



Sample Pages from
Life and Death in an Empty Hallway

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LIFE AND DEATH IN AN EMPTY HALLWAY

A DRAMA IN ONE ACT BY
Christopher Evans



Life and Death in an Empty Hallway
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Printed in the USA

Characters

3M 3W + 3 Any Gender

Rick (M)

Elizabeth (F)

Journey (Any Gender)

Marley (F)

Bert (M)

Kelvin (M)*

Brittney (F)

Paramedic 1 (Any Gender)

Paramedic 2/Announcement voice (Any Gender)

*a revised scene has been included that changes the male character of Kelvin (Rick's brother) to a female character named Kelly (Rick's sister). Please feel free to use this scene if casting calls for it.

Original Production

Life and Death in an Empty Hallway was first performed at the Montana State Thespians Festival on February 3rd, 2023 (under the working title of H-10) with the following cast:

Rick: Reece Fenton
Elizabeth: Shalie Haug
Angelique*: Jaelyn Kleinsasser
Bert: Anthony Rangel
Kelvin: Kohle Schlehr
Brittany: Keira Patterson
Paramedic #1: Ireland Osentowski
Paramedic #2: Sammy Lynch

*the character of Angelique has since been renamed Journey

Director: Chris Evans
Production Manager: Lesli Evans
Stage Manager: Delaney Linn
Special Effects Operator: Lily Bowman
Sound Effects Operator: Leighton Larsen

Awards Received

Outstanding Overall Drama
 Outstanding Costume
 Outstanding Supporting Actor (Bert)

A single door frame is seen onstage. A chair is overturned on the side. A young man, RICK, 17 and looks like he “does sports,” is propped up against the door frame. He has been shot in the chest. There is blood and his breathing is labored. Periodically, an emergency light flashes and we hear an announcement that comes with an emergency alarm sound. The announcement reads as such...

ANNOUNCEMENT: Can I have your attention, please? Can I have your attention, please? A fire has been reported in the building. Please evacuate now. Do not use the elevators.

A voice is heard from another room.

VOICE: Help me! Help me, please!

RICK: Help!

ANNOUNCEMENT: Can I have your attention, please...

RICK: *(to the announcement)* Shut up!

ANNOUNCEMENT: Please evacuate...

VOICE: Help!

RICK: I would but I'm a little occupied right now. *(to the ANNOUNCEMENT)* Would you PLEASE shut up! *(coughs from shouting)*

All sound stops. There is a change of lighting. JOURNEY, 16-18, dressed in mostly white clothing, has appeared. RICK is shocked to see somebody who wasn't there a moment ago.

RICK: *(to JOURNEY)* Help me.

JOURNEY: I have two questions.

RICK: Didn't you hear me? I said help me.

JOURNEY: I heard you.

RICK: And?

JOURNEY: Answer my questions first.

RICK: Sure. Why not?

JOURNEY: Number one. How do I look? Right now.

RICK: Are you kidding me?

JOURNEY: No, I am not. First question. How do I look right now?

RICK: (*calling out*) Help! Help me!

JOURNEY: Shut up and answer me. How do I look right now?

RICK: Jesus. You look like you need to help me. Okay?

JOURNEY: Please.

RICK: Amazing. Really. I had no idea beauty looked like you.

JOURNEY: Sarcastic. But I'll take it. Thank you. Was that so hard?

RICK: (*calling out again*) Help me!

VOICE: Help me!

JOURNEY: I thought she might be here.

RICK: Who?

JOURNEY: Her name's Elizabeth. She's in pretty bad shape. (*pause*) You ready for my second question?

RICK: Sure. Fine. Let me have it.

JOURNEY: You're *this* close to dying. Are you scared?

Lights change back to emergency lighting. We hear the Fire Alarm announcement. For the remainder of the script, the character VOICE will now be titled ELIZABETH.

ELIZABETH: Somebody. Anybody.

RICK: Can you hear me?

A long pause before answering.

ELIZABETH: Yes.

RICK: What's your name?

ELIZABETH: Elizabeth.

RICK: Really?

ELIZABETH: Yeah. Really.

RICK: Wow. (*pause*) How bad are you hurt?

ELIZABETH: Pretty bad, I think. I got hit in the leg and now it won't stop bleeding.

RICK: You got anything to make a tourniquet?

ELIZABETH: Already have one on. It slowed down the bleeding but it's not stopping. How are you?

RICK: Hit in the chest. Trying to breathe. It's hard.

ELIZABETH: I'm so sorry. *(pause)* I didn't get your name.

RICK: Rick. It's Rick.

ELIZABETH: Rick, did they get him?

RICK: I haven't heard anything for a while. I don't know if that's a good thing or a bad thing.

ELIZABETH: Rick, I'm scared. *(pause)* Really scared.

RICK: Me too, Elizabeth. Me too.

Lights change. Emergency sounds stop. MARLEY, 17, very fashionable with A LOT of chains, RICK's ex and very angry about it, has appeared.

Oh, no.

JOURNEY walks around the scene, observing.

MARLEY: Oh, Ricky. Ricky. Ricky, Ricky. You've been a naughty boy, haven't you?

RICK: Hi, Marley. I'm hallucinating, right?

MARLEY: Oh, God, yes. You've lost a lot of blood. I'm really surprised you haven't bled out yet.

RICK: Surprised or hoping?

MARLEY: Little column A. Little column B.

RICK: Damn.

MARLEY: You asked.

MARLEY is looking for a chain in her collection.

RICK: Can I help you?

MARLEY: *(finds the chain)* You remember when you gave me this chain?

RICK: Which one is that?

MARLEY: (*walks over and shows him*) This one.

RICK: No.

MARLEY: Really?

RICK: Yeah. Really.

MARLEY: (*sarcastically*) Awww. You don't remember giving me my favorite chain? Sad face. (*pause*) Let me help. "Marley, this is because I really love you."

RICK: (*remembers*) Awww. Come on.

MARLEY: Let me help some more. I'm going to paint the scene. Faculty parking lot a week later. (*pause*) "Marley, I don't think this is going to work anymore." (*RICK says nothing*) Yeah. You remember. Good. (*pause*) You look really bad.

RICK: I would have cleaned up if I knew I was going to have company.

MARLEY: Jackass.

RICK: Love of my life. (*pause*) Why are you here? What do you want? Why am I seeing you?

MARLEY: The chain. You looked me in the eyes and told me you loved me then broke up with me a week later for some girl I don't even know. I wear it to remind me what a horrible person you are.

RICK: Have you ever heard of moving on?

MARLEY: You were seeing her while we were together, right? You were seeing everybody while we were together, right? The whole damn time, right?

RICK: (*after a moment*) Yes.

MARLEY: So you're a cheater and a liar.

RICK: Sure. I guess so.

MARLEY: And a coward.

RICK: I don't have to listen to-

MARLEY: You suck as a human being.

RICK: You done?

MARLEY: I am. But you're not. Your day's not done yet, Bubba.

Synapses in your brain are firing all over the place and the things you're going to see... *(pause)* You aren't even strapped in for the ride you're about to take. Wish I could stick around to watch you squirm.

RICK: What do you want me to say?

MARLEY: An apology would be nice.

There is a moment.

RICK: I'm sorry.

MARLEY: *(walks up to RICK)* Go to hell. Enjoy the ride. Tell them I sent you. Toodles.

MARLEY leaves flipping him off with both hands as she goes. Lights change. Emergency sound back on. RICK has passed out.

ELIZABETH: Rick? *(RICK does not answer)* Rick? *(RICK startles awake)*
Rick?

RICK: Yeah. Still here.

ELIZABETH: You okay?

RICK: I think so. Why?

ELIZABETH: You were just apologizing. Sounded like you were talking to somebody.

RICK: Really?

ELIZABETH: Yeah. I think so.

RICK: Weird. *(pause)* How are you doing?

ELIZABETH: Bleeding's slowed down. Not sure if the tourniquet is working or if I'm running out of blood. *(pause)* Rick?

RICK: Yeah?

ELIZABETH: Where is the help?

RICK: Not sure.

ELIZABETH: Are they going to find us?

RICK: I don't – *(pause)* Yes. They have to.

ELIZABETH: Are they going to find us before we bleed out?

RICK: I hope so. I really hope so. (pause) Elizabeth? (there is no answer)
Elizabeth? (There is no answer. He yells. It hurts.) ELIZABETH!

Lights change. Sound stops. BERT MCCALL, 15 or 16, sits beside RICK in the doorway. JOURNEY sits on an overturned chair a short ways away.

BERT: (to RICK) Hey.

RICK: Hey.

BERT: You don't look so good.

RICK: Thanks. You look great. (to JOURNEY) He looks great.

JOURNEY: He does.

RICK: Who is he?

JOURNEY: Ask him.

RICK: (to BERT) Who are you?

BERT: You don't remember me?

RICK: Should I?

BERT: (to JOURNEY) He doesn't remember me.

JOURNEY: Sad, isn't it? (to RICK) Rick, that's hardcore cold, dude.

RICK: Dude?

JOURNEY: I heard how it sounded when I said it. Sorry.

BERT: I went to middle school with you.

RICK: A lot of people did.

BERT: You changed my life.

RICK: Okay. How?

BERT: You beat the crap out of me for wearing a Dungeons and Dragons T-shirt.

There is a silence. RICK realizes.

RICK: Bert?

BERT: (fans his hands in front of his face) Ta-da!

RICK: Why?

BERT: I was invited.

JOURNEY fans their hands in front of their face.

JOURNEY: Ta-da!

BERT: You beat the hell out of me after I got shoved into you by some of my friends. You took a look at my shirt, assumed I was weak, and to impress your friends you “defended yourself” and took me down and punched me in the head about 12... (*air counts*) No, wait. 13 times. I had to wear glasses after that because you altered the way my right eye sat in my skull. Your fist adjusted the way it focused.

JOURNEY: Jesus, Rick.

RICK: I got into major trouble if that helps. I have a juvenile record.

BERT: It doesn't. After all the emergency room stuff, I had a real quiet ride back home with my mom and dad. Told my mom and dad “good night” and went to bed. Lying in my bed. I had a moment – (*pause*) Remember when I said that you changed my life?

RICK: Yes.

BERT: I had a moment where I imagined that you were dead. (*pause*) You changed a kid who liked gaming, girls and vacations with his parents into a kid who couldn't game anymore because of his eyesight, would never get a girl he likes to even look at him now, and now couldn't look his parents in the face. 13 punches changed me into that. A kid with a goopy eye patch who was lying on his bed envisioning you dead.

RICK: I'm so sorry, Bert.

BERT: Apology not accepted. (*pause*) Your life-changing kicking of my ass didn't stop with me.

JOURNEY: Rick. What the hell?

BERT: I went back downstairs the next morning and my dad and mom were sitting at the table like they did every morning. Dad, reading his iPad scanning for news, and Mom eating a granola bar. I went to the toaster, threw in a couple of Pop-Tarts and began a new day. (*pause*) There was generic conversation. During whatever we were talking about, I felt a different vibe in the room. They weren't talking to me as their son anymore. No, “Hey, Kiddo how's your day?” No mom hug and an “I love you.” (*pause*) It's like I was a stranger. In my own damn house. (*pause*) Then it hit me. They were scared of me. They were scared of saying anything

that would send me over the edge. *(pause)* They were talking to a victim.

RICK: No, Bert. No.

BERT: It took me a while and some parent required therapy but I finally got it. *(pause)* You know, when you're born, your parents see you as perfect. You are Superman, Lady Gaga and Albert Einstein all rolled into one. Untouchable. There's hope. There's faith. Hope that there's great things ahead and faith that all those great things are going to fall into your kid's lap. *(pause)* When you beat me up, you changed my entire universe. *(pause)* At school, they'd point and say, "That's the kid. That's the kid." *(pause)* I'm "the kid." *(pause)* At home, they saw me as vulnerable. Check the list of things that scare parents the most and that's right on top. *(pause)* I was just somebody who blended in with the crowd. That's the only way that they could handle it. Oh, they still loved me, in fact, they are in the parking lot right now hoping beyond all hope, but their superhero son disappeared the day your first punch hit my face. They were so full of guilt and disappointment. *(pause)* I hated you for that.

RICK: I am so sorry, Bert. If I could change that day, I-

BERT: Don't, Rick. You can't pull a happy ending out of your ass right at the end. No forgiveness here but I do want to tell you something.

JOURNEY: *(checking their cellphone)* Bert, you have to go.

BERT: One more second. *(pause)* I don't wish you dead anymore. I really want you to survive this. I really do. *(gets up to leave)*

RICK: You okay now, though?

BERT: Rick, they got me coming into the school. All I heard was a popping sound, the lights went out and then I was here. *(pause)* Good news? My glasses stayed on and didn't break when I hit the ground. *(pause)* Something to remember me by, huh? *(pause)* If you survive this, would you do me a favor?

RICK: Yes.

BERT: Tell my parents that I fought like hell. At least give them that, ok?

RICK: Yes.

BERT: Thanks.

JOURNEY: Bert, it's time.

JOURNEY holds out their hand. BERT takes it. BERT looks back at RICK as if to say something, changes his mind, and walks off with JOURNEY. RICK begins to cry. LIGHTS CHANGE. Emergency lights and sound. RICK continues crying.

ELIZABETH: Rick? (pause) What's going on? (pause) Rick? (pause) Rick, I'm scared.

Lights change and sound off. KELVIN, 15, RICK's younger brother and very different than RICK, wears a rock band T-shirt. KELVIN stands in the area of RICK. He is gaming on his phone. RICK is still emotional.

KELVIN: Hey, numbnuts. (RICK composes and recognizes his brother)
Made you look.

RICK: Kelvin, what in the hell, man?

KELVIN: I know. It's weird, right? Your dirtbag baby brother part of a blood loss hallucination. How cool is that? (pause) I'm honored. I thought you didn't like me.

RICK: Congratulations, I don't. You're a necessary evil. Like scabs.

KELVIN: That's good. You kind of hurt my feelings with that one.

RICK: I'm sorry.

KELVIN: I'm over it.

RICK: Kelvin, you're here.

KELVIN: Yes.

RICK: Why?

KELVIN: Well, when a mommy and daddy love each other very much—

RICK: No.

KELVIN: Well, big brother, I have a question.

RICK: Make it quick.

KELVIN: Yeah....okay. (pause) If you don't make it, can I have your room?

There is a moment.

RICK: What?

KELVIN: (*speaking to a 5-year-old*) If. You. Don't. Make. It. Can. I. Have. Your. Room? (*pause*) IF, you don't make it, and I take your room, you aren't going to haunt me, are you? Like when I'm making out with somebody? That'd be weird.

RICK: Never going to happen.

KELVIN: You sure?

RICK: Yep. Let me tell you why.

KELVIN: Can't wait.

RICK: You are dumber than dirt and you always smell like B.O., lunchroom lasagna and really cheap weed. You are getting nowhere near a human to "make out." She would have to have no sense of smell, be blind and deaf and have no standards. What you are looking for is a slutty Helen Keller type. (*or "What you are looking for is a crash test dummy wearing lipstick."*) Not many of them wandering the school hallways.

There is a moment.

KELVIN: Ouch. (*pause*) I'm going to put a blackout curtain in the bedroom window where you have those curtains that scream, "My masculinity is in question, please help me!"

There is another moment.

RICK: Can I ask you a question? Seriously?

KELVIN: Shoot. (*realizes his poor choice of word*) Awww. Damn. My bad. (*pause*) What's your question?

RICK: If I don't make it, will you please be nice to Mom and Dad? Tell them that I loved them and everything?

KELVIN: Ew.

RICK: C'mon. It's going to be hard on them if I'm not there. (*pause*) Look up from your damn phone and look at me. (*KELVIN does*) Please.

KELVIN: I get your room?

RICK: Yes.

KELVIN: No haunting?

RICK: No haunting.

KELVIN: Blackout curtains okay?

RICK: Really?

KELVIN: Part of the deal.

RICK: Sure. Blackout curtains.

KELVIN: Deal. You're still my brother even though I demand Dad gets a DNA test every year on your birthday. Dad's kind of a slut. You never know.

RICK: Thank you.

There is a real moment between the brothers.

KELVIN: You're welcome. (pause) Later.

KELVIN goes to leave. Stopping to step over RICK as he goes. There is a pause when he is directly in front of RICK. He leaves. KELVIN is gone. RICK has relaxed. He calls out.

RICK: What am I supposed to do now? (He senses a really bad smell. It's bad. He realizes.) Oh, my god. Wow. (pause) YOU CROP DUSTED ME? Deal's off! I'm going to haunt the holy crap out of you.

JOURNEY: (running in) You know that last guy?

RICK: Yeah.

JOURNEY: He just tried to sell me weed. (the smell hits them) Whoa. What's that smell?

Lights change. Sound returns.

ELIZABETH: Rick?

RICK: Yeah?

ELIZABETH: What's that smell?

Lights change. Sound out. BRITTANY, 17, a calm and soothing presence, has appeared.

RICK: What now?

BRITTANY: Rude.

RICK: Sorry. (sarcastically) Hello. Welcome to my hallway. I apologize for all the blood. Some dastardly do-wrong type has put a hole in my chest. (pause) Better?

BRITTANY: No. But I'll take it.

A silence.

RICK: And you are?

BRITTANY: Not yet.

RICK: Why?

BRITTANY: Not yet. (*pause*) Rick, right?

RICK: Maybe.

BRITTANY: (*smiles*) Okay.

RICK: I've never seen you before. What part of my internal bleeding are you?

BRITTANY: You know me.

RICK: No I don't.

JOURNEY enters the scene.

JOURNEY: You should.

RICK: Why?

BRITTANY: You might be going to my wedding.

There is an obvious silence.

RICK: (*to JOURNEY*) I think this hallucination is a mistake.

JOURNEY: Nope. Just listen to her.

BRITTANY: You might even cry at my wedding because, as you probably might tell others, "It's the most beautiful dress that I've ever seen." In reality, you've never seen me so happy.

RICK: What in the hell are you talking about? I hate to burst your bubble, but I haven't got an invite in the mail.

BRITTANY: You might get one.

RICK: I'm honored and congratulations and stuff but who the hell are you?

BRITTANY: You might even be going to my graduation. I'm going to get a 4.0.

RICK: What?

BRITTANY: You might be going to my first high school play. It's gonna suck, but I'm going to shine.

ELIZABETH is heard from the other room.

ELIZABETH: Rick?

BRITTANY: My first day of school. I'm going to be real nervous.

ELIZABETH: I can't feel my legs anymore.

RICK: Stop it.

ELIZABETH: I don't want to die, Rick.

BRITTANY: My first steps. I'm going to be so happy.

ELIZABETH: *(weakly)* Help me.

RICK: *(puts his hands over his ears and screams)* STOOOOOOPPPPP!

There is a moment. RICK's hands come down.

BRITTANY: My birth. *(RICK is stunned)* If you make it through this, I'm going to be your daughter. *(waves weakly at RICK)* Hi.

RICK: Hi. *(to JOURNEY)* Why are you doing this?

JOURNEY: I'm not. You are.

BRITTANY: I need you to live.

RICK: Why?

BRITTANY: So I can. If you make it, I'm going to make you really happy and proud.

RICK: If I don't?

BRITTANY: I don't know. *(fans her hands in front of her face)* Poof. Maybe.

RICK: What's your name?

BRITTANY: You're probably going to name me Brittany. You have a thing for that name. Your wife is going to hate the idea of naming me that but you'll talk her into it. It's going to be a great life but you need to live.

RICK: Who's my wife?

BRITTANY starts to speak.

JOURNEY: Don't tell him.

RICK: C'mon.

JOURNEY: Live and you'll find out.

RICK: Blackmail? Really?

JOURNEY: Whatever works.

RICK: *(coughs into his hands)* That's not good. *(Shows his hands. There's blood.)*

BRITTANY: You're getting worse. Fight this. *(gets up to leave)*

RICK: Where are you going?

BRITTANY: I have to go. It's not my choice anymore. *(pause)* It's yours. *(pause)* I hope you live. I'd really like to be your daughter one day. *(she starts to walk out)*

RICK: Hey. *(BRITTANY stops)* It was nice meeting you.

BRITTANY: It was nice meeting you. *(pause)* Dad.

*BRITTANY leaves. RICK weakly waves after her.
JOURNEY speaks after a moment.*

JOURNEY: That was weird, huh?

RICK: We're coming to the end of this, aren't we?

JOURNEY: You tell me.

RICK: I'm not going to make it. *(JOURNEY does not answer)* Am I? *(JOURNEY still doesn't answer)* Please. I gotta know. *(no answer)* Please.

JOURNEY: Did you know over 44 million gallons of water go over Niagara Falls every minute?

RICK: No I didn't,

JOURNEY: Google don't lie, bruh.

RICK: Bruh?

JOURNEY: Trying it.

RICK: Try something else.

JOURNEY: Can you imagine the destructive force of that much water?

RICK: Maybe later. Little busy dying right now.

JOURNEY: Drama queen. (*pause*) Since 1850, over 5000 people have gone over the falls either intentionally, trying suicide, or accidentally. On October 24th, 1901, the first person to go over the falls and survive was a schoolteacher by the name of Annie Edison Taylor. She went over this wonder of the world in an oak barrel. (*pause*) As of today, only 16 people have survived the fall. You mess around with Mother Nature, you will find out. She is judge, jury and executioner. No parole, just life or death, and she is a hanging judge most of the time.

RICK: Most of the time?

JOURNEY: You ever hear of Karel Souchak? (*pronounced Carl Soo-check*) He was a Czechoslovakian daredevil who went over Niagara Falls. (*pause*) On July 2nd, 1984 he was ready to go. He got in his homemade red metal barrel and was rolled into the water over the falls. A thousand feet later, Karel Souchak went over the Seventh Wonder of the World into the churning, violent waters below. (*pause*) He survived. (*pause*) Bloody but alive and in debt. He was even given a 500 dollar ticket for going over Niagara Falls without a licence.

RICK: Wow.

JOURNEY: Yeah, wow. That's not all. (*pause*) Fame from Karel's Niagara fall earned him enough money to cover his bills plus. He even had enough extra money that he considered building a stunt museum on the Canada side of Niagara Falls. (*pause*) Life was going great for Karel Souchak. Going so well that he planned for another death-defying stunt. (*pause*) The date was January 19th, 1985. With his bills paid and his confidence at an all-time high, Karel Souchak was suspended in another barrel 180 feet in the air above the floor of the Houston Astrodome. Below him was a container full of water. The idea was simple. Drop Karel's barrel into the container full of water. Karel lives. Crowd cheers. Life is good for Karel Souchak, right? (*pause*) Karel's barrel was released prematurely, and instead of falling straight into the container below, it began to spin to the ground. Even the pads at the bottom of the container to help soften Karel's fall came loose, rendering them useless. Karel's barrel hit the side of the container hard. The barrel was destroyed on impact. (*pause*) It wasn't pretty. Responders ran to the wreckage expecting the worst. (*pause*) He was alive. They rushed him off in an ambulance in front of a stunned crowd in the Astrodome. (*pause*) Karel Souchak died before the stunt show in the Astrodome finished. He's buried in a cemetery on the Canada side of Niagara Falls.



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