

BEYOND THE MOMENT

By Jeff Dunne

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## CHARACTERS

TREVOR	A young man in his late teens who suffers from sex addiction.
TAYLOR	A young woman (could be played as male if desired) who is Trevor's best friend (and vice-versa), and can't continue to watch him throwing his life away.

## SETTING

The front stoop of a small, suburban house.

## NOTES

This play was written for the 8-10 January 2021 Quarantine Quarters Challenge by Green Buffalo Productions. The prompts for inclusion were:

Dialogue (at least one of):

"Someday I will learn to love myself as much as I love everybody else."

"That's absolutely nerdificent" (magnificent, but nerdy)

"If I pick up one more thing, I will cry."

Props (all of):

A thank you card

A dog treat

A warm fuzzy blanket

Setting (one of):

A front yard or stoop

A child's playroom

A stockroom

SCENE

*(Trevor is sitting out on the stoop of his parent's house. He is clearly anxious. His friend, Taylor, comes out with a piece of paper in one hand and a fuzzy blanket in the other. He turns to look up at her.)*

TREVOR

Well, what did he say?

TAYLOR

Trev, before we get to that, I think we should talk.

TREVOR

For god's sake, Taylor, don't play games with me. What did the doctor say?

TAYLOR

Just... slow down. Here.

*(She wraps the blanket around him.)*

TREVOR

I'm not cold. Just tell me...

*(He stops at a hard look from Taylor.)*

Alright. And I guess I am a little cold.

*(He pulls the blanket around himself tighter.)*

It must be bad news if you're bringing me this.

TAYLOR

Your mom said it comforts you.

TREVOR

Oh god. You told my mom?

*(Taylor nods.)*

This isn't good. Is it...

TAYLOR

Just breathe, Trev. I'm not saying anything is either bad or good, but we really need to talk about this.

*(She sits down next to him.)*

Do you realize that this is the third time this year that we've gone through this little exercise?

TREVOR

Yeah. Actually, that reminds me.

*(He takes out a card in an envelope and hands it to her.)*

TAYLOR

What the...

*(She opens it, and takes out a Thank You card. She reads.)*

Thank you for being there when I need you most.

*(She puts the card back.)*

That's very thoughtful, Trevor, but I'd really prefer that you just stop putting yourself in this position in the first place.

TREVOR

I know. I *know*.

TAYLOR

I don't know what drives you to this, or... or what you're trying to prove, but...

TREVOR

I don't know. I just can't help myself.

TAYLOR

Well you need to figure it out. Or at the very least you need to get your shit together and learn how to protect yourself.

TREVOR

I know how to protect—

TAYLOR

*(Suddenly really angry...)*

Then why the hell don't you!?! Don't you realize that there are people who care about you?!? And not these random sluts you find... wherever the hell you find them. You think you're invincible or something, but—

TREVOR

I know! I—

TAYLOR

No! Shut up and listen! It's one thing to go sleeping around with anyone that stays still long enough for you to get on top of it, but I really am beginning to think you must have a death wish or something. Buy a fucking condom, you jackass.

TREVOR

I have—

TAYLOR

Then use it!

TREVOR

I try—

TAYLOR

Bullshit! Don't give me that *bullshit* anymore. 'I try'? It's not the fucking Olympics, Trev. Open the package, and slip the thing over your dick. It's that fucking simple.

TREVOR

Taylor... please. I *know* how to use it, it's just...

TAYLOR

Just what?

TREVOR

When... when I'm in the situation... I forget. I get so... swept up in the passion that I... I just forget.

TAYLOR

You have a problem, Trev.

TREVOR

I know.

TAYLOR  
I want you to get counseling.

TREVOR  
What??

TAYLOR  
I'm serious. I want you to get counseling.

TREVOR  
Oh my god. So I do have something. What is it? What did they say? I swear, if I pick up one more thing, I'll cry. Is it curable? Is it...

TAYLOR  
I'll tell you what you have. You have a god damn addiction.

TREVOR  
What?

TAYLOR  
It's an addiction, Trev, and either—

TREVOR  
So I didn't get an ST—

TAYLOR  
AND EITHER... (*Taking a breath.*) Either you get some counseling, or...

(*She takes another breath to calm herself.*)

TREVOR  
Or?

TAYLOR  
Or I can't be your friend anymore.

TREVOR  
What? Taylor... We've been—

TAYLOR  
I can't do this anymore. I can't watch you throw your life away like this. How many times are you going to get lucky, Trev?

TREVOR

When you say 'get lucky', do you—

TAYLOR

God damn it, Trevor! This isn't a joke! You think it's just you who goes through the stress? You're my best friend. You've been my best friend since as long as I can remember. You're like a brother to me. I don't know why you keep doing this, why you feel you need to do this, what you think sleeping with all these girls is going to do for you... but I'm done. I can't keep going through these scares because you can't keep your dick under control.

*(She takes a calming breath.)*

Now are you going to or not?

TREVOR

I *do* try. I swear I do.

TAYLOR

No. Not 'are you going to stop sleeping around'. I know better than that. *(Slowly, with enforced patience...)* Are you going to get counseling?

*(Trevor looks at her, and there is a long pause as they consider each other. He finally realizes that she is not making an idle threat.)*

TREVOR

Y-yeah. I mean, I don't have a choice, do I?

TAYLOR

You have a choice. I'm just not in your life in one of them.

TREVOR

Then I don't really have a choice.

*(Taylor shrugs.)*

TAYLOR

Here.

*(She hands him the piece of paper.)*

TREVOR

Wha—

TAYLOR

It's a list of psychologists. I circled a few that I think would be a good fit, but you can call whichever you want – or as many as you want – until you find one that... feels right.

TREVOR

Where did you... you know—

TAYLOR

Internet. Sex addiction is a real thing, you know. There are people who specialize in it.

TREVOR

Like me.

TAYLOR

Cute. No. Doctors and psychologists who specialize in it.

TREVOR

I bet they just like listening to— *(He stops at her glare.)* Sorry.

TAYLOR

Seriously, Trev. I know you think self-awareness and all that is bunch of crap, but—

TREVOR

I'm *aware*.

TAYLOR

Come on. We've been friends our whole lives. Who do you think you're kidding?

TREVOR

I... I *have* thought about it.

TAYLOR

Yeah? And what have you come up with?

TREVOR

I...

*(There's a long pause, as Trevor struggles to bring himself to speak.)*

Forget it.



TAYLOR  
No. No, I won't forget it. What?

TREVOR  
It's... It's a lot of things.

TAYLOR  
I've got time.

TREVOR  
*(A heartless laugh...)*  
I think... I think part of it is... When some girl wants to have sex with me, it's like... It's like for that moment, I'm... *desirable*. Someone *wants* me. You know what my family's like. All those years of being... ignored. And then, there's some girl and she actually wants me.

TAYLOR  
You know she's probably just—

TREVOR  
I know. I *know*. But in that moment...

TAYLOR  
You've got to get past this feeling of worthlessness. You're a good guy.

TREVOR  
It's not that easy to believe. Maybe someday I'll learn to love myself as much as I love everybody else, but... It's not that easy.

TAYLOR  
Never said it was easy. Just that you need to work on it.

TREVOR  
I don't know. You know... I think about it all the time.

TAYLOR  
Yeah.

TREVOR  
*All* the time.

TAYLOR  
That's what addiction is.

TREVOR

So what do I do?

TAYLOR

That's what the counselor will help you figure out.

TREVOR

I know you, Taylor. You already looked this up.

*(Taylor laughs a little.)*

TAYLOR

Maybe. I would guess that they'll suggest you start by giving yourself something to focus on besides sex. It's also a brain chemistry thing, so maybe some new kind of reward to help retrain your behavior.

*(Trevor looks over at a nearby dog dish, then pulls out a dog treat from it.)*

TREVOR

I could try these.

TAYLOR

Are you trying to stop yourself from scratching at the furniture?

TREVOR

Well sometimes we—

TAYLOR

I do NOT want to know.

TREVOR

Anyway...

TAYLOR

Anyway... I think there are a lot of techniques, but none of them are going to work if you don't want to make a change.

TREVOR

I don't know. I don't want to give up sex. It doesn't seem... right. It's not like drugs, you know. Sex is a hard-wired drive. Our species wouldn't exist if we didn't—

TAYLOR

No. That's more bullshit. This is you trying to justify a load of crap. Yes, sex is a drive, but most of us have enough control to make sure we do it responsibly. If you are so out of control that you can't even remember to put on a condom, that's not what things are like for people who don't have a problem.

TREVOR

I guess.

TAYLOR

So?

TREVOR

So what?

TAYLOR

Do you want to change?

TREVOR

I don't know.

TAYLOR

Trev, you're sitting on the front porch, so stressed out that you need your childhood blanket to comfort you, waiting to find out if you've got some incurable disease. Is this really what you want from life?

TREVOR

No, of course n—

TAYLOR

Then what the... Why is this even a question for you? This is what you're making for your life. This is the third time *this year!* Are you really okay with this?

TREVOR

No.

TAYLOR

And you still aren't sure you want to change? Knowing that I'm not doing this a fourth time isn't enough for you?

*(Trevor stops. He looks at his best friend.)*

TREVOR

You really...

TAYLOR

I can't keep doing this. I love you too much to watch you destroy yourself. Either you start taking your health and your life seriously, or I need to start working on not caring. Because watching you destroy yourself is killing me.

TREVOR

I never meant—

TAYLOR

I know you never meant to, but that's how it is. Your mom feels the same way, although we both know both your parents are too dys... whatever, too broken to ever actually say anything or show that they love you. But I do. I love you. I *care* about you. And I don't ask for much, but I need you to start caring.

TREVOR

Oh god, Taylor. You know I care about you. You're everything to me!

TAYLOR

I know. I meant that I need you to start caring about *you*. I *need* that. Can you do that for me?

*(Long pause.)*

TREVOR

I can try.

TAYLOR

Not good enough.

TREVOR

I will try.

TAYLOR

Still not good enough.

TREVOR

What if I can't? What if I fail?

TAYLOR

Then you keep trying. Time after time. Every time.

*(They regard each other in silence for a moment.)*

I need you to promise me.

TREVOR

I promise.

TAYLOR

Thank you.

*(Taylor gets up.)*

TREVOR

Hey.

*(Taylor turns to look at him.)*

You never told me what the results were.

*(Taylor stares at Trevor. She obviously doesn't want to.)*

What? Why are you... Does that mean it's bad??

TAYLOR

I'm worried.

TREVOR

About what?

TAYLOR

That you're... That if you learn that you got lucky again, you won't take this seriously.

TREVOR

So it's nothing serious?

TAYLOR

No, you fucking idiot. It *is* serious. The whole damn thing is serious.

TREVOR

I *know!* I know! And believe me, I'm listening. And I'm taking it serious.

*(Taylor shakes her head in disgust, a reminder of past annoyances over bad grammar.)*

Seriously. I'm taking it seriously.

TAYLOR

You better, you jackass. *(Pause.)* They phoned in a prescription for you. Some unpronounceable antibiotic. You'll live to fuck again.

*(Trevor looks at her with a deep love and appreciation.)*

TREVOR

Thank you.

TAYLOR

Yeah.

TREVOR

No. Taylor. Thank you.

TAYLOR

You made me a promise.

*(Trevor waves the list.)*

TREVOR

I will.

TAYLOR

You better.

*(Taylor exits.)*

TREVOR

I love you too.

*(Lights out.)*