An excerpt from
FORGETTING LEE GRANT

SYNOPSIS

FORGETTING LEE GRANT is a story about surviving. Lee Grant’s body is found by a pair of strangers, Sienna and Tam. The sight and implications of her body sends them and their relationship into turmoil as they struggle to cope with their own kinds of grief. Meanwhile, Lee’s partner and friends need to figure out how to live without Lee. The two different kinds of grief that these two groups of people cope with are intertwined, and ultimately come together when Sienna reaches out to Lee’s partner at the climax of the script.

CAST

SIENNA – mid 20s, a young idealist.
TAM – mid 20s, Sienna’s partner. Stuck grounded in reality.
KYRA – early 20s, Lee’s roommate, young in mind.
MIRANDA – late 20s, Lee’s roommate. Cynical, low-energy, and willfully disengaged from things that overwhelm her.
VINCENT – late 20s, Lee’s roommate and close friend. A caretaker at heart.
MIRIAM – late 20s, Lee’s partner. Strong-willed and perseverant, often to a fault.
SCENE ONE

(A dark stage, the main light source is a streetlamp. SIENNA and TAM stand in the light. Just outside their light is a graffiti-covered dumpster.

The girls are dressed for an evening out at a bar. SIENNA wears something bulky atop nicer clothes. TAM is put together and casually beautiful.)

SIENNA
What do we do now?

TAM
Go home.

SIENNA
We can’t just leave!

TAM
Sure. We called the police.

SIENNA
Yeah, but...

TAM
But what? They don’t need us.

SIENNA
I don’t want to just leave her here.

TAM
It’s not our problem anymore.

SIENNA
If we leave, we’re suspicious.

TAM
Let them investigate me. Tomorrow. When I have coffee.

SIENNA
Don’t be so cold.

TAM
She’s dead, dear.

SIENNA
She was a person.
TAM
She’s still dead.

SIENNA
That doesn’t make her less of a person.

(SIENNA walks towards the half-lit dumpster.)

TAM
Don’t!

(SIENNA pauses.)

SIENNA
Does it scare you?

TAM
No, it’s gross.

(SIENNA continues to the dumpster until she’s mostly in the dark. TAM stays in the streetlight.)

TAM
Babe. I love you. Please, don’t touch it.

SIENNA
She’s kind of beautiful.

TAM
Jesus,

SIENNA
She’s got really pretty hair. I think it’s curly.

TAM
Sienna!

SIENNA
It looks like she was going out. She’s wearing a dress. It’s a really unusual color, but I think I might have one—

TAM
Holy fuck, Sye.

SIENNA
Like a champagne-y blue, you know?
TAM
No, I don’t know. I don’t want to know—

SIENNA
Come look.

TAM
Jesus, no.

SIENNA
She can’t hurt you.

TAM
This is so fucked up, please.

SIENNA
I wonder where she was going. Was she with other people? Do you think she died alone?

TAM
I’m going to throw up.

SIENNA
Do you think it was fast?

TAM
I’m leaving.

(TAM is visibly stuck between walking away and staying with SIENNA. She begins to walk away, but pauses.)

TAM
Sienna, please. Please. Please come with me.

(SIENNA ignores her, crouching down beside the body.)

TAM
I can’t leave you here.

SIENNA
And I don’t want to leave her here.

TAM
We don’t even know her!

SIENNA
Maybe we did.

TAM
What?

SIENNA
Maybe I know her. Does that make it easier to stay?

TAM
God. I don’t... You don’t, do you?

SIENNA
Maybe.

TAM
Don’t fuck with me.

SIENNA
Probably not.

TAM
Sienna.

SIENNA
She could be anybody. Maybe I ride two seats away from her on Amtrak. Maybe she’s a custodian in my building, maybe I didn’t even notice her.

TAM
Maybe she’s somebody we didn’t know and don’t need to know!

SIENNA
She could be a friend of a friend.

TAM
Where even are the police?

SIENNA
She probably goes to the same bars as us.

TAM
Doesn’t this count as an emergency?

SIENNA
I want to know her name.

TAM
You’d think they’d be faster.

SIENNA
I want to know her.

TAM
Sienna—

SIENNA
You’re right.

TAM
Please—

SIENNA
Let’s go home.

TAM
Thank god.

SIENNA
She looks like she could be sleeping.

TAM
She’s dead, love.

SIENNA
She’s dead.

(The light stays until SIENNA joins TAM and they walk away from the dumpster.)

SCENE TWO

(In a cozy living room, with mismatched couches and an old coffee table. There is a big armchair, empty. MIRIAM sits on the middle of the couch, VINCENT and KYRA on either side. MIRANDA sits on the ground against the couch.

A cell phone sits on the coffee table.)

MIRIAM
She would call me first, right? I'm her partner, Lee would call me if something went wrong.

VINCENT
She'd call me if you were fighting.

MIRIAM
We weren't fighting. I made a wonderful dinner for her to come home to!

VINCENT
Well, she was supposed to see me the next day.

KYRA
And we had house dinner on Saturday.

MIRANDA
Like she's never missed our dinners before, Kyra.

KYRA
This is different.

MIRANDA
It's something silly. The police are going to call and you're going to feel like an idiot.

MIRIAM
I'd rather feel like an idiot.

VINCENT
We should change the subject. Distract ourselves.

KYRA
I'm so worried about her.

VINCENT
What's the worst date you've ever been on?

MIRIAM
Anything Lee planned.

MIRANDA
Didn't you just have a terrible one, Kyra?

KYRA
Okay, so I met this girl on tinder.

(She pauses.)

MIRIAM
Go ahead.

KYRA
Okay so, we decided to go on an outdoor adventure, and you know me, I like nature. So we plan to get together in the evening, and that day had been really gross and cold, but cute girl, fun date,
why not, right? I get to this trailhead at like 6 at night, and it’s already kind of rainy but we had had such a good conversation over messaging and so I had to give it a try.

MIRANDA
I wouldn’t have even driven there.

VINCENT
I mean, it could go either way. Either it’s terrible out and you bond over that and get snuggly, or it’s terrible out and you’re uncomfortable and you never see her again.

KYRA
Well, I liked her, and I hadn’t gone on a date in a while, so I stuck around. She was twenty minutes late, and showed up when I was just about to get ready to ditch. She brought the shittiest picnic of these soggy chicken sandwiches—

MIRANDA
Wait, you ate chicken?

KYRA
No, of course not, which got me a weird look—

(The phone on the table buzzes, and everyone turns to stare at it. MIRIAM picks it up with shaking hands. A tense pause—)

MIRIAM
It’s an email.

VINCENT
An email.

MIRANDA
Waiting like this is so awful. I know there’s a lot of missing people, but goddamn.

KYRA
I just want to know what they know. How long did the detective say again?

MIRIAM
By six tonight.

MIRANDA
It’s five thirty.

VINCENT
Taking this long might not be a bad thing. It just means he doesn’t have any new information.

KYRA
If he found her, he’d just call.
MIRANDA
Okay, here's what happened. Her car broke down, her cell phone died. She's a ways away because that conference was not close, so she's taking time to get home.

MIRIAM
She would call.

MIRANDA
Not with a dead phone.

MIRIAM
Any store will let someone lost use a phone.

MIRANDA
Unless she was trying to get home on her own.

MIRIAM
She's not stupid.

MIRANDA
She can be stubborn.

MIRIAM
Not stubborn enough to hitchhike home without trying to get in contact.

MIRANDA
Does she know your phone number?

MIRIAM
Then she bought a phone charger.

MIRANDA
Her cards got rejected.

KYRA
Guys—

MIRIAM
She carries emergency cash.

KYRA
Guys, please.

MIRANDA
Then she used that to get on a bus.
MIRIAM
Then where is she??

KYRA
Miranda!

MIRIAM
I'm sorry.

MIRANDA
No, I'm sorry.

MIRIAM
I just want him to call.

VINCENT
Do you want to be distracted again?

MIRIAM
I wasn't paying attention earlier.

VINCENT
How about a glass of water?

MIRIAM
That would be nice.

(There is silence as VINCENT leaves the room to get a glass of water.

MIRIAM picks up the phone, checks it. KYRA and MIRANDA exchange looks.

VINCENT returns. MIRIAM sets the phone down.)

MIRIAM
Thank you.

VINCENT
Of course.

(A pause.)

KYRA
We could watch a movie?

MIRIAM
(VINCENT grabs a set of keys, and hands a coat to MIRIAM.)

VINCENT
Lee is safe. Okay? She’s fine.

MIRIAM
Please, let’s go.

(All exit.)

SCENE THREE

(Dully lit stage. Music is playing from a phone speaker. VINCENT lounges on the couch reading. The couch has been made up as a bed with blankets and pillows. VINCENT’s things are around on the coffee table, on the side of the couch. There’s a cup of tea on the coffee table.

MIRIAM enters, clearly exhausted. She is not surprised to find VINCENT, but is somewhat sheepish to find him awake.)

VINCENT
It’s three in the morning—

MIRIAM
I know, I know, I was just—

VINCENT
You need to go to sleep.

MIRIAM
I can’t.

VINCENT
You could sit down for a minute.

MIRIAM
I will, I know I need to slow down—

VINCENT
Mir, you need to take care of yourself.

MIRIAM
And I will slow down, soon—

VINCENT
Sit down.

(A pause. MIRIAM takes a seat beside VINCENT. He hands her the mug of tea from the table.)

VINCENT
It'll be cold by now, but...

MIRIAM
Thank you.

VINCENT
Tell me about your day.

MIRIAM
I went to work all morning, until Ira made me take a lunch break at two. I ended up in this bookstore, I just got lost for a few hours.

VINCENT
What were you lost on?

MIRIAM
I found this book... One of Lee’s favorites. I just got so stuck on it.

VINCENT
Did reading it help?

MIRIAM
A little. Felt kind of like a tribute to her.

VINCENT
I miss her.

MIRIAM
I feel so empty without her.

(A pause.)

VINCENT
Do you remember the party?

MIRIAM
The one at Claude’s?

VINCENT
When I introduced you two.
MIRIAM
When you shoved us together.

VINCENT
I just thought you’d make the cutest couple—

MIRIAM
And brought us matching drinks.

VINCENT
And I was right, right?

MIRIAM
We went home together.

VINCENT
I remember.

MIRIAM
I told you all about it.

VINCENT
In gross detail.

MIRIAM
Of course.

VINCENT
We weren’t even very close then.

MIRIAM
I think we bonded over her.

VINCENT
She was so...

MIRIAM
Magnetic.

VINCENT
Yeah. Magnetic.

(A pause.)

MIRIAM
How did we get here?

VINCENT
Do you want me to go?

MIRIAM
No, no—

VINCENT
If you need your space—

MIRIAM
I don’t want to be alone.

VINCENT
Me neither. That apartment feels so…

MIRIAM
Quiet?

VINCENT
Yes.

MIRIAM
Mine too.

VINCENT
And it’s not Lee was all that noisy anyways.

MIRIAM
You could just… Feel her.

VINCENT
Any time she walked into the room.

MIRIAM
She was so present.

VINCENT
I knew, I just knew, when she didn’t come home that something was wrong. I could feel it.

MIRIAM
It was like the world went cold.

(A heavy pause.)
VINCENT
I worry about you.

MIRIAM
I’m okay. Like, not in the overall sense, but I’m alright tonight.

VINCENT
Are you?

MIRIAM
Yeah. I’m just going to get through it. Keep working.

VINCENT
Lee’s always been good at making you take care of yourself.

MIRIAM
I’m taking care of myself.

VINCENT
Are you going to sleep tonight?

MIRIAM
Eventually.

VINCENT
Eat?

MIRIAM
Yeah, I should eat. I could order in or... (she gets quiet)

VINCENT
Miri—

MIRIAM
No, it’s okay. It’s okay.

VINCENT
Miri—

MIRIAM
I could just, like, I’ll just make a sandwich or—

VINCENT
What is it?

MIRIAM
I'm fine!

VINCENT
Breathe.

(She breathes erratically.)

MIRIAM
See, I'm okay—

VINCENT
You don't need to be okay.

(Silence.)

VINCENT
You don't need to be okay.

MIRIAM
I miss her so fucking much.

VINCENT
I know, I know. Me too.

MIRIAM
Fuck.

(They hug. MIRIAM begins to sob. VINCENT holds her.)

MIRIAM
I love her. I hate this.

VINCENT
Me too.

MIRIAM
I hate this.

VINCENT
I miss her.

(A pause. MIRIAM takes a long breath.)

MIRIAM
I hate crying.
VINCENT
I think I’m out of tears.

MIRIAM
All I can do is cry.

VINCENT
What do you want to do?

MIRIAM
Honestly? I really just want to get shitty takeout from that awful shitty Chinese place down the street and fight about who gets to pay and how much we should tip and watch her stupid shitty documentaries.

VINCENT
Like the one about how they make buttons?

MIRIAM
God.

VINCENT
I miss her.

MIRIAM
It’s not fair!

VINCENT
It’s not.

(A pause. MIRIAM yawns.)

VINCENT
Are you going to sleep tonight?

MIRIAM
Honestly? No.

VINCENT
How about we take a walk down to the takeout place up the street?

MIRIAM  (laughs sadly)
Can I pay?

VINCENT
If you want to, sure. We’ll get it, and then we can come back here and we’ll open some of those awful beers she liked in your fridge and drink to her.
MIRIAM
They’re awful.

VINCENT
So fucking bad.

MIRIAM
Let’s do it.

VINCENT
Yeah?

MIRIAM
Yeah.