

Slumber Party

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Characters:

AMANDA - Teenage girl, awkward, kind, extending an olive branch.

SHELBY - Teenage girl, awkward, cold, accepting the invitation.

Director's Note:

Punctuation in this script is used to enforce a rhythm/flow for the actor's speech. Here's a key for what the punctuation I used means and/or how to utilize it in a line:

- Slashes (/) are used to indicate an overlap in conversation. Wherever a slash appears, the next line should begin almost immediately.
- Commas (,) are used to denote short, quick changes in tone or thought. They don't always change the objective, but they indicate a new idea or a discovery from the character. Really, this punctuation rule should be used at the actor's discretion, however, a comma should never slow or ultimately stop the rate of speaking; no pauses should be taken as a result of a comma.
- Dashes (-) indicate a full pivot in thought or a correction. Whereas the comma is used to denote quick shifts in thinking, the dash is used to tell the actor when the character's tactic changes or when a beat can be added. Again, these shifts should not slow or stop the rate of speech.
- Ellipses (...) denote a fall or trailing off of a character's speech. As used in this play, their purpose is to indicate a transition from outward reflection to inward reflection. They are much like the dash in that they represent an obstacle in the character's objective and force the character to use a new tactic. However, ellipses can allow for longer shifts and pauses; it's absolutely fine to go slow with these shifts.

The ultimate goal is for the dialogue to sound authentic, like human speech. Reading the line as written ensures that the dialogue sounds real and doesn't sabotage the integrity of the characters. Fast-paced beats and careful attention to the placement of "um's" and "just's" are incredibly important. The speed of the actor's delivery should be relatively quick, but not to the point where it begins to be a punchline.

Lights up on a semi-lit media room. AMANDA enters, a pillow under each of her arms. She's visibly anxious, wringing her hands and looking around the room. She's laid out two sleeping bags on the floor, along with a bowl of popcorn, a liter of soda, and a stack of red Solo cups. She tosses the pillows down onto each of the sleeping bags and straightens them.

She pulls out her phone and picks up the bluetooth speaker on her sleeping bag. She syncs her phone, then shuffles music. She can't decide what song to play, so she keeps skipping songs at a comically accelerating pace. After little success, she decides against playing music and stands, leaving the speaker on the sleeping bag.

She looks over the set-up, not completely satisfied. She rotates the popcorn bowl, nudges the cups to a more central position, straightens the sleeping bags, anything to ease her mind.

Her work is interrupted by the doorbell. She stands, takes a deep breath, and exits to answer the door.

AMANDA

(Offstage.)
Hey Shelby! Come in.

AMANDA enters, followed by SHELBY, who is holding a duffle bag and stands awkwardly to the side. There's some kind of weird, almost palpable energy between the girls.

AMANDA

So, um. This is where we'll sleep. I've got some snacks laid out already, but we have more stuff downstairs. I think my mom is ordering pizza.

SHELBY

Cool. *(She sets her duffle bag down. She looks around, then, to AMANDA:)* Should I- Should I sit, or-?

AMANDA

Yeah! Sure, yeah, we can sit.

They sit.

SHELBY fiddles with the straps on her drawstring bag, AMANDA looks at SHELBY, desperate to reignite the conversation.

AMANDA

So! Um, we've got some options. We could- we have Scrabble. The TV has Netflix so we could watch a movie. Like- *(She laughs.)* Remember when we accidentally watched that rated R movie that one time we were at your house- I don't remember which / movie it was-

SHELBY

It was The Breakfast Club.

AMANDA

Yeah! Yeah, it was. That was pretty funny, right? Cause, we were only, like twelve, and they talked about sex and, you know, they have the scene with the weed and stuff.

SHELBY

Yeah, that was funny.

Silence. SHELBY isn't trying to be cold, AMANDA isn't trying to be awkward. There's just a disconnect.

SHELBY

(Trying to return AMANDA's energy.)

Well, um, I like Scrabble. We could / play that.

AMANDA

Oh great! Yeah, I'll go grab that. Be right back.

AMANDA exits on the other side of the stage. SHELBY watches her leave. Once she does, SHELBY stands and explores the space. It's familiar to her, but things have changed; different pictures hang on the walls, the chairs have moved, etc. There's a solemn sadness in the way SHELBY looks around, as if she's resigned to being lost in a space she's been in hundreds of times.

AMANDA returns, the Scrabble box in her hands.

AMANDA

Okay, so I definitely think it might be missing a few letters, cause- you remember my old dog Jackie?

SHELBY

Yeah, a little bit.

AMANDA

Yeah, yeah, well, before we gave her to my Aunt Crystal, she was still teething, and- *(She giggles.)* She got into the Scrabble box and chewed on a ton of the letters, and she must have swallowed a few because she pooped out the word "Xylophone" a couple days later.

The girls laugh, eyes on each other to figure out when to stop giggling. AMANDA sets the box down.

AMANDA

But yeah, it's missing some letters, so- we can still play it if you want, or, we have other games-

SHELBY

That's fine.

They sit, the Scrabble box between them.
AMANDA opens it and sets up the board
and letter-stands.

SHELBY

So, um. It's been a while since we hung out.

AMANDA

(Focused on setting up the game.)

No, yeah, for sure.

SHELBY

I was- I mean, I don't want to say I was surprised, or- well, I was, kind of, you know- I just didn't expect you to invite me over.

AMANDA

Well, I mean. *(She looks up at SHELBY.)* I just- I saw you in the hall and I don't know why, but I was like "Wow, I haven't seen her in so long." And I got this... ache, I guess? Like regret. And I thought, you know, why feel guilty when she's *right there*. When *you're* right there. So I invited you. And, believe me, I didn't expect you to actually want to come-

SHELBY

I wanted to come.

AMANDA

Well. I see that *now*.

AMANDA tosses SHELBY the bag of
letters.

AMANDA

Pick seven.

SHELBY

(Smiling a little.)

I know how to play Scrabble, Amanda. You always think I don't know how to play / whatever game we play, but I do.

AMANDA

(Smiling as well.)

That's not true, I just want to be sure you know what you're doing.

SHELBY

I *do*. This isn't Ms. Hillary's Little Darlings dance class.

AMANDA

(Laughing.)

Oh my god, when we had to do that dance / from Lion King and you couldn't do a pirouette-

SHELBY

(Laughing.)

From Lion King, yeah.

AMANDA

And so I- stand up- and so I would grab your hand-

AMANDA pulls SHELBY up and, taking her hand, propels her into a twirl.

AMANDA

I'd *whip* you around like *that*. And she got so mad because, she was like-

SHELBY

(In a nasally Southern accent.)

"Shelby needs to learn how to pirouette without being launched like a Beyblade."

AMANDA

Yeah, yeah! Ooo, that was a good Ms. Hillary impression.

SHELBY

You get pretty good at it after you take private lessons with her every Tuesday and Thursday for ten years.

AMANDA

Oh! Do you- you still go to her?

SHELBY

Yeah, I'm on her competition team now.

AMANDA

Oh, cool! Very cool. I left. Obviously. Cause, you know, I wasn't- I was bad. Well, not bad, but- not good. Not like, I mean, I had rhythm, you know? I could hear the music, I just- when I would do the spins I'd get a little dizzy, you know? Like, vertigo. And, and I don't know if you know this, but I actually would like, see things when I spun. Not like auras or something, but visions. Like, how I died and stuff like that. One time, I saw Shaquille O'Neal. So- Bad.

They sit in silence.

AMANDA

So! Scrabble?

SHELBY

Yup. Yup yup, Scrabble.

AMANDA stares at the board, then, with her letters, she spells "LOTS."

AMANDA

I spelled LOTS, and I get... eight points.

SHELBY looks at her letters.

SHELBY

I don't know how to say this. But. I only have one X, two V's, one Z, and three C's.

AMANDA

Oh.

SHELBY

Yeah, I don't- I don't think I can spell anything with that-

Cox? AMANDA

Excuse me? SHELBY

Is cox a word? AMANDA

Uh, yeah, but I don't think I can spell that- SHELBY

What do you mean? AMANDA

I don't have a k, or an s- SHELBY

What would you need a k or an s for?? AMANDA

To spell cocks? SHELBY

C-O-X? AMANDA

...OH. SHELBY

Yeah?? AMANDA

I thought you meant- SHELBY

What?? AMANDA

SHELBY

Nothing. Don't worry about it.

AMANDA

(It slowly dawns on her.)

...OH YOU MEANT LIKE-

SHELBY

(Hushing her.)

Yes, yes I did.

AMANDA

No no no, I meant-

SHELBY

I see that now.

AMANDA

Well, no need to get snippy.

SHELBY

I'm not.

AMANDA

I was just- I didn't get it.

SHELBY

I know, I know.

AMANDA

You seem, like, upset.

SHELBY

I'm not upset, why would you think-?

AMANDA

You just sound upset, like, I upset you or something.

SHELBY

I'm not upset with you, Amanda, why would I be upset with you?

AMANDA

I don't know. I don't know, I just- I'm worried that I made a mistake.

SHELBY

What do you mean? You just mixed up cox with-

AMANDA

No. I mean- You're not having a good time, are you?

SHELBY

(Lying.)

What? Of course I am!

AMANDA

Shelby.

SHELBY

...No.

AMANDA

Yeah.

They stare at the board.

SHELBY

Have we really changed this much?

AMANDA

I haven't changed. At least, I don't think I have.

SHELBY

You have.

AMANDA

(A surprisingly bitter tone in her voice.)

That's not entirely my fault, though, is it? You changed and I changed with you. You left and I had to- I had to adapt, I guess.

SHELBY

I know. I'm sorry. *(Beat.)* Yeah, I'm sorry. For- for ditching you when we got to high school. And there's no way I can justify it or qualify it, cause, I mean, all I can say is that we started to have different interests, but that's not true. You always wanted to do stuff with me and I just decided I was too cool for you, and I made dancer friends and I abandoned you. But looking at you right now and having the image of you from elementary school in my mind, and knowing that the person I picture is my best friend and the person sitting right in front of me, that I'm looking at now, *isn't*... It hurts so much. It's like a- like a guilty nostalgia, if that makes sense? I hate that I screwed up the girl I grew up with. I hate that you changed because of what I did. You were fine before. You were *amazing* before. And I made you think you needed to change, or- *(She shakes her head.)* I'm sorry, I'm not really sure what to say to try and, like, explain myself. I want to hug you and apologize but that wouldn't make what I did any better or make what you went through any less painful, so I'm just sitting here, looking at you, and I'm- I'm really sorry. *(Beat. She looks at AMANDA and, determined, grabs her hand.)* I understand if your answer is no. Absolutely I do. But- can we give this a chance? Being best friends, I mean? I know I'm making a bigger deal than needs to be made of this, but-

AMANDA

Yeah. No, yeah, I- That's why I invited you here, I wanted- *(She beams and squeezes SHELBY's hand.)* I want to give it a chance.

SHELBY

(Smiling.)

Cool. Great.

AMANDA

Great.

They smile at each other, forgiveness exchanged between their interlocked hands.

SHELBY

Hey, uh, can I- can I get a drink from the-

AMANDA

Oh! Oh, yeah, yeah, here-

AMANDA pours a drink for SHELBY and for herself, then, all business, returns to the board.

AMANDA

So. Cox.

SHELBY

I'll just pull some more letters.

AMANDA

Great idea.

SHELBY reaches into the bag to pull out more letters and smiles at AMANDA. They're giving it a chance.

Blackout.