

Curtains

by

Amanda Sage Comerford

May 2017
311 Diamond Bridge Ave.
Hawthorne, NJ 07506
908.917.5141
amanda.sage.comerford@gmail.com

CHARACTERS

ZACH: 30s, married to Stella, and a first-time parent. Although he is normally a pretty steady and rational guy, he's not quite sure of his footing right now.

STELLA: 30s, married to Zach, and a first-time parent/stay-at-home mom. She does well managing day-to-day, but when she becomes overwhelmed, she's a bit jumpy and dramatic.

GOAT: a recording or offstage female voice for a toy

MAGGIE: a baby girl with the horror movie-esque bass voice of a man, off stage

NOTES

TIME: Evening.

SETTING: A shed in Stella and Zach's backyard.

It's evening in Stella and Zach's backyard. There's a shed with open doors. Maybe a wheelbarrow and a shovel or two. It's your standard backyard shed with windows. We hear commotion – crashes, come from the house. It sounds as if the house itself is being raped and pillaged. The commotion continues as Zach and Stella come running through the backyard. Stella has a canvas grocery bag over her shoulder, but we can't really see much. They burst through the doors of the shed. They are out of breath. They are frantic. They are fleeing.

It's dark.

ZACH

Oh my God, oh my God, oh my God, oh my God.

STELLA

God can't save you now.

ZACH

That was bad. That was really bad.

STELLA

I told you.

ZACH

I thought you were being dramatic.

STELLA

I wasn't.

ZACH

You're usually being dramatic!

STELLA

Well, I wasn't this time!

ZACH

Where the hell is the... Here.

He turns on a lantern and hangs it from a hook in the ceiling. It lights up the shed and we can finally see them.

ZACH
Ok.

STELLA
Shhhh.

ZACH
What? What is it?

STELLA
They'll hear you.

ZACH
They can't get to us back here.

STELLA
That's what you think and then, BAM.

ZACH
So, what are we going to do?

STELLA
What do you mean?

ZACH
We need a plan. Ideas.

STELLA
We stay here.

ZACH
That's not a plan.

STELLA
For the moment, yeah, it is.

CRASH. They duck, but nothing is coming for them.

ZACH
Ok, just for a minute. But we have to... Look around, we have to find something.

STELLA
Like what?

CRASH.

ZACH
Anything. We just... we need to think big.

STELLA
We need to get the hell outta dodge.

ZACH
We can't just leave.

STELLA
Do I need to remind you what happened in there?

ZACH
No.

STELLA
Or what's happening in there right now?

ZACH
No, but this is pathetic.

STELLA
I'd rather be pathetic than trapped under rubble so deep that only my little fingers are peeking out and no one can hear me scream.

CRASH. Zach keeps watch at one of the windows.

STELLA
Do you see anything?

ZACH
No. I don't know.

STELLA
Maybe they think we ran. We left town or something.

ZACH

What's with Monty and Boaty?

STELLA

I don't know, but those are not our Yorkies.

ZACH

They used to be.

STELLA

They used to have fuzzy muppet faces.

ZACH

They looked bigger. Did they get bigger?

STELLA

And scarier.

ZACH

They were never scary before.

STELLA

Well, they look different when they're not on your side.

CRASH.

ZACH

Ok. We can't just sit here. We have to... act.

STELLA

You know, this place isn't half bad.

ZACH

PEN! Yes, there's wood, some tools... I'll build a pen. That's what people do, right? They use pens like little traps. We can corral –

STELLA

You're talkin' time consuming labor. We don't have time for that.

ZACH

I'll go buy one. You can buy them. I'll just run out and –

STELLA

And leave me here? I don't think so.

ZACH

Then what? What do we do?

STELLA

We stay.

CRASH.

ZACH

Where?

STELLA

Here.

ZACH

C'mon.

STELLA

We make a life here. Right here. We don't have to go back. Let them have the house. Take anything they want.

ZACH

We're not abandoning our house and giving it to them. We just... we came out here for a quick breath of fresh air. We're going back in there.

STELLA

But this is perfect.

ZACH

All we need is an in.

STELLA

It's a safe place. A little slice of paradise.

ZACH

A shed.

STELLA

Oh, don't say it like that. It's not a *shed*. It's... it's a little house.

ZACH

It's not.

STELLA

There are windows and doors – double doors. Like French doors.

ZACH

Yeah, I feel real French and fancy right now.

STELLA

I can make curtains.

ZACH

Curtains.

STELLA

Curtains are important. They completely change the feel of a room.

ZACH

They'll match the shovels and wheelbarrow.

STELLA

I can make that happen.

ZACH

You're putting a lot of stock in a pair of curtains.

STELLA

And a bar cart. We'll get a bar cart. And a table. With chairs. Two chairs.

ZACH

And plumbing?

STELLA

You can put an extension onto the back and we can figure out plumbing.

CRASH. This crash is loud and extended. It sounds as if one of the wall from their house has completely caved in on itself.

ZACH

Ok. Keep talking.

STELLA

We can get one of those loft beds, you know, so that our living room / kitchen area is underneath to save space.

ZACH

We will IKEA the shit out of this place.

STELLA

We wanted an open concept floor design. We could have it.

ZACH

Wait. What about my computer?

STELLA

Well...

ZACH

We need internet and I NEED my computer. And my workspace. And then I'd need another shed to keep all my tools, so we'd have to build another – wait, stop – you're distracting me.

STELLA

I'm not.

ZACH

We don't need a new home. Our home is 10 feet that way.

STELLA

If it's still standing by morning.

ZACH

We have a bed, and a living room, and a kitchen – and – plumbing, which by the way, is already installed.

She fumbles through her bag.

STELLA

Yeah, but I have... look, I have applesauce and juice and, and, some crackers, and we can order a pizza and see if maybe the delivery guy will pick up a bottle of Whistle Pig on the way. You like Whistle Pig.

ZACH

I do like Whistle Pig.

STELLA

So you see? This can work.

ZACH

Yes!

STELLA

Yes!

ZACH

No, not you, "Yes!" I mean: "Yes! I have a plan." We can go in through the basement. You can fit through that window, right?

STELLA

I don't know.

ZACH

You can go through the basement. They don't know the lay of the house. We'll have the element of surprise on our side.

STELLA

But the Yorkies –

ZACH

They're with her. They won't be off on their own. Plus, it's been pretty quiet, right? I think they're quiet now.

STELLA

It's suicide.

ZACH

It's not. Just listen... see? Nothing. I think they fell asleep.

STELLA

They're playing you.

ZACH

No. No, this is it, Stella, this is our chance. We're going to run down the side. You'll climb through the window, unlock the door, let me in, then we'll move upstairs while it's quiet. Got it? Stella? Stella? STELLA!

STELLA
JUST LET ME THINK.

ZACH
About what? We have a plan.

STELLA
No, you have a plan. I have a little house. And I'm not going back in there.

ZACH
What?

STELLA
You heard me.

ZACH
But you have to.

STELLA
I don't.

ZACH
This family is not going down like this!

STELLA
Then you go back in there.

ZACH
You need to climb through the window.

STELLA
You need to wave the white flag, 'cause, baby, it's over.

ZACH
If we can't get past this hurdle, if we can't stand up to her now, then it's over. We're never going to be able to. We're never going to make it. Now, I need to know. Are you with me?

STELLA
No.

ZACH
C'MON.

NO. STELLA

STELLA. ZACH

STELLA
I can't. I can't go back in there. You don't get it. You act like you do, but you don't. I'm in the thick of it. All day. Every day. And you... you have no idea what that's like.

I do. ZACH

You don't. STELLA

ZACH
We are losing our window of opportunity here.

STELLA
Back off, man. I'm warning you. I'm not going back. I'm gonna break. I'm gonna break if I go back in there and you can't make me.

He takes a step towards her. She pulls what she believes is pepper spray out of her bag and holds it defensively (defiantly!) towards him, ready to spray. What she's actually holding is a toy goat.

GOAT
Bleat, bleat. I'm Gabby. I'm a gutsy goat.

ZACH
What the hell are you gonna do with that?

She still holds it out in front of her, in self-defense.

STELLA
I thought it was pepper spray.

ZACH

You were gonna spray me with pepper spray? That's so fucked up!

STELLA

I was gonna pretend to spray you with pepper spray!

ZACH

That's not any better!

STELLA

Oh, calm down.

ZACH

You calm down!

STELLA

You!

ZACH

Just put the goat down.

STELLA

No, I don't think I will.

ZACH

BABE. Babe. We both knew this day would come.

STELLA

Not like this.

ZACH

It was bound to happen.

STELLA

But we're not ready.

ZACH

There's no stopping it now.

STELLA

I'M not ready.

ZACH

It doesn't matter if you're ready or I'm ready or if the freakin' house is ready, we have to suck it up –

STELLA

No.

ZACH

We have to suck it up –

STELLA

We don't!

He grabs her by the shoulders.

ZACH

We have to suck it up and face the fact that... that our baby... that our little girl –

STELLA

Stop!

ZACH

That she's crawling, Stella. She's crawling. And there's nothing that we can do about it.

STELLA

No!

She sinks down and drops the goat.

GOAT

G is for Goat. Bleat, bleat.

He kneels down in front of her.

STELLA
(quietly)

She bit my records.

ZACH

What?

STELLA

My records. She bit them.

ZACH

The good ones?

STELLA

They're all good.

ZACH
(gently)

No, they're not.

STELLA

And she ripped all of the pages out of my favorite Albee. Who just died, you know, so... add salt to that wound.

ZACH

She doesn't know he died.

STELLA

We don't know that.

ZACH

No. But it has to get better, right? It's only been a week.

STELLA

It's been a day.

ZACH

Fuck, really?

STELLA

And the bookcases almost came crashing down. And the TV. She broke our wedding picture. And the dogs turned on me. They saw anarchy and liked it and they follow her now and.... I was just getting the hang of it. It was just starting to get easy and now it's hard again, harder than it was

before and I'm just not sure if I'm very good at this. And you leave and go to work and I'm here, with her, and no one to talk to and no time to do anything that I used to do – and I swear, sometimes, I can just feel the walls slowly moving in on me and when I do get to leave, just for a little bit, I walk back in and it's like someone is piling blankets on top of my head and I can't breathe. I'm trying so hard, but it's not enough. And I feel awful. I feel like the worst person to ever do this and it's not going to get better. This is the most important thing I'll ever do and I'm failing.

ZACH

You're not failing.

STELLA

I'm hiding in a shed.

ZACH

It's not a shed. It's a little house. With... shovels. And we'll figure it out. What else can we do? We love her.

STELLA

(sigh)

Yeah.

CRASH. They both flinch.

ZACH

Basement window?

STELLA

No. We're adults. We'll use the door.

ZACH

Ok. And if you want, you can put curtains in here. Hide out every once in a while.

STELLA

Thanks.

He grabs the lantern.

Are you ready? ZACH

No. STELLA

Now? ZACH

No. STELLA

Now? ZACH

Ok. STELLA

They take a breath.

She picks up the goat, brushes it off, and holds onto it. She grabs onto Zach, and together, they step out of the shed. They walk slowly, cautiously, à la Brad and Janet walking towards Dr. Frank-N-Furter's mansion, but without the singing. He puts the lantern down and reaches out for the door. The dogs bark. These are not Yorkies. These are ferocious hell beasts. He pulls his hand back, but recovers, and with a push we hear the dramatic long creak of the door opening. Light from inside shines on them.

We hear the slow, haunting, heavy sound of two hands clapping against the floor.

H-hello? ZACH

Baby? STELLA

Ma-ma. MAGGIE

They take a step through the doorway.

ZACH

Baby Maggie? Is that you?

MAGGIE

Da-da.

The door slams shut behind them and the lights go out. Lightning snaps.

CRASH.

END.