

River's Message
A 10-Minute Play
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CAST OF CHARACTERS

RIVER: Female. Late teens - Early twenties. College student. River is a happy-go-lucky type of person despite currently working through the pain of losing a parent.

KENNEDY: Female. Late teens - Early twenties. River's best friend, genius, and a Computer Science Major. She would do, have done, and does, the impossible for River.

SETTING

On a bench outside the University's Dorm.

TIME

The Present during the tail-end of a University's Final Examination's Week.

PLAYWRIGHT'S NOTES

The "/" near the end of a line of dialogue suggests an overlap with the next lines being read.

SYNOPSIS

On the eve of their University's Final Examinations, Kennedy creates a Facebook App to help her best friend, River, communicate with her mom who has recently passed away. RIVER'S MESSAGE explores the line between life and death over a Wi-Fi connection.

Lights up on a bench with RIVER sitting on it.

She's wearing a top bearing her University's name and holding up her laptop yelling...

RIVER
YOU STUPID LAPTOP! GIVE ME BACK MY TERM PAPER!

RIVER starts shaking it.

Enter KENNEDY wearing a backpack slung over one shoulder.

KENNEDY
Woah. Woah. Whoa! River, what are you doing?
(KENNEDY puts down the
backpack and takes the laptop
out of River's hands.)
Give me that!

RIVER
Stupid computer ate my Final and I was trying to make it
throw up!

KENNEDY
I got it! Jeez, there are other ways to make it puke.

KENNEDY starts to hack away at it.

RIVER
Then can you induce the vomiting a little faster? I only have
10 minutes left to turn it in!

KENNEDY
How many times have I told you to back up your files?

RIVER
I know I know... I was running out of time and-

KENNEDY
Hmmm...

RIVER
Was that a good hmmm? Or a bad hmmm?

KENNEDY
It's just a... Hmph.

RIVER
That was definitely a bad hmmm.

KENNEDY
No. No... it's just that... hmmm...

RIVER

I swear if you hmmm one more time, I'm gonna-

KENNEDY

Found it!

RIVER

What?!

KENNEDY

Hold on... Option-Click... Save as... dot t.x.t... Word...
Open... "...when a human body dies, a soul leaves that body
and returns to its original form."

RIVER

THAT'S IT!!!

(RIVER gives Kennedy a huge
hug!)

Thank you thank you thank you!!! You are a genius!

*RIVER takes the laptop, puts it on her lap and looks
at the screen.*

KENNEDY

All the text is there, but you'll need to reformat-

RIVER

I don't care. As long as I don't have to re-type everything I
already forgot. I knew that your Computer Science Major
Thingy would come in handy one day!

RIVER begins to reformat the paper.

KENNEDY

Sounds like a pretty heavy subject, "when a human body
dies..."

RIVER

It's for Psych 151.

KENNEDY

Ah, the Death and Dying class. Did it help?

RIVER

No time for talking. Time for reformatting.

KENNEDY

Right. Format away.

Pause.

While RIVER works...

KENNEDY (CONT'D)

Why's everybody out here?

RIVER

The Wi-Fi started acting really weird inside the dorms.

KENNEDY

It did?

RIVER

Yeah. So we have to connect out here.
They finally kick you out of the computer lab?

KENNEDY

Actually, I left so that you could help me test my Final Project?

RIVER

Due tomorrow, right?

KENNEDY

Web Dev 261: Social Media Application Development.

RIVER

Not sure how much help I'll be. I'm kinda in the middle of a "love-hate-it's complicated" relationship with these stupid computer things right now.

KENNEDY

I promise, it'll only take a minute. I just need you to log into your / Facebook-

RIVER

Hold.. that... thought.... aaaand SUBMIT! Booyah!! Last Final of the Semester: DONE!

RIVER gets up to do a ridiculous dance.

RIVER (CONT'D)

Come on, Kennedy! Show me your happy dance!

KENNEDY reluctantly gets up and does a little jig.

RIVER (CONT'D)

Go Kennedy! Go Kennedy! It's your birthday! It's your birthday! OH EM GEE!! This feels AMAZING!!

KENNEDY

Glad to see you happy.

RIVER

Duh! The hardest semester, shoot, year of my life and it's now done Done DONE!!! Oooo! We have to go out and celebrate! My treat!

KENNEDY

You're broke.

RIVER

Right. Your treat!

KENNEDY

Fine. But when we get back, you have to promise me that you'll test out my project. There's still a couple of tweaks I need to-

RIVER

Tweaks my arse! Finals are done-zoh!

KENNEDY

For you.

RIVER

Ooo.. what am I gonna wear?

KENNEDY

This project is different, River. The implementation of this App can go far beyond Final Examinations.

RIVER

What can possibly go beyond Finals? Isn't there a University Rule that says after you finish a Final, you never need to use that information EVER AGAIN!

KENNEDY

What about for doctors?

RIVER

That's what WebMD is for.

KENNEDY

River, this project will change life as we know it. It can even change death.

RIVER

Dude. Total Buzzkill.

KENNEDY

Right. Sorry. I was... you're absolutely... this is supposed to be your celebration. And after the year you've had... I can't think of another person who deserves to get more inebriated than you.

RIVER

I'll drink to that!

KENNEDY

But I really really need you to test my project. You're the only one who could help me and after I totally saved your life by recovering your Final Term Paper, I just thought that... right. Never mind me. It's not like we've been friends since I taught you how to play hopscotch in the Third Grade. So... you go have your fun... while I flunk out... and get disowned by my family.. and become destitute...

KENNEDY begins to exit.

RIVER

Wait.

KENNEDY

What?

RIVER gives Kennedy a hug.

RIVER

Thank you. You don't have to become a prostitute.

KENNEDY

Destitute. I said destitute.

RIVER

I'm kidding. I know what you said, you dork! Kennedy, you are a true life saver. Jeez, I thought the only person who can give me a worse guilt trip was my mom.

KENNEDY

Did it work?

RIVER

What is it you wanted me to test?

KENNEDY

I can come back when you're sober.

RIVER

This may be the last time you'll ever see me sober.

KENNEDY

Only if you're sure-

RIVER

KENNEDY!

KENNEDY

Okay. Okay.

(KENNEDY takes out a laptop
from the backpack.)

Tell me if this gets boring and I'll stop.

RIVER

Just shut up and show me what I need to do.

KENNEDY

You see that?

RIVER

Yeah. It's Facebook. But Kennedy, honey, sorry to break it to you, but someone's already made Facebook.

KENNEDY

Duh. I know that. I'm talking about that icon up there.

RIVER

That blue thing?

KENNEDY

That's the one.

RIVER

Okay, I see it. What's it supposed to do? Block ads or something?

KENNEDY

A little more than that.

RIVER

I would hope so, because again, you do know that someone's / already made-

KENNEDY

It's used to communicate with the dead.

RIVER

Say what?

KENNEDY

I created a Facebook App that hooks into the laptop's Wi-Fi processor which makes it possible to tune in to a frequency to contact a person on the other side.

RIVER

The other side of what?

KENNEDY

Life.

RIVER

You did what?

KENNEDY

I created a Facebook App that / hooks-

RIVER

I know what you said, but I don't... I can't...

KENNEDY

Remember when you lost your mom, you told me that you had so much left to tell her...

RIVER

And I wrote what I wanted to tell her in a message on her Facebook account.

KENNEDY

Like how I left a letter for my dad in his casket when he died.

RIVER

I can't help it if my mom was way more hip than your dad.

KENNEDY

So, I wondered if there was a way to tap into another dimension... another plane of existence if you will... by using a Wi-Fi connection.

RIVER

Do you hear the words that are coming out of your mouth? Because my ears heard, "Crazy!"

KENNEDY

I know how it sounds, but think about it: we can communicate with people all over the world through Google Hangouts or with Skype, right? So, why couldn't we do that with our loved ones living in a place where only a Wireless Fidelity I-Triple-E Eight-oh-two-dot-eleven-XB Channel on a Twelve Gigahertz Band can reach them?

RIVER

You could have just said, Wi-Fi.

KENNEDY

Well, technically a Super Wi-Fi, but it's the only direct connection to them.

RIVER

On Facebook?

KENNEDY

Did you know that 30 million users passed away in the first 8 years of Facebook's existence? And when you break that down, that's 312,500 users every month; which is 10,273 people every day... which leads to 428 Facebook Profile Owners that die every hour.

RIVER

Serious, Kennedy-

KENNEDY

But even though they're gone, their lives still live on on their Facebook Pages.

RIVER

Yeah, but they're still gone.

KENNEDY

Not with what I coded.

RIVER

You can't change death!

KENNEDY

I'm not trying to change anything because, in theory, they're not really dead. They're just... their souls... their their spirits are just tuned into another frequency that we haven't been able to tap into yet. Until now.

RIVER

Kennedy, you can't bring back the dead.

KENNEDY

Then prove me wrong. Log into your account and find out. Don't you want to know if your mom read your message? You know you can do that with Facebook Messenger.

RIVER

Don't do this to me.

KENNEDY

She could have written you back.

RIVER

Kennedy.

KENNEDY

River. The only thing I care more about in this world than computers... is you. And when I saw you hurting and I couldn't do anything about it... I knew that I had to do something. And this was it.

RIVER

Why me? Why my mom? You don't know how long it took me to get over losing her.

KENNEDY

Are you?

RIVER

No. But that's not your / decision-

KENNEDY

Do you want to be? I mean not be over losing her, but don't you want know if she's okay? If she's at peace? Don't you want to tell her how much you miss her? How much you still need her?

RIVER

Of course I do! But that's not for us to decide! This is life. And a part of life is death. And so is letting go.

KENNEDY

But it doesn't have to be that way. Not anymore. Because you still have her... and you can always have her because she's right here...

(KENNEDY turns the laptop to
face River.)

... waiting for you.

*KENNEDY makes a motion for River to log into her
Facebook Account.*

*RIVER reluctantly does so and stares at the screen for
a long beat...*

*Lights begin to fade when we see River's reaction to
her message being read... and to the reply that
River's mom left her.*

BLACK OUT.

END OF PLAY.