

The Accident

Hanna Hollis

Characters:

Lisa, age 19

Michael, age 17

Nurse, female, mid-forties

Surgeon, male, mid-thirties

Time:

The present day, around 3 a.m. on a rainy summer night.

Setting:

The small waiting room in the operation wing of a hospital.

The stage is dark. The sound of heavy rain can be heard. Suddenly there is the loud squealing of car brakes. Then a brief, tense pause. All that can be heard is the rain. Then, there is the blaring sound of emergency vehicle sirens. Blue and red lights flash above the stage. All at once, everything goes forebodingly quiet. A few moments pass. As the lights fade up, we see MICHAEL and LISA sitting in a pair of chairs that face the audience. MICHAEL is in the chair on the left, closest to a set of double doors that are each labeled "operating rooms." LISA is on the right. A man's jacket is draped around her shoulders. Both have sterile bandages on various parts of their bodies. A NURSE sits behind a small desk labeled "information," quietly typing into a computer.

MICHAEL

(he looks at his watch, then to the doors next to him and back at his watch.)

Why is it taking them so long?

LISA

(looking at MICHAEL, speaking with irritation)

Oh, I don't know, maybe because he's been rendered unrecognizable. That might have something to do with it.

MICHAEL

It wasn't that bad.

LISA

He looked like a bloody version of the Phantom of the Opera. Worse, actually.

MICHAEL

It wasn't that bad...it couldn't have...

LISA

How would you know? I watched them load him into the ambulance! You couldn't even look at him!

(MICHAEL looks away, ashamed)

MICHAEL

(lamenting to himself)

I wasn't even supposed to be there.

LISA

(having at him)

Of course you weren't! It was a college party, not some high-school hangout! Why did you even want to come in the first place?

(MICHAEL doesn't respond)

LISA (Cont'd)

(now in a full-on rant)

Worse, instead of backing me, Carson actually insisted that you come with us! "Aw, Lisa.

Let lil' Mikey come," he said. Well, you came, you drove and now Carson is

fighting for his life!

(she draws Carson's jacket tighter around her, as if seeking comfort from it.)

MICHAEL

(clearly frightened by her implication)

Lisa, please...it was an accident...I tried to make the turn, but the road was too slick.

LISA

Yeah, keep telling yourself that, kid.

MICHAEL

You can't seriously think I meant for this to happen!

LISA

Well, you two haven't been the best of friends lately, that's for sure.

MICHAEL

(letting the anger get the better of him)

No, we're...

(he catches himself and quickly recovers)

Never mind.

LISA

(leaning forward, puzzled)

You're what?

MICHAEL

(hurriedly trying to backpedal his way out)

Nothing...forget it...

(brings himself back in check)

You're right, we haven't exactly been seeing eye-to-eye. That doesn't mean I want him

dead.

LISA

(skeptically)

Yeah...sure...okay.

(They are silent. LISA puts her arms through the sleeves of the jacket, revealing that it is about two sizes too big. MICHAEL sits with one leg propped up on the opposite knee and nervously picks at a loose thread in the hem of his jeans.)

LISA
(breaking the silence)
How long's it been?

MICHAEL
(he looks at his watch and tsks as he calculates)
It's going on an hour forty-five.

(MICHAEL begins to idly spin the ring on his thumb. LISA groans as she leans her head back against the wall. After a moment, she begins interrogating MICHAEL.)

LISA
(looking at MICHAEL with her peripheral vision)
Why did you want to come with us, Michael? Seriously, Carson and I were the only two people at that party that you knew, and don't say that you wanted to hang out with your dear sister. We both know that's not true. And, for some reason you hate Carson's guts right now, so it wasn't to hang out with him.

MICHAEL
I don't hate his guts.
(pause)
I guess I just wanted to know what a real college party was like; if it was anything like what the movies always paint it to be.

LISA
Please, you'd rather be playing your Xbox than socializing with people in the real world.

MICHAEL
It's a GameCube, actually...completely different system. And, for your information, I've become a lot more social since you left for college. I go to parties, meet people.

LISA
The annual robotics team Christmas party doesn't count. You might count that inter-team mixer thingy they do the night before the competitions, if you can call a bunch of smelly robot nerds trying to dance a party.

MICHAEL
That's why I wanted to go to a real party. One with people who are definitely not nerds and

know how to dance. A party with...
(tripping over the word)
Girls.

LISA
(mockingly)
Aww...is lil' Mikey looking for a girlfriend?

MICHAEL
No. And don't call me that.

LISA
Why not? Carson calls you that.

MICHAEL
Carson's...different

LISA
(sensing she is getting closer to his secret, she leans in closer.)
Why?

MICHAEL
(picking up on her suspicions, he redirects her)
Well, for one thing, he can beat me up if I tell him not to call me that.

LISA
So could I.

MICHAEL
Yeah, but you wouldn't because Mom and Dad would kill you if you did. Nothing is stopping Carson.

LISA
Uh-huh, right. So to keep from getting a few blows from Carson, you let him call you "lil' Mikey."

MICHAEL
(not very convincingly)
You got it.

(Not sure that she finds his answer satisfactory, LISA sinks back into her chair and goes quiet. After a few moments, the SURGEON enters through the double doors labeled

“operating rooms.” He is carrying a ring on a silver chain in his closed fist. He walks over to MICHAEL and LISA.)

SURGEON

Are you two with the young man from the car accident?

MICHAEL

(with anxious urgency; his guard is down)

Yes, we are. How is he?

LISA

(matching MICHAEL’S tone)

Can we see him?

SURGEON

I’m sorry. We tried everything, but we could not save him. We found this around his neck. *(the SURGEON holds out his fist and lets the ring attached to the silver chain drop. It swings slightly from the point where the SURGEON is holding the chain between his fingers before coming to a stop. MICHAEL snatches it out of the SURGEON’S hand before LISA can think to go for it.)*

SURGEON (Cont’d)

Again, I’m so sorry.

(the SURGEON exits through the doors to the operating rooms. LISA watches MICHAEL as he stares at the ring. After a moment, MICHAEL slips the ring off of the silver chain and slips it on his thumb where he wears a matching ring.)

LISA

(understanding the weight of MICHAEL’S gesture)

you...and...

(MICHAEL gives her a look of confirmation)

LISA

(in disbelief)

No.

MICHAEL

(nodding)

Yes. That’s why I went tonight.

LISA

(looking as if she’s about to vomit)

I’m going to be sick.

(LISA runs off stage through a door marked as the women's restroom. MICHAEL lets out a long breath and sits quietly for several minutes.)

MICHAEL

(glancing up towards the ceiling)

I guess we would have had to tell her sometime, right, Carse? Didn't expect it to be like this; but let's face it. Not much we can do about it now, huh? I miss you already.

Love you, bud.

(LISA slowly exits the bathroom. She has heard her brother's confession from the other side of the door. She is still pale, but is visibly calmer. As LISA makes her way towards MICHAEL, she takes off Carson's jacket. LISA drapes it on MICHAEL'S shoulders. MICHAEL puts his arms through the sleeves. The jacket fits him perfectly.)

BLACKOUT