

the cable.

by Katie Hileman, directed by Katie Hileman

Characters

A

B

I leave it up to the directors and the actors to decide who plays A and who plays B. Gender should not make a difference. Please forgive all of the missing punctuation/grammar correctness in general. This is very stream of consciousness. Feel free to alter punctuation as necessary, but don't be afraid of pauses/silences. If an actual jumper cable doesn't work, feel free to work with some type of rope with clips suggesting a jumper cable, it could be as simple as a piece of string - all that is important is that the two actors are physically connected by something.

*Lights up. Two actors standing facing downstage. They are connected by jumper cables. Depending on how long the cables are, they should be standing far enough apart that the cable is taught. There is definite energy happening between them, it should be palpable in the room. This silent build should go on for awhile... like 30 seconds if you can.*

A

*(with a jolt)*

It's like sometimes I can't breathe. Like sometimes it all just gets to be too much like I look at you and all of a sudden my breath gets stuck somewhere in my throat and its like I can't get enough oxygen like I'm drowning and all I have is that knot right at the top of my stomach and I try to catch my breath I try to catch my breath I keep trying to catch my breath but I can't catch it. It's gone.

It's like I just can't look at you because you'll know. You'll look at me and you'll know and I can't I can't do that not right now it's not the right time but I want you to know I do I can feel my face burn I can feel my lungs burn i can feel my body burn and its too much too much all of this is too much make it stop make it stop

I want to know you I want to know more I can't get enough. I am not enough.

I am plain and boring and have no stories to tell. I am jealous and unusual and pointed, but quiet. I look at you and I try to tell you things. I need to tell you things. I need you to know I need to know you I need to hear you I need to feel you.

I need you to tell me its going to be okay. It's going to be okay. It's going to be okay. It has to be okay I have to be okay. I am not spiraling. You have me. It's alright.

It's alright.

B

*(with a jolt)*

I can feel you looking at me. You looking at me. I am aware. I can feel your eyes on me. I can feel the fire getting hot and the air getting heavy. You are stealing all the air. you do that. I blame you for that. I know it's my fault though.

I am tall and awkward and think too much about the past. I hold it against you. Always.

I didn't want this to happen. I didn't want to see you like this. I am a mess and too many thoughts and not enough words. I am not good at explaining. I never have been. I don't want to explain. I don't want to have to explain. I have to. you have to hear it.

I feel my heart twinge and my fingers tingle and I touch your hair. I love your hair.

I try to breathe but there is no air. You are stealing all the air. You do that. I am trying to be present. To not fade away. I want to melt into a puddle but I can't because you are here and I am looking at you and I have to tell you.

I have to tell you

A

You are standing at the top of the stairs at that horrible, sloppy party. I am bored and drunk and I look up and I see you. You're so cool. Just so quietly cool and in control. I had never seen anything like it. I'm wasted and sweaty and we lock eyes and I smile and I know that's it. I'm done. This will certainly kill me. That smile. I look away because I can't look at you. We can't make eye contact again. or else that's it. I'm done.

and sure enough I look back.

B

It's Christmas and we are at my mom's. I hate Christmas. It makes me sad. It's like all of my bad childhood memories rolled into one horrible day. I wanted you to see it. I wanted you to get scared. I wanted you to understand. I wanted to reach over and hold your hand. I wanted to feel you there to know someone was there. But I can't feel you. You are gone. You aren't there. You weren't there. I needed you and you disappeared. I couldn't feel our connection. I panicked. I overreacted. I made a mistake that day.

I want things to be okay.

*A and B turn to face each other now if they have not already.*

B

I have to tell you you need to know.

A

I don't want to hear it don't tell me

B

I have to tell you you need to know

A

I have to tell you you need to know

B

I don't want to hear it don't tell me

A and B

I'm going to tell you.

A and B

Don't.

*There is a moment. Then they unclip themselves and throw the cable(s) to the floor.*

A

This is your fault

B

This is your fault

A

You wanted this to happen

B

You wanted this to happen

A

What are you talking about

B

It was too easy

A

Don't say that

B

It's true

A  
Don't say that

B  
I didn't want it to be true. I don't want it to be true.

A  
I have to tell you

B and A  
I love you

*Pause*

B and A  
I'm sorry.

*Pause*

B and A  
Goodbye.

*B and A regard each other and then regard the cable on the ground. They don't know if they want to pick it back up. They decide to and then slowly roll up the cable together and put it down. Then. They stand with the rolled up cable between them. They are meeting for the first time.*

B  
*(with a jolt)*  
Hey

A  
*(with a jolt)*  
Hi

B  
How are you

A  
I'm okay how are you.

B  
Good. I'm good.

A  
Cool.

B  
Yeah.

A  
Yeah.

*There is a long silence.*

B  
You look familiar

A  
We met before... at a party.

B  
Oh yeah!

A  
Yeah. That party was dumb.

B  
What? Why do you say that?

A  
It was hot and there wasn't enough beer.

B  
Yeah I guess you're right.

*They look at each other.*

A  
Can I help you with something, or ?

B  
Oh, sorry, yeah, ha, I noticed you were having some trouble..

A  
Oh, yeah. My my shit sucks. It's okay though.

B

Well did you need help? I have some cables here we could use.

*A looks at B. Then at the cables.*

A

Sure, yeah, I guess

B

Yeah?

A

Yeah, okay, thanks

B

Yeah no problem

*They reach down and grab their respective end of the cord., they don't walk away yet though. They regard the cable, and then look at one another.*

B

So what were you doing out here alone?

A

I'm usually alone.

B

That's a shame.

A

Why do you say that?

B

No one should have to be alone.

A

Ha, where'd you hear that?

B

It's a fact.

A

Oh yeah?

B  
Yeah.

A  
Eh I prefer it... it's quiet. I feel like when I'm with someone there's too much noise in my head.  
Too much electricity. Makes me crazy.

B  
Yeah I guess I get a little crazy sometimes... but isn't that part of it? The noise? The electricity?

A  
It's too much.

B  
It's only too much when someone gets hurt.

*They look at each other and walk to their former spaces on the stage.*

B  
I hope this helps.

A  
More than you know.

*Pause. They look down at the cable.*

B  
I can't make you any promises

A  
What?

B  
I can't make you any promises.

A  
What are you talking about?

B  
About this working. It's going to be hard.

*(a moment)*

A  
I know.

B  
I'm going to hurt you

A  
I know.

B  
I'm going to make you feel bad.

A  
I know.

B  
I won't want to make you feel bad. But it will happen.

A  
I know.

B  
You will be jealous and take me for granted.

A  
I will.

B  
You won't want to, but it will happen.

A  
I don't want it to happen

B  
Yes, yes you do

A  
I need to know you're there. That you're not going to disconnect.

B  
It will happen.

A  
Yes

B  
But, I'm here.

A  
I'm here.

B  
...So?

A  
I can't breathe. There's not enough air.

*Pause.*

A  
I'm scared

B  
I'm scared

A and B  
Okay

*A breath. Then. They reconnect onto the cord. There is a jump in electricity. Things are on hyperdrive. The next two lines are to be spoken over each other.*

A  
*(with a big jolt)*  
I can feel you looking at me. You looking at me. I am aware. I can feel your eyes on me. I can feel the fire getting hot and the air getting heavy. You are stealing all the air. you do that. I blame you for that. I know it's my fault though. I didn't want this to happen. I didn't want to see you like this.

B  
*(with a big jolt)*  
It's like sometimes I can't breathe. Like sometimes it all just gets to be too much like I look at you and all of a sudden my breath gets stuck somewhere in my throat and its like I can't get enough oxygen like I'm drowning and all I have is that knot right at the top of my stomach and I try to catch my breath I try to catch my breath I keep trying to catch my breath but I can't catch it. It's gone.

*Silence. Some breaths.*

A and B  
But I'm here.

A and B  
I've got you.

*A and B turn to face the audience, like at the top of show. They reach out and grab the cable.*

*The silence builds.*

*Blackout.*