

One-Way Conversation

by

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Cast of Characters

BELLA:

Teens

MOM:

30's

Place

Car

Time

Evening

Setting: Mom's car.

At Rise: Bella and her mother are just settling in the family car after grocery shopping.

MOM: Put your seat belt on.

BELLA: I know, you don't always have to tell me the same thing every single time.

MOM: I do have to tell you, cause if I don't tell you, you won't put it on.

BELLA: But you don't even give me a second to sit, before you're shouting at me to, "put on my seat belt".

MOM: I wasn't shouting.

BELLA: You weren't screaming but you shout when you talk. You don't hear yourself.

MOM: I hear myself just fine.

BELLA: Whatever.

MOM: Don't give me that whatever talk. I hate that "whatever"...

BELLA: You sound silly when you say it.

MOM (playfully): "Whatevrrrrr".

BELLA (trying not to laugh): Not funny.

MOM: Did we get the butter?

BELLA: I grabbed the butter when I got the eggs.

MOM: Oh, good. Don't want to hear you or your father in the morning. Like two grumpy old men.

BELLA: I like to have my breakfast.

MOM: You don't have to tell me.

BELLA: Why are we still sitting here?

MOM: Patience. I'm checking my mirrors.

BELLA: Mom, the parking lot is practically empty. Look, there's one car all the way over there in the corner. Can we go please?

MOM: What's the rush? ...I want to talk to you.

BELLA: Oh, come on, I just want to get home.

MOM: It's why I asked you to come with me to the store.

BELLA: So, you trapped me.

MOM: I can't get a word in edge wise with you, lately. Always on the go, always busy, we don't ever get a chance to talk.

BELLA: Fine. What do you want to talk about?

MOM: How's school?

BELLA: Are you serious?

MOM: I'm asking you, how is school?

BELLA: School sucks like always. Next question.

MOM: Why does it *suck* as you put it?

BELLA: Because I'm working too hard.

MOM: Excuse me but your education is costing your father and me a small fortune.

BELLA: Whatever.

MOM: Why don't you bring any of your friends around?

BELLA: Because they wouldn't like you.

MOM: That's a terrible things to say, Bella.

BELLA: So? I don't like their parents, either. Doesn't matter.

MOM: I want to start meeting some of your friends. Bring them around. We can have a barbecue this weekend---

BELLA: No! There's no way I am having one of those crazy family barbeques and inviting my friends over because they will stop being my friend.

MOM: And why is that?

BELLA: Because we're all crazy.

MOM: That's not true.

BELLA: Mom, please, we're all nuts.

MOM: Excuse me, but I think that's terrible.

BELLA: Mom, I don't have time for this...you're so long-winded.

MOM: That's enough. I'm your mother, show some respect.

BELLA: Yeah, yeah...

MOM: ...I feel as though you're pulling away from me.

BELLA: ...Maybe I am.

MOM: Why?

BELLA: Because you're difficult to talk to, you never listen.

MOM: That's not so---

BELLA: You don't understand, you don't ever hear what I'm trying to say to you. It's always a one way conversation. First, you come at me and complain about all the things you think I'm not doing and you do this to get me angry because you think by getting me angry it's going to somehow make me work harder for what I want in my life and you're wrong. I'm sorry, but you're so wrong. That's not the way to help me move forward. It's not. Can't you ever just be my friend and support me by giving me encouragement? Do you have any idea how impossible what I'm going after already is? Do you? it's so damn hard and I can use some kindness...just some; you're my mother, you know, I--all I ask is that you stop trying to get so damn strategy oriented with me and instead work with me, give me sound advice, if you have any, cause coming down on me doesn't help. I'm not asking you to hand feed me, but be there for me the way I need you to be...there...you happy? Now you know what's bothering me.

MOM: Where is all of this coming from?

BELLA: You already know.

MOM: ...I see...it's because I want the best for you and it's because I know you're talented and I don't want to see you ignore your potential.

BELLA: But I'm not ignoring my potential!

MOM (warning): Watch...

BELLA: Can you just let me be free to talk for once? You don't ever let me express how I truly feel and then when you ask me to talk to you, you make me feel like I have to walk on eggshells.

MOM: I understand.

BELLA: I'm working hard, Mom. I'm working so hard that I can't even sleep at night because it's all I can think about. You don't see me as much because I'm not like the other kids. I'm rehearsing, I'm working, I'm learning and you think I'm off messing around, wasting my time and I'm not doing anything like that, I don't have time for that. You need to see me for me and for what I am and stop thinking I'm someone else or that I'm lying to you all of the time. I don't lie to you!

MOM: ...Alright...I didn't---I don't mean to accuse you of lying to me but you make me feel like you're off galavanting around...at least, give me some info so I'm not at home worrying about you half the time.

BELLA: But you always know where I am. The curriculum shows you on the computer. You can see all my classes and after school activities.

MOM: It would be nice if I heard from you, once in a while, just a "Hey Mom, it's me, heading over to rehearsal", for whatever play you're working on, et cetera.

BELLA: But I don't have the time. You don't realize how hard they work us and if I'm a second late I get scolded and look unprofessional.

MOM: I know...I can't say I'm disappointed in what you're saying. I'm actually ecstatic. I'm proud of you and all that you're achieving and I will try to listen to you more when you do decide to talk to me. (beat) I miss you. You're my only daughter and I do want us to be friends, the way I was with my mother...lately, I don't know, I feel more alone and that's not your fault, that's my fault; trying to find things to keep myself occupied, watching television shows is depressing because it makes me think to myself, "What have I accomplished with my own life?". I think I get hard on you because I don't want you to be like me, at least in terms of career and what have you...I want to see you reach your full potential and I get angry at you because you're my hope, I get to live through you in a way and I'm not trying to say this to put any pressure on you cause that's, that's not my intention, honey...I want you to live your life for you, that's what I care about but, if you can, say hi to me once in a blue moon, let me know how you're doing...I'd like that very much...

BELLA: I will, Mom...look, we're talking now, aren't we?

MOM: Yes.

BELLA: Don't get upset. You know I love you.

MOM: I love you too, sweetheart.

BELLA: I'm not going anywhere, okay?

MOM: Okay...I'm sorry I came down on you and that I've been difficult...it's an adjustment. I'm used to you being home more often and I have to respect the fact that you have your own life going on. Oh, to be young again and in your shoes. I'm so proud of you. Keep at it.

BELLA: I will Mom and I promise I won't leave you hanging.

MOM: That would be nice.

(they both laugh)

BELLA: I promise.

MOM: And I promise not to be a pest.

BELLA: That's a hard promise to keep, I think.

MOM: Yeah, you're gonna have to put up with me whether you like it or not..

BELLA: Good.

MOM: Good...

END OF PLAY