

THE VIEW AT THE END

By

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THE VIEW AT THE END was created as part of 24 Hour Theatre at Available Light Theatre (Matt Slaybaugh, Artistic Director; Acacia Leigh Duncan, Jaylene Jennings, & Elena M. Perantoni, Producers). It was first presented at the Riffe Center Studio One in Columbus, Ohio, on November 8, 2014. It was directed by Brant Jones; the sound design was by Dave Wallingford; and the lighting design was by Jaylene Jennings. The cast was as follows:

AGATHA.....Beth Josephsen  
CHARLIE.....John Connor  
SALLY.....Audrey Rush  
OSCAR.....Chris Austin

We're on a CITY ROOFTOP. It's night. The only sound is emptiness, like a cold wind on the air.

AGATHA and CHARLIE are here. Alone. SHE's at the ledge; HE's at a small table with a glass of wine. An open bottle. Everything lit by candles. It almost looks romantic.

CHARLIE

...then I walked home as the sun rose over Rue Feydeau. And that's the story of how I lost my virginity, twice, in Paris.  
...  
...  
Agatha.

AGATHA

Hmm?

CHARLIE

So much for baring my soul at the end of the world.

AGATHA

Sorry, I was -- the view of the city from up here. It really is quite breathtaking. And you weren't baring your soul, you were bragging. Paris. The debauchery of youth. Lies and misgivings.

CHARLIE

Truths and certainties in the face of the unknown. More wine?

AGATHA

Do you think it will hurt? At the end?

CHARLIE

...I think you should have more wine.

AGATHA

I don't want to numb myself, Charlie. I want to feel. I haven't ... I didn't do enough of that in my life.

CHARLIE

Lucky you.

AGATHA

Yeah... lucky me. You didn't answer my question.

CHARLIE

I didn't come up here to talk about it.

AGATHA

The world is ending and you don't want to talk about it?

CHARLIE

The world isn't going to end. I mean, we are. Yes. The world? It'll still be here, just there will be no one left to mourn.

AGATHA

I think it's gonna hurt. Yeah. At the end... Dance with me.

CHARLIE

What?

AGATHA

It was a simple enough statement.

CHARLIE

No, I heard you. Why?

AGATHA

I've never danced on a city rooftop, last request of humanity... take your pick, Charlie.

CHARLIE

I don't dance.

AGATHA

Yes, you do. In Paris, you said...

CHARLIE

I don't want to dance.

AGATHA

Why did you come here?

(The DOOR from downstairs opens as SALLY and OSCAR burst forth.)

SALLY

Ohhhh my God, this is perfect! Look, it's so cute up here! Oh, there are people.

AGATHA

Hi.

OSCAR

We're so sorry to intrude like this on your last moments.

SALLY

We thought the building was totally abandoned.

CHARLIE

It is. Everyone evacuated yesterday. We didn't have anywhere to go. Not that it makes a ton of difference now.

SALLY

Neither did we. Have a place to go. I'm Sally, hi.

CHARLIE  
Charlie. And Agatha, there.

SALLY  
Oscar. He's my bae.

AGATHA  
Your "bay"?

OSCAR  
We're a couple. Like you all.

AGATHA  
Oh, no... um...

CHARLIE  
Neighbors. We didn't really even talk, or meet, until yesterday. During the evac.

SALLY  
Oh, well, it's perfect then, isn't it?

AGATHA  
What's perfect about it?

SALLY  
That you found each other. For the end.

AGATHA  
No, I meant, when you both joined us up here on the roof, you said "Oh my God, it's perfect."

OSCAR  
Maybe we should go.

SALLY  
No, she's right it is. It is perfect.

OSCAR  
But it's their roof, Sally. We can find another one.

SALLY  
Please Oscar, it'd be more meaningful to have witnesses.

CHARLIE  
Hey, the more the fuckin' merrier.

AGATHA  
Charlie.

CHARLIE  
What?

AGATHA  
We have guests.

CHARLIE

Now we're a "we"?

AGATHA

We... well... Would you two care for some wine?

CHARLIE

We're not hosting a party, Agatha. The whole of humanity is about to be wiped clean from the Earth.

OSCAR

Yeah, we should bounce, there's some negativity here.

AGATHA

No, stay! There's no negativity, that can't be lulled into a pseudo-quasi-state of politeness with enough wine.

CHARLIE

Trust me, there's not enough.

SALLY

Oscar, they can help us.

OSCAR

If it's what you want then it's what I want.

SALLY

I knew you'd think it was just perfect.

(SALLY and OSCAR have gotten pretty cutesie by this point.)

AGATHA

Help you with what?

SALLY

We're getting married!

AGATHA

Oh! Wow.

CHARLIE

I don't know why you'd want to get married. In this world. Just to watch it fall apart and burn around you.

OSCAR

At least we'd be together. To the end.

CHARLIE

If you're lucky.

SALLY

Since the end is pretty much upon us, I'd say we're set.

AGATHA

So you want to get married tonight? Now?

SALLY

Yes! And then we're going to jump off the building.

AGATHA

What?

CHARLIE

Yeah, I'm gonna need more wine.

OSCAR

And this isn't just because the world's ending.

SALLY

No, this is the real deal.

AGATHA

Jumping off the building?

SALLY

No, well yes. But I mean the wedding, that's the real deal.

OSCAR

I proposed before all this world ending trouble.

SALLY

Got down on his knee and everything, just like in the movies. I couldn't believe people still did that, ya know?

AGATHA

That's... lovely.

SALLY

So you'll do it then?

AGATHA

What?

OSCAR

Marry us. Official it or whatever you call it.

CHARLIE

You want Agatha to marry the two of you? So what, you can commit suicide as man and wife.

SALLY

It's not about killing ourselves. If you hadn't noticed, the world's gone to hell and it's taking us all with it.

OSCAR

We'll all probably be dead by morning anyway. Why not go out on our terms? A big F-U to the world for ending on us.

CHARLIE

Yeah, when you put it like that, Oscar has a good point. What do you say, Agatha?

SALLY

We're kind of on a schedule.

CHARLIE

You wanted to host a party. A wedding's like, way better.

AGATHA

I'm not licensed to marry people.

SALLY

Right, it's the end of the world. I don't think any one will be checking up on your credentials.

AGATHA

And I don't know you. Or anything about you. I'm not prepared to marry anyone, I wouldn't know what to say.

SALLY

Oh, I've got that covered.

(SALLY pulls some journals from her bag and opens one for Agatha.)

SALLY

We wrote it all down.

OSCAR

We could do it ourselves, but that kind of takes the wind out of the sails doesn't it?

SALLY

When we got up here and saw you both, it just, seemed like fate, ya know?

AGATHA

(still flipping through the journal)

No.

OSCAR

We're just saying that it would be nice to have witnesses to it, and to have someone preside over the ceremony.

SALLY

It would be perfect, actually. Make it feel, more real.

AGATHA

No, I mean no. I can't let you just... give up.

SALLY

On what? We're not giving up on each other.



AGATHA

On your lives.

SALLY

It's not like that.

AGATHA

It's leaping off a fucking building.

CHARLIE

Agatha, it's what they want.

AGATHA

What they want?! So you're all for this?? I wanted to dance and you said no. They want to kill themselves and you're ready to push them off the ledge?

CHARLIE

Oscar made a good argument. We're all about to die. What difference does it make if some people go dancing and some people go falling?

AGATHA

The difference is... it's... wrong, I don't know! Okay!? I just, they seem like nice people. You, Oscar and Sally, you seem like lovely people.

CHARLIE

You don't even know them.

AGATHA

They wrote it all down.

CHARLIE

Yeah, she said. The ceremony.

AGATHA

No, I mean, all of it. All of them. Look. Their lives, their stories, their love. They wrote it all down.

(AGATHA hands Charlie a journal,  
SALLY pulls more from her bag.)

SALLY

Every moment.

CHARLIE

Why?

OSCAR

After it was announced, ya know, that this was it, that it was the end, we felt like recording something. Us, ya know, written down.

CHARLIE

No one's gonna ever read it.

SALLY

You don't know that. One day, someone could stumble upon this rock. Shouldn't there be proof that we were here.

CHARLIE

The rotting cities will pretty much cover that.

SALLY

No, us. Me and Oscar. You. Agatha. The people who lived in those cities. Who died in them. We won't get to be buried. No gravestones. No funeral. We couldn't just go without leaving something. Just in case.

AGATHA

I think it's beautiful. I wish I'd thought of it. But... If you think there's a "just in case" --- why would you want to go before the end. Before you see what happens.

OSCAR

We know what happens.

SALLY

Agatha, I know it's not what you'd do. I know, but there's something calming about it. It brings me some peace to know that Oscar and I will face the end together.

AGATHA

You could face it here, with us.

OSCAR

No... we can't.

(OSCAR offers his hand and SALLY takes it and they step up onto the ledge, looking over.)

AGATHA

Please.

SALLY

Funny, I was just about to say the same to you.

CHARLIE

Agatha, this might be the wine talking.

AGATHA

You haven't had that much.

CHARLIE

Just let me mask my feelings in my own way. Marry them, and then I promise... we can dance, at their wedding.

AGATHA

You understand that's not much of a consolation.

CHARLIE

It's not a consolation. It's just the truth. I believe in truth and certainty in the face of the unknown. You can give them that.

AGATHA

So could you.

CHARLIE

Yeah, but you're the one who wanted to feel something right?

AGATHA

Not like this.

CHARLIE

It's their last wish. The last wish of humanity. Their humanity. So, grant them that.

AGATHA

I'm nervous.

SALLY

Everyone is.

(AGATHA opens the journal again,  
finding her page.)

AGATHA

Okay. Um... dearly beloved. We are gathered here, on this roof, to join together Oscar and Sally. They have loved a lifetime because tomorrow isn't coming and today is all they have. Do you have the rings?

OSCAR

Oh, no, we um... wait... here... use this one.

(OSCAR pulls a ring from his hand  
and puts it on Sally's).

CHARLIE

That'll do.

AGATHA

Sally and Oscar, by the power vested in me, by the end of the world, I now pronounce you husband and wife.

(SALLY and OSCAR kiss. It's happy.  
It's full of love. They walk to the  
edge together. They look back.)

OSCAR

Thank you.

SALLY

Good luck.

(They hold hands and step off together. AGATHA goes instinctively to grab them or check to see.)

CHARLIE

No, don't. Let 'em go.

(HE pulls her back and holds her gently. THEY go from this hold into a slight swaying dance.)

CHARLIE

This is actually nice.

AGATHA

We should've stopped them.

CHARLIE

Do you know why I came up here?

AGATHA

Because I had wine?

CHARLIE

No. Because I wanted to be alone. I didn't want to feel anything in the end. I'd already felt too much and I was tired of it.

AGATHA

Then why are you dancing?

CHARLIE

Because you let them go, and now you know the kind of pain I feel. And I didn't want that to be the last thing to happen to you. Don't tell anyone I said that.

AGATHA

I'll try. ...It really is beautiful up here.

(THEY keep dancing.)

CHARLIE

What do you think happens in the end?

AGATHA

I don't know, Charlie. How about we just enjoy the view?

(THEY keep dancing as the lights fade.)

END OF PLAY