

Jo

by John Kolvenbach

It's late. Kitchen table. A sister, 40s, is in a t-shirt and pajama bottoms.

Her brother enters. 30s. A white plastic bag is wrapped around his right hand.

Sister: You're fourteen hours late. That's not even the same day.

Brother: Hey jo.

Sister: Don't call me that. Are you sober?

Beat.

Sister: Is that a deli bag?

Brother: I got some help from this guy, used to be a doctor.

Sister: I don't wanna hear about that.

Brother: He went to school but he didn't finish -

Sister: I don't wanna hear any stories about a *lying junkie* who put a *bag* on your hand, ok?

Beat.

Brother: If I had my watch I'd check how long it took you to get mad already.

Sister: I'm not mad.

Brother: Whatever you call this.

Sister: Why is there a bag on your hand.

Brother: "it's good to see you, what's up, happy holidays, you look robust."

Sister: Why is there a bag on your hand.

Brother: To keep the bandaid dry. not the bandaid, the napkins dry, ok?

Sister: Do you still have all your *fingers*?

Do you need a *tetanus* shot?

Where have you been.

Did you already lose your phone?

Brother: I still have it, just not on me.

Sister: You don't answer it.

Brother: Don't get mad.

Sister: It stops having any *purpose* if you never *answer* it. Why even Call it a *phone* if it doesn't *do* anything -

Brother: stop yelling at me.

It's hard to keep it charged.

Sister: No it isn't.

Brother: It's hard for me.

Sister: No it isn't.

Brother: Ok, so everyone can keep their phone charged but I can't because I'm a bad person, you proved it.

Sister: That's not gonna work.

Beat.

Brother: What time is it?

Sister: I don't know.

Brother: Yes you do.

Sister: It's about three.

Brother: What are you doing up?

Sister: I couldn't sleep.

Brother: Are you still with that guy? from last time?

Sister: No.

Beat.

Sister: Which guy.

Brother: He had like a bowl cut even though he was older.

Sister: I don't know who that could be.

Brother: It looked fake but I got a close look during the football and it turned out it was real.

Sister: I don't know who you're talking about. *Sam?*

Brother: I guess.

Sister: Sam was my *husband*. Sam is Lilly's *father*.

Brother: I might have the wrong guy.

Sister: You think he had a *bowl* cut?

Brother: A little bit.

Sister: We got divorced a *decade* ago - You're bleeding on the floor, is that coming through the bag?

Brother: I can clean that up, -

Sister: Do you need to go to the *hospital*?

Brother: It's fine. I got cut.

Sister: How?

Brother: I don't totally remember, but don't be like "he doesn't even *remember*" I woke up with it, that happens. It's not serious.

Maybe tomorrow if there's nothing else happening someone could look at it.

Sister: Good idea.

Brother: Tomorrow some time.

Sister: No, good idea. We were gonna go get a tree but why don't we all go to the emergency room for the day.

Brother: You don't have to.

Sister: No, the kids'll love it.

Brother: Your kids like me.

Sister: Everyone likes you.

Brother: Not everyone.

Sister: Ok, Because *SOME OF US. s*

ome of us are Concentrating - while living their own lives and both of the kids have I think the *flu* now - *Some* of us are concentrating on trying to Just Get You To Charge Your PHONE.

And FAILING.

Am I asking too much? Tell me if it is and I will give up altogether and write you off completely, Just like, Even Just Once In a WHILE.

Once a *week*.

Go to a, *wherever* you are, a *friend's* house and charge it and

and Say you turn it on and say I've called like three thousand times, maybe *heed* that.

Maybe *note* that.

Brother: a friend's house.

Sister: Or Wherever.

Brother: What do you think I'm doing? We're eating pretzels and, like, apple slices on the sofa and I'm like, Anyone using this outlet?

Sister: There's somewhere you can charge your phone.

Brother: Is there?

Sister: I don't wanna hear about *where you live* or *what you're doing*.

Brother: I'm not saying anything.

Sister: Don't *threaten me*.

Brother: Don't threaten you with the actual facts.

Sister: Yes.

Yes.

Find A Way to Charge Your Phone. A *Bus Stop*. It's *possible*.

Brother: I just got here.

Sister: That's true. We were all here before. Now everyone's asleep.

Brother: I can see them tomorrow.

Sister: Good idea. Unless you die in your sleep from whatever it is, from the *Rictus* that's growing in there.

Brother: The rictus?

Sister: It could be *anything*.

Brother: Except rictus.

Sister: You know what's so fucked up about that is *Yes*, So you were good in school, That proves it, You can know everything and still be a total dumbass.

Brother: Why're you so mad all the time?

Sister: Don't get me started.

Brother: I have something that could take the edge off for you.

Pause.

Brother: calm down. calm down.

Pause.

Brother: I'm kidding. I don't have any. If I did I wouldn't be here, believe me.

Sister: What does *that* mean? You wouldn't *be* here? The. Everything you say makes me crazy.

Brother: Maybe I should go.

Sister: Where would you go?

Brother: I'll got to a bus stop and charge my phone. I'll be back later.

He moves toward the door.

Sister: What does later mean? In your world. Just to set my expectation.

Later like tomorrow? later like next year.

Brother: (His back to her) What's so good about you? You ever think of that? That you can yield the.... scales of justice on me, because your phone is charged up? that gives you the moral high ground?

why did the bowl cut guy leave, did he say? was it because of how fair you are?

what's makes you so special, because you got here on time?

Sister: Yes.

Brother: Well I don't go by any of that.

Sister: What do you go by?

Brother: I go by be nice to people.

Sister: I see. Good system.

Brother: I'm gonna head out.

Sister: I went to a shrink about you.

She was like, You can't control him and I was like, Duh.

and then she was like, What would happen if you stopped trying to control him and I said you'd probably die in like a day

and she goes, He will make his own choices, ultimately

and I go, Lady, What's wrong with you.

Beat.

Brother: Sorry I said that about the haircut guy.

Sister: *That's* what you're sorry about.

Brother: I never liked him.

Sister: I did.

Brother: Well maybe you were wrong to.

Sister: As it turns out, yeah.

Beat.

Brother: I went to a shrink about you too.

Sister: You did not.

Brother: I was like, She says I have to come home and then I do and she's mad at me the whole time for incidental grievances

and the shrink was like, Even if you're wounded in the hand? and I'm like, Even then.

Sister: I wonder if we have the same shrink.

Beat.

Sister: I'm gonna get that operation where they cut your brain and I don't have to know you anymore.

Brother: That's not something.

Sister: It's new.

And then I would see you on the street and think, poor guy and give you five dollars and that's the extent of it.

Brother: But then I'd be like, Hey Jo

and I'd be Restored in you

and you'd have to go get your brain cut again.

Sister: That's true.

Beat.

Brother: Maybe if we both did it.

Sister: Right. then it would work, I think that's sensible.

Brother: We can go tomorrow, instead of getting a tree.

Sister: I'll reserve two tables, side by side. We can ask your junkie doctor friend.

Brother: If there's anybody I'd want to get my brain sliced open next to, it'd be you.

Beat.

Sister: Is your hand ok?

Brother: I haven't looked at it.

Sister: Do you want to go to the hospital?

Brother: Yeah but can we go tomorrow?

Sister: (softly) You suck so much ass.

as a brother.

Brother: ok.

Beat.

Sister: I made up the couch in the tv room.

I bought you a toothbrush.

and there's a thing of multi-vitamins.

Brother: You gonna stay up?

Sister: I might, yeah.

He sits on the floor. He leans against the wall.

LIGHTS