

A MOMENT IN TIME

A One Act Play

by

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Cast of Characters

Character 1: Charlie

Charlie is the main character. He is a young gay man in his twenties who wants a happy ending.

Character 2: Eleanor

Eleanor is a young woman in her twenties. Eleanor is Charlie's best and oldest friend. The two are very close.

Character 3: Oliver

Oliver is a young man in his twenties. He is dating Charlie, and

Scene

This play begins and ends with a marriage proposal. Between the proposal and the response, we see CHARLIE thinking it through by reliving memories and moments in time.

Time

This play takes place in the evening, with flashbacks to various times.

SCENE 1

(The lights come up to an empty stage.
CHARLIE and OLIVER enter stage right,
walking slowly and holding hands.)

CHARLIE

That restaurant was a great idea, we should listen to El more often.

OLIVER

I agree, she's been right about a lot of things recently.

(OLIVER and CHARLIE stop walking center stage.)

CHARLIE

What else has she been right about recently?

(OLIVER turns towards CHARLIE.)

OLIVER

Well, I've been talking to her about you, Charlie.

CHARLIE

Yeah?

OLIVER

Yeah, she's been helping me with something, a surprise for you.

CHARLIE

What's the surprise then, love?

OLIVER

I've been thinking about you, about us, and how things are going. I've been thinking about how I feel when we're together.

(OLIVER pauses for a few seconds.)

CHARLIE

And?

OLIVER

Charlie, we've been together for a long time now. These six years have been the best years of my life. You've shown me the world, and I love you so much for bringing such joy to my life. I've been thinking about this for a very long time, and I love you so much that I don't want to wait another second.

(OLIVER reaches into his pocket, pulls out a ring box, and gets down on one knee while opening it.)

Charlie, will you marry me?

(BLACKOUT, spotlight on CHARLIE who is caught by surprise at what OLIVER has said.)

CHARLIE

This is the moment I've been waiting for all night, but I don't know what to say.

(CHARLIE continues to speak, now talking as if OLIVER is inside his head with him.)

Of course, I want to be with you Oliver, but you know that I don't like surprises. We've been through this before, they aren't my thing. I like to plan; I like to know what's always going on. But I know that this would have come as a surprise anyway, even though I thought it might happen since you were so enthusiastic to plan our anniversary dinner.

(CHARLIE walks to another point on stage, thinking intently.)

But do I want to spend the rest of my life with you? We used to fight so much that it was normal, and you've been feeling colder lately like you were back then. I heard that once couples get married, they sometimes fight more. We've already had our share of rough moments. I don't know if I can do that again.

(CHARLIE pauses.)

Though we have had some wonderful moments too. And you've shown me how I deserve to be loved, even if you aren't tuned in all the way all the time. You've got a lot on your plate between work and your family, so I totally get it. But if we were to get married, that would be one more thing for you to worry about, and I don't want you to stress about anything. Still, I want to make you happy. I love to see you happy, to see you smile. I remember the first time I saw you smile; it was the first time we met. The day was going horribly wrong for me, but you came and saved it without a second thought. I'd love to go back and

sit there with you, pretending the world doesn't exist while we talk about silly things that don't mean much anymore.

(BLACKOUT - END OF SCENE)

SCENE 2

(The lights come up to a small coffee shop. There is one table with chairs where CHARLIE sits. There is a counter that ELEANOR is wiping down.)

(CHARLIE is sipping his drink while looking at the door anxiously, then his watch. ELEANOR notices and walks over to him.)

ELEANOR

Charlie, you've been waiting for him for almost an hour now. He's probably going to blow you off again like last time.

CHARLIE

He said he'd be here. I trust him.

ELEANOR

I don't, Charlie. I don't trust him at all.

CHARLIE

He was the one who picked today, El, I don't know. He was somewhat insistent when he called. This was all his idea, he wanted to reschedule.

ELEANOR

I don't know, Charlie, this is the fifth time you've rescheduled a date with him. He's never given you any real reason for cancelling, and it really sucks to watch you go through this over and over again.

(A character at one of the tables in the background waves for ELEANOR to come over. She nods and waves that she will be over.)

I love you, but you can be dense when it comes to these things, you know? I just want you to be happy, Charlie.

(With this, ELEANOR walks away from CHARLIE's table. CHARLIE continues to wait, tapping nervously on the

table. OLIVER walks into the café. He walks to the bar, and orders from ELEANOR. While he is waiting for his drink, he notices CHARLIE sitting alone nervously. He takes his drink and walks over to CHARLIE.)

OLIVER

Hey, could I sit with you? The other tables are taken.
(OLIVER gestures around, and CHARLIE notices. He nods.)

CHARLIE

Yeah, it's no trouble at all. I was going to leave soon anyway.

OLIVER

Why's that?

(OLIVER takes a seat.)

CHARLIE

I was supposed to meet a guy, but he never showed up.

OLIVER

Is he a friend of yours?

CHARLIE

We've gone on a couple of dates, but he's been blowing me off recently, so I don't think it's going to work out.

OLIVER

Well, we're here together now, should I fill in for him?

(OLIVER smiles at CHARLIE and takes a sip of his drink.)

CHARLIE

Are you asking me out when I don't even know your name?

OLIVER

To be fair, I don't know your name either.

(They both laugh at this.)

My name's Oliver, what about you?

CHARLIE

I'm Charlie.

(BLACKOUT)

(Spotlight on CHARLIE, still sitting in the chair at the table.)

CHARLIE

And of course, how could I forget the aftermath of dinner with your parents three years ago?

(CHARLIE gets up and walks to the side of the stage.)
We didn't talk for days, you elected to stay at a friend's house while things blew over. Then you came home like nothing happened, and I didn't like that at all.

(The lights come up on the table and chairs.
OLIVER is sitting at the table, and
CHARLIE is standing stage left.)

CHARLIE

Were you planning to tell me?

(CHARLIE is visibly agitated, pacing around the kitchen. OLIVER watches him.)

OLIVER

Charlie, I thought they had gotten past this. I didn't think it would be a problem anymore, they've been different recently.

CHARLIE

You didn't think it would be an issue? Oliver, your mom can still barely talk to me, and your dad wouldn't come out of his study the entire time we were there. How was I supposed to talk to them about anything when they won't even try to communicate?

(CHARLIE stops and turns to OLIVER.)
You could've been honest and told me they were still not okay with us being together.

(CHARLIE begins to pace again. OLIVER shifts.)

OLIVER

I thought they were getting better; my mother is the one who invited us-

(CHARLIE interjects.)

CHARLIE

It seems like nothing has changed for them, Oliver. It feels like they still hate me, they don't like that you're with me, it doesn't feel any different now than it did eight months ago.

OLIVER

They seemed to be better, they were asking me about you last week. They'll come around; I know they will.

(CHARLIE stops pacing again, he turns to face OLIVER.)

CHARLIE

When Oliver? When will they come around? It's been three years. I watch you beat yourself up over their opinions when they can't even accept you for who you are.

(OLIVER begins to show sadness. CHARLIE takes a softer tone.)

CHARLIE

I love you, Oliver, but you know it hurts whenever we see them. I feel so out of place, and I can't imagine how you feel. I hate to see you hurting so much.

(CHARLIE comforts OLIVER)

OLIVER

I just want them to love you as much as I love you. I know they would if they gave you a chance. Everybody loves you so much, you're so wonderful.

CHARLIE

I don't need anyone to love me if you do, Oliver. I'd rather see you happy without them in our lives than tearing yourself apart over the smallest things. I really think it's time that you talk to them about this and let them know how you're feeling.

OLIVER
I think you might be right, Charlie.

(BLACKOUT)

(END OF SCENE)

SCENE 3
(Spotlight on CHARLIE, front of stage
left.)

CHARLIE
Looking back on it now, I see how upset you were by your
parents' behavior. But back then, I was still reeling even after
we talked it out. I remember going over it all with Eleanor and
thinking about whether I wanted to be with you if we were going
to get back into fighting regularly.

(BLACKOUT)

(The lights come up on ELEANOR and
CHARLIE sitting at the table. They are
in CHARLIE's kitchen.)

ELEANOR
Well at least he finally came home, right?

CHARLIE
Yeah, I guess. He left again after we argued, though.

ELEANOR
Maybe he just needed to cool off.

CHARLIE
But that's what he used to do, El.

(CHARLIE sighs.)

We would be fine, then we'd argue over nothing, he'd leave, and
then he'd come back later, and we'd start the cycle again. You

remember how bad it got, right? I think he slept on the couch or at a friend's house more than we shared a bed.

ELEANOR

I know, Char.

CHARLIE

And then there was that other fight, when his ex was trying to get back with him...

(CHARLIE trails off.)

(BLACKOUT)

(The lights come up on the same set, CHARLIE is sitting at the table with his head in his hands. OLIVER walks in, unaware of what is going on.)

OLIVER

Charlie, what's wrong?

CHARLIE

You should already know what's wrong.

OLIVER

I'm sorry Charlie, I don't know what happened. Did I do something wrong?

CHARLIE

I don't know, did you, Oliver? With Leon?

OLIVER

Charlie, what's Leon got to do with anything?

CHARLIE

I saw your notifications last night when you asked me to set your alarm, you made plans with him.

OLIVER

Charlie, that was nothing, I swear. All we did was get lunch, it was just to have a chat and clear things up.

CHARLIE

You said that you were done trying to talk to him, Oliver. You told me that he would leave you and I alone.

OLIVER

He reached out and wanted to apologize, Charlie. It was fine, trust me.

CHARLIE

If it was fine, you wouldn't have hidden it from me, and you wouldn't have told me you were going in to work on your day off. I know you didn't go in, Oliver.

OLIVER

Charlie, I'm sorry, but I don't know what you want to hear.

CHARLIE

I want you to be honest with me, but it seems like you can't do that.

(CHARLIE sighs and gets up.)

I'm going to El's for a bit. Don't wait up for me.

(CHARLIE walks off stage, OLIVER sighs.)

(BLACKOUT)

(The lights come back up on CHARLIE and ELEANOR in the kitchen.)

CHARLIE

I just don't know if I can go through that again, you know? I don't want to fall back into old habits, but he's been getting distant, and I'm scared.

ELEANOR

You know that I'm always right here for you, yeah?

CHARLIE

I know, you're always there for me.

ELEANOR

Exactly. And I'll be there for you if things go south again, Charlie. I just want you to be happy, you're my best friend.

After everything I've seen you go through, I think Oliver is the first guy that hasn't been horrible to you.

(CHARLIE chuckles.)

CHARLIE

I only met him because I got stood up so much, anyway. It's kind of funny when you think about it.

ELEANOR

Yeah, I always thought that was the best thing that Ryan ever did for you. Not showing up that day was possibly the only good thing he ever did.

CHARLIE

It really upset me at the time, but I think it was for the best, too.

ELEANOR

At least Oliver shows up on time, and he loves you. I can see it whenever you're together, I know he cares about you.

(BLACKOUT)

(END OF SCENE)

SCENE 4

(A spotlight on CHARLIE, who is center stage.)

CHARLIE

This is it; this moment will change our entire lives. If I say yes, we're going to get married, and we'll be together for the long run. But if I say no, it'll totally break his heart. I would never want to break his heart, but I don't know if I can give him mine.

(CHARLIE chuckles.)

It's funny, the rest of my life lies in my hands right now and I still have no idea what I want to do. I know that I love him,

Oliver is the best thing that's ever happened to me. He's so caring and considerate and he makes me feel safe. But when we fight, it cuts deeper than a knife. His parents would never approve of us getting married. I'm scared of getting married, anyway. What if we don't love each other anymore in 10 years? I don't want to put Oliver through that. And what if we start fighting again? If we're married, it'll be a lot harder for him to justify sleeping at a friend's house or on the sofa every time we argue.

(CHARLIE sighs, begins to pace.)

Still, he is a wonderful man. He puts everyone else first, even when he should prioritize himself. He shows how much he cares without trying. He's always been sweet to me, and he's unbelievably kind. I know that he wanted to move past the fighting, and we've made some great progress, but I'm still afraid that it'll start again.

(CHARLIE moves to where he was when the proposal happened.)

I don't know, it is a bit scary to put all your trust and your life into the hands of one person. I guess that's what he's done now, risking what we've built to ask for forever.

(CHARLIE sighs.)

It would shock my parents, and his parents would never approve. I don't want him to alienate his own family for my sake, that wouldn't be fair to him. But I guess they already did that on their own, we've tried to interact with them, and they continue to blow us off like we're nothing to them.

(CHARLIE stands in his original spot from the proposal.)

I think that there's only one thing I can say now.

(The lights come up to CHARLIE and OLIVER in the same configuration from the first scene. CHARLIE is standing, and OLIVER is down on one knee with the ring out.)

CHARLIE

Of course, I'll marry you, Oliver. I love you.

(BLACKOUT)

(END OF PLAY)