

RAW PROVOCATIVE HUMANE PLAYS

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ALL THE WAY HERE

a new play
by Kitt Lavoie

Lights rise on a spartan Staten Island apartment, made homey with fabrics, flowers, and other carefully placed, inexpensive touches.

A knock at the door.

A beat.

Another knock, louder this time.

ANNA, early 20s, rushes in from an adjoining bedroom. She hisses towards the door.

ANNA

One minute!

Anna goes to her purse and digs out a five dollar bill. She goes to the door and swings it open.

ANNA

Sorry, I was--

Outside the door stands PAUL, flanked by ALEX, both early 20s.

A beat.

ANNA

Hi.

PAUL

Hi.

ANNA

(re: the bill in her hand)

I thought you were someone else.

PAUL

I bet.

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ALEX
Hey, Anna.

Anna nods to Alex.

A long beat.

PAUL
Can we come in?

ANNA
Sure.

Anna steps aside and Paul and Alex enter the apartment.
Paul takes it in.

PAUL
When I heard you went to New York, this isn't what I expected.

ANNA
It's cheap. Well, *cheaper*. Than other places.

PAUL
It doesn't feel like New York.

ANNA
Well, it is.

PAUL
It's a house. I didn't even know they had those in New York.

ANNA
It's a multi-... They call it a multi-family home. It's an apartment. In a house. So...

PAUL
We had to take a boat to get here.

ANNA
(gesturing to the window)
Well, you can see the city from here...

Paul goes to the window and looks out. He nods. A long silence.

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ANNA

I'm sorry.

(a beat, re: "I'm sorry")

I don't know why I said that.

PAUL

I do.

ALEX

He's sorry, too, Anna.

Paul shoots a look at Alex.

ANNA

Look, this isn't a good time.

PAUL

Well, we don't always get to choose the timing of things. Like, for example, last April sixth wasn't a great time for my *wife* to just disappear. Just, poof, disappear. I get home from a weekend fishing with my dad and... It was a week before taxes were due. I didn't know where any of our receipts were. I looked everywhere, but... I was able to get an extension, which was good. Because I figured you'd be back. But--

Paul gestures -- "you never came back."

ANNA

I did them and left them in the middle drawer. Of the desk. For you to sign. So you wouldn't have to.

PAUL

Well, I was looking for a shoebox, so. I found them. Eventually. After I had already redone them myself.

ANNA

I should have left a note.

PAUL

Or something.

ANNA

(genuinely)

I didn't mean to inconvenience you.

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PAUL

It was more than an *inconvenience*, Anna. It was my *life*. You destroyed my life.

ANNA

I didn't do it to disrupt your life.

PAUL

Not disrupt. Destroy.

A beat.

ANNA

I know. I'm sorry, and I am glad to talk about it, but this is not a good time. I can meet you. Tonight. And we can talk.

PAUL

You'll excuse me if I'm not confident you'd show up.

A beat.

ANNA

What do you want?

PAUL

I want to know why?

ANNA

Why what?

PAUL

Why, Anna?

ANNA

I don't know.

PAUL

You just *disappeared*.

ANNA

I know.

PAUL

Why?

ANNA

I don't know.

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PAUL

Well, you put your things into boxes and you loaded those boxes into a car and you drove that car across the country and then apparently drove that car onto a *boat* and moved here. And you don't know. That just happened.

ANNA

Sort of. Yeah.

PAUL

And you didn't tell me. You didn't tell anyone where you were going. Or *that* you were going. And that just "sort of" happened.

ANNA

I'm sorry.

PAUL

(re: leaving)

Why?

ANNA

I don't know.

PAUL

What did I do--?

ANNA

You didn't do anything.

PAUL

You left me.

ANNA

I didn't leave you. I left St. Paul.

PAUL

Which is where I lived. With you. Where we had a life. And plans.

ANNA

I know.

PAUL

That you know.

ANNA

Yes. And I'm sorry.

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PAUL

(shouting)

DON'T TELL ME YOU'RE SORRY. TELL ME WHAT THE FUCK HAPPENED!!!

Anna vehemently hushes him.

ANNA

Will you--!!! I have neighbors.

PAUL

And you wouldn't want to disrupt their lives. Sorry.

Paul paces away.

A beat.

ANNA

I know you don't want to hear it, Paul, but I am sorry. About the way I left. But it was almost a year ago at this point.

PAUL

Which makes it okay?

ANNA

No. But it makes it a long time ago.

PAUL

It's not that long, Anna. We were together a lot longer than that.

ANNA

And I said I'm sorry.

PAUL

You just want to disturb those neighbors, don't you.

ANNA

Did you just come here to yell at me?

PAUL

No. But now that I'm here, it's kind of all I want to do.

Anna nods.

A beat.

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PAUL

I'm sorry.

A moment.

ALEX

Things are different now, Anna.

(a beat)

Paul's working down at Roddy's now.

ANNA

I didn't leave because he wasn't working.

ALEX

No, I'm just saying, things are different.

PAUL

I want to get back together. That's why I came. I'm sorry for yelling.

ANNA

That's not what I want, Paul. I'm sorry.

A beat.

ALEX

Anna, I think it's good you left.

Paul shoots Alex a look - "What the fuck?"

ALEX

(to Paul)

I do.

(to Anna)

You guys were together a long time. I mean, we've be friends, the three of us, for a long time. And you've been together since I've known you. And over time, things change. You become a different person. And sometimes you need time apart.

PAUL

I didn't need time apart.

ANNA

I didn't leave because I needed time apart, Alex.

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ALEX

Just listen to me a minute. I understand. It was the same with me and Suzanne. I mean, we were together almost as long as you. And when you guys got married, I'm gonna be honest with you, it fucked me up. I mean, we're not old people, the three of us, and you two made this commitment. This lifetime commitment for the rest of your life. And no matter how much you love someone, that's a lot. And it freaked me out. And I think it freaked Suz out, too, because things got bad between us really fast. And I did things that hurt Suzanne. And I did things that would have hurt Suzanne if she had found out about them. And I know she did things, too. You saw how bad things got. You were there.

Anna nods.

ALEX

We broke up, Anna, a few weeks after you left. I don't know if you knew that.

ANNA

No.

ALEX

Yeah. And she moved out to Bloomington for some job at HealthPartners. And that was it. Five years of my life, that was it. Until she came back around Thanksgiving to pick up her stuff. And we got to talking. And all the things that drove me crazy felt like they didn't matter anymore. So I moved out to Bloomington. We got a place near the mall.

(a beat)

And we're getting married next year.

Paul shoots Alex a look. This is news to him.

ANNA

Really?

ALEX

We haven't told anyone yet. But, yeah. It's not what I thought I wanted. But it was. And the only way I knew that, the only way I figured it out, is we spent time apart. And if I freaked out that much when you got married... I can only imagine how much you guys were freaking out. I wasn't even thinking about it. I wasn't thinking about you. I wasn't the kind of friend I should have been to you two. And I want to fix that.

(beat)

I'm just saying, I think it's good that you left, Anna. And I think it's good that he came here. Things change. Then they change back. Or you realize that they never really changed at all.

PAUL

Listen to him, Anna. You know how mad he was last year. But they're doing great.

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ANNA

I'm not mad, Paul. I never was. I just wanted something else.

PAUL

I could be something else.

ANNA

I don't want you to be something else. I want you to be you. I just want something else.

PAUL

What if I want to be something else?

ANNA

I don't want that.

PAUL

But what if *I* want to?

ANNA

I don't think you could be what I wanted.

PAUL

I don't get to try?

ANNA

No. I'm sorry.

Paul paces away.

ALEX

Anna, don't be like that.

ANNA

This doesn't have anything to do with you, Alex.

ALEX

I don't think he was the only one at fault here.

ANNA

I never said it was anybody's fault.

ALEX

And I'm saying, I don't think it was his. Not totally.

ANNA

Alex. You are just going to make things worse.

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PAUL

It can't get worse.

ANNA

(to Alex)

This has nothing to do with you.

ALEX

I have seen what you have done to him and I cannot just stand by and watch. Do you understand?

ANNA

Do you understand, *this has nothing to do with you*. It has nothing to do with him, even. Sometimes things don't work out.

ALEX

Not if you don't work on them they don't.

A beat. She turns to Paul

ANNA

It's not what I want.

PAUL

Why?

ANNA

Because it isn't.

PAUL

Why?

ANNA

Why does it matter?

PAUL

Because if I know why I can know if it can be fixed.

ANNA

I don't want to fix it.

PAUL

Why?

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ANNA

I don't know how to answer that.

PAUL

Why?

ANNA

Because I don't and I live in New York and this is where my life is. I'm sorry.

PAUL

That's not why you left. You didn't live in New York when you left. Your life was with me. When you left.

ANNA

But it is now.

ALEX

And that can be fixed.

(to Paul)

Are you willing to move to New York?

PAUL

Yes.

ANNA

Alex--

PAUL

I am, Anna.

ANNA

I don't want you to.

ALEX

Give him a chance.

ANNA

I don't want to.

ALEX

You should.

ANNA

But I'm not going to.

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PAUL

Anna--

ANNA

Paul, I don't know what you want me to say.

PAUL

Something other than "no."

ANNA

Well, that's what's true. Okay? I'm sorry. I assumed you would have moved on by now.

PAUL

Moved on to *what*? I am a married man with no wife. What am I supposed to move on to?

ANNA

If you want a divorce--

PAUL

I don't want a divorce.

(a beat, pleading)

Anna, I came all the way here.

ANNA

And I don't know why you did that. And Alex, I really don't know why *you* did that. But I wish you would both leave. I'm sorry.

PAUL

Just tell me *why*.

ANNA

It just wasn't working, Paul. It wasn't. That's all.

PAUL

That isn't all. That *isn't* all. Because if it was all, why the fucking rush? Why couldn't we talk about it? Why couldn't we work on it?

ANNA

It wouldn't have made a difference.

PAUL

How could you know? How could you possibly know? And what would it have hurt? To try?

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ANNA

There was nothing to try.

PAUL

I would have tried anything.

ANNA

There wasn't anything.

PAUL

But we couldn't have tried *something*? To see?

ANNA

See what, Paul?

PAUL

What would have happened.

ANNA

If what?

PAUL

If we tried.

ANNA

It was over, Paul.

PAUL

It didn't feel over. Up until the day you left, everything felt fine.

ANNA

Well, it wasn't. It was over.

PAUL

What does that even mean?

ANNA

Paul, the only thing that happens if we keep taking is that you get hurt. I don't want that.

PAUL

(re: it wasn't working)

What does that mean?

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ANNA
It wasn't working.

PAUL
It was.

ANNA
Paul--

PAUL
We could have made it work.

ANNA
We couldn't.

PAUL
I could have. If I knew what the problem was. If I knew there was a problem.

ANNA
It just wasn't working. So I have moved on.

PAUL
You didn't move on. You moved away.

ANNA
Because it wasn't working.

PAUL
(bellowing)
HOW WAS IT SUPPOSED TO WORK IF YOU DIDN'T TELL ME THERE WAS A
FUCKING PROBLEM???

Anna freezes, her breath catching. Then...

A baby cries from the other room.

Anna raises her hands to the other two to remain still. The three stand frozen while the baby wails. After a moment, the crying quiets.

After a beat, Paul goes to the door of the bedroom and peers in.

Alex just looks at Anna.

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After a moment...

ANNA

Please leave.

Paul turns back into the room.

PAUL

Alex, go downstairs, please.

ANNA

You can both go downstairs.

ALEX

What the fuck, Anna?

ANNA

Please leave.

Paul turns back to look into the bedroom.

A beat.

ANNA

Paul. Seriously.

PAUL

(turning back into the room)

How am I supposed to go?

ANNA

Just do it.

PAUL

I mean, at least it makes some sort of sense now. It's awful. But at least it makes some kind of sense.

ANNA

It is awful. And it makes sense. And please leave.

A beat.

PAUL

No.

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Paul turns back and stares into the bedroom.

ANNA

Alex, can you get him out of here.

ALEX

I don't think so, Anna.

ANNA

If you care about him as a friend, you will. You want to be a better friend to us? Think about even the *best* possible outcome if he doesn't leave. Then you will.

A beat.

ALEX

Let's go, man.

Paul wheels around on Alex.

PAUL

That's my *son*. I have a son.

ALEX

We don't have to go home. But let's get out of here. This is a lot new.

PAUL

Yeah, it is a lot new.

(to Anna)

What the fuck, Ann?

ANNA

I'm sorry.

Paul breaks eye contact, trying not to snap at her. Then...

A beat.

ANNA

I didn't want to disrupt your life. This isn't what you wanted.

PAUL

Maybe it was.

ANNA

No it wasn't, Paul. You know it wasn't. I know it wasn't.

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PAUL

Maybe it is.

ANNA

It isn't, Paul.

PAUL

How do you just get to say that?

ANNA

You haven't even asked her name.

A beat.

PAUL

What's her name?

ANNA

Just go home.

PAUL

I don't care what I wanted. I want you. I'll take this.

ANNA

Will you?

PAUL

That's not what I meant.

ALEX

C'mon, Paul.

PAUL

Alex, I will let you know when I need something from you.

(to Anna)

Why do you get to decide not to disrupt my life? What's so special about my life that it can't be disrupted.

ANNA

You weren't happy, Paul. Things weren't working, Paul. For either of us. For you. We barely talked. We sat there at dinner and looked at our *phones*. And when we did talk, I never felt like you were listening to me. And when you were talking, I know I wasn't really listening. Our life was nothing. And it was going to be nothing forever. My job was awful. You weren't working--

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PAUL
So I can't be her father?

ANNA
No. That's not why.

PAUL
Then why?

ANNA
Listen to Alex. Just go someplace and think. This isn't what you want.

PAUL
And if it is?

ANNA
That's too bad.

PAUL
It's just too bad?

ANNA
Yes. I don't want to disrupt my life.

PAUL
Why are you being so fucking cruel about this?

ANNA
I'm being kind.

PAUL
It doesn't feel kind.

ANNA
Well, it is. I wish you hadn't come here. I wish you hadn't seen her. I wish you had just moved on with your goddamned life. But you didn't. You came here. I left *everything*. Everything that was good in my life, I left so you wouldn't have to see her. And then you came here.

PAUL
Well, what if I wanted to see her.

ANNA
I didn't want you to see her.

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PAUL
Why?

ANNA
Because then I would be stuck with you.

PAUL
 Stuck with me?

ANNA
 You know what I mean.

PAUL
 No I don't.

ANNA
 Yes you goddamned do. You made it very clear you felt stuck with me.

PAUL
 I love you.

ANNA
 You're used to me. You like the fact of us. But you stopped liking me a long time ago.

PAUL
 I came all the way here.

ANNA
 What do you like about me, Paul?

PAUL
 I love you.

ANNA
 But what do you like about me?

PAUL
 Come on, Ann...

ANNA
 Alex, what do you like about Suzanne?

ALEX
 She trusts me.

Anna nods, satisfied.

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I trust you, Anna.

PAUL

You shouldn't.

ANNA

I do.

PAUL

Look, Paul. Listen to me. We made sense for a long time. We don't anymore.

ANNA

Why not?

PAUL

I don't remember what I like about you, either. It's not that I don't like you. Or I didn't when I left. I just don't remember why. I think I was just used to it.

ANNA

What's wrong with being used to it?

PAUL

I'm not used to it anymore.

ANNA

(a beat)

It was good to see you, Paul.

I'm not going anywhere. Even if you are done with me -- which I don't really believe, frankly -- she's still mine. And you can be "done" all you want, but I have rights. Even if you want to divorce me, I can be a part of her life. Which means I can be a part of your life. You don't just "get to say." The law says you *are* stuck with me.

PAUL

A beat.

She's not yours.

ANNA

A beat. Paul just looks at her.

She's not.

ANNA (cont'd)

ANNA

I told you, if we kept talking all that would happen is you would get hurt. Things weren't right with us for a long time. Before I left. You wanted to know why I left?

(re: the baby)

That's why. I didn't want to disrupt your life. I didn't want to disrupt anyone else's either.

PAUL

I don't believe you.

ANNA

Look me in the eye.

Paul stands opposite Anna and looks deeply into her eyes. Anna looks deeply back.

A long moment.

Paul shakes his head and breaks eye contact.

ANNA

I was lonely when I was with you.

PAUL

I've been lonely since you've been gone.

ANNA

Then stop waiting for me to come back.

Paul slowly, gently backs away from Anna.

Suddenly, he picks up a vase of flowers from a table and hurls it against the wall with SMASH.

Alex and Anna flinch away.

The baby begins to cry.

Paul turns to Anna, a rage roiling in him. Anna looks him in the eye.

A beat.

PAUL

I love you, Anna. And I wish to God any of this changed that.

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A beat -- then Paul turns and leaves.

Alex looks at Anna as the baby continues to wail.

You alright?
ALEX

Yeah.
ANNA

A long beat. Crying. Alex looks at Anna, searching her face. Then...

Go home to Suzanne, Alex.
ANNA

Alex doesn't move.

I'm not lonely anymore. Go home.
ANNA

A beat. Then Alex turns and goes to the door. He takes the handle...

...then turns.

What's her name?
ALEX

Alex, I don't want to disrupt anyone's life.
ANNA

Alex stands, hand on the door, looking at Anna.

A moment.

Including hers.
ANNA
(a beat)

Go.

Alex nods.

I like your place. Take care of it.
ALEX

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She nods.

He goes.

Anna stands a beat, then turns and heads into the
bedroom.

Blackout.

END OF PLAY.

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