

THE OTHER SIDE

CHARACTERS

PAIGE: *female; an out-of-body spirit.*
CONNER: *male; a grim reaper.*

TIME

The present.

SETTING

The hallway of a hospital. And between one world and another.

A bare hallway with a closed door upstage. This door leads to a hospital room we will not see. Dim lights. Then, a blackout, followed by an intense flash of white light. Two characters appear, seemingly from thin air. One, PAIGE, stands in front of the door, her arms stretched out, as if she is a human shield. The other, CONNER, wears a black grim reaper's robe and carries a scythe. He grabs PAIGE, trying to yank her from her position.

CONNER: Move!

PAIGE: No!

CONNER: Paige!

PAIGE: Get off!

CONNER: I'm not kidding!

PAIGE: Me neither!

CONNER: Last warning. They told me to use this . . .

PAIGE: You wouldn't dare . . .

CONNER: Would too—this is that major—I will totally scythe you . . .

PAIGE: You never even had the guts to dissect a worm . . .

CONNER: You don't understand . . .

PAIGE: Yes, I do! I won't let you take her, Conner.

CONNER: You can't stand there forever. Someone's coming for you too—

PAIGE: No, I'm not listening.

She covers her ears.

La, la, la la . . .

MERRIDITH ALLEN

CONNER: She's not gonna wake up!
PAIGE: Just because you gave up doesn't mean she will. She could wake up, and so could I . . .
CONNER: You have to move, Paige. For serious.
He lifts the scythe.
I'm gonna count to three. Okay? One . . .
PAIGE: Give her time, Conner . . .
CONNER: Two . . .
PAIGE: Please? For me?
CONNER: *Hesitating.* Two and a half . . .
PAIGE: This is us—Paige, Conner, and Dana—the three musketeers—we held hands at kindergarten graduation—come on, Conner!
CONNER: *Hesitating.* Two and three quarters . . .
She doesn't move.
Okay! You better move.
She doesn't.
I'm gonna do it.
She stares at him.
For real.
She braces.
I warned you. Three!
He torques back to swing. She turns away. He swings. At the very last second, she ducks and rolls away. He swing so hard, his body wrenches and he stumbles, dropping the scythe.
Damn! That's heavy . . .
PAIGE: *Dusting herself off.* I can't believe you did that, you jerk!
CONNER: Oh crap . . . I'm sorry.
He stands.
Not that—I mean I couldn't like, really hurt you, right?
He steps towards her, she retreats.
But . . . you know, you just—you put on that robe, they put this big thing in your hands and, like, okay yeah, I totally got carried away . . .

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PAIGE: That's it. Now I'm really not moving.
She plants herself in a guarding position in front of the door again.
CONNER: Awww, come on . . .
PAIGE: No, you come on! Why can't you give her a chance?
CONNER: Believe me, I wish I could, but trust me, there's nothing I can do. I was a goner, like, Bam! Like, on impact. And Dana? She's hangin' on but . . . look, she's next on my list, okay? It's like, done. Here, I'll show you.
He pulls out an iPad.
PAIGE: What the hell—you have a list of dying people on an iPad?
CONNER: Well, yeah—I mean that's why They chose me. Their whole system runs on Mac devices now, so when they need a new reaper, they're more likely to take a teenager over a—okay, anyway, that's beside the point . . .
PAIGE: Are you sure? Like, really sure it can't be changed, or maybe—I don't know, can we talk to someone? Maybe they made a mistake.
CONNER: They didn't. The big Genius Bar in the sky doesn't have an error margin.
A moment. PAIGE crosses her arms.
Don't you remember how bad it was?
PAIGE: Um . . . I don't know . . .
CONNER: Wow. I guess that's the difference between dead and almost dead. I remember everything.
PAIGE: So . . . how bad was it?
CONNER: Let's just say, *The Fast and The Furious* except ten times worse and way less cool looking.
PAIGE: We hit a . . . was it another car?
CONNER: A truck. On the side of the highway. I—well, me and Dana, we were both in the front when . . . well, it took almost the whole top off the car and . . .
PAIGE: Oh, God . . . yeah . . . and I was . . . I had a headache . . .
CONNER: So you asked me to drive us. You were laying down in the back seat. It's all my fault, I wanted to get us to the party faster, and there was that slow-ass dude from like, Florida in front of us,

and I just wanted to pass him, right? But it was foggy and . . . I totally messed up, Paige.

PAIGE: So this is . . .

His iPhone beeps. He checks it.

CONNOR: Oh, man. That's a text from my boss. I really do need to go get Dana. If I don't, she'll get stuck, and I'll get in some deep shit then, and . . .

PAIGE: What do you mean, "stuck?"

CONNOR: Um, like a ghost, I guess? I haven't gone through the whole Welcome Packet yet, so I don't know exactly, but it's not good. You don't want that for her, do you?

PAIGE: No . . . Connor? Have you seen the other side, like, where we're going?

CONNOR: Yeah . . . for a little while, before they sent me for Dana. I'm not supposed to talk about it, but actually, the place looked pretty cool, and things felt good there. Like everyone you know and love is okay and, everything is taken care of.

PAIGE: Sounds nice. You think, um—can I go with you guys? Since we all go together everywhere anyway . . .

CONNOR: I asked about that, but you're not on my list, so that means someone else is coming for you, I think.

PAIGE: Like who? My grandma?

CONNOR: I don't know.

PAIGE: Can you check?

CONNOR: Uh, sure. One sec.

He presses a button.

I just gotta let gCloud synch.

PAIGE: gCloud?

CONNOR: Like iCloud, except, you know.

He points up towards heaven. A few moments, then he stares at her.

PAIGE: What? Am I—is it bad? Am I going—is it somewhere bad, what?

CONNOR: No. You're . . .

He checks again.

. . . you're not on anybody's list. Let me put in a search real quick.
He does.

Oh, wow. Your name's not anywhere.

PAIGE: What does that mean?

CONNOR: That means . . . Paige, I think you're going to be okay.

PAIGE: Oh my God . . .

CONNOR: Yeah. That's awesome . . .

PAIGE: But that means . . .

His phone beeps again.

CONNOR: Shit. I gotta get Dana. And . . . you gotta let us go. A pause. Please, Paige.

She finally steps aside. CONNER picks up the scythe and starts to move to the door.

PAIGE: Wait. Can I say good-bye to her?

CONNOR: Ah . . . I don't think there's time . . .

She throws her arms around him.

PAIGE: I love you guys.

CONNOR: Yeah . . . me too.

He breaks the hug. A moment between them.

Um . . . so . . .

PAIGE: Wow . . .

CONNOR: I always wanted to do that!

PAIGE: You too?

CONNOR: God . . . I was driving so fast cause I was gonna . . . you know, like, at the party . . .

PAIGE: Oh my God, this sucks! For like a million and one reasons.

His phone beeps again.

CONNOR: Shit, I need to . . .

PAIGE: Go. Go get her. Um . . .

CONNOR: So . . .

MERRIDITH ALLEN

PAIGE: This really is . . .

CONNER: Don't say it. This is . . . I'll see you someday. On the other side.

They embrace once more and he finally breaks it. When he does, she watches him start to move to the door. Then, feeling something, places her hand on her chest, looks up and out to the audience, seeing something we don't. As CONNER places his hand on the door-knob, she inhales audibly. A big gasp, as if all of her breath were returning to her. Then, an intense flash of light. Then darkness. Then, dim lights. The two of them are gone, and the only thing that remains onstage is an open door.

END OF PLAY

PLAY SHAK
George Freek