Going Nowhere

a very short play about envisioning a new path ahead

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Characters: **SHE, a woman who is strong enough to do whatever it takes.**

HE, a man who isn't as mild-mannered as he might appear.

Setting: **A beautiful craftsman home in a highly desirable neighborhood.**

Time: **December, 2019.**

Dialogue Notes:

— Indicates a character's dialogue is interrupted, by another character speaking, an event or a character abruptly shifting gears within a line of dialogue.

... Indicates a character is searching for words, does not complete a thought or leaves a line of dialogue open.

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Going Nowhere

We see a man, peering into the screen of his computer from a comfortable room in his well-appointed house. Maybe there are Christmas decorations displayed. All about the joy, here.

The man seems very excited. Probably too excited. It may have been a while since he's been excited like this. He moves away from the computer, eager to share the excitement. Maybe he pulls out his phone, but he's interrupted by a woman coming into the room, with her bag. She's also excited. Her excitement is amplified by a couple of glasses of wine.

SHE:
Hey!

HE:
Hey! Did you get my—

SHE:
(interrupting) Yes! That's crazy!

HE:
What did I tell you?

SHE:
You were right! But I didn't know you'd be *this* right!

HE:
Would I bother being less right?

SHE:
Hah! I had to read the text twice. I had Janice read the text twice.

HE:
Janice is good? You two went to yoga?

SHE:
Janice is great. Pilates. Then happy hour. But seriously? Two Hundred Thousand over asking?

HE:
I would not joke about that. Not in a text.

SHE:
(gesturing around her) But we just put the house on the market! We priced it too low. What did Andre say?

HE:
It's priced right. He expected to get over asking. But not—

SHE:
(interrupting) No! Not— And not during the holidays! No one makes an offer during the holidays!

HE:

Right?

SHE:

Wow. Do you want a drink?

On cue, he pulls out an open bottle of champagne and two glasses.

Hah! I married well, didn't I?

HE:

Is that what Janice says?

SHE:

Yes, actually. *(pulling out her phone*) I'll tell her it's for real.

HE:

(pouring champagne) Oh, it's real, all right!

SHE:

(texting while she talks) I mean it is just an offer. But think of the possibilities!

HE:

Mais oui, ma cherie! Just like we talked about: a change, a re-assessment, a new chapter in our lives!

She considers this as she puts away her phone; he hands her a glass.

Here's to turning the page.

SHE:

Ha ha ha. Right. Having the option to do that. Feels good, doesn't it?

She clinks his glass and drinks.

HE:

Hang on. What does that mean?

SHE:

What does what mean?

HE:

"Having the option."

SHE:

Sorry! The option to turn the page. Being able to do it, if we're ready. Or not.

HE:

But we— We had this discussion. That's why we listed the house, because we were ready to turn.

SHE:
Ready to see if turning was an option.

HE:
Sweetie, that's not—

SHE:
(interrupting) Honey. Remember? Andre said he didn't trust the market in general and we knew it was the holidays so as far as I was concerned it more like… seeing if our pages were still stuck together.

Very short pause.

HE:
Well, they're not.

SHE:
Could I have more champagne?

HE:
(pouring) Bien sûr. But be honest with me: What's going on with you?

SHE:
It's just… Say we sell the house. Whether it's now or we wait until after—

HE:
(interrupting) We have the offer now! Andre doesn't think we'll—

SHE:
(interrupting) I don't want to be homeless for Christmas!

HE:
We won't be! And we'll ring in 2020 right here; it'll months before we close, and by then—

SHE:
(interrupting) By then, whenever that is… Where we going to go?

Short pause. Maybe he fills both glasses, again.

HE:
I'm very glad you asked! Take a look at this.

He pulls her to the computer screen.

SHE:
Yeah? Very pretty. What is that?

HE:
That is our next page.

SHE:
Our—? *(as she looks at the screen more carefully)* Oh!

HE:
Et voilà!

SHE:
Right! Where is it?

HE:
The house is off the Coast, north of the Capitol.

SHE:
On… an Island?

HE:
Uh huh.

SHE:
It's gorgeous! Those gardens…

HE:
All native plants. Low maintenance.

SHE:
(pointing at the screen) Can you go into the house, there?

HE:
A virtual tour. Look at those views.

SHE:
And that architecture. Amazing. We can afford this?

HE:
They just dropped the price. It's the holidays.

SHE:
Wow. I never dreamed!

HE:
And get this: We'd have plenty left over. We could essentially retire!

SHE:
Oh, we're not old enough to—

HE:
(interrupting) Why do we have to wait until we get old?

SHE:
Could you work from home?

HE:

I suppose I could *dabble* from home, like you.

SHE:

I have a job, I don't—

HE:

(interrupting) Do you know what this is telling me, though?

SHE:

This… page?

HE:

Exactement! That it's time to slow down. I've been too consumed by my career, reaching for everything beyond my grasp. Not recognizing what it is that I have. What we have, together. That *that* is enough!

SHE:

Are you talking about the dogs?

HE:

I'm talking about each other. Being able to really enjoy our life together. Look. Just look:

He points again to the screen, and they both focus on what could be written there.

Imagine. Waking up each morning, just you and me…

SHE:

And the dogs.

HE:

And the dogs. Gazing into each other's eyes. Not knowing what the day will hold. Time becomes meaningless as we get up whenever we want to, and go into our day with absolutely nothing but time on our hands.

SHE:

Time with no meaning.

HE:

Which we will make meaningful! I feel like we haven't even managed talk to each other, lately!

SHE:

We talk! We go out to dinner or drinks with friends, and we talk!

HE:

I mean, *really* talk. The two of us. *(back to the screen)* Right there is where we could do that. For hours on end. About anything you want.

SHE:
Sounds…

HE:
Doesn't it? And we'd eat in; start cooking, again. No restaurants, on the Island, so all of those recipes we've been collecting? We'll make them.

SHE:
Ha ha ha. All of them?

HE:
All of them. And don't worry about shopping; we'll have everything delivered.

SHE:
We'll have to start going to the gym, more!

HE:
We'll exercise at home! I mean, that view? We'll take long walks on beach together. The dogs will love that!

SHE:
Yeah.

She pours herself more champagne.

HE:
And you know how you've been saying I watch too much politics?

SHE:
Both of us, really. But it's hard not to—

HE:
(interrupting) We'll just stop! It's not like there's any reason to get involved—Elizabeth has the election in the bag.

SHE:
You know, Janice and I have been meaning to sign up for—

HE:
(interrupting) And honestly, I'm a little worried about that.

SHE:
Um… About what?

HE:
You and Janice. I think she's becoming too dependent on you. A little distance would help your relationship, I think.

SHE:
Oh, do you?

HE:

I do! Then there's your family? *Quel dommage!* More and more demanding. I was reading about the advantages of online socializing. You could do that. Schedule meetings on the computer every so often? Do that with your *petit emploi*, as well.

SHE:

Did you say "my little"—?

HE:

(interrupting) And safely tucked away in our home, we'll finally be able to catch up on all the reading we've been meaning to do. You could start writing, or learn French!

SHE:

(under her breath) Or *you* could learn French.

HE:

Or we could just do nothing! Do nothing but watch Netflix! Grow our hair long and bake and eat and get soft and fat together and watch Netflix. Day after day. Night after night. Until… who knows when? You can't put a time-table on something like that, *n'est pas*?

SHE:

I don't know how to answer that.

HE:

It was actually a hypothetical. But we can't be afraid to write our own story at this point in our lives. If we play it right, *(pointing to the screen again)* that could be our entire world. So small we can hold it tightly in our hands and never, ever let go!

After a moment, she drains her glass.

SHE:

Let's open another bottle, shall we?

HE:

Absolument!

She watches him leave, then pulls out her phone again; puts it up to her ear.

SHE:

(into the phone) Hey! Janice!
Yes, no, it's still…
Yeah, well, I'd miss you, too, but don't worry about that.
Because…
(looking after him) There is no way in hell I'm letting him sell this house.

She puts the phone down and looks at the screen, this time as if it's a mortal enemy.

I hate to break it to you, *ma cherie*, but buckle up: We ain't going nowhere!

End of Play