

WORKING TITLE: TORNADO

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A full-length play

By Elana Gartner

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## CAST

- MARIETTA:** Female. Ages mid-20's to mid-50's over the course of the play. She is the rock of the family but cannot attend to her own needs as easily. Attends church.
- LEO:** Male. Ages mid-20's to mid 50's over the course of the play. Kind, loving, doesn't always do the right thing but dedicated to his family. Attends church.
- SALLY\*:** Female. Ages 20's-30's during the play. Fun cousin of MARIETTA's who is also like her best friend. They have previously been roommates and grew up together.
- WINSTON:** Male. Aged 50's. MARIETTA and LEO's next door neighbor who is like an uncle to KELSEY. He works with LEO at the factory.
- KELSEY:** Female. Has cerebral palsy. Two versions of KELSEY. One is age 5 who is only seen in shadow. The second must be able to play between middle school and college age. It is required that both versions of KELSEY be played with authentic casting. While challenged by CP, she has all the markings of difficult struggles with her parents. Beloved by the town.
- EDEN:** Female. 50's. Singer, church attendee, social, volunteer. Friend of MARIETTA's.
- PAUL\*:** Male. Anywhere between 40's and 60's. A community member. He knows everyone and cares for everyone.
- FATHER DOYLE\*:** Male. Irish American. 70's or 80's. Quirky. Kind. Well-intentioned.

\*Doubles as pile workers when they are not in character.

Midwest America, Modern day.

Scene

*Darkness.*

*A moan is heard.*

*A dark yellowish gray light starts to illuminate from the back of the stage. The audience can see large hazy, awkward shapes, collapsed on one another. A large tree has clearly crashed, in addition, and can be seen, branches strewn everywhere. Several boards fall down, the last pieces of a dream home taking its last breath. Another moan. Shouting in the distance and running feet. A long beat. Another moan. Sudden silence. A shift in lighting. MARIETTA and LEO enter as a young couple. LEO has his hands over MARIETTA's eyes. She is giggling.*

MARIETTA

Leo! Leo! Where are we going?

LEO

(takes his hands off. MARIETTA looks around in astonishment)

What do you think?

MARIETTA

(overwhelmed)

How did you...what is this place?

LEO

It's...it's ours...if we want it.

MARIETTA

(turning to him)

Here? I thought we were just driving through.

LEO

What if we weren't?

MARIETTA

(turning around and looking at the house)

Leo...

LEO

If you don't love it, then the answer is no.

MARIETTA

How can we...how can we even afford this?

LEO

My grandfather's money is enough. Prices are a little cheaper here.

MARIETTA

I can't let you spend it all on this!

LEO

It has everything we want, Mare. A big kitchen, three bedrooms, two bathrooms, there's even two livingrooms...

MARIETTA

Two livingrooms? What do we need with two livingrooms?

LEO

(shrugs)

Maybe one is a dining room.

MARIETTA

A dining room? Like those fancy folks? We could be fancy!

(She jumps around the stage excitedly as she describes her thoughts. LEO watches with amusement)

Over here...over here...would be our livingroom where we watch TV or something. You know, playing with the dog.../

LEO

/...Are we getting a dog?

MARIETTA

I've always seen myself as having a dog. Don't you think?

LEO

Sure. We could have a dog.

MARIETTA

And then...on Sundays, after church, we go to the dining room...

(she gestures elsewhere)

...and have dinner with our friends in our proper clothes.

LEO

There you go. I haven't even shown you the best part yet.

MARIETTA

There's more?

(He steers her to look out at the audience)

LEO

Do you see out there? That's your greenhouse.

(MARIETTA gasps with delight and kisses him)

MARIETTA

Is there also somewhere for you to work on your woodworking?

LEO

I can build a place out back. Plenty of room. Lots of land. So. What do you think?

MARIETTA

(puts her arms around LEO's neck)

I think you're too good for me.

LEO

(smiling at her)

This is only what I told you I would do when we got married.

MARIETTA

I didn't think you'd find it out here.

(beat)

We'd have to move.

LEO

That's the idea.

MARIETTA

No, I mean.../

LEO

/...They'll be fine.

(beat)

The question is whether this is what you want.

(They hold each other momentarily, looking into each other's eyes as they consider the question. A loud shout from offstage. The lights shift back to the wreckage. WINSTON runs on and wildly assesses the damage)

WINSTON

No! No! No! Leo! Leo! Marietta!

(He starts to pull things off the wreckage, desperately. Other workers appear. They start helping WINSTON. In the chaos, a couch emerges. It is moved to DS, in front of the wreckage. MARIETTA lies on the couch in a robe, sleeping. A breath. The doorbell rings. LEO hurries onstage, trying to get to the door before MARIETTA wakes up. Opening the door, he sees SALLY. They have an emotional hug)

LEO

Thank you for coming.

SALLY

How are you doing?

(They start to bring in her many bags)

LEO

We don't know a lot. The doctors are still running all kinds of tests. They...they don't know if she's going to survive.

SALLY

She will. Be strong. We're all going to pray, right?

(LEO nods)

Where's Marietta?

LEO

She's taking a nap on the couch over there. I thought it best to leave her alone.

SALLY

Yeah. Good idea.

(beat)

Marietta said you were going to try to talk to your parents again last night?

LEO

They, um...they told me that we should just give up.

SALLY

What?

LEO

They said, even if she survived, she'd probably spend most of her life institutionalized, anyhow.

(Silence)

I didn't even know how to respond.

(Beat)

We don't have a lot of money, Sally.

MARIETTA

(waking up)

Leo? Who's at the door?

LEO

It's Sally, honey.

SALLY

(walking over to her and hugging her)

Hey, Etta.

(A long emotional hug)

MARIETTA

I'm glad you're here. Did you have any traffic?

SALLY

No, none.

MARIETTA

(looks at SALLY and hugs her again. She tries to hold in her tears)

I'm sorry. It's the hormones.

SALLY

Maybe the stress, too.

MARIETTA

(dabbing at her eyes, smiling)

Yeah, maybe. Oh, I'm really glad you're here.

SALLY

Good. Well. I better get going on settling in so I can make us some supper.

MARIETTA

My mom called this morning.