

THE FIRST BROKEN PROMISE

By  
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28 Plays Later

Day 1

February 1, 2021



ACT I

SCENE 1

LIGHTS UP - A FRONT PORCH.

TIM sits on the stoop of a long, ranch style house. There are windows along its length, some bayed, others flat. To the right of the stoop is a cement bench, with a statue of a little girl sniffing a bouquet of daisies. To the left of the stoop a little pond burbles.

TIM sighs heavily. After a few moments, KRISTIN opens the window nearest the stoop and pushes her head through.

KRISTIN: They didn't fix this window.

TIM: They probably forgot.

KRISTIN: We told the buyers it would be fixed.

TIM: They probably forgot.

KRISTIN: You repeated yourself.

TIM: I've done that my whole life when people didn't listen to me.

It's KRISTIN'S turn to sigh. She does.

TIM: I should have been here.

KRISTIN: You didn't know.

TIM: But I should have been here.

KRISTIN: (smirking) You didn't know.

TIM: I--

TIM stops himself and smirks, getting the joke a little late.



TIM: You were never funny as a child...

KRISTIN: I blossomed after you left for college.

TIM: You took my room, you took my comedy act... What did you leave for me?

KRISTIN: I left you a very large guilt complex.

TIM: I have had one of those since I was 12.

KRISTIN: It was always easy to guilt you into stuff.

TIM: Mom used to call you a manipulator. I never believed her.

KRISTIN: You made a huge mistake, then.

TIM: I was never very bright when it came to social interaction.

KRISTIN: That's how you couldn't have known.

TIM hangs his head a little and nods.  
KRISTIN pulls herself back inside, leaving the window open. She emerges from the front door, leaving it open as well.

KRISTIN: You didn't find the box?

TIM: (shaking his head) No. I thought it was in the attic.

KRISTIN: You've NEVER been wrong about that stuff.

TIM: And you missed your opportunity to watch my winning streak crash and burn in the pink mountains of fiberglass insulation.

KRISTIN: Always have been a day late.

TIM: But you've never been a dollar short.

KRISTIN: That used to be true.



TIM: I used to be smart. You used to be rich.

KRISTIN: This used to be home.

TIM looks at KRISTIN with a 'What's that smell?' face.

TIM: This used to be hell.

KRISTIN: Hasn't that always been the same thing?

The two remain silent for a few moments.  
KRISTIN suddenly gets somber.

KRISTIN: Ben never came home.

TIM: A year ago, I would have been sorry to hear that.

KRISTIN startles herself with a laugh.

KRISTIN: I wish you'd said that before I cried myself to sleep last night.

TIM: You've always been too good for him. We knew that from the day you met. We confirmed it on the day you got engaged. And we drank ourselves stupid on the day you got married so we wouldn't remember.

KRISTIN: You could have TOLD me...

TIM: I've always told you. Repeated. Four or five times a year for the last few decades.

KRISTIN: You could have made me listen.

TIM: And I could have walked on water. And I could have leapt over a tall building in a single bound. And I totally could have gotten a date before I was twenty-two, too!

KRISTIN: (laughing) I've never known myself as well as you've known me.

TIM: You should have started going to therapy when I did.



KRISTIN: You were what, sixteen?

TIM: Fifteen.

KRISTIN: I never would have made it past the first session.

TIM: I've always been sure you'd get a lot out of it.

KRISTIN: You only get out of things what you have put into them to begin with.

TIM: Why did she always add so many extra words to sentences?

KRISTIN: Who taught the cock to crow at sunrise?

TIM: Wow. We haven't had a philosophical conversation in a loooooooooong time.

KRISTIN: We haven't been stoned together in a long time, either.

TIM: I have ceded this battle to you more than once.

KRISTIN: And I have always worn the crown proudly.

TIM: And modestly.

KRISTIN: Did you ever think about...

She waves her hand at the house.

TIM: Never once. I always assumed we'd have been able to come back here forever.

KRISTIN nods.

KRISTIN: I've done nothing to prepare.

TIM: You have cleaned the kitchen, scrubbed the carpets, painted the bathroom, and most importantly, you have given me tasks that I never would have thought to do myself.

KRISTIN: That wasn't what I was talking about.



TIM: I knew what you were talking about. I chose to ignore it out of self preservation.

A car horn sounds.

TIM: Wow. They've never been on time before. That's what dad always said.

KRISTIN: You promised to hold my hand so I wouldn't cry as we gave them the keys.

TIM: I have never broken a promise to you.

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#### **Brief 1- Due by 2 Feb at 10:00am UK time**

I don't know if anybody else noticed, but 2021 didn't quite start with the whole "goodbye to 2020" we were promised (shout out to our special friends on the other side of the pond... and those on this side of the pond... oh, and those by the other ponds. Shout it all out!).

So, for our first brief, let's take control of the situation.

Write a play that is all about saying goodbye to the past. Focus only on the yesterdays and yesterday and yesterdays. Nothing about the now, nothing about what's to come - only what was, and perhaps what could have been.

And for our first brief, I always like to start easy - write in the style that you feel most comfortable in, with the amount of characters you prefer, and in a length that is perfectly Goldilocks (not too long, not too short, but just right for you for today).

Perhaps write a social realism play about something that happened in 2020 (I think there may have been one or two things to write about)?

Or an absurdist play about something that happened to you on this day last year?

Or a musical about a throuple that is moving out of their old house and reminiscing?

How about a comedy of errors set in a hotel with a door that keeps taking you to the same room in the past (hmm... maybe not too original)?

Perhaps some lyrical magic realism about natsukashii? What about a tragedy about someone who is incapable of letting go of a childhood trauma?

Or a dramatic monologue about an Italian chef parting from his favourite tortellini dish?

So many possibilities, and after all, parting, as we've been told, is such sweet sorrow...

Still no ideas whatsoever? Just set it in a pond... with James Bond... in the past... on a plain... with a plane... and a pound... of pound coins...

OK, time for some TLC World-Famous Bonus Points!!!

To get your talented writing hands on nifty bonus points, make sure to make no reference to any present or future, focus the entire play on the past. Maybe even only use past tense - so no 'verbing', 'verbs' or 'will verbs'!