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THE NIGHT BEFORE BASIC

Monologues / Drama / 2 min

Cast 1 Female x1

Lena's older brother leaves for basic training at dawn. She sneaks into his half-packed bedroom to say the thing she has been avoiding all summer. A fight in June is standing in her way.

CHARACTERS

LENA - 16 to 17, a sharp, funny kid who deflects with jokes and is out of jokes tonight

SETTING

Her older brother's bedroom in a suburban house, just after midnight, the night before he ships out.

A teenage boy's bedroom at night. A packed duffel bag sits by the door. The bed is stripped down to the mattress. LENA, 16, stands in the doorway in pajamas, then steps in.

LENA

Okay. You're asleep on the couch, so this is the only way I'm gonna get through it. Don't wake up.

She sits on the edge of the mattress.

Mom said the bus is at five-thirty. She said it like it was a dentist appointment. "The bus is at five-thirty, Lena, set an alarm." Like you're going to the dentist for nine weeks.

I found your hoodie in the dryer. The gray one. I'm keeping it. That's not a question, I'm just telling you so you don't text me from wherever asking where it is. You won't have your phone anyway. They take your phone. I looked it up. They take your phone and they cut your hair and they yell at you and you're not allowed to yell back, and you, Danny, you are the worst person on

earth at not yelling back.

(a laugh that doesn't hold)

You're gonna be so bad at this.

She picks at the mattress.

I wanna say something and I keep not saying it. I've had all summer. I had all summer and I just kept making it a joke. So.

The fight. In June. In the kitchen. When you told Mom about the recruiter and I said the thing. About Dad. That you were doing exactly what he did, just with a uniform. Leaving and calling it a reason.

You signed the papers eight days later. I counted.

(quieter)

And I've been telling myself that's not why. That you'd already decided. That it's stupid to think one thing I said in the kitchen could...

But if it was. If it was even ten percent why. I need you to know I didn't mean it. Not the way it came out.

She stands. She can't sit still for this part.

'Cause here's the thing I never said. Ever. In my whole life. When he left, you were fourteen. And you sat on the floor of my room every night for like a month 'cause I couldn't sleep with the door closed. You didn't say anything. You just sat there doing your math homework on my carpet till I passed out.

You're not like him. You're the one who stayed. You stayed so hard I forgot somebody had to.

(beat)

So go. Go be terrible at not yelling. And
come back.

*She takes the pillow off the bed, hugs it to her
chest, and heads for the door. Stops.*

Five-thirty. I'll set the alarm.

END OF SCRIPT