

THE GROWING STONE AUDITION SIDES

LUKE

Synopsis: End of Act 1. Luke and Matt are finally having a real conversation — the first they've had in years, hashing through Luke's work as a teacher and activist, Matt's total absence for the last 10+ years (including when Luke's wife died), and how much Luke might or might not have known about why Matt stayed away — stemming from Matt having been sexually abused by their father for a good portion of his childhood.

LUKE

The kids are great, the adults not so much.

MATT

How so?

LUKE

Oh, the usual hypocrisy.

MATT

Like what?

LUKE

Our deep and abiding commitment to education. It is so deep and so abiding that we slash school budgets, we bombard the kids with stupid tests, we make college unaffordable, and we blithely continue on our merry way destroying the planet they're supposed to inherit. The kids are fucked and they know it, and they know that we know it.

MATT

What happened to all that wide-eyed optimism?

LUKE

Still here. Just hibernates once in a while. What about you? What are you focused on?

MATT

Not much. Beyond destroying the planet one gas pipeline at a time.

LUKE

Enaj doesn't pull any punches.

MATT

I'll say, she's relentless.

LUKE

And smart and brave and inquisitive and funny. And stubborn as a mule.

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MATT

Like her mother?

LUKE

Exactly like her mother.

MATT

How's she been doing since Helen?

LUKE

Hanging in there. I mean, it's tough.

MATT

First her Mom, now her Grandma.

LUKE

Yep.

MATT

And you?

LUKE

Helen was everything. I miss her every day. And I worry about Enaj.

MATT

Of course you do.

LUKE

No, I mean, in relation to Helen. It's just...I mean, Enaj is amazingly open for a teenager, even with me. She'll talk about anything except her Mom. It's like, no, I'm not going there.

MATT

She needs time.

LUKE

That's for sure.

MATT

Maybe she should see someone.

LUKE

Maybe. I don't know. Has she said anything to you?

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MATT

About Helen?

LUKE

Yeah.

MATT

She said her mom loved to dance.

LUKE

(Laughing) Did she? Yes.

(Slight pause)

You know, it's real important to her that you're here.

LUKE

Why did you come back?

MATT

Because you begged me to.

LUKE

I did not beg, I simply —

MATT

How much do you know?

LUKE

More than you think.

MATT

Tell me.

LUKE

I was in sixth grade. It was a Monday afternoon. I came home earlier than usual because band practice had been cancelled, there were a lot of kids out sick. I walk into the house and I hear this weird moaning sound upstairs. It sounds like an animal in pain – something that's gotten in through the roof and is trapped or whatever. It's kind of scary, but I have to check it out, so I go upstairs. The door to your room is open. Just a crack, but it's enough. I can see everything.

MATT

Why didn't you tell me?

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LUKE

I couldn't. I mean, I didn't know what to do, I was just....And then later I thought maybe I dreamed it all, or it was some weird hallucination.

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MATT

Synopsis: End of Act 1. Luke and Matt are finally having a real conversation, the first they've had in years, and Matt is finally talking through why he's really come home, including dealing with the long-term sexual abuse he endured as a child by their father, as well as how much their now-dying mother was aware.

LUKE

Why did you come back?

MATT

There are things I need to say to her. Things I need to know.

(Slight pause.)

You know what? It's not fucking worth it.

LUKE

Matt, you've come this far.

MATT

And the journey never fucking ends.

(Beat.)

How much do you know?

LUKE

More than you think.

(Beat.)

When did it start?

MATT

My eighth birthday. We had a party in the backyard. Chocolate fudge cake with rainbow sprinkles and French vanilla ice-cream. Ben and Jerry's. You were there, but then you went to a friend's house for a sleep-over. There was a treasure hunt, we played volleyball, goofed around. We had fun. By the time we'd cleaned up, it was late. They'd bought me a book for my birthday. "The Right Way", a real wholesome piece of garbage. He tells me to go get ready for bed and we'd read it together. He comes in and lies next to me and we take turns reading. Then he looks at me and he says, "Son, I love you so much", and he kisses me on the cheek and the top of my head and strokes my face. The next thing I know he's climbed in beside me and his hand is on my crotch, and he takes my hand and places it on his dick and he's got a hard-on. There was a strange kind of innocence about it the first time.

LUKE

Did he—?

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MATT

He did everything. Not right away of course, he needed buy-in. I was confused, I was scared shitless. I mean, he was my Dad. But he said it wasn't wrong, it was special, but other people wouldn't understand, so we couldn't tell anyone, not you, not Mom, not my friends. It was our secret.

LUKE

And you didn't.

MATT

Who could I tell? Except Jesus, of course, I told him, I told him all the time. In church, when it was happening... Lord Jesus, Savior, please make it stop. I'll do anything. Anything.

LUKE

How long—?

MATT

Five years, two months and thirteen days.

(Beat.)

You find ways to cope. Disassociate, create another reality. I'd put myself up on the ceiling, and I'd look down at this person who wasn't me.

LUKE

How did you get him to stop?

MATT

It got to the point where I didn't care. He could kill me if he wanted to. I went to him and I said, that's it, we're done. You are not going to touch me or fuck me ever again, and if you so much as lay a finger on Luke I will kill you.

LUKE

What about Mom?

MATT

She knew. And she did nothing to stop it. You ever notice the way she looked at him when he was affectionate with me? She saw it clear as day. The man she had wed before God was doing the unspeakable to her little boy. And here's the kicker: She blamed me. I was the evil one. I was an agent of Satan. I had led her faithful God-fearing husband into the deep dark pit of eternal damnation. She knew and she turned a blind eye.

(Beat.)

LUKE

What do you need from her?

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MATT

Accountability. That's all. To acknowledge and take responsibility for not protecting me, her son, from the trauma of sexual and emotional abuse at the hands of his father.

LUKE

That's why you're here.

MATT

And wouldn't you know, I'm too fucking late.

The lights fade.

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ENAJ

Synopsis: Matt has returned for the first time in more than a decade upon receiving news that his mother could die at any time. Matt is at his brother's house, and his niece finds him at their telescope.

ENAJ

Don't touch that.

MATT

I'm sorry.

(Backing off)

Hi. You must be Jane.

ENAJ

Enaj.

MATT

Enaj?

ENAJ

Jane spelled backwards.

MATT

Really?

ENAJ

Really.

MATT

Well, it's great to see you again, Enaj. I'm Matt, your long-lost uncle.

She accepts his awkward offer of a handshake.

So why...er—?

ENAJ

I hate Jane. All that Plain Jane and Mary Jane bullshit, like I was some ugly boring wimp.

MATT

Whereas Enaj is...?

ENAJ

The opposite. Exotic and sensuous and kick-ass fierce.

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MATT

Got it.

(Beat.)

I hear you're in a band.

ENAJ

I mess around with some friends.

MATT

What do you play?

ENAJ

You mean music?

MATT

Yeah, and instrument. Or instruments.

ENAJ

We do kind of indie folk stuff. I play guitar. Sing. Write songs.

MATT

Great, that's awesome. And where do you perform?

ENAJ

House concerts mostly.

MATT

House concerts?

ENAJ

A friend's house or barn or whatever.

MATT

Cool.

(Beat.)

How's school?

ENAJ

Seriously?

MATT

I was just curious.

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ENAJ

You don't ask a teenager how school is going.

MATT

Okay. Sorry.

ENAJ

How was your flight?

MATT

Long. Way too long.

ENAJ

Well, welcome.

MATT

Thank you. It's really great to see you after...what, it must be—

ENAJ

Eleven years.

MATT

I guess so, right. Wow. You know, I was thinking, the last time I saw you—

ENAJ

I threw up on your Armani suit.

MATT

I don't remember that. I just remember you as being very cute and very smart.

ENAJ

I just remember barfing.

Beat.

MATT

Listen, I, er...I know I've been kind of absent. To put it mildly. But I'm hoping—

ENAJ

Why didn't you come to Mom's funeral?

MATT

I had planned to, but in the end I just couldn't.

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ENAJ

Why not?

MATT

I wasn't well. I am so sorry about your Mom.

ENAJ

I'm sorry about yours.