

Colby Conner
Theater for Social Change
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Something in the Water

Characters:

Eric Ross: A 2nd year college student at Bethel University who came home to Hartsville on his winter break.

Elinor Ross: Eric's older sister in her mid 20s who works just outside of Hartsville at Universal Music Group Nashville.

Receptionist

Andrew Tarkin: A 2nd year college student at Miami University who lives in Hartsville.

Nurse

Setting:

Scene 1: Takes place at a doctor's office. Stage Right is the entrance to the office and the sitting area to the office with 6 chairs aligned along Upstage. 5 of the 6 chairs are occupied by patients waiting for their appointment. Center Stage is where the patient check-in is located. Stage Left is a hallway that leads to an examination room.

(Coughing is heard in the background. Distinct chatter. Lights gradually fade on. Eric and Elinor enter stage right and walk up to the register to check in.)

Eric: Woah, everyone's packed in here like there's a plague going around.

Elinor: *(stuttering)* It's um... just... flu season.

Eric: Um okay... *(gives Elinor a confused look)*

Elinor: You look tired, you should take that seat if you don't want to stand around until I get out. *(points to the only empty seat in the room)*

Eric: Yeah sure. *(takes the seat)*

Elinor: Hi, I have an appointment for 1:30.

Receptionist: Name?

Elinor: Elinor Ross.

Receptionist: Date of Birth?

Eric: July 17th, 1991.

Receptionist: Thank you, please have a seat until we call your name... Actually it appears that the doctor is ready for you now. Please follow the nurse down the hallway.

Elinor: Thanks *(to Eric)* it shouldn't be too long. I know you're probably anxious to get out of here. *(walks down hallway with Nurse who just entered stage left)*

(Andrew turns his head when he hears the name)

Andrew: *(looking surprised to see him)* Hey it's Hollister!

Eric: Hey...

Andrew: You don't remember me, do you?

Eric: Sort of? Sorry, you look so familiar but I can't place the name to the face. If you called me Hollister, we definitely went to high school together.

Andrew: Yeah junior and senior year! It's Andrew. You're on break?

Eric: Oh right, JV LAX! Yeah, I just got back last night. I go to BU.

Andrew: Boston University? My brother goes there! You should-

Eric: Oh I meant Bethel University in Minnesota.

Andrew: I go to Miami University.

Eric: Oh, University of Miami? How's the weather down there?

Andrew: No, Miami University. It's in Oxford... Ohio, not England. *(Looks at Eric twiddling his thumbs)*. Hey, I know it's scary but don't worry too much, I'm sure you're better off than the rest of us.

Eric: I'm just here with my sis. She's getting some kind of test, she said it wasn't a big deal or anything. What do you mean?

Andrew: A test? At this time? At this doctor? It's definitely a big deal, at least locally. Probably hasn't gotten national coverage. It's about the ash in the water. You go to school in Minnesota and just got back so you haven't been drinking it as often as we have.

Eric: There's something in the water? That must be why everyone's here and why my sis was acting strange earlier.

Andrew: You haven't heard? I guess that makes sense, Hartsville is a small town but you live here. But maybe your family didn't want you to worry about them. The Fossil Plant has been practically dumping waste in the river.

Eric: I guess, I wish they wouldn't. I'm 21, not a child. Wait...the Cumberland? That goes through so many towns like ours.

Andrew: Right? My friend in Carthage started vomiting blood and having strong stomach cramps and had to be hospitalized for a while. I come home some weekends so there's a chance I could've gotten exposed to it.

Eric: Is that why you're here? To get a test to see if you're showing any symptoms.

Andrew: Actually, I already took a couple of tests. I'm getting the results. They won't tell you anything over the phone so they make you come in for everything even if it's nothing major... Hey your sister looks fine, I wouldn't worry too much unless she starts showing physical symptoms.

Eric: I just can't believe that I had no idea this was happening. Is anyone doing anything about it?

Andrew: We've tried. There've been a couple of lawsuits since the contamination with metals exceeds state health standards but they've all been dismissed. (*looks annoyed and frustrated*) I remember that bullshit excuse, "all seepage from the coal ash ponds is legally permitted by the state". And then the director of civil projects refuses to acknowledge any harm done when it's so blatantly obvious!

Eric: They're supposed to have our best interests at hand, I just don't understand, all of us are being affected.

Andrew: Some people can afford to get their water elsewhere, I guess. Nevertheless, they could at least pretend to give a shit.

Eric: Do you think that-

(*Nurse enters stage left and walks center stage to the receptionist desk.*)

Nurse: ANDREW TARKIN.

Andrew: Well, that's me. *(Starts to walk off with the nurse.)* Hey let's catch up later, there's a lot more you'll wanna hear about.

Eric: Hey, I hope everything goes well.

Andrew: Thanks, and I'll wait for your sis to get out of her appointment. Mine shouldn't take long... hopefully. *(Walks to the Nurse stage left who takes him to the office.)*

Eric: Sounds like a plan. Good luck, man. *(Sounds of coughing intensifies and lights fade out)*