

# THE PLAN

BY

EVE ARMSTRONG

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Eve Armstrong  
664 West 163<sup>rd</sup> St #22  
New York, NY 10032  
[eve@realityasidetheatre.com](mailto:eve@realityasidetheatre.com)

**Characters**

CHRISTOPHER ..... M, 20's  
LOU ..... M, 20's.  
IAN..... M, about 16  
AL ..... M, 40-50's. Bowtie.  
BILLIE ..... F, 40-50's

**Setting**

A little diner in some city in America.

**Time**

Friday at 10am

**The Plan**

*At Rise:* CHRISTOPHER and LOU sit at a two-person table DL. They've just finished their meals and sip coffees while studying papers. They study and write silently for a few moments. CHRISTOPHER stretches a bit, looking out the window. AL and BILLIE sit at nearby table DR.

CHRISTOPHER

My eyes are getting worse.

LOU (*Absently*)

Hmmn .. ?

CHRISTOPHER

I keep holding the paper like two feet from my face.

LOU

You're not eating enough herring.

CHRISTOPHER

What's herring got to do with it?

LOU

What else could it be?

*(Long pause. CHRISTOPHER stares out window, goes back to studying, sips coffee, stops studying, stares out window. LOU starts sketching something on a pad of paper.)*

CHRISTOPHER

How do you know I'm not eating enough herring?

LOU

You didn't have any just now.

CHRISTOPHER

So? Maybe I ate some yesterday.

*(Enter IAN, the waiter, R.)*

LOU

If you're betting on herring to give you your eyesight back, seems to me you ought to be eating a hell of a lot of it.

IAN

How's everything going here?

CHRISTOPHER

Fantastic.

LOU

Fine, thanks.

IAN

Is there anything else I can get for you? More coffee?

CHRISTOPHER

No, we're good. *(Pause.)* If we stop ordering stuff are you going to kick us out, or can we stay sitting here?

IAN

Uh – oh, no! You can sit here. We're not busy.

CHRISTOPHER

Okay. Thanks.

IAN

You're welcome, thank you. *(Takes their payment and bill.)* Have a good weekend.

CHRISTOPHER

You too.

*(Exit IAN R.)*

LOU

*(Finishes sketching)*

So you want to take a look at this?

CHRISTOPHER

How can I look at it, I'm going blind.

LOU

*(Pushes map he's drawn toward CHRISTOPHER)*

Here, look.

CHRISTOPHER

Mrs. T, she did this to me, you know. Remember whenever I didn't do my homework she made me copy twenty dictionary pages? It made me fucking cross-eyed. My eyes were bloodshot for days afterwards.

*(IAN enters R, starts putting on coat and gathering belongings as if he's preparing to leave.)*

LOU

*(Massaging hand)*

That's not as bad as my knuckles and her ruler, man. It'll be a sweet revenge. A long time in the making. Here, look. The way I figure it, if we make it past the back entrance, we're home free. Room 103 is located – Chris, will you look?

*(Waits for CHRISTOPHER to pay attention)*

Room 103 is located about 50 feet down the hall from the back entrance. No one's going to notice someone walking 50 feet. We'd be pretty much home free.

CHRISTOPHER *(Studying map)*

You left out the new wing.

LOU

What?

CHRISTOPHER

You didn't draw in the new wing.

LOU

I don't know exactly where it stems off from. Anyway it's irrelevant, it's nowhere near this hallway.

*(CHRISTOPHER appears unhappy.)*

What?

CHRISTOPHER

I don't like fudging over details. It makes me nervous.

LOU

Look, what's wrong with this? This is clear-cut, the only issue is making it through the back without trouble.

CHRISTOPHER

Are we going to do this right or not? There's no room for mistakes here. *(Slightly hushed)* We can't even agree on which brand of cyanide.

LOU

We can go with your guy, okay?, I already told you.

CHRISTOPHER *(Sigh)*

What if she's in the room? How do we know she won't be in the room?

LOU

It's lunch hour.

CHRISTOPHER

So? She can't possibly have any friends to eat lunch with, why wouldn't she just stay in her room? I think we'd better peek into her window and see if she's there. We should do it on a Wednesday. The short day.

LOU

Why Wednesday?

CHRISTOPHER

It's the short day. Because the teachers have faculty meetings. She won't be hiding away in her room when she has meetings. Right?

LOU

Why would they meet during lunch hour?

CHRISTOPHER

We don't necessarily have to do it on lunch hour, we can do it during their meetings. It should definitely be a Wednesday.

LOU

Jeeze, Chris, Mick and I have raquetball on Wednesdays.

CHRISTOPHER

Look, if you can't be flexible, this isn't going to work.

LOU

You don't even know when the meetings *are* on Wednesdays.

CHRISTOPHER (*Frustrated*)

Will you work with me here?

IAN

Um, excuse me for interrupting, but have you considered maybe doing it on a Tuesday?  
(*Pause*)

LOU

Excuse me?

IAN

She has a psychiatrist appointment during lunch on Tuesdays. She'd definitely be gone.

LOU (*Alarmed*)

Uh ...

CHRISTOPHER

You know Mrs. Tablesaw?

IAN

Yeah, I have her for homeroom and math.

LOU

You – you've heard ... this?

IAN (*Excited*)

Yeah. Yeah, don't worry, I'm all for it. You guys are doing us all a huge favor. Mrs. T's a total bitch. She's failing me because I write my integral signs backwards.

(*Pause*)

LOU

(*Trying to cover up*)

I think you may be mistaking our intentions. We never said –

CHRISTOPHER

Tuesdays? Are you sure it's always Tuesdays?

IAN

Oh, yeah, absolutely, she never misses her appointment. But if you go in the back way it might look weird. Going in the main entrance instead, you could say you're parents visiting your kid.

CHRISTOPHER

You know we thought of that, but we don't want to be seen, that's the thing.

IAN

Oh, yeah, that'd be tricky.

LOU

Chris!

CHRISTOPHER

What?

LOU (*Warning*)

This is stupid, Chris.

CHRISTOPHER

Lou, the kid's trying to help.

LOU (*To IAN*)

Look, no offense, but (*to CHRISTOPHER*) we can't be inviting people ... – you know?

CHRISTOPHER

Lou, he knows Mrs. Tablesaw.

LOU

So?

CHRISTOPHER

So?! Can you imagine *anyone* who knows Mrs. T. not wanting her dead? He's perfectly trustworthy.

LOU

*(Reacting to the "dead")*

Chris, Jesus!

CHRISTOPHER

Relax. Come on, Lou, he's still a student. He's intimate with the current layout. We could use some insider advice.

*(LOU sighs, resigned. To IAN)*

I'm Christopher, this is Lou.

IAN

I'm Ian.

CHRISTOPHER

Hi Ian. So you think the back way isn't the most effective choice?

*(Motions for him to join them)*

IAN

*(Pulls up a chair)*

No, forget the back way. See, the playground security guard shows up around 10:30, just before the kindergarteners go to recess. He'll be hanging around out there, you can't always predict where he'll be.

LOU *(To IAN)*

Don't you have to work?

IAN

My shift just ended.

CHRISTOPHER

What if we show up earlier, like 10, before he gets there?

IAN

So then you're hiding in the hallway 'til 12:30?

CHRISTOPHER

*(Sees that that won't work)*

Right ...

LOU

They have a security guard for recess?

IAN

What you could do is try the new wing. It's got an entrance that faces the woods in back of the playground – right by the four-square blacktops. The security guard doesn't usually go over there 'til later because the younger kids have recess first and they don't tend to play four square. They hang out in the playground.

CHRISTOPHER

How long 'til the older kids get recess?

IAN

12:30. Just when Mrs. T's lunch hour starts.

CHRISTOPHER

That's perfect.

LOU (*Conceding*)

That does sound pretty good.

CHRISTOPHER

Where is the new wing on this map, can you add it in?

*(Hands him LOU's pencil)*

IAN

*(Drawing on map)*

So it opens onto the main lobby like this, and heads back this way, kind of the mirror opposite of the hallway where her classroom is ...

LOU

But we're trying to avoid being seen by the office staff, see.

IAN

Oh, you don't have to worry about that. This hall dumps into the lobby after you've already gone by the office – it's between the office and the entrance to Mrs. T.'s hallway. So you should be good.

LOU

That sounds workable.

AL

*(Leaning over from table nearby, unable to contain himself any longer)*

But you'd still have to go by the nurse's room.

*(Pause)*

CHRISTOPHER

Say again?

AL

Forgive me, that was rude, but we couldn't help overhearing your little dilemma. I'm Al Grossman, I teach Social Studies at St. Raskolnikov's. This is my wife Billie; she teaches English.

IAN

Hi Mr. Grossman, Hi Mrs. Grossman.

BILLIE

Hi there Ian! How's Macbeth coming along?

IAN (*Shrugs*)

Isn't there an English translation? (*BILLIE grins*)

AL

(*Bubbling with enthusiasm*)

That's fantastic ambition, both of you, I hope you don't mind my saying so. Angelica Tablesaw has been terrorizing the faculty for two decades. She beat out Billie here for Dean of Student Affairs last month, but only because she forged her resume –

BILLIE

She ran over Al's class pet iguana with her Hummer.

AL

She's tenured, so we'd resigned ourselves that there's no stopping her. Damned dysfunctional system, you know?

CHRISTOPHER

Oh, it's absurd. It's a disservice to students, totally undermines their needs. It's good to meet you. I'm Christopher.

(*Pause as everyone waits for LOU to introduce himself; he doesn't – he just watches everyone warily.*)

This is Lou.

AL

Hi Lou!

BILLIE

Hi!

LOU

*(Resigned that everyone's onto their plan)*

Hi.

AL

What I just wanted to mention was, even if you were to enter by the new wing, you'd still have to bypass Nurse Zuckerman. She can be a real tart.

LOU

How bad of a – a, uh, tart, can she be?

AL

For one thing, if she saw you she'd demand to see your H1N1 vaccination certifications. She's a stickler. There's no getting around her. And those things have your names on them in easy-to-read print. That woman never forgets a name.

CHRISTOPHER

We don't even have H1N1 vaccination certifications.

LOU

Is that really necessary for entering public schools?

AL

How long have you two boys been out of school?

LOU

Five years.

BILLIE

Well *she* says they're required, but she's probably making it up. She needs to keep herself busy. Between runny noses and her raquetball club, she has no commitments in life.

LOU

But you think that as long as we figure a way around Mrs. – um –

BILLIE

Zuckerman.

LOU

Zuckerman – then we'll be okay?

AL *(Nodding)*

Should be home free.

*(Long pause as everyone thinks hard.)*

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BILLIE (*Sudden thought*)

Wait! If someone gets sick, she'll be busy in her exam room. Right?

(*General agreement.*)

What it seems you two need, then, is a young accomplice. An inside job's always easier.

LOU

What, you mean use one of the students?

BILLIE

Yes! A carefully-timed sick student. That's all you need to tie her up. Do you have kids there?

CHRISTOPHER

We don't have any kids.

IAN

I'll do it.

CHRISTOPHER

You? What would you say?

IAN

(*Improvising on the spot*)

I just came down with some weird terrible ... thing, .. and I feel just weird and ... terrible.

LOU (*Dubious*)

Do you think that'd convince her?

AL

Sounds perfect. It's what she hears all day long.

CHRISTOPHER

Great!

BILLIE

Now, you've decided to use the new wing entrance, is that right?

LOU

I guess we have, it sounds like our best bet.

BILLIE

Well, tell you what. I have a break the period before that – 11:45 to 12:30. If you like, I can step outside for a while and make sure the coast is clear. Flirt with the security guard for a few minutes if it's necessary.

CHRISTOPHER

Sure! We don't want to impose, but that'd sure help us out.

BILLIE

Oh, it's no imposition.

CHRISTOPHER

Thanks!

AL

And I can do the same for the final stretch. I'm in room 107 – just a few doors down from Angelina. In case she's still there at 12:30 I can call her into my office for a friendly chat for a minute or two.

LOU

Wow. Thank you.

AL

Just a minute or two, mind you, I won't be able to take too much of her.

CHRISTOPHER

Then it's settled!

LOU

Seems to be. Thank you, all of you, we appreciate your help.

AL

Don't mention it, Lou, we're proud to help make this work out.

IAN (*Gasp*)

Oh shit, wait!

*(Various "what?!"s from others.)*

The cleaning crew! They do the lobby around lunch time.

LOU

They clean in the middle of the day?

IAN

They just empty the garbage cans. Do you think they'd be an issue?

*(Pause)*

AL (*Unsure*)

It's unlikely.

BILLIE

But you're right, it might not be safe to entirely rule them out.

*(Pause)*

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CHRISTOPHER

Damn!, this is so close to perfect.

LOU

Yeah ...

*(Everyone thinks)*

AL

*(Looks up as someone enters diner, off)*

Hey, wait a sec, here comes Judy, the Assistant Dean of Students. Maybe she'll have some ideas.

*(Calling to her)*

Hey Dr. Mannis, good to see you! Want to come on over here and give us a hand for a minute?

**BLACKOUT**