow.

2

Please, don't. Never do. You know, I've always thought that like, if it came to it, I could eat a person but that grape literally just changed my whole apocalypse plan.

1

Ok, wait, you should be thanking me for dissuading your cannibalism. That's honestly dark.

2

Yeah I doubt I can handle the real thing-

1

If you couldn't handle the grape.

They laugh. A lot.

New memory. 2 puts makeup on 1's neck.

2

Just tell your mom it was a flat iron burn.

New memory. 1 and 2 lay in the grass and look at clouds. They can point to show each other what they see, if they'd like.

New memory. 1 and 2 lay in the snow

2

Don't move!

1

AAHHHH it's so cold!

Just do it! 2

I want to stop 1

Keep going! 2

I need to stop 1

12 more seconds! 2

They wait for 12 seconds

Time! 2

1 shoots up, shivering. 2 plays it cool, but is definitely cold

I have hypothermia 1

Come warm up 2

I have hypothermia 1

You can't get hypothermia that fast 2

I have frostbite 1

Alright, come warm up. 2

They huddle for warmth

That was not fun 1

But it got your heart pumping, right? 2

1 checks their heart

No 1

2 laughs

I think it's frozen 1

Beat

Can we go inside? 1

Go inside? On the first snow of the year? What's wrong with you? 2

I have hypothermia 1

I was laying there too and I'm fine 2

You're a crazy person 1

What else should we do? 2

Nothing 1

What do you normally do on weekends 2

Usually just hang out with my friends 1

But what do you like, *do* 2

I don't really know 1

Beat

Hey, so, do you remember that guy Ethan I was telling you about? 1

Yeah of course. 2

Well, he's been like, asking to hang out all day... 1

Ok 2

And, I mean, I don't want to, like, leave you 1

I know- 2

But I just need something to go my way. If he was anybody else I wouldn't. 1

No it's ok 2

Are you sure? 1

Totally, yes. 2

You understand? 1

Absolutely 2

Take my key to go inside. 1

I'll wait outside. I like the cold. 2

You sure? 1

Yeah 2

His room is like, literally 2 minutes away so I'll be like right here. 1

Yeah 2

If you need anything just let me know. 1

Ok, cool. Thanks. Have fun. 2

You too! 1

Transition memory. 1 revisits the last time they spoke to 2 (3/3)

Good, well, honestly, it was great seeing you. 1

(no response at first, then:) Yeah it was. 2

What are you up to today? 1

Not much. 2

Yeah, me neither. 1

Wait, do you mind if I put you on hold for a sec? I gotta answer someone really quick. 2

Yeah, sure thing go ahead. 1

2 never resumes the call. Eventually, 1 realizes this and hangs up. They sit in silence for a long time. 2 walks and sits at the edge of the stage. 1 joins them, eventually.

2 drives 1. At some point they arrive at 1's home and continue to talk.

I'm so tired 1

Don't worry, you'll be home soon. Are you feeling ok? Do you want to lie down? 2

Um... 1

Are you feeling ok 2

I just want to lie down	1
<i>(trying to appease)</i> There's a lever, on the side of...	2
<i>I searches but can't find it</i>	
<i>(while searching)</i> I can't...	1
You can go to the back seat.	2
No it's fine I don't want to be a burden	1
It's no burden.	2
No it's fine	1
Are you going to be sick?	2
No I'm totally ok.	1
Well if anything changes let me know.	2
<i>Beat</i>	
Is this your car? This is a nice car	1
Thanks	2
How long have you had this?	1
Just a few weeks, actually.	2
What happened to your old one?	1

Nothing I just could afford a new one 2

But that car was awesome! 1

It started getting really old and like the engine started to go these past few years though 2

Poor sad car. 1

I begins laughing. A chuckle at first, but slowly it grows and it becomes hard for them to hold it in.

Why are you laughing? 2

(laughs) 1

(also kind of laughing) what's so funny? 2

Nothing, nothing... (laughs) 1

Come on, what is it? 2

Nothing... (laughs) 1

Jesus Christ, come on, what is it? 2

Nothing! 1

Beat. 2 is dissatisfied but does not care to pursue 1's secret anymore.

Look out! 1

2, terrified, slams on the breaks. 1 holds back laughter.

What? What did you see? 2

...

1

2

What the hell did you see?

1 bursts into laughter. 2 fumes with anger

2

That was a fucking joke?

1

Do you remember the last time I was in your car?

2 thinks for a moment

2

What does that-

1

Yes you do, come on. Don't you remember, we went to Weazer's, and-

2 remembers

2

Oh my god!

1

(laughs)

2

Why are you laughing that is fucked up! That's a fucked up thing to do that was not funny.

1

(laughing) yes it was!

2

(also kind of laughing) that's a fucked up thing to think is funny.

1

Oh come on, no one got hurt, it's fine.

2

Either of us could have. Could have hurt my car too.

1

Come on, cars don't matter.

2
When you spend thousands of dollars on one they do.

1
You didn't think that was funny?

2
You're fucked up.

1
You thought it was funny last time.

2
That wasn't a joke, you know that, right? Someone almost got hit.

1
No one got hit.

2
Yeah, well, the guy on the bike almost did.

1
Almost, though, almost.

2
You didn't think it was funny at the time.

1
What are you talking about, yes I did! You couldn't see your own face is the problem otherwise you would have thought so too.

2
You're the only person I know that thinks a near hit and run, well not a hit and run because I wouldn't run, but a hit... - you're the only person who'd find that funny. That was not funny.

1
Bec-

2
Besides, why would you think that was a good thing to just spring onto someone like, while I'm going out of my way to drive you home. You know, I'm actually doing you a fucking favor

1
I'm sorry-

2
I could have stayed at the party but you were the one who got too drunk and had to leave immediately and because I felt, for some reason, I had some semblance of responsibility to your well being

I'm not normally like this- 1

And because you haven't grown the fuck up I had to drive you 2

Pause

I mean, Jesus, that is not how you get people to like you. Ruining their nights and then causing them to crash their car - that is not how you get people to like you. Do you know that? 2

You don't like me? 1

Beat

I don't really know. 2

Oh. 1

I don't really know you. 2

Beat

The turn's coming up- 1

Yeah, I know where you live. 2

Beat

So you liked the party then? 1

I did 2

You thought it was fun? 1

I did 2

Yeah, me too. 1

Oh yeah? 2

Yeah 1

That's good. 2

Beat

I'm sorry for, um, laughing at your distress. 1

That's ok. 2

Beat

I really don't care. 2

ok 1

Pause

So how did you- 1

Just, shut up for the rest of the ride, please. 2

Ok 1

Can you do that for me? 2

ok 1

We're like 2 minutes away from your house just... 2 minutes, please. 2

ok 1

Beat

I swear you thought it was funny. 1

I don't care. 2

Beat. 1 steps out of the car

Well I'll see you around 1

Yeah see you 2

Beat

ET Phone home 1

She turns and points her finger to 2.

2 turns to 1, looks at her finger, and turns away again.

Beat

Here 1

1 hands 2 money

What's this? 2

For the ice cream. 1

Oh. You didn't have to- 2

I wanted to. Have a good night. 1

You too. 2

1 leaves the car. Transition into a memory, now from 2's perspective. 1 lays in the snow. Before 12 seconds has passed, 2 joins her.

Time! 2

I have hypothermia 1

Come warm up 2

There's 1000 things happening to me right now and none of them are good 1

Like what 2

I have hypothermia 1

I'll help you 2

I have frostbite 1

I'll help you 2

... I have hypothermia 1

Odds are you go lick that flag pole over there? 2

A game of "odds are" is improvised. If they get different numbers so be it. If they get the same, 1 must talk their way out of it.

Uggghh what do people do around here? 2

Well, when we're not licking flagpoles, there's usually things to do but everything is closed down because of the storm. It's insane you made it here. 1

My car can handle anything. 2

2 looks at 1.

Filling the silence:

2

Besides, I wasn't gonna let distance stop us from our first snow celebrations

Beat

2

Are you warm yet? I'm fine.

1 has completely left the stage. 2 is alone.

2 looks for 1. They're nowhere to be found.

2 explores the space. They kick the snow. They just think.

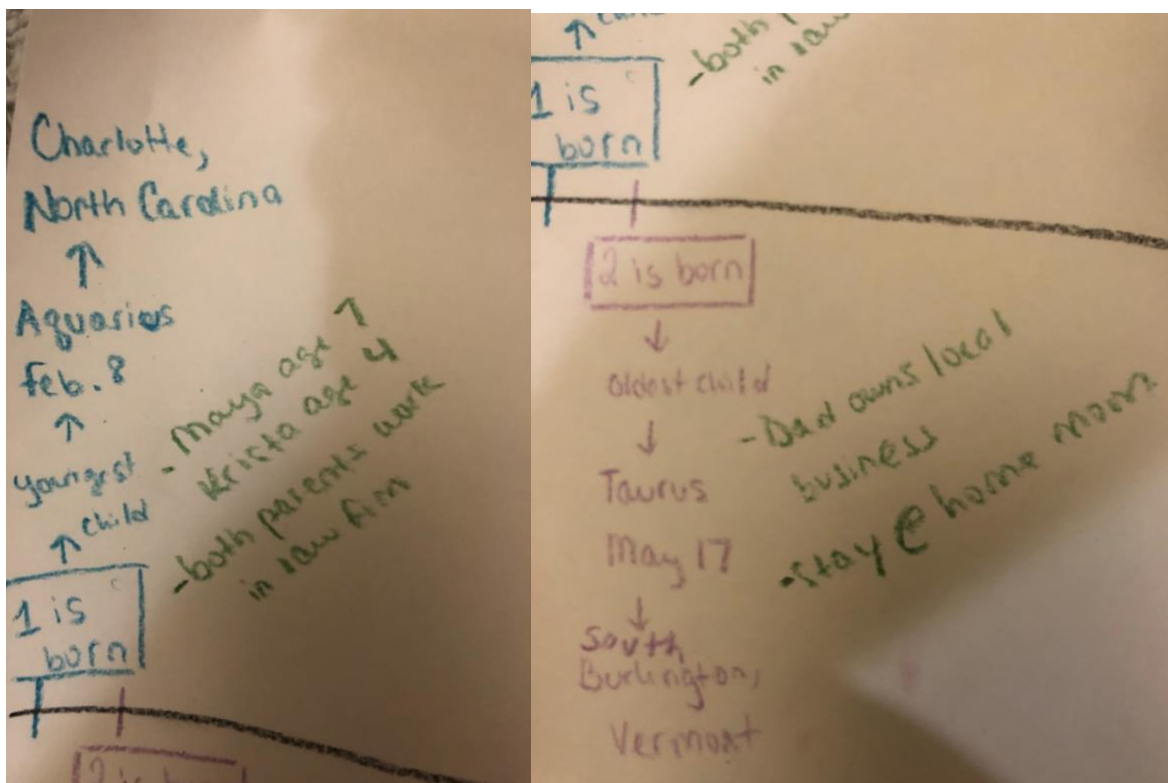
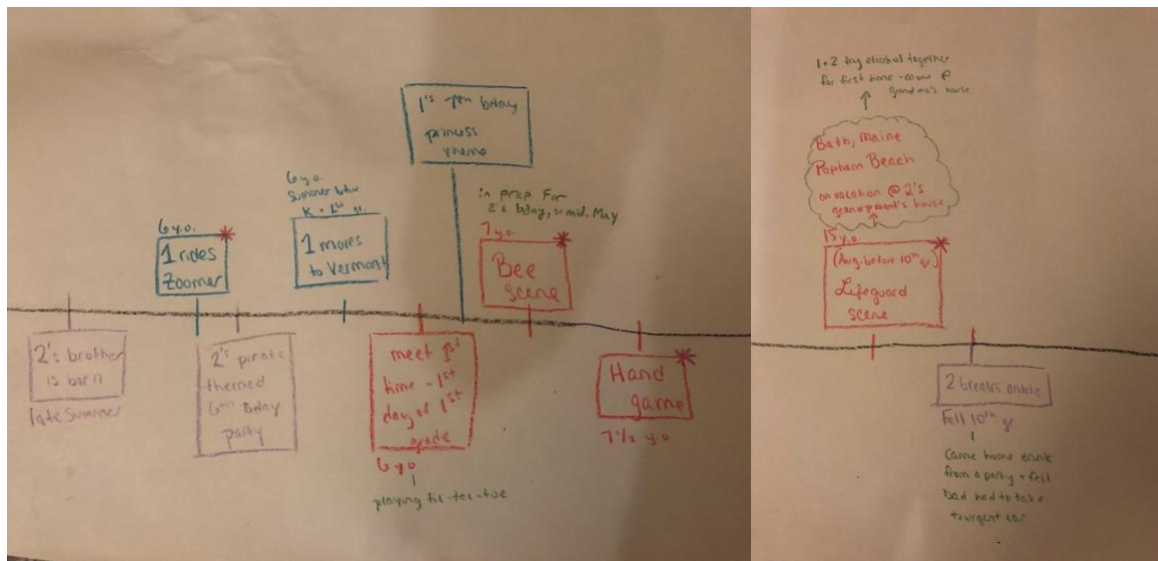
Blackout.

For a while. Then:

End of play

APPENDIX: IMAGES

Research: The Timeline



Snapshots from the timeline of 1 and 2's relationship

Production photos by Chris Kayden.



The Recess Scene PC: Chris Kayden



The First Snow Scene PC: Chris Kayden



The Car Scene *PC: Chris Kayden*



The Second Snow Scene *PC: Chris Kayden*

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