

**Hannah and the Archaeologist
and the Deep Sea Diver
and the Helicopterist
Recall the Instance in Which
Hannah Repaired the Roof**

by Lauren D'Errico

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Characters:

Hannah

Cassie

Charley

Archaeologist

Deep Sea Diver

Helicopterist

The above characters have been written to be played female or non cis-male identifying actors.

Note:

A slash “/” indicates an interruption in dialogue.

SCENE:

The façade of a 7-Eleven convenience store.

The building is wrapped around with a porch almost, but not really — there is a step to get up through the front door. It feels like there would only be a few cars in the parking lot, the owner's and maybe one customer that does their midafternoon grocery shopping at the local 7-Eleven.

In the porch area, Cassie and Hannah and Charley stand around drinking Slurpees and staring at nothing in particular, a tableau of youngish high schoolers ditching class in the middle of the school day.

But they aren't high schoolers — they are older than that, not significantly, but still, not children.

They stand there.

They slurp.

They stand there and slurp and it goes on for longer than what feels comfortably natural. It goes on until whoever finishes finishes first, when the empty-cup-slurping sound begins.

CHARLEY:

Can you believe how much time we used to spend right here.

HANNAH:

Seriously.

CASSIE:

And how many of these things we drank. They're kind of disgusting.

HANNAH:

What flavor did you get.

CASSIE:

Banana mixed with. Coke.

HANNAH:

That sounds so terrible.

CHARLEY:

That was your classic!

CASSIE:

I know! That's why I got it. I had to get it. I could still feel it in my mouth, even though I think the last time I've had a Slurpee was. Ten years ago.

HANNAH:

Ten years—

CASSIE:

But the way I thought it would taste was. This just tastes like a brown crayon.

CHARLEY:

What does that even mean.

CASSIE:

Like. The light brown crayon. Like. But back then I remember craving this. This exact combination. I remember once they had Coke and they had pina colada. And I tried it. And it just wasn't the same.

Whoever downed the Slurpee first tosses it towards the trash can — the toss elicits some kind of response, whether it goes in or not.

CHARLEY:

Yeah, I remember. I think I tried some of it. It was like. So sweet.

CASSIE:

So sweet. Didn't you try it too Hannah.

They turn to her for her contribution — but she's got nothing. A shift between them, the sinking silence. And Charley gets it firmly back on track.

CHARLEY:

Have you ever thought about how much money we spent on Slurpees. Even just the small ones. It adds up. Imagine all those dollar bills.

CASSIE:

And the chips too.

CHARLEY:

And the candy.

CASSIE:

I could probably like. Buy a car now.

HANNAH:

I wish I could like. Go back in time and tell myself to just. Relax then. Maybe skip the Slurpees for a week. Maybe just hold onto that money for the me of the future.

CHARLEY:

Right. Right.

CASSIE:

It's so weird to be here again —

CHARLEY:

It really has been ten years. Hasn't it.

HANNAH:

I think so.

CHARLEY:

Really.

HANNAH:

How are you guys. How have things been since like. High school.

CASSIE:

Okay. I'm. Okay.

CHARLEY:

Things are the same.

HANNAH:

Yeah.

CASSIE:

Me too.

HANNAH:

Yeah. You still work.

CASSIE:

Yeah I do.

CHARLEY:

Are things.

CASSIE:
Uh huh.

CHARLEY:
I feel like I haven't seen either of you in. Forever.

CASSIE:
It's so weird to just. Stand here. It's like. I can feel the imprints of standing here years ago but. My body doesn't fit right anymore.

CHARLEY:
Yeah I know exactly what you mean. Exactly.

HANNAH:
Wouldn't other kids be here around now? Maybe it's just. Not cool anymore.

CHARLEY:
Yeah maybe.

*Long silence. Too long. They have nothing to say —
is it because they all have nothing going on or
because they really have nothing to talk about what
each other?*

CHARLEY:
Oh my god. Do you guys remember when in like. Eighth grade we each got one of those. Huge bags of chips and we carried it all up the hill over there. Up to Sunset Park.

CASSIE:
We ate it all in like. Forty five seconds I swear.

CHARLEY:
(to Hannah)
Do you remember that day?

HANNAH:
(she doesn't)
Yeah. Sure. I do.

CASSIE:
Do you remember that time in Spanish class when Kyle threw all his pencil into the ceiling at once?

HANNAH:
I haven't thought about him in. Like —

CHARLEY:
Do you remember when he asked me to the movies with him?

CASSIE:
And you went / but the projection was broken.

CHARLEY:
But the projection was broken and we got pizza instead.

This two of them quickly embody the whole snowball thing of catching up with someone that you used to really spend a lot of time with.

And Hannah remembers none of this. She tries to cover, badly.

CASSIE:
Do you remember the eighth grade formal?

CHARLEY:
Do you remember the day that Alexis almost choked in the middle of that math test?

Charley and Cassie rapid-fire even faster, in a way that feels unbelievable, or at least unreal — they forget that Hannah is even there.

When Hannah speaks, she addresses the audience. With each line time gets a little more funky, the air gets a little heavier.

CASSIE:
Do you remember when we would have a sleepover every Friday night?

CHARLEY:
Do you remember when we all snuck out and walked to the river?

HANNAH:
I can't
I don't
I really want to but there is only just
Empty space

CASSIE:

When we spent the whole day on the beach / and then fell asleep on the sand?

CHARLEY:

When we stayed up for three nights straight just to see if we could?

HANNAH:

Empty space that's filled with
Things that I can almost
And sounds that I can almost
I should be able to but I

CASSIE:

When it was four in the morning and we laughed so hard that we all started crying at once
for no reason?

CHARLEY:

When we didn't trick or treat that year because it snowed and by the time the next
Halloween came we were too old?

HANNAH:

Can't recall everything with the same amount of
Or any amount of
I should be able to
I don't

CASSIE:

When we were all in the school musical together and we learned every word?

CHARLEY:

When I let Angela cut off my hair?

HANNAH:

I don't think I have a problem
But maybe I do have one
Because I think I should be able to
And everyone else can

CASSIE:

When we walked all the way downtown and back again just to see if we could?

CHARLEY:

When we spent every weekend together?

HANNAH:

Down to the last

Maybe I do have a memory problem
Because I should be able to remember without a problem
Because it shouldn't be a problem of
Scrambling and

CASSIE

When we / celebrated Christmas for the first time?

CHARLEY:

When we tried to do a Secret Santa?

HANNAH:

Thinking too hard and
Really making things up to stand in
Filling in when people are saying

CASSIE:

When we all knew the / secret by the end of the night?

CHARLEY:

When we kept a journal of our summers?

HANNAH:

Do you remember?
Thinking too hard and then they already fill in the memory
And then it isn't a problem anymore

CASSIE:

When we took photos of everything?

CHARLEY:

When we lost the camera before we / could develop them?

CASSIE:

When we met?

HANNAH:

But it's a problem when it's things that I need to remember
Formative things, or
Funny things, or
Important things, or
Not things like
I can't even remember the simplest things without really working hard
I should be able to remember the simple things without working hard

CHARLEY:
Do you remember the roof?

HANNAH:
Like that.

CASSIE:
Working on the crew?

CHARLEY:
Working on the roof?

HANNAH:
A simple thing
Being up on the roof
The roof

CASSIE:
Repairing the roof?

HANNAH:
Why can't I just remember that
The roof

The stage becomes:

*The intersection of an archaeological dig,
a deep sea dive,
a helicopter in transit.*

*Covered in dust,
obscured by the tide,
hundreds of miles above.*

Everything else is nowhere to be found anymore.

*Three women on the stage, a considerable distance
between them.*

*(They are different than Hannah and Cassie and
Charley)*

They face the audience.

ARCHAEOLOGIST:
I am going to remember

*She is exactly what you'd imagine an archaeologist
would look like:
loose fitting shirt,
shorts that are rolled up a few too many times,
closed toe shoes and thick socks,
a sunhat with the floppy brim.*

DEEP SEA DIVER:
I am going to remember

*She is exactly what you'd imagine a deep sea diver
to look like:
the thick suit, such a huge and cumbersome-looking
suit,
the bungee connecting her up to the above-water-
world,
the helmet next to her at her feet.*

HELICOPTERIST:
I am going to remember

*She is exactly what you'd imagine a helicopterist to
look like:
a jumpsuit (one thick enough to withstand the
elements of helicopter flight),
a pair of boots,
a helmet with a headset.*

ARCHAEOLOGIST:
I am an archaeologist but

DEEP SEA DIVER:
A deep sea diver but

HELICOPTERIST:
Helicopterist but

Hannah returns to the stage.

She observes.

ARCHAEOLOGIST:
Really just someone trying to remember

DEEP SEA DIVER:

This way

HELICOPTERIST:

In the way that I know how

ARCHAEOLOGIST:

To do the work to

DEEP SEA DIVER:

Figure things out

HELICOPTERIST:

No

ARCHAEOLOGIST:

Waking up one morning

DEEP SEA DIVER:

And climbing up a ladder

ARCHAEOLOGIST:

This is about how to

DEEP SEA DIVER:

Processing a memory and

HELICOPTERIST:

Remembering

ARCHAEOLOGIST:

I remember

DEEP SEA DIVER:

I remember

HELICOPTERIST:

I remember

They all set off on their remembering, telling the story in the way that they know how, which is the only way, and the way that is correct.

Slowly at first, then faster:

DEEP SEA DIVER:

The day I am on the crew that works on the roof
One of the houses in the neighborhood

ARCHAEOLOGIST:

I remember that the sky was still completely dark,
or it was almost fully bright already.

DEEP SEA DIVER:

I am one of the first people to arrive
I show up early in the morning

ARCHAEOLOGIST:

It was morning but it felt like night,
or it was not that early but early enough that it was a surprise that that the sky would be
so blue already, so full of blue, full of sun and clouds and morning sounds.

HELICOPTERIST:

All blue
All blue with streaks of something else
Something brighter and something
Orange yellow white

DEEP SEA DIVER:

I don't see anyone at first

HELICOPTERIST:

Blinding light
Neither night nor day but
Both too light and dark
End of night and start of
Morning

DEEP SEA DIVER:

I think I'm alone

ARCHAEOLOGIST:

I remember the sky was so dark when I was standing underneath it when I showed up
when no one else did,
or looking up at the blue and thinking about how blue and huge it was, that sky, when the
others began to show up.

DEEP SEA DIVER:

I'm not really alone
I'm not really alone

ARCHAEOLOGIST:

I wore a thick jacket shrugged off of my shoulders and boots that didn't fit quite right, or it was a little too tight and my boots were too and they both fit me like a costume, not quite right.

DEEP SEA DIVER:

I wear a jacket made of a thick material and clunky boots

HELICOPTERIST:

Arch of blue wakes up and stretches out on top
Over and over and through the
Dark blue into light blue
Over the top and over me too

ARCHAEOLOGIST:

I remember standing there alone and looking up the side of the house and thinking the roof was much farther up than I thought it would be,
or I remember thinking that it wasn't really so tall at all.

DEEP SEA DIVER:

I am on of the first people to climb the ladder

HELICOPTERIST:

I am tiny underneath when all either touches me or feels me
Feels far away
Or touches me and goes far away
I am all-alone but it's also there

ARCHAEOLOGIST:

Maybe it was something in the light but the walls were extra tall,
or maybe it was almost as if I could see the top already.
Maybe it was especially tall,
or maybe it would not exacerbate my fear of heights so much that it would be troubling.

HELICOPTERIST:

So I'm not alone I'm really
Paired and waiting for something to happen something else
That some thing that one thing
My eyes will open to see to completion
Ascend from below to above
Make the repair
Fix that and then it will be done and fixed

DEEP SEA DIVER:

Up the side of the house to the roof

ARCHAEOLOGIST:

And it was just that moment that I remember at the same time feeling a chill,
or the sun came out from behind a cloud and hit me with heat,
or the sun just began to poke up from below the horizon,
or the sun was fully settled into the sky,
or the sky began to get brighter and brighter blue,
or I started to sweat.

DEEP SEA DIVER:

I ascend the ladder towards the last step

HELICOPTERIST:

I wait for someone else to arrive

Anyone else

Anyone else other than all of what is already there underneath

Feels like forever

I wait for what feels like forever

Or one hundred lives

or twenty seven seconds

or enough time for the species of organisms underfoot to start a new generation

DEEP SEA DIVER:

and I reach the last step

ARCHAEOLOGIST:

And so I found the wooden ladder leaned up against the side of the house,
or the ladder was a shiny silver one unfolded into a V in the front.

A wooden ladder

A metal ladder

Brown wood leaned up on brown house

Silver ladder like walking up stairs

DEEP SEA DIVER:

I climb onto the roof

ARCHAEOLOGIST:

And then I feel a shift in the light

Time has passed for sure

Indeed for sure passed and more than what should I have passed and

I move myself up

DEEP SEA DIVER:

I stand up straight

HELICOPTERIST:

And I go up one move at a time

And all that there is suddenly are
These steps
Just me
These steps
Flexing leg into foot to make these steps

ARCHAEOLOGIST:
Almost looked like it wouldn't hold me up
With a support in the middle
Wouldn't get me up there
The rest of the crew climbed up and I could still hear their voices

DEEP SEA DIVER:
I look at the sky

ARCHAEOLOGIST:
I put my first foot on the first rung
The first stair
I could feel the shape of the rung under my boot
I quickly stepped up on each stair

HELICOPTERIST:
And above me disappears and below me disappears
When they reappear again together back together they are something else
Blended together sky and ground clouds clumps of dirt so thick they should be mud
If it was not so inconceivably dry
Like clouds so plump they should burst with rain
But they don't
But they stay suspended

ARCHAEOLOGIST:
One step and then another one, another one, another one
One step after another after another after another
Hand and foot and hand and foot
Step one step the other step one step the other

HELICOPTERIST:
One step
Another step
One at a time no other way but one at a time
One step to leave below behind and go above
A few more steps and then up further up farther up all the way up and

DEEP SEA DIVER:
I look at the sky

HELICOPTERIST:

Then there there up high there higher up on some plain taller than me
Taller than me but can support me
Can support me but needs my assistance too to support too
And I am standing up there and I
Am looking up at the sky and nothing else

ARCHAEOLOGIST:

When I got to the top
When I got to the top

DEEP SEA DIVER:

I am given my assignment and
I help to repair the roof for as long as it takes to be done
I mean

*One continuous monologue for all three of them,
whoever picking up whatever, one or two or three of
them on each (but choreographed so that it doesn't
seem like they are all rushing to say the next word
first):*

Because it is all I can see up up above and I am standing there and all of the colors are beginning to swirl together like things that do not belong together but want to connect together anyway inky blue into lighter into orange into yellow into blinding white sky blinding light empty and full and then the sky consumes me in full it is eating me up and I was inside of it and it was all around me and inside of me too when I opened my mouth and allowed it to be I haven't felt anything else that way specific before I mean I remember the day I am on the crew that works on the roof I remember one of the houses in the neighborhood I remember I am one of the first people to arrive I remember I show up early in the morning I remember I don't see anyone at first I remember I think I'm alone I remember I'm not really alone I remember I wear a jacket made of a thick material and clunky boots I remember I'm not really alone I remember I am one of the first people to climb the ladder I remember up the side of the house to the roof I remember I ascend the ladder and I reach the last step I remember I climb onto the roof I remember I stand up straight I remember looking at the sky I remember I am given my assignment and I remember I help to repair the roof for as long as it takes to be done I remember that I remember that I remember it exactly like that I remember or it it was or it would be I remember up when or looking when I wore a right or it not quite right I remember the roof or I remember maybe it or maybe it maybe it or maybe it troubling and it or the or the or the or the and so I found the or the ladder a wooden ladder a metal ladder almost looked with a wouldn't the rest I put the first I could feel I quickly one step one step hand and foot step one step next step next step next step one step next step next

HELICOPTERIST:
I remember things exactly that way

DEEP SEA DIVER:
Things exactly that way

ARCHAEOLOGIST:
Exactly that way

*They stop speaking,
but continue to remember.*

*The archaeologist invites the deep sea diver and the
helicopterist into the dirt-covered space.*

HANNAH:
I've always had a terrible memory

*As the archaeologist speaks she shifts through pans
of dirt — the helicopterist and the deep sea diver
also try to pan the dirt, too.*

*Where the action seems natural for the
archaeologist, it is just as stilted for the others.*

*Hannah approaches. She pans the dirt too, close to
the archaeologist, mimicking her movements.*

HANNAH:
I think it would be fun to be archaeologist
I like being outside
I like to dig a hole in the sand when I go to the beach
I like the sun

ARCHAEOLOGIST:
Do you know anything about archaeology?

HANNAH:
I don't
And I don't know about history
That kind of stuff doesn't
Stick
And I don't know what archaeologists do

ARCHAEOLOGIST:
Then it's a good thing you gave up on that dream.
You might not have been very good

HANNAH:
What does an archaeologist do?

ARCHAEOLOGIST:
Dig
Uncover
Really uncover
Not just expose it to the world but
Uncover
Uncover something unrecognizable
and make shape of it
Bringing it out of the ground
Knowing what you're dealing with

HANNAH:
Are we getting close to something?

ARCHAEOLOGIST:
And all of the tools are so tiny
That's something that I was surprised to find
The size
You would think that you would need something big to uncover something
Huge
But you don't really
You really don't
What you need is you need something tiny
Something tiny for what's underneath that
So you can see it all

HANNAH:
What do you see?

ARCHAEOLOGIST:
You need to take your time with everything that you do
You need to really take your time
Consider everything
Precisely consider
Every follicle of dust
dirt
sand
Consider everything
Consider things moving one side to the other side

Consider heading towards whatever's down there
And then when you consider it
You find it
You push everything else away

HANNAH:
And then you can see

ARCHAEOLOGIST:
Hard angles

HANNAH:
As it takes its shape

ARCHAEOLOGIST:
And you can imagine what it might be

HANNAH:
As you get closer

ARCHAEOLOGIST:
And you can imagine the entire history connected to that thing
The thing rising up from the ground
That wasn't there before
That seems as though it couldn't have been there before

HANNAH:
As you can almost see it

ARCHAEOLOGIST:
As it appears out of the dust —

*They closely examine the dirt as the deep sea diver
and the helicopterist continue to sift through the dirt
in front of them.*

ARCHAEOLOGIST:
It's just a thing
Without context
It is just a thing
What you find in the dirt is what's true

HANNAH:
This is a memory
I find a memory
I uncover a memory from the dirt

It is still covered in dirt
Still covered in
I don't know what it means
I don't know what it means and I don't know if it's true

ARCHAEOLOGIST:
Standing on the roof
Working on the roof
The way that I remember it —
It's true because it comes out of the dirt

HANNAH:
But where does the dirt come from?
How do you know where the dirt comes from?
How do you know if the dirt is true?

ARCHAEOLOGIST:
You know that it's true because
It's already there
Because it wasn't made
It was found

HANNAH:
How do I know that it's exactly what I remember?

ARCHAEOLOGIST:
Because if you've done all that then it must be true
If you've pulled it from the dirt then it must be true

HANNAH:
I can dig in the dirt but I still can't remember
I can find it but
Doesn't help me remember
Doesn't help me figure out the way that I remember standing on a roof.

The dirt pit becomes deep underwater.

HANNAH:
I've always had a terrible memory, and I can only remember something after someone tells me first.

Hannah and the deep sea diver swim towards the bottom, which is invisible, incomprehensible in its still-far-away-ness.

*The archaeologist and the helicopterist swim too,
unnaturally.*

HANNAH:

I think it would be fun to be a deep sea diver
I like the water
I like to hold my breath
I can do it for a long time — control my breathing

DEEP SEA DIVER:

Do you know anything about deep sea diving?

HANNAH:

I don't
I only know one stroke
Freestyle
And I don't know how to dive
My body won't seize at the last moment
And I don't know what deep sea divers do

DEEP SEA DIVER:

Then it's a good thing you gave up on that dream
You might not have been very good

HANNAH:

What do deep sea divers do?

DEEP SEA DIVER:

Breathe
In through mouth
Out through mouth
Enter the water seamlessly
Exist inside of the Earth
Swim down
Swim lower
To find the surface on the bottom
By the time you get there you can barely see it
By the time you get there you may not see it at all

HANNAH:

Are we getting close to something?

DEEP SEA DIVER:

When you're completely submerged in water
Things begin to become
Murky

You keep heading down but
Where you're going becomes
Murky
Everything rippled
Everything looking the same
Dark and wet and underwater and the same

HANNAH:
What do you see?

DEEP SEA DIVER:
Not discovering something but
Already knowing what you're looking for
Already knowing what you came for
Dove for
What you came to find
What
Is there submerged under the water

HANNAH:
How do you know what
The thing you're looking for is when everything starts to look the same?

DEEP SEA DIVER:
Whatever you can find under the water is true
If you went in that deep to find it and found it —
Then it must be true
Whatever it is

HANNAH:
What is it?

DEEP SEA DIVER:
Standing on the roof
Working on the roof
The way that I remember it —
Found down deep

HANNAH:
But everything down here is
Waterlogged
That can't be exactly right because
What about what's on the surface?
What about what you don't need an industrial tank of oxygen to reach?
What about without equipment weighing you down?
Is it only true if all of the openings are filled with water?

DEEP SEA DIVER:

If it's in the water then —

HANNAH:

This can't be right. Right?

I can't always swim down this far

All the way down this far

To find

Something as simple as standing on top of a roof

*The underwater becomes very high up in the sky.
Hannah and the helicopterist fly their helicopters.
The archaeologist and the deep sea diver each sit in
a copilot seat.*

HANNAH:

I've always had a terrible memory, and I can only remember something after someone tells me that it's something I should know

But then that's not quite right either —

I should be able to remember the sounds and the voices and the smells of it

*The helicopterist and Hannah call over to each
other to be heard over the wind.*

HANNAH:

I always thought it would be fun to be a helicopterist

I like to travel

I like to be in motion

I don't like to be settled for too long

I've always been told that I am a good driver

and I make people feel safe

So maybe I could be a captain

Or something

HELICOPTERIST:

Do you want to?

HANNAH:

No

I have never thought about something like this for any amount of time apart from now

I'm terrified of heights

And I can't stand to be above the ground

And I get vertigo at the top of flights of stairs

One flight of stairs

HELICOPTERIST:
Then what are we doing up here?

HANNAH:
I'm looking for how to remember
I need to figure out how to do it
The roof isn't in the dirt
The roof isn't in the water

HELICOPTERIST:
But —

HANNAH:
But I can't see it from up here either

HELICOPTERIST:
Seeing from up here is
The way you see from up here is
Everything becoming one thing
Everything together blurring together
Everything speeding by below

HANNAH:
Everything?

HELICOPTERIST:
And nothing identifiable
Nothing close enough or slow enough to be distinguished from anything else

HANNAH:
How do you see anything from all the way up here?
How do you know?
How do you know where you're going?

HELICOPTERIST:
You don't stop and look
You keep going forward
You don't
You keep going
And if anything catches your eye from all the way up here then
It must have been worth it to see
It must have been something true

HANNAH:
But I do want to see!
and find

and uncover
But I don't want to have to do that always from so high
Or dive so deep
or dig so carefully

*The stage begins to become the 7 Eleven again,
from high up all the way down to the bottom.*

HANNAH:
I just want to have
I just want to feel
I just want to hear
I just want to know
I just want to have already known
I want to know
I want to know
I want to know
I want to know I want to know I want to know

HELICOPTERIST:
Then why don't we get down from here?

HANNAH:
We're already up so high —

*By now the space has made its full transformation
back to reality.*

*And the archaeologist is gone. And the helicopterist
is gone. And the deep sea diver is gone.*

*And it is just Hannah and Charley and Cassie,
standing in front of 7-Eleven, looking at each other.
Mostly Charley and Cassie looking at Hannah —
waiting for her answer to the question about the
roof.*

CHARLEY:
Do you remember that? The roof?

HANNAH:
No. Not really.

CASSIE:
Okay.

HANNAH
I don't.
CHARLEY:
Okay.

*Someone throws out their Slurpee. And then
someone else does.*

*And then they all head off, the group of them
together.*

End of play.