

FALLEN

Characters

Lydia, a single mother, in her late 30s

James, mid-30s, a kindergarten teacher, teacher of Lydia's son

Jake, Lydia's son, age 6

Setting: The play takes place in a quiet neighborhood, between 2 neighborhood homes with rectangular windows. A tree had just fallen, uprooting the sidewalk, tugging at a phone line running between the 2 homes, and crushing the mailbox outside the home on the left.

Act I

A blustery afternoon, a few hours after the last day of kindergarten had ended. Lydia is seen in a dirtied outfit through the window of the left home, moving about the cardboard-box-filled living room in haste. James trudges in from the left stage as if walking against strong winds, hugging a leather satchel tightly. He halts in shock as he catches sight of the fallen tree, then walks over to examine it. He notices the crushed mailbox and gazes toward the left window. Lydia has her back turned towards him, moving around boxes in search of something. James begins to walk towards the window, but wavers. After a short pause, he takes a couple of steps back, carefully making his way around the tree, and onto the front porch of the right home. He quickly unlocks the door and enters. A few seconds later, James appears in the right window. He picks up the telephone sitting by the window and dials. The phone sitting by Lydia's window rings.

LYDIA

(Putting down the roll of packing tape in her hand and walking over to the window. She answers the phone.)

Hello?

JAMES

(Facing left and speaking into the phone.)
Hey, Lydia, it's James! I just thought I'd call to see if everything is okay.

LYDIA

(Absent-mindedly, turning her head to look at something on the left, unseen through the window)

Oh, yeah, everything is fine... Why, what's wrong?

JAMES

(A little flustered but still maintaining his good humor)
Oh, you know, just... well, you might not have noticed, but there's this huge tree outside your house and I just thought I'd check in to make sure your mailbox was the only thing that... suffered the consequences.

LYDIA

(Snapping out of her daze and breaking into a smile.)

Oh, right! Of course! I- I got so busy I almost forgot that happened today.

(She chuckles—a half-sigh, half-chuckle)

Thank you, James. I appreciate your calling. We're okay, thankfully.

(Lydia smiles and so does James. A moment of blissful silence passes.)

How was Jake today? I hope he didn't cause any last trouble.

JAMES

Oh, no, not at all. Jake is a great kid. I'm going to miss having him in my class.

LYDIA

(Smiling inadvertently)

Yeah...

(She glances back at Jake who is not seen through the window. There is a long pause. Outside, the wind howls with new intensity, but the silence glaring. Lydia turns towards the right, James' direction.)

James?

JAMES

(Looking towards Lydia's direction with a certain eagerness.)

Yes?

LYDIA

Why are you calling me?

JAMES

(Blinking with slight confusion.)

To... to see if you're doing okay...?

LYDIA

Yes but, why are you calling me? Why now?

JAMES

(Knitting his brows tighter together)

What do you mean?

LYDIA

As in-

(She sighs and massages her forehead)

You know what, forget it. I don't know what I was on to.

(She pauses and the phone line sparks/makes a loud crackling noise.)

JAMES

No, no, I think I do know what you're asking.

LYDIA

I feel like...

JAMES

I just...

LYDIA

Why can't you just be straight up with me? After 2 years... Why can't you just-
(She freezes, as if time has stopped for her.)

JAMES

I guess I just don't want to admit it.
(He chuckles in embarrassment. A pause.)

Truth is, Lydia, I'm not just calling to check in on you as a neighbor-
(He freezes mid-speech)

LYDIA

(Unfreezing and continuing her thought)
I didn't mean for that to come off so harsh. I just feel like there's something, you know? Every time we talk, there's this...
(An exasperated look crosses her face as she searches for the right words. She freezes in time.)

JAMES

(Unfreezing and picking up where he left off.)
Or as your son's teacher, or even... as a friend. I-

LYDIA

Maybe it's just me...

JAMES

Dammit, I care about you.

JAMES

(James breathes in sharply, realizing what he had said.)
Shit...

LYDIA

(Almost as a whisper to herself.)
Is it just me?

JAMES

(Rubbing his temple.)
Well, I said it. You're leaving soon so I guess I might as well say it all. I care about you and I have since the day you appeared on my doorstep, offering to help me move in. And you're a great mother—anyone who faintly knows you can see that. But I know it hasn't been easy with just you and Jake...

LYDIA

James? You're awfully quiet...

JAMES

(Continuing)

So let me help.

LYDIA

Say something, James. Please.

JAMES

(Concerned)

Lydia? Are you there?

LYDIA

Hello?

JAMES

Hello?

LYDIA

(A pained smile on her face)

You've really got nothing to say to me, huh...

JAMES

If I've offended you in any way, I'm sorry. Just please say something.

(A silent pause. Both Lydia and James look out the window and sigh.)

LYDIA

Fine. So be it.

JAMES

I get it. I'll leave you be.

(the phone line sparks/crackles again.)

BOTH

Take care.