

A Case for Yellow Excerpt

By

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ACT II

Scene 2

*Mid-morning. Livingroom. Miles is sitting on the couch, reading, a different book than earlier. A few moments, and then the front door opens. It's Lily and Evangeline. Evangeline carries a few bags. Miles looks up.*

EVANGELINE

Good morning, Miles, dear, just dropping off a few things. I'll be out of your hair in a minute. Here, flower, come and show me where you want these.

*The two exit to the back rooms. Mile sits for a few moments. Gets up. Paces. Sits back down. Picks up the book, holds it without reading. Puts it back down. Stands again. Continues this, until Evangeline and Lily reenter.*

Alright dear, keep me updated so I don't have to worry. If you need anything let me know.

*The two women embrace. Evangeline touches Lily's face. They say nothing, but it's all there.*

Take care, Miles.

MILES

Thanks Mom.

*A pause.*

EVANGELINE

You'll call too, if you need to.

*Miles nods.*

She's first, though, always.

*Miles nods again.*

Right then. Well.

*A pause.*

LILY

Mom.

EVANGELINE

Right. Take care, bud.

*With that she exits the house. A silence in her wake.*

(CONTINUED)

MILES

How are you feeling? Do you want to sit?

LILY

I'm alright thanks.

MILES

Ok.

LILY

I can sit though. I mean, if you want--

MILES

No, I mean, whatever you--

LILY

Let's sit.

*She goes and sits on the couch. He doesn't.*

MILES

Are you hungry?

LILY

I ate breakfast with mom.

MILES

Right. Can I get you anything? Water? Tea?

LILY

Oh, uh, some water would be nice--

MILES

I'll be right back.

*He exits. Lily sits for a moment. Picks up his book, examines it. Puts it back down as Miles reenters with water. He hands it to her, hesitates a moment, then sits down on the couch.*

LILY

Thanks. A new book?

MILES

Yah.

LILY

You finished the last one?

MILES

No, I uh, I gave up on it. You were right, it wasn't worth it.

(CONTINUED)

LILY  
Oh.

MILES  
But that's the thing about books. There are always more.

LILY  
You can always start a new one?

MILES  
Exactly.

*A moment. Then they embrace. A release. When they pull back, both have tears.*  
I'm sorry.

LILY  
Me too.

BOTH  
Too much sorry, the both of us.

*They smile a little.*

MILES  
So you're, uh, bleeding?

LILY  
Yah, it's pretty common to bleed after. The period cycle starts over.

MILES  
Right. Pain?

LILY  
Not bad. Yesterday, pretty bad. But I'm really feeling a lot better. Just kind of how I usually feel on my period.

MILES  
Right.

LILY  
How are you?

MILES  
Oh, you know.

LILY  
I'm...not sure I do.

(CONTINUED)

MILES

I'm...also not sure. I'm, uh, glad you're ok. I mean, you're feeling ok. That's good.

LILY

...and...?

MILES

Well, uh...I mean it's over. I mean it's done. So there's no longer any...uh, hope I guess. You know. I mean there's no chance...so I guess that's probably good.

*A beat.*

I'm happy to see you. It's been a while since we've spent the night apart.

*A beat.*

I like this new book a lot. It's, uh, quite thrilling. Lots of action, very exciting.

LILY

Miles...

MILES

I'm sad. I'm really, really sad. I feel, heartbroken. Bereaved. I think that's the word.

*A silence.*

LILY

I wish I knew...

MILES

I think it's just going to take time. That's what they say about these things, right?

LILY

I don't know...

MILES

I just need time to grieve, and then to heal...

LILY

Time heals all wounds?

MILES

People say that.

LILY

Do you believe it?

(CONTINUED)

MILES

I don't know. I think...time deadens some things and amplifies others. Time...things change. Inevitably. So this...this won't be forever. I'm not sure about healing though. Some wounds fester.

LILY

Not if you tend them properly.

MILES

So I guess that's what this is, figuring out how to tend this particular wound.

LILY

Your wound and our wound.

MILES

Right, both. And yours too.

LILY

I think mine's ours.

MILES

No wound of your own?

LILY

I think...my personal wound...just got healed.

MILES

Oh.

*Beat.*

We speak in metaphor a lot, don't we.

LILY

It makes ugly things beautiful.

MILES

Beauty...

LILY

Also, sometimes we don't have words for what it is.

MILES

So we say what it's like.

LILY

Exactly.

MILES

Beautiful likeness.

(CONTINUED)

LILY

Mhmm.

MILES

Doesn't that idealize reality?

LILY

Well, reality...

MILES

Right, not reality, but I mean isn't metaphor that ideal world you so desperately don't want to mistake this one for?

LILY

I...I think it's a little different. I'm not sure how to articulate why.

MILES

I think it's different too.

LILY

Yah?

MILES

Because it doesn't stand aloof. It shapes this world.

LILY

Huh.

*Beat.*

We're pretty smart, aren't we?

MILES

Don't forget funny and handsome.

*A beat.*

LILY

What do we do with today?

MILES

I don't know. Talk some, probably. Grieve a bit--for me and for us. Do some things soft and pleasant; listen to old music or read aloud to each other. Easy things. Simple things.

LILY

Are there? Easy things, simple things?

MILES

I don't think the things themselves are anything. It's just how we experience them, in the moment.

(CONTINUED)

LILY

Easy and simple. I could use some of that. And you're ok with it?

MILES

Grief is easy. It's our desire not to feel so shitty that makes it hard. I fully intend to allow myself to feel as awful as I need to. Easy, simple.

LILY

Easy, simple. And the talking?

MILES

Probably less so. We'll take it in stages.

LILY

Ok.

MILES

When one becomes too much we switch to the other.

LILY

Ok.

MILES

Where should we begin?

LILY

I don't know. I'm not sure if--

*Lily winces, a sudden cramp.*

MILES

Are you ok?

LILY

Yah, yah, just a cramp.

MILES

Do you want me to rub your back?

LILY

I'm not sure if that'll help...it's a very...internal cramp.

MILES

Oh.

LILY

But I mean you know it's always nice, you know, like it helps distract if nothing else.

(CONTINUED)



MILES

So should I--

LILY

If you want to--

MILES

I mean only if you want me to--

LILY

Yah I mean I don't want to make you--

MILES

Oh no I offered, I'm happy to--

LILY

Well, then--

MILES

So I'll--

LILY

Yah.

*They adjust themselves. Miles starts to put his hand under Lily's shirt to rub her back.*

MILES

Is it ok if I--?

LILY

Oh yah. Sure. Yes. Thanks.

*He rubs her back for a bit. Lily is too tense to have it help. Miles can feel that. Both are uncomfortable.*

That's uh, that's good.

MILES

You're feeling better?

LILY

Yah, um...

*A silence.*

MILES

I guess we should talk...

LILY

Yah, I guess we have to.

(CONTINUED)

MILES

So much for easy and simple.

LILY

We've spent so many years disallowing illusions, I guess we're in the habit.

MILES

Oh. Well, that's a place to start.

LILY

What?

MILES

Well, uh...I didn't go to work yesterday.

LILY

Oh?

MILES

No. I stayed home. Well, I went out first. Well...you should probably just go look.

LILY

Look where?

MILES

.....

*A few moments. Then Lily gets up, exits. She is gone a long time. Finally, Miles gets up to go check on her. As he's about to exit she appears in the doorway. They stand there for a long moment. Then Miles goes and sits down on the couch. A pause, and then Lily joins him.*

LILY

What...does it mean, to you?

MILES

I'm not sure exactly. I just...couldn't bear the thought of walking into that room and seeing it dark. A forever reminder of the loss. This way...well, it'll always, *signify*, I guess, but...it's the better part of it. The good part. So at least I can, have, some of the light. Grieve for the empty brightness instead of lingering in the dark. Does that make any sense?

LILY

I...I don't understand it but I recognize it.

(CONTINUED)

MILES

Huh.

LILY

So it's...I should take it...

MILES

As a good sign? I think so. Or maybe just as...

LILY

What's necessary. Which is good, to do what's necessary.

MILES

...a new coat of paint.

LILY

Just that?

MILES

Probably not. But...I don't know. We...ascribe so much meaning to everything. Maybe if we just let it be a coat of paint...that's all it will be.

LILY

You really think you could do that?

MILES

I can try?

LILY

But...if it does mean more than that.

MILES

Then I'll fail.

LILY

Not necessarily. You might remain in a state of willful ignorance.

MILES

I don't think...you and I...we'd be able to sustain that. No. Would *choose* to sustain that.

LILY

You have a lot of faith in us.

MILES

We're healthy people. We make healthy choices. We'll make the healthy choices.

(CONTINUED)

LILY  
It's a health we've cultivated. It's not guaranteed.

MILES  
I think it's pretty strong.

LILY  
A plant that needs re-potting.

MILES  
Oh?

LILY  
So strong it necessitates a dangerous change. A traumatic change. But that allows it to keep growing, stronger. We are...

MILES  
Your mother's ficus.

LILY  
My mother's ficus.

*Both burst out laughing. Laugh a lot. It subsides.*  
You know, if this were a story, the ficus would die.

MILES  
The plant?

LILY  
Yah. I mean, if I were writing this as a story, the plant would die. We'd struggle, they wouldn't know if we were going to make it, then mom would call and tell us the plant's dead, and then everyone would know our relationship's dead, even without it ending. Because in stories, symbolism means something. Everything means something. No room for the extraneous.

MILES  
The plant as the physical manifestation of our relationship.

LILY  
And no one would question it, in a story. We've all learned what it means, for that plant to die. All our stories are fantasy.

MILES  
Yah but we do that in life too, don't we? I mean, if your mom called right now and said her plant's dead, I'd be seriously freaked.

(CONTINUED)

LILY  
I wonder...

MILES  
Yah?

LILY  
Do we learn it from stories? But I mean life was first,  
right?

MILES  
I...

LILY  
Or maybe it's that thing where there's a third factor.  
Life and stories are both the symptoms.

MILES  
I think at this point I *want* the plant to die. Because  
then I can be like, "fuck you, this is life, it doesn't  
mean anything."

LILY  
A third thing...

MILES  
No plant is going to make these decisions for us.  
Fucking symbolism doesn't get to decide.

LILY  
...works with just two...

*A long silence.*  
I think I need to lie down for a bit. I'm tired.

MILES  
Is this...?

LILY  
A depression thing? No, I don't think so. I think it's  
just good ol' normal physical and emotional exhaustion.

MILES  
You have plenty of reason...not that you have to  
justify--

*Lily stands up.*

LILY  
I'll probably be a couple hours. More if I actually  
fall asleep.

(CONTINUED)

MILES

Oh, ok. What should I--?

LILY

Whatever you want.

MILES

Oh. Right. Well...

*Lily begins to leave, stops when Miles speaks.*  
Lily? I thought we were going to spend the day  
together?

LILY

This isn't symbolism, Miles. I'm tired, I'm resting.  
Don't read into it.

MILES

I just--

*She exits. A beat.*  
Lily?

*A few moments. Lights fade.*