

*Lights rise on a middle-class living room, lights are out, but some evening light pours in through the windows.*

*Keys are heard in the front door, with some giggling and whispered talking. The front door opens, and AMBER and WILBUR stumble in, all over each other. They fumble around in the dark, clothes dropping from both of them along the way, eventually making it to the couch.*

AMBER: Wait. Wait. Do you have anything?

WILBUR: Uh, I think so. In my wallet... *(He searches his wallet.)* Aha! Here's one!

AMBER: How long has it been in there?

WILBUR: What? Oh, I don't know...a couple months?

AMBER: No, I don't trust it. You've been sitting on that thing since last year, so it's probably gotten all gross and dried and...no.

WILBUR: Well, then...do you have anything?

AMBER: Shit, I don't know. This isn't my responsibility! Let me check the drawer here.

WILBUR: You keep condoms in your end table drawer?

AMBER: Yeah? So?

WILBUR: What if you're entertaining...like, your mother comes by, and pokes around and finds it?

AMBER: Trust me she won't. Now shut up before I lose my interest in you. Gotta' turn on the light.

*She clicks on the lamp on the end table.*

*TED is sitting in the recliner next to the couch.*

TED: What. The. Hell?!?

*AMBER and WILBUR scream, jump up, try to cover themselves.*

AMBER Oh my God! Ted?!?

WILBUR: Is this your husband? You told me you were single!

AMBER: What? No! Ugh! This is my brother!

TED: Please go put some clothes on.

*AMBER scurries behind the couch to redress.*

TED: Did not need to see that.

AMBER: Thanks, brother, good to see you again too. The past five years haven't been easy, y'know!

TED: What're you talking about, five years? I've been here the whole time!

WILBUR: Does he mean....he's been watching...like, when we did that thing with the...?

AMBER: No! He disappeared five years ago. You know, when that thing happened.

WILBUR: Ohhhhh....ok, I feel better now.

TED: Well, I don't! What thing made me disappear?

AMBER: You know, when that big purple guy snapped his fingers and like half the population disappeared.

TED: How would I know that if I was the half that disappeared?!?

AMBER: I don't know! Maybe you all went to some planet and were like, "I wonder where the other half of the population is!"

TED: We didn't!, you're telling me that the guy whose chin looks like an old ball sack did this?

WILBUR: Wow, now that you say it, you're right. I was always thinking he was part raisin, but I can't unsee it now.

AMBER: Both of you stop talking about balls!

TED: As far as I remember, I was sitting here telling you about the new Linkin Park album and then...this.

WILBUR: Wow, Linkin Park. That's a blast from the past!

TED: Linkin Park isn't around anymore?

WILBUR: Oh no. Sorry.

AMBER: Wait a second. If you're back, does that mean...?

*Doorbell rings.*

KAREN: *(From outside the door.)* Amber! Are you home?!

AMBER & TED: Mom.

AMBER: Maybe if we turn off all the lights and hide she'll go away.

TED: That's our mother out there! Answer it!

AMBER: You answer it if you feel so strongly about it!

TED: It's your house! And I'm still dealing with the trauma!

AMBER: You mean the trauma of suddenly reappearing after five years as though you only blacked out for a second, while I had to deal with it all alone? That trauma?!?

TED: Well, mostly Linkin Park breaking up, but, sure, that too.

AMBER: How do you think I feel, you popping up just as I'm about to get laid for the first time in three years?

WILBUR: You told me it'd only been a few months...

AMBER: Shut up, Wilbur!

KAREN: *(Outside.)* It's your mother!

AMBER: As if the whole neighborhood couldn't tell.

WILBUR: I have an idea! You all hide and I'll open the door, tell her you also disappeared when that big purple guy did his snappy thing, and you haven't come back!

AMBER: Does it make me a terrible daughter to like that idea?

WILBUR & TED: *(ad-lib)* Yeah. A bit.

*AMBER reluctantly stomps over to the door, adjusts her hair, dress, then opens it.*

KAREN: *(not meant as an insult, but...)* What happened to you?

AMBER: *(suppressing her rage with a smile)* Welcome back, Mom! Good to see you again!

KAREN: You gonna' invite me in or make me stand out here all night?

AMBER: Do I actually have a choice?

*KAREN enters, sees TED and WILBUR.*

KAREN: My boy!

*She runs to WILBUR and embraces him.*

WILBUR: Uh...

TED: Mom, I'm Ted.

KAREN: Oh. Right. My eyes must have gone downhill in the past five years. You two look so much alike.

*They look NOTHING like twins.*

TED: God, I hope not, based on what they almost did.

AMBER: Shut up, Ted! So you know you've been gone?

KAREN: Well, when I got back and there was a new family living in my house, I had a feeling.

AMBER: How was I supposed to know you – or anyone – would come back at all?

KAREN: I don't blame you, dear. It must have been very hard for you.

AMBER: *(Feeling vindicated.)* It was!

KAREN: I can't imagine how you managed!

AMBER: I appreciate that, Mom.

KAREN: I mean, here you were, still in your house, existing, living your normal, perfect life, while your brother and I were nowhere to help you, stuck in some void thanks to an enormous purple guy and his fancy glove.

AMBER: *(Sarcastically.)* Yeah, it's a wonder I managed to survive at all!

WILBUR: This feels like a family thing. I should go...

KAREN: And who is this fellow? He looks like Captain Patriot!

TED: It's not Captain Patriot, Mom, it's Captain Am—

AMBER: Are you one of those silly young men flying around in a Halloween costume?

WILBUR: No, I'm just Wilbur.

TED: Wilbur? Maybe Captain Patriot is a better name after all.

AMBER: Ok, Ted, who would never be confused for a superhero unless it was...Doctor Stupid!

TED: Doctor Stupid? That's the best you can do? Wow.

WILBUR: There's a Doctor Stupid?

KAREN: You two stop bickering! Now, I think we should all sit down.

*They do.*

KAREN: I want you to fill us in on everything we missed.

AMBER: That's it? Just everything?

TED: *(Gleeful in her torture.)* Spare no detail!

AMBER: Look, I'm tired and this was not the way I thought the night was going to go, so I'm going to bed.

*She begins to exit to another room, WILBUR follows.*

AMBER: Alone.

KAREN: Where are we supposed to go? I'm homeless thanks to you!

AMBER: Make yourselves comfortable!

*Just as AMBER is almost all the way off, KAREN looks at the recliner.*

KAREN: Where's your father?

*AMBER stops. TED looks at both of them, the sibling rivalry gone from his face. WILBUR looks anxious.*

KAREN: Amber? Did you hear me? I asked where your father is. Did he disappear too?

AMBER: No.

KAREN: Then where is he? I figured with me gone, you might've taken him in. Especially after Scotty left you for his secretary, you'd want someone else here in the house to take care of, although you never took great care of Scotty for that matter...

AMBER: He was here. For a while, then I decided to sell your house. It was too big for him being all alone.

KAREN: I imagine it was very difficult to sell the home you grew up in, with all the memories we made there.

AMBER: Not too difficult, no.

KAREN: I hope you got a nice lump of cash for that home. You know it was your father's boyhood home too?

AMBER: You've mentioned that before, yes.

KAREN: So is he in a nursing home? I always knew that man would need someone to wait on him hand and foot or he wouldn't know what to do with himself.

*AMBER rejoins the others and sits. She's silent for a moment.*

AMBER: In the time that both of you were gone, something really bad happened here. Happened everywhere in the world.

KAREN: What was his name this time? The Silver Devil? Mr. Amazing?

AMBER: COVID-19.

KAREN: That's an unusual superhero name.

AMBER: It wasn't a superhero. Or villain. Well, in a way I guess it was, but not an enemy like I'd ever seen before.

*KAREN looks confused, or maybe just not wanting to accept the truth. TED appears to be figuring it out.*

AMBER: It was a virus, Mom. It swept the world, faster than any bad guy with a mask and cape. And Dad...he got it.

KAREN: Oh. Oh no.

AMBER: You know he never took great care of himself to begin with. Especially after you left. He went from smoking one pack a day to two, and the most exercise he ever got was walking from that recliner to the refrigerator to get another beer.

KAREN: He's...gone? Not coming back too?

*No one says anything. Nothing needs to be said.*

KAREN: I always knew I'd outlive him. We joked about it, you know? Laughing at your mortality helps when you get to be old like me.

AMBER: He made it past the first few waves. And then hung on as long as he could.

TED: It's all gone now, though, right?

AMBER: I wish. No. It's still here. It's not going away anytime soon.

TED: You mean, until there's a vaccine or a cure. If there's technology that can make half the world go up in smoke at the snap of your fingers, surely—

AMBER: There is a vaccine. And there was a time when it looked like it could have totally been wiped out of existence, like you two were, but...no.

KAREN: Maybe he was right.

AMBER: Who?

KAREN: The guy who looks like he has a raisin for a chin. Fantos? Maybe half the population doesn't deserve being here if they'd let something like this virus spread.

WILBUR: There's only one problem with that.

TED: What's that?

WILBUR: It was the half who was here that let that happen.

*Silence as this moment sinks in.*

AMBER: I think we should all call it a night.

*They all acknowledge their agreement; KAREN lays back on the couch, and TED puts the recliner back.*

AMBER: (To WILBUR) Would you be ok just laying with me for a while?

WILBUR: Of course. Yes.

*(They exit.)*

KAREN: I never got to say goodbye to him.

TED: It's not right.

KAREN: What can you do about it?

TED: I don't know. Something.

KAREN: Get some sleep. Your head will be clearer tomorrow.

TED: Yeah. I'm sure it will.

KAREN: I missed you, even though I didn't realize it.

TED: Me too.

*She clicks off the lamp on the nightstand. The room is thrown into near darkness, except for the light coming through the window. TED tries to sleep in the recliner for a few moments, but he's too upset to keep still. He eventually gets up.*

*TED approaches the window, and looks out, putting half of his face in light, the other half in darkness. He looks like a comic book villain.*

*Then, with a fast snap, he pulls the curtain shut, plunging the stage into a blackout.*

End of play