

## Harmony, PA

A ten minute play  
by Gabrielle Wagner

NAME: Gabrielle Wagner Mann

WHERE?: Summit, NJ

BIO: Gabi is an actor/singer and playwright/librettist/lyricist who recently moved back home to NJ after 20 years in Los Angeles. Her ten-minute play *Net Worth (fka Bum Deal)* was produced in Maplewood just before the pandemic started. Her first one-act musical *iWish* was produced in LA three times, and published, and *City of Light*, her full-length musical was most recently seen at the SheNYC Festival directed by Cady Huffman and at 54Below, directed by Autumn Reeser. A handful of her other short plays have been produced on both coasts and she's currently workshopping her full-length play, *Pot Odds*, and musical *Every Moon: a Faerie Tale*. She is also currently pursuing her MFA in Playwriting/Screenwriting at Point Park University. As an actress, Gabi starred in and won awards for many musicals including: *Divorce! The Musical*, *The Threepenny Opera*. She can be seen on *Mad Men*, *Wilfred*, *Stonerville* and other films/tv shows. Since being back in NYC, she's starred in *Valer: a Texas drama*, and *2020:a Fantasy*, in addition to various films and shorts. More at [www.gabriellewagner.com](http://www.gabriellewagner.com)

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What's keeping me positive? Reading, writing, walking, my kiddos, hubby, dog, chocolate vodka;)

Yes, you can publish this!

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## **CHARACTERS**

3w, 1m

- MaryAnnAnn:** late 60s, hard-working, blue-collar woman, prideful, tough as nails, suspicious of anything/one new
- Winnie:** 40, MaryAnn's daughter, in town during the pandemic, a fish out of water back here in the 'backwoods' of PA, successful NYC singer/actress
- Gregory:** 30s/40s, new to town, music teacher, trumpet player
- Grace:** 9, Winnie's socially awkward daughter, hasn't spoken in over 3 months

## **TIME**

Present

## **PLACE**

A small house in Harmony, PA

During the pandemic, a woman and her daughter from NYC move back in with her mom in small town Pennsylvania.

## **NOTES**

Slash mark (/) denote a point of overlap between one speaker's line and the next speaker's line.

A dash (-) denotes when a line is interrupted by another line or a character's own thoughts.

An ellipsis (...) indicates a pause or reflection in the character's thoughts before or after speaking.

## **INGREDIENTS**

1. Trumpet (Greg plays it)
2. Unexpected Money (Winnie finds a penny)
3. A Porch (the setting)
4. A Dance Break (Riverdance clogging)
5. A Secret (Greg has known Winnie for a while)
6. \*\*extra credit: the Devil (three times mentioned!)

## Harmony, PA

*MaryAnn, late 60s, stands on her front porch, humming and pruning the few flower pots on the railing and taking sips from her drink in a tumbler. From the distance she hears a trumpet being played. She stops what she's doing and listens and looks for the culprit. The sound gets closer. She reaches through the open door and grabs her shotgun and points it towards the sound.*

MARYANN

Who's making that racket out there? Announce yourself or be prepared to be silenced. This gun is loaded.

*(She cocks the gun. The trumpet playing stops.)*

GREGORY

Hello there, Miss. Whoa!

MARYANN

'Miss?'" Who you calling 'miss?' I'm damn near seventy years old, I am no 'Miss!'" What do you /want?

GREGORY

Pardon me Ma'am. My apologies. From back there you looked much younger. That's a compliment, I promise.

MARYANN

Who are you and what do you want?

GREGORY

Well /I was just-

MARYANN

/You're not trying to sell me music instruments, are you?

GREGORY

No Ma'am.

MARYANN

I seen that Music Man show, they did it at our theater here in town last year, I liked it okay. But, I don't want no trouble...

GREGORY

You mean, 'right here in River City?'

MARYANN

This ain't River City? What are you going on about?

GREGORY

No, no, I meant you know, from the /musical...

MARYANN

There's an Oil City about an /hour up the 79.

GREGORY

(sings)

'Cuz... Ya got trouble, folks... right here in River City. Trouble with a capital T and that rhymes with P and that stands for Pool.'

*(He puts his trumpet to his lips and goes right into a trumpet version of '76 Trombones.)*

MARYANN

Hey, hey hey, pipe it down... I ain't buying what you're sellin'

*(He stops playing.)*

Well, the Devil sure does make work for idle hands.

*(She tentatively lowers the gun.)*

GREGORY

Music is not the Devil's work, Ma'am. Music is a universal language, the breath of gods.

MARYANN

I still have a shotgun over here, Buster. And I still don't know why you're here.

GREGORY

My name's Gregory, or just plain Greg. But you can call me Buster if you like. I'm new here, I'm the new teacher at the Harmony Elementary School.

MARYANN

And?

GREGORY

I'm here to see your daughter. I believe she's staying here.

*(MaryAnn lifts the shotgun again.)*

MARYANN

What do you want with my daughter?

*(Her daughter, Winnie, 40, steps out onto the porch. She is dressed more modern and fashionably - it's clear that she is not 'from here.')*

WINNIE

Oh, Jesus Mom, would you put that thing down. Not everyone who comes knocking is serial killer or a rapist.

MARYANN

Well speak of the Devil. Here she is, the woman you're looking for.

*(Winnie notices Greg standing at the foot of the porch stairs. He waves sheepishly.)*

GREGORY

Hi Winnie.

MARYANN

You know him?

WINNIE

Mr. Hilton /I told you I'm not-

GREGORY

It's Greg, please call me Greg.

WINNIE

I told you at the diner that I'm not staying. And I cannot help you.

GREGORY

Well, you're here now. Please just consider it.

WINNIE

But my life is in New York and I just came to make sure my mom was okay during /the pandemic.

MARYANN

And she is. She's just fine, always has been. You came because New York was a virus cess-pool that you needed to get away from. Lucky I made you quarantine before being around humans.

WINNIE

*(aside to Greg)*

My mom's not human.

MARYANN

I'm right here!

WINNIE

*(gesturing to the shotgun)*

Mom, can you take that thing inside and give us a minute?

*(Just then Winnie's daughter, Grace, 9, quietly appears at the doorway to the house. Greg notices her first.)*

GREGORY

Well, hello there.

WINNIE

Hi honey. Do you need something?

*(Grace doesn't speak.)*

Grace, do you want to come out and say hello?

*(Grace runs back inside the house. Winnie is a bit distressed by this. MaryAnn frowns and follows Grace in.)*

She hasn't said a word since we left New York.

GREGORY

How long has that been?

WINNIE

Three and a half months.

GREGORY

Have you taken her to see anyone about it?

WINNIE

Here? Who?

*(Greg shrugs.)*

No... I've just been patient with her and letting her take her own time. It's been hard. No TV here and no Wifi. Well okay, after a month of no Wifi, I was losing my mind and finally convinced my mom that I would pay for everything and it would not affect her at all.

GREGORY

And has it?

WINNIE

Yes! She's obsessed with Candy Crush and GardenScapes, and she's binging the Ozarks!

GREGORY

So, you've brought out the dark side in your mom.

WINNIE

You mean the woman who was just pointing a shotgun at you only moments before? Yea, that's not Netflix, that's all her.

GREGORY

You think she just misses home and her friends?

WINNIE

My mom?

GREGORY

No Grace. Your daughter, that is your daughter, right?

WINNIE

Yes... I don't know. Maybe. I'm not sure she ever liked it in New York either and she's a bit shy, so friends weren't exactly beating down the door for her. I sort of dragged her there when she was one because my career was taking off... To be honest, I'm not sure I love it there either.

GREGORY

Do you think it's possible that she's just stuck in fight flight freeze because everything's in limbo and she has no idea where life is taking you both next?

WINNIE

It's taking us back to New York. She knows that.

GREGORY

Of course. I'm sorry, I didn't mean to overstep.

WINNIE

What do you know so much about all of this?

GREGORY

I just know a little bit about trauma and... how it manifests in the body.

WINNIE

You think she's traumatized?

GREGORY

God no, that's not what I'm saying. I'm sorry, we've gotten off track... I'm a musician. And a teacher. You're a singer. And a really good one. And I need some help getting this new music program going in the schools here. I know /you said no but-

WINNIE

How do you know I'm any good? You've never heard me.

GREGORY

Well... that's actually not 100% true... I confess. I already knew who you were.

WINNIE

How?

GREGORY

I've spent some time in New York. I've seen a few of your cabaret shows and... I've subbed in the pit for Dear Evan Hansen a few times.

WINNIE

What? You have?

GREGORY

I did. And I actually played the night you went on for Evan's mom.

WINNIE

Yeah? Wow. That was a night. I... swing for both of the mother roles but I'd only ever gone on for Zoe's mom. Playing Heidi Hansen is a whole other animal and I was so so nervous.

GREGORY

No, you were such a pro. Didn't miss a beat. Can't say the same for myself though.

WINNIE

Thank you. Yea, I love that show. I have the worst luck though, I was just about to take over the role of Zoe's mother permanently, right before Broadway shut down. Would you know it, I finally get my place on the Broadway stage and bam! Blocked!

GREGORY

I can't even imagine what that must have felt like.

WINNIE

So... are you a stalker? Or is just a coincidence that you know so much about me and then ended up in the same Podunk town in Pennsylvania that I'm in?

GREGORY

It's mostly a coincidence.

WINNIE

Mostly?

GREGORY

I mean I did take the job here long before I knew you were here, so it's not like I followed you but... it wasn't a complete coincidence that I ran into you at the diner.

WINNIE

Accidentally on purpose?

GREGORY

Something like that... Look, we both know that it's going to be a while before theatre and our jobs there are coming back to anything like we knew it.

WINNIE

I know all of that... It's just, I've wanted this for so long and worked so hard to get there and I was devastated when the pandemic shut it all down, shut my dreams down. But after I mourned that and had a few days of drinking maybe possibly a little too much, I realized... it's all okay... There's been something really raw and eye-opening about this time and this 'forced vacation' so to speak... I didn't realize how much I needed a break. Permission to just get off the merry-go-round for a minute. It's brought me closer to this sense of home and this sense of family and what I truly want to accomplish in my life, in whatever time I have left. I know what my talents and my gifts are and I'm not really all that sure that I care so much about anyone 'knowing my name.' And I think for so long, I was driven by this desire to succeed, to prove that I could do it against the odds, because let's face it, the odds are never with a performer. And I think... what I'm realizing is... it was all to prove it to myself. And well, I have. I did it. I made it. And now I have to decide if I want it. I mean I want it but you know what I mean...

*(Greg looks at Winnie as if he really 'sees' her.)*

GREGORY

I know your name.

WINNIE

That's... wow, I have no idea why I am saying all this to you.

GREGORY

That's *my* gift. People just randomly open up to me out of the blue.

WINNIE

Blessing and a curse I bet.

GREGORY

Sometimes... not this time.

WINNIE

Thanks for not judging.

GREGORY

Oh I think I'm being very blatant and upfront. I *want* you to stay. Why would I judge you? I don't think I can hack this town without another sane human being that has lived outside of it. I think we could bring something really cool to these kids who frankly have never had a decent music program.

WINNIE

You just called me sane.

GREGORY

Am I gonna eat my words?

WINNIE

You might.

GREGORY

I have so many ideas and I need a partner to help me make them realistic. Like not just instruments and music but a whole theatre program, singing, acting... dance.

WINNIE

And you just lost me, nope. I don't dance. You don't want to see me dance. No parent in their right minds would pay to have me teach their kids to dance. Nope.

GREGORY

That can't be true.

WINNIE

Oh it's true. I have two left feet. Thank god there are still some shows that don't require dancing.

GREGORY

But there's always a dance break.

WINNIE

Otherwise known as a break from dance. No seriously, I've been cast in shows and they figure they'll work me into a dance number because it would 'make sense for my character to do so' and then there's always that moment when the director and choreographer whisper quietly on the side of the room. And then the next rehearsal I'm somehow blocked out of the dance, doing some other 'non-dancey' business that my character would do. It's not like I don't warn them, but they always want to try.

MARYANN (FROM O.S.)

Oh come on, you took clogging classes for years. You practiced so much *I* can still remember the routines. I also think it's why my ears haven't stopped ringing.

WINNIE

Ma, are you eavesdropping?

*(MaryAnn appears from behind the door frame doing her best impression of Michael Flatley from Riverdance.)*

MARYANN

*(still dancing)*

She wanted to go on tour with Riverdance so bad.

WINNIE

Mom, this is terribly embarrassing.

MARYANN

Well, you better take my hand and do it with me or I have way more embarrassing stories that I'll be busting out.

*(MaryAnn keeps her clogging feet moving. Greg pulls out a recorder from his bag and starts playing something Irish sounding. Finally, Winnie joins her and the two of them do their Riverdance routine. Grace watches from the window smiling. Greg finishes his tune. And they all laugh.)*

GREGORY

That was perfect!

WINNIE

That was terrible!

MARYANN

Thank god, she found her singing voice, because we didn't have the heart to tell her that the only clogging she'd be hired to do would be in the bathroom.

WINNIE

Mom!

MARYANN

But you have a bee-yoo-tiful voice, Sweetheart.

GREGORY

MaryAnn, you were quite nimble on your feet there.

MARYANN

Hey, I got some Irish in me, at least a quarter. Must be where I get my rhythm from.

WINNIE

Or at least your ability to drink us all under the table.

MARYANN

Har har har.

WINNIE

Hey, look...

*(Winnie reaches down and picks up a penny from one of the porch stairs.)*

Look at that. A shiny new penny. Where did that come from?

GREGORY

Heads or tails?

WINNIE

Heads of course. If it's tails, you leave it and turn it over for the next person to find.

MARYANN

I taught her that. I also taught her that finding a penny means your luck is gonna turn.

WINNIE

One can only hope, Mom. One can only hope.

*(Winnie puts the penny in her pocket and there is a slightly awkward silence.)*

GREGORY

Well, I should get out of your hair. Look, the offer stands. I have a pretty generous budget to work with so I'm just saying, while you're here, you might find yourself wanting to do something...

*(Grace who has been lingering just behind the doorframe since the 'dance break,' finally steps out onto the porch.)*

GRACE

Mama, can we stay?

*(Winnie turns to Grace with her jaw dropped, which spreads into a smile.)*

WINNIE

Oh Grace! I have missed your voice.

*(Grace runs to Winnie's who wraps her in her arms.)*

GRACE

I'd like to play music. Can we stay?

*(Winnie and MaryAnn both look at each other. MaryAnn gives Winnie an imperceptible nod. Winnie hesitates, looks at Greg and then back to Grace. Greg pulls a second recorder out of his bag and hands it to Grace.)*

WINNIE

Yes, honey, we can stay.

*(Grace eagerly takes the recorder and immediately starts blowing into it, making... noise.)*

GREGORY

How about if I come back next week and give you a lesson?

*(Grace happily runs inside. MaryAnn smiles and then turns around following Grace in.)*

WINNIE

Crazy.

GREGORY

What?

WINNIE

She grows up in New York surrounded by “culture,” exposed to the arts in every form, anything under the sun she wanted to learn, she could. And it takes her coming here to nowhere to get interested in music.

GREGORY

Harmony, PA.

WINNIE

Harmony, PA.

(End of Play)