

HOLD MY HAND

by

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ACT [I]

(BEGINNING)

(INT: hotel room with a queen sized bed, made, a white and blue patterned blanket hides an off white sheet set. Two pillows rest at the top in the same fabric as the sheet. A bedside table stands to the right of bed holding a lamp, on, and a book - we can't see its title. The walls are a very faint blue, in a certain light you could forget it even holds a color. The start of an unpacked bag rests on the bed pulling down the blanket, clothes are placed inside, slightly haphazard. A man, DANIEL, stands at the bed folding and placing clothes next to the suitcase, creating stacks to later reorganize into a dresser. When speaking he occasionally looks off to his left towards an open framed door. Through the door sits a woman, JULIETT, roughly the same age, but she wears it better. She's getting ready for a night out. She's sitting in a front of a small vanity that sits between the bathroom and bedroom. She's facing slightly away from the audience so that we just catch her profile when she's speaking. Both are middle aged and well-dressed attractive. They wear a grounded sense on their face, but are to the point of comfortability in life.)

(Both move in very slow and deliberate ways, not mechanical, just as if they're living life, their speed is natural to someone

who's forgotten they have
somewhere to be.)

DANIEL

So check-in for the conference isn't until 6:00.
There're four hours to kill until then.

JULIETT

Why don't we just grab an early dinner. I'm tired of
food two minutes from an offramp.

DANIEL

Yeah...
Sam and Murray recommended a place right by here, what
the hell was it called.
i just talked to them...

*(He grabs a coat out of the suitcase
and stares at it for ~10 seconds.)*

DANIEL

How cold do you think it'll get tonight?

*(Daniel considers, then slowly hangs
the coat in the closet behind him and
continues to pull clothes out of the
suitcase and fold them)*

DANIEL

It started with an S...

JULIETT

I don't think I was there.

DANIEL

Sss... Shhhh... (quietly) shit

*(SH syllable repeats mechanically like
an echo. DANIEL glances up to the left
corner of the ceiling as he digs
through his head, trying to think of
the name.)*

Shorn?

JULIETT

(She lightly shakes her head and looks over at Daniel)
I'll just call Murray.

DANIEL

Remind him too, he's checking on the house tomorrow and watering everything. That third bedroom was trying to creep the other week.

DANIEL(Continued)

(straining) ¿Shore? Shoreline? Something beach-y maybe, I think it was a seafood place.

(JuliETT grabs the phone and turns away from Daniel. Dials and calls. She's lost in the conversation with Murray. Daniel continues unpacking clothes from the suitcase. Taking great consideration in what he's grabbing from the case and placing onto the bed. Both are silent for a time.)

Linger in this moment. The actions they take can sit for a while here,

Animations start to crackle, spindle lines. Nothing ever completely materializes from the actions of DANIEL and JULIETT. The animations are born from them, but they aren't a copy.

(JuliETT hangs up the phone)

DANIEL

What was the place?

JULIETT

He didn't say

(JuliETT seems detached.)

DANIEL

What do you mean?
You called him to ask.

JULIETT

I know,
he said Sam and him are talking about separating.

DANIEL

...shit

JULIETT

6 years.

He said he asked Sam to work on it, but he didn't want to go through that. All the effort to just come to the same conclusion. I don't get it.

DANIEL

Is there someone else?

JULIETT

I didn't ask.

DANIEL

I wonder what happened

JULIETT

They've seemed strange the last year..

DANIEL

Well. (Sigh) I wonder why Sam didn't say anything to me last week?

JULIETT

Has he ever been that way?

DANIEL

Yeah, (thinking pause) no, should I call and talk to him? I could also ask about that place.

JULIETT

Don't,

They're both dealing with a lot right now. The least of his worries are where we're eating.-- Let him reach out if he wants to.

DANIEL

I know, I know... So tomorrow the plan is just to meet with Mia in the morning and go from there.

JULIETT

Yeah, yeah that's fine.

(Pause. Both continue to work on what they're doing. Spinning off the conversation and thinking to

themselves. Daniel picks up cloths and places them on the bed,--. To him it makes sense to just get them out of the bag before worrying about where they go. Juliett stands and slowly floats to the other side of the room.)

DANIEL

what did your dad say when you talked to him earlier?

JULIETT

He's worried about us, about the state of the house, and what's left inside when we leave. What did we try and call it again?

...

to hold onto this trip, we've taken trips, but this one is somehow more than us visiting somewhere.

DANIEL

I don't think it helps him to worry about that.

Did he get the results back?

JULIETT

He said the doctor is supposed to call next week.

DANIEL

Well what's he going to do if he's not out of remission?

JULIETT

I don't know how to answer that...

DANIEL

...sorry for bringing it up.

JULIETT

Just... it's fine

DANIEL

Yeah, well, we've got to eat. Shhhhh...Ship. Ships.

(He pauses as he pulls the final piece of clothing from the bag and absentmindedly places all of the stacks back into the suitcase.)

DANIEL (Continued)

Shipyard? Ssssink

(Light subtle shifts into reds,)
I don't know what places are around here, but maybe it could be like a date night, go and find a new place.

(The air conditioner kicks off. The shades are drawn shut and the overhead light comes on. The bedside lamp farthest from our view is on. This is the light in the room. Daniel sits on the bed, Juliatt gets up and walks over to the suitcase. She begins looking for something. She overturns piece after piece of clothing slowly searching)

JULIETT

I just need to grab my contacts before we go.

DANIEL

Are you sure you packed it there? I didn't see it in the suitcase.

(Juliatt continues searching, digging through the suitcase.)

DANIEL(continued)

I think you might've left it at home

(Daniel looks from her to the luggage and back again. Juliatt willfully doesn't hear him and continues going through the suitcase)

DANIEL(continued)

I didn't see it when I checked through everything before we left. They're probably back in the drawer or in the bathroom back home.

(Juliatt is irritated, Daniel develops a grimaced smile, trying to be helpful)

DANIEL

We could...

JULIETT

[*pulling out luggage*] (annoyed, but not loud) God damnit! I know I put it in here. Is there a tear in the lining somewhere, the case could've slipped into it and we just can't see it.

DANIEL

Murray is checking on the house tomorrow, we can just have him look while he's there. Ship it overnight, if you did forget...

JULIETT

(*pointed, but not yelling*) I didn't fucking forget it!

DANIEL

I don't know why you get so defensive about this, it's not...

JULIETT

I just know that I packed them. I made a point to remember.

DANIEL

Maybe you're remembering it in the wrong order.

JULIETT

I packed them, besides Murray isn't going to check tomorrow.

DANIEL

What do you mean?

JULIETT

He's dealing with a lot, I just told him it was ok if he didn't make it to the house. It's not like we're gone for very long. We head back on Sunday.

(Daniel Shakes his head and drops his left arm to his side)

JULIETT

What else was I supposed to do?

DANIEL

Talk to me. Tell me what's happening.

JULIETT

Sometimes it's not that simple.

DANIEL

Why didn't we just pay someone to drop in on the house, like I suggested.

JULIETT

Because its unnecessary. It's only a few days, everyone is so worried about the house. It can be by itself for a few days. Whatever rooms shift by the time we get back can all be reset.

(Daniel looks around the room, he looks discontent as he pauses his gaze on the suitcase. Clothes are strewn about from Juliett's search.)

DANIEL

I hate these hotel rooms.

JULIETT

Well we've been together for a while. How could we possibly stay together for so long if we didn't get out sometimes. Do something different every once in while. Sit under an unfamiliar ceiling.

DANIEL

Is it actually different?

JULIETT

What does that mean?

DANIEL

We've been in this hotel room how many times.

(Juliett sits down on the bed)

JULIETT

Differences are always done in degrees. Everything tends to break, when you move quicker.

(Daniel blankly stares at her)

JULIETT (continued)

It's hard to figure this out when you're in the middle of it, though. Like asking someone down in a well, what they see to the west? They probably don't have a good answer.

I wonder though if it's just a case of finding the right question. Like what do I ask myself to find myself.

DANIEL

(Annoyed, but concerned) Babe?

JULIETT

Look at this! My hand! Do you see... This line here, it wasn't there last time. Or a minute ago. We're different ages moment to moment. It could be gone next time I look.

DANIEL

(Slightly less annoyed and slightly more concerned) I don't see...

JULIETT

And when I close my left eye, I see a field. There's a tree in the distance and under it someone's reading; by themselves and wholly content.-- Though I can't see that far and I can't hear her, I know she's humming. The same song I used to hear when I'd fall asleep.

DANIEL

Do you want a drink of water? Or...

(Juliett begins humming interrupting DANIEL, there's a sing-song nature to it.)

DANIEL

I'll grab a glass...

JULIETT

Shut up and listen

(Daniel glances around, earnestly trying to hear something. Pause for 20 seconds, Juliett is lightly humming and notes can be heard in the background. Like someone slowly playing a piano two rooms over.)

DANIEL

This trip is too much, we can just drive back tonight. The...

(color shifts from yellows to blues.)

JULIETT

I don't think so, we need to let this play out. I don't know what happens if we try to stop it too early. I'm falling asleep and I know who it is. I know who's under the tree.

DANIEL

I don't even know what time it is. We should've left hours ago, by the time we walk out of this hotel room, they're going to be done with the first panel discussion.

JULIETT

Do you remember when we met? Do you remember how long we've been together? What you were like before and how you've changed since then?

DANIEL

Early February, I remember it was cold, I wore jeans and a sswea...

JULIETT

I fell in love with you when I saw my mothers eyes staring back at me from your face. I knew you saw me like her. In that look I could feel the banister to the third floor where she kept a box of belongings from childhood. She'd go up there,

and live through looking. I'd sit in the frame of the stairway, watching everything she did. And when she finally noticed me, she looked at me as though I was that box. Like she could pack every wisp of past into me and I'd somehow make everything...

DANIEL

I love you...

JULIETT

She's standing now, (pause) the woman under the tree. And she's looking toward me. Not humming. The song ended a few minutes ago, I just didn't notice.

End