

The Most Comfortable Mattress in Existence

By

Artist Reflection Statement

I have never really considered myself a “creative writer”. There are only a couple of spots in my life that I can remember having an idea that I absolutely need to get down on paper. One being the adventures of a superhero who was quite literally a stick of cheese, with a permanent marker as a sidekick. I went into Playwriting with no true expectation. I wasn’t sure if I would be able to write as creatively as I used to in years long ago. I can say, however, that I was able to surprise myself with each new piece I wrote over the semester, culminating in this One Act – “The Most Comfortable Mattress in Existence” – it’s clear I still have some of that creative writing energy.

I started the semester writing dramatic pieces – the one aspect I wasn’t fully sure I would be able to tackle effectively. Then, once we moved on to longer pieces such as the 10-Minute play, I shifted my focus onto the area I feel I have most experience in, comedy. Having what little parts of my 10-Minute play read aloud was something truly special. This was the first time I have been able to get a live reaction from a group of people reading something I wrote. I received a great reaction which encouraged me to continue the piece.

For the One-Act, I wanted to combine just about every idea from the semester. I originally wanted to do a strict comedy, but after I hit a certain point, I realized that I was getting a little burnt out of funny ideas, so I decided to take a dramatic approach to the play as well. I surprised myself greatly by the time I reached the end of my first draft for this play. I couldn’t believe that I successfully combined the two genres and told, what I believe is, a cohesive story (even though some of the time travel stuff may be a little confusing, even to me, the playwright!).

My usual writing process is to just write. Dump whatever words I need to onto the page and try to make sense of it as I go. For this one in particular, I allowed myself to word-dump just to get the ball rolling, but once I figured out the direction I wanted this play to go in, I needed to stop and actually plan. This was very helpful to me, so I could see the entire timeline of events in advance as opposed to just making it up as I went along.

There is certainly one, huge thing that I will be taking away from the Playwriting class, and that is... that I can do it! I’ve never really doubted my playwriting abilities before, but I have certainly never pushed myself as much as I have during this course. I tried many new things in my writing and received some wonderful feedback all around.

I like to live under one personal goal. To make one person laugh each and every day. It’s probably why I enjoy writing comedy so much. This can also apply to people I know very well, such as my closest friends or family, as well as people I don’t know very well, like a student I don’t talk much with on campus. Often, you never really know what someone else is going through in their life. The way I see it, whether they are having a great day or a bad day, taking the extra step to make someone smile or laugh is harmless either way. When I write, that’s what I’m going for. I want all people to be able to sit and get a good time out of what they read. Again, that’s why I’m so glad my drafts for the 10-Minute and One-Act (and even my History of Theatre 10-Minute) were read aloud in class. Without any doubt, they were all received very well by my peers. The comment “effortlessly funny” has been stuck with me throughout the rest of the semester.

In the future, that is what I will continue to strive for. Whether I am writing, directing, or acting. I will always be searching for humor. However, it also doesn’t hurt to take a funny story and make it real. Make it grounded, like I did here. I truly had no intention on turning this silly concept of a story into a piece about a man trying to save his mother from dying. As soon as I finished my draft, I stopped and thought to myself for a while, just how powerful it felt to write that kind of story, and still be able to end it on an upbeat and happy note.

This will certainly not be the last play I write. What I learned from this course; I have deemed too valuable to let go to waste! Enjoy.

CHARACTERS:

Daniel – early 20's, stays this age throughout the entire play. Anxious, sometimes unable to complete sentences. M.

Timmy – Preschool age, early 20's and mid 30's. Easygoing, chill dude with a good sense of humor. M

Susan – Daniel's mother. Early 30's, and mid 60's. Caring, sweet, gentle. F

Oliver – Daniel's son, Ages 6-7. Rowdy, full of energy. Few lines – so can be played by child actor if possible. Younger actor preferred. M

Evelyn – Daniel's wife, early 20's and mid 30's. Much like Susan in terms of personality. F.

Teacher – Daniel and Timmy's elementary school teacher. Super strict. Likely in 40's or 50's. F

SETTING:

This play takes place in many locations, with set changes occurring during blackouts. The first setting is the nasty, filthy-looking apartment of Timmy and Daniel. The second being Daniel's childhood bedroom. The third being Daniel and Evelyn's bedroom, which is briefly turned into an elementary school classroom.

Note that Daniel, to the audience, will appear to be the same age throughout the entire show. That is only to us, the audience. To the people on stage, Daniel is the age he is supposed to be during that scene. For instance: Though Daniel is dressed like his younger self in Disney pajamas, appearing at the age of 20-something, he is perceived by his mother as a child.

Another note: Rooms will need to be created out of something can be easily rearranged, such as bi-fold flats, as the set changes frequently from scene to scene. Only room changes need to happen in Daniel's apartment, Daniel's childhood bedroom, and Daniel's future home. All other changes can take place downstage with a few set pieces.

Scene 1

Lights up on a messy apartment living room, it has not been cleaned in weeks. Pizza boxes, soda bottles, crumpled up pieces of paper towels and more miscellaneous garbage litters the apartment.

DANIEL and TIMMY stand in their living room looking at an old and worn-down mattress. TIMMY is noticeably sweaty. DANIEL appears to have just woken up.

It's... a mattress.

DANIEL

Not just any mattress, it's a *free* mattress!

TIMMY

Where'd you even find this?

DANIEL

Lying in some alley a couple streets away. Sure, it's a little suspicious but I mean, it's in hell of a lot better shape than *your* raggedy old mattress and, it's like, the most comfortable thing I've ever laid on. So, I figured I'd do you a favor. Busted my ass off pulling this thing up for you too, should probably count as my trip to the gym this week. You're welcome. Go get your old one, I'll help you bring it downstairs.

TIMMY

I don't want this.

DANIEL

Dude, be for real.

TIMMY

I'm fine with the one I have. Thanks, but no thanks.

DANIEL

TIMMY stares at DANIEL for a moment, then crosses to the kitchen. TIMMY grabs a knife from the block sitting on the counter, and crosses into DANIEL'S bedroom.

What are you doing?

DANIEL

Don't come in here or I'll stab you.

TIMMY
(offstage, shouting)

The sound of ripping and tearing is heard, with occasional grunts from TIMMY. After a moment, the sound stops. After another moment, TIMMY reenters, disheveled. As if he'd just killed someone.

TIMMY

No way you're keeping that mattress now, dude.

*DANIEL crosses into his bedroom. Lights turn on in here.
DANIEL'S mattress has been completely eviscerated.*

DANIEL

What the fuck, Tim?

TIMMY

Daniel Henderson, you watch your mouth! Didn't your mother ever teach you not to say things like that! Get it out here so we can throw it away!

*DANIEL stares at his old mattress and begrudgingly begins lugging it into the living room.
Lights fade out.
Lights fade back into DANIEL, lying on his new mattress, with TIMMY watching over.
The apartment is ever so slightly cleaner.*

DANIEL

What? Are you gonna tuck me in?

TIMMY

And give you a smooch on the forehead. Is it comfortable or what?

DANIEL

No. It sucks, I hate *it*, and I hate *you*.

TIMMY

Bullllshitttt. I know when you're lying to me dude. Look me in my eyes and tell me that's not the most comfortable mattress in existence.

DANIEL stares down TIMMY, right in the eyes.

DANIEL

This is not the most comfortable mattress in existence.

TIMMY

Right.

DANIEL

If you like it so much, why don't I let you have it.

TIMMY

No way, this is my gift to you, my friend. Plus, I wouldn't dare give you my old mattress. Who knows what kinds of stains you'd find on that thing.

DANIEL

Gross.

A pause.

TIMMY

Alright, I'll leave you alone. Whatever happened to that date you had tonight? With that Evy, Eva, whatever her name was?

DANIEL

Shit! Evelyn!

TIMMY

What?

DANIEL

I was supposed to meet her at the café two hours ago.

TIMMY

Aw dude, I'm sorry.

DANIEL

Whatever. I'll just... let her know what happened, hopefully she's not too pissed.

TIMMY

Damn. My bad though, for like, making you toss your old mattress and stuff.

DANIEL

It's fine.

TIMMY

(singing)

If I could turn back time, *(stops singing)* amirite? See you tomorrow, Danny.

DANIEL

Goodnight, Cher.

DANIEL gets himself ready for bed, and lays atop his mattress with just a blanket and pillow.

He makes himself comfortable.

Lights fade out.

Scene 2

Lights fade in. DANIEL wakes up, stretches and heads into the living room.

TIMMY sits on the couch with a cup of coffee, trying to find something to watch on TV.

TIMMY

Morning Danny.

DANIEL

You were right.

TIMMY

'Bout what.

DANIEL

The mattress, being like (*mocking*) “the most comfortable mattress in existence”. Slept like a baby.

TIMMY

That’s good. Don’t remember ever saying anything about your raggedy mattress though. Definitely wouldn’t call it the most comfortable mattress in existence. That thing sucks.

DANIEL

You don’t remember?

TIMMY

Remember what?

DANIEL

The mattress?

TIMMY

Dude, what is up with you and your mattress? Why do you care about that piece of junk all of a sudden?

DANIEL

You gave it to me, dipshit.

TIMMY

(*sarcastically*)

Oh! The mattress that you brought from your mother’s? That you’ve had for, what’s gotta be the last 10 years? Right. I *totally* got that for you. What are you talking about?

DANIEL

What are *you* talking about?

TIMMY

Whatever dude. Hey, I’m glad you had a good night’s rest, stop yapping about the mattress and go eat your breakfast. I whipped up some pancakes this morning.

DANIEL

Two days in a row?

TIMMY

We had omelets yesterday, so unless you’re sneaking out and having pancakes with somebody else...

DANIEL

Shit! I gotta call Evelyn.

TIMMY

Evelyn?

DANIEL

Yeah, Evelyn from... just... give me a sec.

DANIEL walks back into his bedroom and pulls out his phone.

He pulls up her contact information and calls EVELYN.

EVELYN appears stage left, a spotlight shines on her, she answers the phone.

EVELYN

Hello?

DANIEL

Hey! Evelyn! It's Daniel. Hey, I'm so, so sorry about yesterday. Something came up with my roommate and I got completely sidetracked, are you on for maybe meeting at the café this evening instead?

EVELYN

Uhm... I'm sorry, but I think you have the wrong number.

DANIEL

What do you mean? We matched yesterday, made plans to meet?

EVELYN

I think I would have remembered if I matched with someone yesterday. Sorry, how did you get my number?

DANIEL

You gave it to me, through our DMs?

EVELYN

I need to go. Sorry.

DANIEL

Wait, Evelyn!

EVELYN hangs up and walks offstage. The spotlight goes out.

DANIEL stands in his bedroom. TIMMY stands at the doorway.

TIMMY

Everything alright? She not interested anymore?

DANIEL

No, she... she was saying she didn't even remember me. Everybody's being so weird today. Why are we having pancakes again?

TIMMY

Maybe last night she went to some party, got a little *you know* or something and accidentally swiped right on you? Definitely have had my fair share of *that* happen to me. Andddd we are having pancakes because today is pancake day... if you want to switch up the schedule, you'll need to take it up with my manager.

DANIEL

Today is most certainly not pancake day.

TIMMY

Yes, it is. Do you want some or not? Why is this suddenly an issue?

DANIEL

Saturday is pancake day, so we had pancakes on Saturday. Yesterday was french toast day.

TIMMY

Today is Saturday. So I made pancakes. *Yesterday* was omelet day. *Tomorrow* is french toast day. Check the calendar.

DANIEL crosses to a calendar on the wall.

DANIEL

I thought I crossed Saturday out already?

TIMMY

Not sure why you'd do that when the day hasn't even ended. These damn things are going to get cold if you keep arguing about the damn day!

DANIEL is left utterly confused by the calendar.

DANIEL

I'm gonna skip breakfast. I think I need to take a nap or something.

TIMMY

Whatever, dude. *I guess* I'll save you some. Are you, like, sure you're good, and everything?

DANIEL

Yeah. Yeah. I'm... I'm fine.

TIMMY

Okay dude. Well, you know where to find me if you need anything. I'll wake you up for lunch.

DANIEL

Yeah. For sure, for sure.

TIMMY stares at DANIEL for a moment before exiting.

DANIEL tucks himself into bed.

Lights fade out.

Scene 3

Lights fade in to a children's bedroom.

Walls (bi-fold flats) have been readjusted to give the appearance of a new room.

DANIEL lies in a race-car bed on stage right.

SUSAN enters stage left.

SUSAN

Wakey wakey Daniel! Time to get ready for your first day of school!

DANIEL jolts out from under the covers.

DANIEL looks around frantically.

DANIEL

Huh? Mom?

SUSAN

The tub's running and your clothes are sitting on the toilet. Hurry up please and come eat your breakfast when you're done.

SUSAN exits stage left.

DANIEL hops out of bed.

DANIEL

What the actual fuck? Holy shit... holy shit... holy shit.

DANIEL frantically runs around, stops and looks at a mirror near his bed.

DANIEL looks like his current self, but is dressed in Disney pajamas.

DANIEL

I've gotta be dreaming. There's no way.

SUSAN

(offstage)

Daniel Henderson, get your butt in that tub!

DANIEL

(yelling to his Mother)

One second!

DANIEL

I'm dreaming! Yep! That's gotta be it. I'll lay back down, wake up, and everything will be fine!

DANIEL lies back down.

SUSAN appears stage left.

SUSAN

Daniel!

DANIEL

Mom! Ma... mother?

SUSAN

Daniel, what is the matter with you this morning? Are you feeling okay? Let me feel your forehead.

DANIEL

Um. Oh, I feel sick, mom. Mommy. Mama? I think I should stay home. Today.

SUSAN

Oh sweetie. You're probably just feeling nervous about your first day. I remember *my* first day of first grade. I was so nervous that I-

DANIEL

Puked as soon as you walked into the classroom?

SUSAN

Yes. How did you...?

DANIEL

I'm gonna puke, mum. 'Scuse me!

*DANIEL runs out of the door, stage left, into the bathroom.
He turns on the sink and splashes water on his face.*

DANIEL

Wake up Daniel. Wake up, wake up, wake up!

SUSAN appears at the door of the bathroom.

SUSAN

Did you puke?

DANIEL

Huh?

SUSAN

Did you?

DANIEL

Uh, no! No. I didn't. Um. No.

SUSAN

See, I think you're going to be fine! Come on now, we don't want to be late! Get ready.

SUSAN exits.

DANIEL

I can't go. I can't go. Uh... uh...

DANIEL becomes less frantic, almost frozen, as he has a revelation.

DANIEL

How have I not tried this yet?

*DANIEL stares at the door and makes cartoonishly unrealistic vomit noises.
SUSAN'S footsteps are heard, and DANIEL quickly flushes the toilet.
SUSAN enters as soon as it finishes.*

DANIEL

I, uh. Threw up.

Susan lets out a sigh.

SUSAN

Alright Daniel. Go back to bed. I'll call the school, but you're only going to get this day off. You're going in tomorrow whether you like it or not.

DANIEL

Oh, thanks, Mom. Yeah, I'll just – you know, head right on to bed. I, uh, love you?

SUSAN

Love you too Daniel. I'll call Aunt Caroline to come over and watch you while I'm at work.

DANIEL

Sounds great. Yeah. Fantastic.

*SUSAN exits the bathroom.
DANIEL runs back into his bedroom and hops back into bed.*

DANIEL

Come on Daniel. Fall back asleep. Fall back asleep, please!

*DANIEL squirms around for a while, but then lays still.
Lights fade out.*

Scene 4

*Lights fade into a dressing room.
It consists of only a white couch and a mirror at a table, in front of the previous set.
DANIEL lies on a white couch, dressed in a tuxedo.
TIMMY stands at a nearby mirror, adjusting his necktie.
DANIEL is just now waking up.*

TIMMY

And so that's why I'll never date a girl with 6 fingers ever again. Dude, are you even listening to me?

DANIEL

Timmy! Timmy. God, am I glad to see you.

TIMMY

Rise and shine big man. You fell asleep on me while I was opening my heart to you, rude ass.

DANIEL

Timmy, you gotta listen to me. First of all...

DANIEL looks around.

DANIEL

Where the hell are we?

TIMMY

Your wedding?

DANIEL

Wedding???

TIMMY

Ladies and gentlemen... please welcome Daniel and Evelyn Henderson to the dance floor... tonight, the bride and groom will be dancing to Cyndi Lauper, "Time after Ti-"

DANIEL

Timmy, shut the hell up for a second will you, I'm freaking out!

TIMMY

Hey, take it easy man. Okay? I know it's a big day for you but you gotta relax. Man, I remember when you nearly fumbled Evelyn just because we brought in that new mattress of yours. It's like it was yesterday.

DANIEL

The mattress!

TIMMY

You were fighting me so much about it. It was a nice mattress, who could pass that up?

DANIEL

It's gotta be the mattress!

TIMMY

What are you on about?

DANIEL

Timmy. You need to listen to me. I know I'm going to sound crazy and weird but, you just need to hear me out. You said you remember me "fumbling", uh, Evelyn like it was yesterday, right? Well, for me, it was yesterday, or maybe not yesterday? I'm not so sure. Not long ago. Ever since I started sleeping on that mattress you gave me, I've been... I don't know. I woke up in the apartment and you or Evelyn didn't remember anything that happened the day before. I go back to bed, and I wake up on my... first fucking day of 1st grade? And now, now I'm waking up and suddenly I'm getting fucking married to a girl I have never even gone out with! Hit me.

What?
TIMMY

Hit me as hard as you can, right now.
DANIEL

Danny, I-
TIMMY

DANIEL
The worst part about it is that I can't fucking tell if I'm dreaming or not. None of this seems real, but I can feel, smell, every little detail-

TIMMY slaps DANIEL in the face.

Ah!
DANIEL

Did you feel that?
TIMMY

DANIEL
Yeah, I felt that, asshole. A little warning would've been nice.

TIMMY
So, what you're trying to tell me is that... you've been time traveling?

DANIEL
I don't fucking know, Timmy. I really don't.

TIMMY
That wouldn't make any sense, you've been, like *here*. Living, doing stuff these past few years. Wouldn't you, like, disappear if you time travelled? If you went back to your first day of first grade – what's that thing about stepping on a blade of grass?

DANIEL
It's not like that, I don't think anyways. It's like, I'm waking up at different intervals of my life. Past and future. I just don't get to experience anything that happens in-between. Timmy, I hadn't even had my first date with Evelyn when you gave me that mattress and now, I'm getting married to her? I don't, I just don't know what to do.

TIMMY
Go back to sleep.

DANIEL
What?

TIMMY

Just lay back down and go to sleep. You, Strange Danny, will wake up at some other point in time, and Normal Danny will wake back up and get married. He may be a little confused why the side of his face is almost black and blue, but we'll cover it up with some makeup, I'm sure one of the ladies have got some lying around.

DANIEL

But Timmy, I just don't know where I'm going to wake up. What if I destroy the mattress? Break this... curse that's been put on me?

TIMMY

Danny, you tossed that thing out a while ago. I'm sure it got incinerated or some shit.

DANIEL

Okay. Okay I think I have a plan.

TIMMY

What is it?

DANIEL

I need to go back. I need to go back to sleep and just... fucking *hope* and pray that I wake up sometime near when you gave me that mattress, and then – then I can get rid of it. Strange Danny gets rid of it so he can become Normal Danny, and everything will be fine. I think.

TIMMY

Yeah. Totally.

DANIEL

Alright. Here goes.

*Determined, DANIEL lies back down on the couch.
He squirms and wiggles for a moment.
DANIEL sits up.*

DANIEL

Knock me out.

TIMMY

Hm?

DANIEL

I'm too worked up. It'll take me forever to fall asleep. Just punch my lights out,

TIMMY

But what about your-

DANIEL

I don't give a fuck about Normal Danny. Just do it!

TIMMY

Hey man, you told me to.

DANIEL

Yeah. Just make sure you-

*TIMMY punches DANIEL, knocking DANIEL out on the ground.
Lights fade out.*

Scene 5

*Lights fade into a new bedroom; Christmas decorations line the walls.
DANIEL lies in the Christmas-colored bed, OLIVER bolts in from stage left climbs onto the bed and begins jumping on it.*

OLIVER

Daddy! Daddy! Wake up, wake up!

DANIEL

Huh?

OLIVER

It's Christmas, it's Christmas! I wanna open my presents! Come on, come on!

*OLIVER hops off of the bed, and dashes out of the room.
DANIEL rises from bed.*

DANIEL
(to himself)

A kid. Okay. Definitely not back in the apartment.

EVELYN stands at the doorway.

EVELYN

You coming downstairs, hun? Oliver's waiting on you.

DANIEL

Evelyn! Uh, Merry Christmas, I guess? You look, nice.

EVELYN

Olly's waiting for you downstairs.

DANIEL

Olly.

EVELYN

You feeling alright? You seem a little off.

DANIEL

Oh. It's uh, I'm fine. Just feels like... It feels like I'm seeing you for the first time. You're beautiful.

EVELYN

(playfully)

Stopp.

DANIEL

Hey, uh. Tell Oliver... Olly, that he can get a head start on those presents. I'm just going to maybe get an extra minute. Wake me up in five?

EVELYN

Are you thinking about her?

DANIEL

Her?

EVELYN

I know, it's been just over a year now. Took me a few years to get over my dad, but I was young then, so it wasn't very easy.

DANIEL

Are you talking about-

EVELYN

Your mother was such a sweetheart. I still have the necklace she gave me before the accident.

EVELYN holds the necklace she is wearing.

DANIEL

Mom...

EVELYN

I'm sorry. Maybe you weren't even thinking about her – I'm so sorry. I didn't mean to –

DANIEL

No, it's alright. I'm just a little, my mind's a bit fuzzy. This morning. I guess.

EVELYN

I don't think you want to talk about this, hun. It's Christmas. Come downstairs and spend time with –

DANIEL is deep in thought.

EVELYN

I'm sorry, Dan, I really am – for bringing it up.

DANIEL

Hey, it's fine. Um. Can I get those five minutes, you think?

EVELYN

Alright. I'll see if I can hold Olly off of those presents for a moment longer. There'll be some hot chocolate downstairs waiting for you.

EVELYN leans in and kisses DANIEL.

EVELYN

I love you.

DANIEL

I... love you too, Evelyn.

EVELYN exits.

DANIEL gets up from the bed and slowly walks around.

An urn sits at a nearby table.

DANIEL approaches it and picks it up.

DANIEL

Mom...

A letter sits where the urn was removed from.

DANIEL swaps the urn with the letter and reads it.

DANIEL

"Dear Daniel... I heard you were on the phone, so I'm writing this as to not interrupt you. I'm heading to Aunt Caroline's just for a moment to drop these gifts off. I'll come back right after, and I'll drive extra carefully. Love, your mother."

DANIEL puts the letter down.

DANIEL sits by himself for a moment, before getting back under the covers.

Lights fade out.

Scene 6

Lights fade into an elementary school classroom.

This consists of a couple of foam mats and an chalkboard that can be wheeled in downstage.

DANIEL wakes up from a nap, lying on a foam mat on the floor.

Beside him, TIMMY wakes up too.

TIMMY

Did somebody fart? Hey – hey you, did you fart? It stinks!

DANIEL

Timmy?

TIMMY
No, I didn't do it!

DANIEL
I've... seen you around. I'm, uh, Daniel.

TIMMY
Hi, "uh, Daniel", did you fart or not?

TEACHER appears stage right.

TEACHER
Boys... quiet time is not over yet! Please keep it down!

TEACHER exits.

DANIEL
(to himself)
Quiet time, huh? Must be in preschool.

TIMMY
Yeeup.

DANIEL
Oh, sorry Timmy. I, uh, wasn't talking to you.

DANIEL lays back down on his mat, but springs back up when he gets an idea.

DANIEL
Hey Timmy?

TIMMY
Yeah, "uh Daniel"?

DANIEL
Do you want to be friends? Like, absolutely bestest of all time ever greatest friends?

TIMMY
That sounds fun!

DANIEL
Cool, awesome. Hey, this might be a little strange. Think you can do me a favor?

TIMMY
A favor?

DANIEL
Yeah. Um. It might not happen for a while, but if you just so happen to find some free mattress lying on the street in a few years... uh, you think you could just... leave it alone?

TIMMY
A free mattress?? I want one!

DANIEL
No. You don't. If you ever see one, never touch it.

TIMMY
Why?

DANIEL
Because... uh... a monster will come out of it and grab you and take you away from you and your parents for the rest of your life!

TIMMY
Nice try, "uh, Daniel" but I don't believe in monsters.

TEACHER appears stage right again.

TEACHER
Shh! Boys!

TEACHER exits.

DANIEL
It was worth a shot.

TIMMY
Hey, once quiet time's over, you wanna meet up at the playground? I got this really cool game we can play called -

DANIEL
Yeah. Sure, Timmy.

*DANIEL and TIMMY both lay back down on their mats.
Lights fade out.*

Scene 7

*Lights fade back into the bedroom from Scene 5, only now with much less Christmas decorations.
Cardboard boxes lay all around the bedroom.
DANIEL lays atop the bed, above the covers.
SUSAN enters, stage left, carrying a cardboard box.*

SUSAN
Alright Daniel. That ought to do it. Come here and give your mother a hug before she goes.

DANIEL wakes up.

SUSAN

Oh, no wonder I wasn't getting any help. You were up here snoozing.

DANIEL

Mom?

SUSAN

What is it Daniel? Are you alright? You look like you'd just seen a ghost.

DANIEL

I'm fine, Mom. You look so, uh, you look so –

DANIEL considers calling his mother "old" but does not want to be rude.

DANIEL

I like your sweater.

SUSAN

Thanks, sweetie. Evelyn gave it to me last year for Christmas. I was hoping she'd be around today to see me in it but, she's out with Oliver getting you your present.

DANIEL

It's Christmas Eve?

SUSAN

Sure is. Losing track of the days too, huh?

DANIEL

Yeah. You could say that.

SUSAN

Alright, well. Come here. I need to go to Caroline's house to see your cousins.

DANIEL remembers his conversation with the letter he read earlier.

DANIEL

Wait – Mom. Don't go.

DANIEL looks out a window upstage.

DANIEL

It's snowing. The roads are probably horrible. Maybe you're better off just staying here?

SUSAN

Daniel. I need to, I need to give her and your cousins their presents and...

DANIEL

The roads, Mom! The roads are awful. People traveling, ice. Why don't you just go tomorrow? I'm sure the roads will be less busy, a little?

SUSAN

Sorry sweetie. I told her I'd be over. Plus, she's making her annual lasagna tonight too. Can't miss that! No sir. You can come with me if you'd like. Call Evelyn and tell her to meet us over there.

DANIEL

Mom. No. I, just, please. Stay.

SUSAN

Daniel, please.

DANIEL

What if you crash?

SUSAN

What?

DANIEL

If you go to Aunt Caroline's tonight, the roads are so bad... what if, you uh... crash?

SUSAN

Where is this coming from?

DANIEL

I just, want you to be okay. I really don't think you should go.

SUSAN hesitates a moment.

SUSAN

Alright, Daniel. If you are so worried that I'm going to crash tonight, then I won't go. Let me call her.

SUSAN pulls out her cell phone and steps out of the room.

DANIEL's phone begins to ring.

TIMMY appears under a spotlight on stage left.

PHONE VOICE is heard over speakers.

PHONE VOICE

Hello. This is a prepaid collect call from...

TIMMY

Timothy R. Smith.

PHONE VOICE

...an inmate from Lucas Correctional Facility. If you would like to accept this call, press 1. If you would like to decline this call, press 2. If you would like to...

DANIEL presses "1" on his phone.

Timmy?
DANIEL

TIMMY
Hey, hey! Danny! Merry Christmas, man. Or, Christmas Eve, I guess. 'Bout the same time.

DANIEL
Timmy? You're in jail?

TIMMY is silent.

TIMMY
Strange Danny?

DANIEL lightens up, slightly.

DANIEL
Ha. Yeah. It's me. I uh, haven't figured it out yet. The whole mattress thing. Do you remember?

TIMMY
Ha ha. Do I remember? How could I forget.

DANIEL
How'd you... get locked up?

TIMMY
We should've put down on paper that you wanted me to knock you out... on your own wedding day. Once I knocked you, "Strange Danny", out, your wife came in and lost her shit. Called the cops. You woke up, but of course had forgotten about your time travel rant. So, you were upset, but then I gave you and the cops the time travel rant and everybody thought I was crazy.

DANIEL
Oh. Well. That wasn't me, Timmy. Not like, "me" me.

TIMMY
Hey, I don't blame you in the slightest. You're my best friend. Plus, it's not your fault that I... ran as fast as I could from the scene.

DANIEL
You ran?

TIMMY
I was freaking out! So... yeah. I booked it. Maybe not my best decision. I'll be getting out soon though, anyways. Not in time for Christmas, so, here I am.

DANIEL

I'm sorry. Timmy. I really am. I'm going to fix things. I promise. Once I get back, all of this will never happen.

TIMMY

Alright, Danny. I need to go. Tell whoever's home I say Merry Christmas. Maybe not Evelyn. She may not want to hear from me.

DANIEL

Will do, Timmy. See you soon.

TIMMY

Goodbye, Danny.

*TIMMY hangs up the phone and exits, stage left.
DANIEL hangs up his phone.*

DANIEL

Hey Mom? You still on the phone?

*DANIEL exits the bedroom.
Lights fade out.*

Lights fade back into the kitchen.

SUSAN is nowhere to be seen. A letter sits on the kitchen counter.

DANIEL hobbles down the stairs into the kitchen, where there are more boxes and an undecorated Christmas tree.

DANIEL

Mom? Where the hell'd you –

*DANIEL spots the letter on the counter.
He slowly walks to it and picks it up.*

DANIEL

"Dear Daniel... I heard you were on the phone, so I'm writing this as to not interrupt you. I'm heading to Aunt Caroline's just for a moment to drop these gifts off. I'll come back right after, and I'll drive extra carefully. Love, your mother."

*EVELYN and OLIVER enter kitchen from the front door, located on the back wall.
They are both bundled up and carrying shopping bags.*

OLIVER

Hi Daddy!

EVELYN hands OLIVER a specific bag and leads him towards the stairs.

EVELYN

Quick! Go run this upstairs and hide it before Daddy sees it, go, go, go!

DANIEL

I couldn't stop her.

EVELYN

Who? Your mother? I can tell. You wouldn't have been able to bring in all these boxes by yourself.

DANIEL

She's gone.

EVELYN

Aw, really? That's too bad. I would've loved to say hello to her. Is she coming back? I'm going to go wash up and then start making dinner. Spaghetti sound good with you? Hope so, cause that's what we're having.

The sound of sirens are heard flying past the house.

EVELYN

Oof. Must be heading towards the highway. Awful pileup not too far from here. The roads are pretty bad tonight. Hopefully everyone's okay. Would hate to be in an accident on Christmas Eve.

EVELYN heads upstairs.

DANIEL, alone, begins to cry.

Frustrated, he slams his fists on the counter.

DANIEL crosses to the couch in the living room and lays on the couch.

He buries his face in his hands.

DANIEL

Please. Please.

Lights fade out.

Scene 8

Lights fade back into TIMMY and DANIEL'S apartment.

TIMMY sits on the couch, trying to find something to watch on TV.

DANIEL wakes up, takes in his surroundings and springs out of bed.

DANIEL

Holy shit!

DANIEL runs out of the bedroom and barges into the living room.

TIMMY is seated on the couch, watching TV.

TIMMY

Hey, you alright?

DANIEL

Timmy, what fucking day is it?

TIMMY

It's just another manic Monday, Danny. What's up?

DANIEL

Holy shit!

DANIEL runs across the room and embraces TIMMY.

DANIEL

I'm back. I'm fucking back!

TIMMY

Yep. You sure are... buddy....

DANIEL releases TIMMY and turns to face his bedroom.

TIMMY

So... what about that mattress, huh? Was it or was it not the most comfortable mattress in existence?

DANIEL grabs knife from the block in the kitchen.

DANIEL

No. I hate it.

DANIEL crosses back into his bedroom.

The lights turn off in here.

The sound of ripping and tearing is heard yet again.

After a moment, DANIEL reenters the living room, disheveled. As if he had just killed someone.

TIMMY

Okay. Well that was a little extreme.

DANIEL

Hey. You did the same thing to my old mattress.

TIMMY

If you didn't want this one that bad you could've just said so.

DANIEL gives TIMMY a deadpan stare.

DANIEL

Go get dressed. We're going to buy a new mattress.

TIMMY

Sweet.

*TIMMY exits DANIEL'S bedroom and enter his own bedroom.
DANIEL pulls out his cell phone and calls his mother.*

DANIEL

Hey Mom. Yeah. It's me. Hey, listen, I know Christmas is a few months out from now, but um, I was wondering if we could start a tradition? Like, maybe all of us come over to your house every year. Myself, Aunt Caroline, the cousins. I could even bring Timmy along. Oh, and Evelyn of course!

TIMMY remembers he still needs to rearrange his date with EVELYN.

DANIEL

Shit! Evelyn!