



Association of B.C. Drama Educators

1996 YOUTHWRITE ANTHOLOGY

LANA O'Brien

INTRODUCTION TO THE 1996 YOUTHWRITE ANTHOLOGY

by John Lazarus

This past spring, at the B.C. Festival of the Arts at Penticton, a dream came true for me.

I began to dream this dream some ten years ago, while adjudicating an earlier B.C. high school drama festival. The choice of plays at that earlier festival represented the usual run of professional work --English and American, with one or two Canadian entries. And I remember admiring the student actors, directors and designers, but also, as a playwright, hoping that some day we might also see a high school festival of plays written by the students.

I had nothing to do with this dream coming true. All I know is that this year, after a number of years hiatus from working at these festivals, I was invited by Geoff Burns to adjudicate something called Youthwrite: a festival of, yes, hallelujah, plays written by high school students!-- in association with the customary A.B.C.D.E. Provincial High School Drama Festival, as part of the Festival of the Arts.

So while my friend Peter Anderson spent the evenings adjudicating the regular festival shows, written by professional playwrights, I got to spend the afternoons adjudicating the six plays written by students. In both concurrent festivals, the atmosphere among the different schools, and between casts, crews and audience, was euphoric and mutually supportive. And thank goodness the Youthwrite Festival has not been contaminated by the divisive silliness of competition and prizes.

So what's the big deal? Why is this a dream come true?

Well we all have our passions, and one of mine is the growth of our own distinct Canadian culture and identity. I'm old enough to remember life before the government formed the Canadian Council in 1957 to support Canadian artists. Back then, professional theatre was something you went to New York to see, and Canadian actors routinely moved to Los Angeles to make a living. Even in the late sixties, when I was an acting student at one of Canada's foremost acting schools, there was not a breath of a suggestion that we might ever act in a new Canadian play, or help a playwright develop one, let alone write one ourselves.

But though growth has been slow, it has been continuous, with a particular spurt when our generation began creating our own theatres and writing our own plays in the 1970s.

And yet now it all seems threatened and besieged. Our customary government funding is being diverted to feed the the great, winged, fire-breathing Deficit crouching at the castle gate. What's worse, our theatres seem to be losing our audiences-- especially the intimate chamber theatres that do small-cast plays, which is the type that I happen to cherish. I'll bet most Canadians don't even know such an art form exists: or if they do, they think of it not as a form one might actively prefer, but as a compromise by entertainers incapable of creating amplified, computerised spectacles of superhuman size, loudness and speed.

So to see these kids turning out these lively, truthful, angry, funny, romantic, sarcastic, intimate, surprising plays -- and directing them, as all six authors did this year -- is cause for enormous excitement and hope.

You will find the level of quality exhilaratingly high, with a striking degree of variety. There is a theme common to half of the plays -- not surprisingly, the ever-popular theme of adolescent mating behaviour -- but it is treated with great originality in each of the scripts; and the other three plays could hardly be less alike.

Graham McKenzie's *Completely in the Dark and a Little More than Dizzy* is a sharp, funny, naturalistic look at two young dudes looking for sex and/or love; and Christopher Davyd's *Graduation Night* is a more romantic treatment of a couple who end their friendship, in favour of something better, on the big evening. And then there's Monica Sparks' *Stranger Things Have Happened*, in which Girl meets mysterious Boy in a surreal subway station.

There are two satires, one serious and angry -- Rebeka Heipel's *Going Home*, a caustic portrayal of a psychiatric treatment gone horribly wrong -- and one raucously funny: *The Network*, Ryan Steele's derisive sendup of the way life can imitate bad television. And finally we have Cissie Fu's highly original *The Vow*, a presentational mask-mime-music-text piece, based on the what sounds like an ancient folk tale but is in fact a story of Ms. Fu's invention.

So, yes, these kids give me hope. Though we older folks may be experiencing a slump in funding and audiences, there does appear to be a fine new crop of theatre artists growing up around us. Here are six of them. Enjoy their book.

- John Lazarus

COMPLETELY IN THE DARK AND A LITTLE MORE THAN DIZZY.

by Graham MacKenzie

Characters

Paul.....theboyfriend

Diane.....thegirlfriend

Terry.....thebestfriend

“otherguy”.....well..theotherguy

Caution: Professionals and amateurs are hereby warned that Completely in the dark and a little more than Dizzy by Graham MacKenzie is subject to royalty. It is protected under copyright law. Inquiries regarding performance rights and royalties should be directed to Graham MacKenzie 4035 Hillbank Road. V9L 4W4 R.R. #7 Duncan B.C. Fee for a single production will be free, but permission from the author must be obtained.

AUTHOR'S NOTES

My plays is short, fast paced and probably confusing to some adults, thus it is much like teenage relationships, which is the main subject my play is about. The characters in the play are ordinary people, in anyday situations doing basically nothing, so therefore easy to relate to.

There are many scenes to show time passing easily. There are no set changes in my play, the props used should be kept to a minimum, and should not be removed between scenes. For example have a single bed to symbolize Paul's room, a garbage can to symbolize outside, a locker to show the hallway, two chairs for the waiting room, and a small table for the restaurant. Have them all on stage at once neatly and in order so the actors can move from place to place easily. The props on stage should not be to spread out they should be pretty close together so the actors will not have to even leave the stage between scenes but instead just freeze on stage as the lights go down then move into the next area for the next scene.

The characters are not stupid though some things they say are. The characters are just average teenagers.

*special note "other guy" should be protrayed as Elvis, the king of rock. In party seen improv Elvis dialogue like.... Hail to the King baby!

scene1. hospital waiting room.

Paul. (reads magazines near Terry)

Dianne. (enters holding tissue to her head.she sits)

Paul. (immediately after seeing her begins to cool down)

Dianne. (notices him. presence)

Paul. (thinks) HI.

Dianne. (looks over and smiles)

Paul. ME AND A FRIEND JUST CAME FROM A CONCERT, HE GOT HURT.

Terry. (enters somewhat loud) THE X-RAYS CHECKED OUT I AM RETARDED.

(sees Dianne, somewhat quietly) ACTUALLY I ONLY HAVE A SPRAIN OR
SOMETHING. (looks at Paul) SO YOU WANT TO LEAVE .

Paul. (looks over at Dianne, she doesn't notice, quietly) SURE. (they leave)

(lights down)

scene2. hallway of school

(Terry and Paul standing outside school. Dianne walks by doesn't notice them.)

Paul. I THOUGHT YOU SAID SHE WAS TWENTY.

Terry. SHE LOOKED LIKE SOMEONE WHO WENT OUT WITH SOMEONE AT WORK.
BUT I GUESS I WAS WRONG.

Paul. I TOLD YOU SHE WASN'T

Terry. YOU DIDN'T KNOW EITHER. WHO CARES IT'S NOT LIKE YOUR GONNA TALK TO HER.

Paul. WHAT! YOU DON'T THINK I'M GOING TO TALK TO HER.

Terry. YOUR A CHUMP, MAN. WHEN WAS THE LAST TIME YOU TALKED TO A GIRL.(pause) BESIDES THE GIRL IN THE LIBRARY.

Paul. LETS GET SOME FAST FOOD.

Terry. I'M WITH YOU ON THAT ONE, WHERE TO? (like police questioning) DO YOU HAVE MONEY?

Paul. NO.

Terry. OF COURSE NOT, SO I GUESS I AM BUYING AGAIN. (thought) YOU OWE ME ABOUT SEVEN MEALS MAN.

Paul. I'M GETTING PAID SOON. DON'T WORRY ABOUT IT.

Terry. MY CAR IS RUNNING ON EMPTY. I NEED GAS MONEY BAD.

Paul. DID YOU CLEAN OUT THE CAR YET.

Terry. NO, BUT I HAVE THIS GREAT IDEA.

Paul. YEAH?

Terry.I THINK I'M GOING TO GROW WEED IN MY CAR (pause)AMONGST ALL THE GARBAGE.

Paul. YOU WERE DEFINITELY BORN STUPID.

Terry. I DIDN'T SAY I WAS GOING TO USE IT.

Paul. LETS GO.(pushes Terry doesn't answer or respond) JUST FORGET ABOUT IT O.K.

Terry. FORGET ABOUT IT. YOU SAY FORGET ABOUT EVERYTHING. HOW. LOOK AT MY LIFE . YOU'RE MY ONLY FRIEND I'VE ACTUALLY NEVER HAD A GIRLFRIEND MY PARENTS ARE DIVORCED MY STEPDAD'S A COMPLETE WASTE AND I KNOW AFTER I GRADUATE THEIR GOING TO KICK ME OUT.

Paul. THEIR NOT GOING TO KICK YOU OUT. YOU BLOW EVERYTHING OUT OF PROPORTION , EVERTHING IS BIGGER THAN IT IS. I KNOW YOUR LIFE BASICALLY SUCKS, BUT YOUR HARD DONE BY ACT AND LOW SELF ESTEEM REALLY BOTHERS PEOPLE.

Terry . ITS SO EASY TO TALK WHEN ITS NOT YOU.

Paul. (thoughtfully) I GUESS SO. (lights down)

scene3. paul's bedroom the garage

(Paul and Terry are listening to fast music, while laying on Pauls bed, Paul's also fooling around with an acoustic guitar. Both generally are thimking and are totally consumed by there thoughts, after awhile Terry stops the music.)

Terry. I THINK I'M GOING TO GROW MY HAIR LONG.

Paul.(sits up) ITS BEEN A MONTH AND I STILL HAVEN'T TALKED TO HER.

Terry. SO DON'T WORRY ABOUT IT. (he turns music back on)

Paul:(while music is blaring, almost yelling) I'VE GOT TO DO SOMETHING.
IT'S KILLING ME DOING NOTHING.

Terry. DID I TELL YOU I STOLE MY DAD'S GUN

Paul. (surprised) WHAT!

Terry. BE QUIET MAN . YOU'RE RUINING THE SONG.

Paul. (lies down) SORRY.(quietly)

Terry. WHAT. (loudly)

Paul. (loudly) SORRY. (lights down)

scene4. hallway of school

(Dianne is searching through her locker, she finds her books and closes locker. Paul walks into "some guy" who then pushes into Dianne and Paul knocks her stuff all over.)

Dianne. ARE YOU O.K.

Paul. YA.

Dianne.THATS GOOD.

Paul. SO.....SO HI. (waiting to see if she remembers)

Dianne. HI. (they pick up books together. Dianne fixes her hair.)

Paul. HI, DO YOU REMEBER ME (pause) FROM THE HOSPITAL.

Dianne.OH (pause) OH THAT WAS YOU. HOW ARE YOU. I CAN'T BELIEVE YOU REMEMBERED, THAT WAS SO LONG AGO.

Paul. IT WASN'T THAT LONG AGO.

Dianne. BUT STILL YOU REMEMBERED, THAT SO COOL. OH,I GOT TO GO BUT
ARE YOU GOING TO THAT PARTY ON FRIDAY.

Paul. (pause, then slowly) I GUESS.

Dianne. I SEE YOU THERE THEN .

Paul. (quietly while she's walking away) SURE.

Terry. (walks up to Paul) WHAT SHE SAY.

Paul. NOT MUCH.

Terry. THAT SUCKS, OH WELL. (starts to walk away)

Paul. HEY, TERRY WANT TO GO TO A PARTY FRIDAY.

Terry. (quietly walking away) SURE. (lights down)

scene 5. party.

(The "other guy" hits on Diane, Diane is unsure what to do, then Terry enters causing the "other guy" to get angry. Terry backs off but other guy doesn't , he ends up punching Terry , who then runs off while Diane watches.)

scene6. at a restuarant

(Lights come up as Paul says his first line.)

Paul. I CAN'T BELIEVE WE'VE BEEN TOGETHER FOR TWO DAYS.

Dianne. I KNOW ITS GONE BY SO FAST. (Paul leans across table, they kiss)

(Terry and Dianne standing in front of locker laughing and overall acting like they were something, Paul is watching them but they don't notice, Paul stands in silence looking confused and betrayed.)

Dianne. I HAVEN'T TALKED TO PAUL IN A WEEK.

Terry. EITHER HAVE I.

Dianne. YOUR SUPPOSE TO BE HIS BEST FRIEND.

Terry. YOU WERE SUPPOSE TO BE HIS GIRLFRIEND. WHY DOESN'T HE TALK TO US NOW? I DON'T KNOW WHAT'S WRONG WITH HIM. ALL HE'S BEEN DOING IS WORK. I THINK HE'S JEALOUS.

Dianne. I DON'T LIKE YOU, (emphasized)I DON'T WANT TO GO OUT WITH YOU. (nicely)I'M JUST YOUR FRIEND. I THINK YOU'RE A REALLY NICE PERSON.

Terry. THANKS.

Diane. WHAT AM I SUPPOSED TO DO.

Terry. I THOUGHT EVERYTHING WAS GOING WELL, WHAT WENT WRONG.

Diane. I DON'T KNOW.

Terry. (pausing then with hesitation) SO WE CAN'T HAVE SEX?

Diane. (surprised) NO.(slowly) NO.

Terry. I'M A HUMAN BEING TOO YOU KNOW. I HAVE FEELINGS TOO. YOU CAN'T JUST STOMP ON THEM LIKE THAT.

Diane. THIS IS SO AWKWARD. (pause, slowly) I GOT TO GO. (Paul enters,

Paul. REMEMBER OUR FIRST DATE. I THOUGHT IT WAS PRETTY EXCITING.

Dianne. (distant) ME TOO.

Paul. I TOTALLY LIKED YOU. (waiting for an answer)

Dianne. (notices, slowly, hardly listening) YEAH. (Paul starts to get edgy, he begins to itch his head) WHERE'S TERRY TONIGHT?

Paul. (sort of mad) DOES IT MATTER?

Dianne. (protective) NO, I WAS JUST WONDERING. JUST DROP IT.

Paul. DROP WHAT?

Dianne. WHAT WERE ARGUING ABOUT. WHO CARES.

Paul. WHAT ARE YOU THINKING ABOUT?

Dianne. IT DOESN'T MATTER, YOU NEVER BELIEVE WHAT I SAY ANYWAYS.

Paul. BECAUSE YOU NEVER TELL THE TRUTH.

Dianne. SEE YOU DON'T TRUST ME NOTHING I CAN SAY WILL CHANGE THAT.
SO WHY SHOULD I BOTHER EVEN TELLING YOU.

Paul. ARE YOU GOING TO THE CONCERT WITH ME THIS WEEKEND.

Dianne. OF COURSE. (pause) IS TERRY GOING TO BE THERE?. (Paul looks angry,frustrated) WHAT'S YOUR PROBLEM. I JUST WANTED TO KNOW WHO WAS GOING TO BE THERE. I DON'T UNDERSTAND YOU, AND I'M LEAVING.

(Dianne gets up and leaves. lights go down slowly on Paul)

scene 8. school hallway.

there is an equal distance between all three characters. Dianne is inbetween Paul and Terry. They all look at each other, all three look confused and speechless for awhile, eventually Dianne hurries off. Paul and Terry are both still standing looking at each other.)

Paul. I GOT TO GO (starts to walk away)

Terry. SEE YOU AROUND.

Paul. (stops walking quietly almost whisper) SURE. (lights down)

scene 8. each character in a different place

(Paul's lying sort of propped up in his bed listening to a slow song.

Terry's sitting on a garbage can with an unlit cigarette.

Dianne's at the restaurant with a date paying no attention to the "other guy.")

slowly lights fade. slow song plays until it ends.

The Vow

by

Cissie Fu

Crofton House School

Original production directed by Cissie Fu

Dramatis Personae

as originally acted at YouthWrite 1996, Penticton, B.C.

Chorus I.....Wendy Kibble

Chorus II.....Sarah Williams

Chorus III.....Katherine van der Gracht

Mime.....Cheryl Fu

Caution: Professionals and amateurs are hereby warned that The Vow by Cissie Fu is protected under copyright law. Inquiries regarding performance rights and royalties should be directed to:

Cissie Fu

2238 West 19th Avenue

Vancouver, B.C.

V6L 1C4

The fee for a single production of this play will be \$20.00.

The playwright's name must be included on all publicity material.

Preface

Sound plays an important role in The Vow.

The rush of the waves and the seagull's cry are all part of word-painting

*- I wish to set the scene in the mind, the imagination of the audience,
where the setting can be truly felt and experienced.*

The beat kept by the staff is a hint to the character's emotion

*- the wife's beat is resolute for she is angry; the child's is lighter,
with a bounce to it, simulating a child's playful actions.*

*This rhythm gives the play momentum as well as urges
the heart of the audience to beat along with it.*

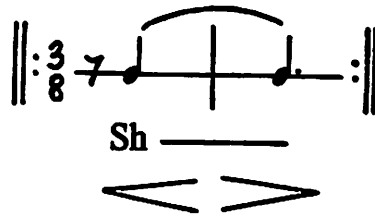
~ Cissie ~

{ Mime }

[All actors on stage.]

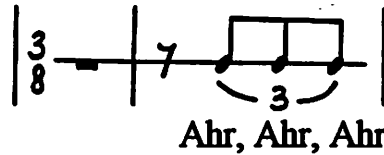
Chorus I [simulate waves upon the sand]

MODERATELY



[continue to repeat. Keep tempo and volume constant.]

Chorus III [simulate the cry of a seagull]



[improvise variations. First and second simulations comparatively softer than third and fourth ones. Fourth simulation comes into foreground, loud. After first four, repeat every several bars randomly.]

Chorus II [start after fourth simulation of seagull]

There is a man
Who desires little
And owns little.

He is a fisherman
But catches no fish
For they are not to be caught
By this man.

CUE: There

kneeling, assume character of MAN by holding mask close to face with LH. No actions are to come in contact with body.

So the sea promises
That it will welcome him
When he, one day,
Slips into its bosom.

The man muses a little space.

The cool green waters
May be tempting;
The rush of waves upon the shore
May please him;
And the song of the seabird
May render him speechless -

But he loves his wife
And he loves his child
And he loves his little house
by the sea.

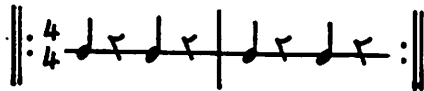
He desires little else.

So he bids the sea a silent farewell
And returns to the home he loves.

[All simulation cease. Pause.]

Chorus II [tap end of staff on stage]

RESOLUTELY



[continue to repeat. Keep strict beat throughout.]

CUE: muses
tilt head slightly left

CUE: loves
sweep RH from head to heart in one gentle movement.

CUE: So
untilt head; free RH
CUE: bids
RH loosely in front of shoulder, swift wave of palm, then free RH

Chorus I [start after eighth beat]

In the house is his wife
Who loathes the sea
For 'tis the sea
That makes her poor.

CUE: wife
*assume character of WIFE
with mask*

Poor in health
For she has little to eat
And poor in mind
For she has little to think.

CUE: health
*RH on forehead, palm
towards body*

CUE: mind
palm towards audience

She blames her poverty
On the man and the sea.

CUE: She
free RH

She hates the man
And she hates the sea
And she hates the little house
by the sea.

CUE: hates
*push RH towards audience,
shoulder-height*

She desires much more.

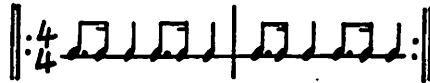
CUE: She
free RH

So she looks away
When the man enters.

CUE: looks
turn head to the right

Chorus II [continue to tap without break]

LIGHTLY



[continue to repeat. Keep strict beat
throughout.]

Chorus III [start after two bars of new rhythm]

In the house is his child,

CUE: child
*assume character of
CHILD with mask*

Busy at play
But its games lack vigour
and colour.

CUE: Busy
tilt head left and right

Lack in vigour
For the child is hungry;
Lack in colour
For its toys are few and rough.

CUE: vigour
bow head

It blames its want
On the barren sea.

CUE: It
raise head

It hates the sea
And it hates the little house
by the sea.

CUE: hates

It desires more.

CUE: It
free RH

So it kisses the man
When he enters -

CUE: kisses
*2nd and 3rd fingers of RH
touch lips, then show
audience, then free*

A kiss for food
That supplies vigour
That it ought to have
That the man ought to provide;

CUE: kiss

A kiss for colour
That supplies beauty
That all toys ought to have
That the man ought to provide;

CUE: kiss

A kiss for toys
That supply entertainment
That all children ought to have
That the man ought to provide.

CUE: kiss

[Beat ceases.]

Chorus II And yet each kiss
Adds to the man's sorrow
For his child's kisses
Come not from love but desire.

CUE: sorrow

*draw lines from eyes to
mouth with 2nd and 3rd
fingers RH, thrice, then free*

He remembers the sea's promise
And he muses a little space.

CUE: muses

— The cool green waters
->> **Chorus I & III:** coooooooooool [breathlike]
May be tempting;

— The rush of waves upon the shore
->> **Chorus I:** Sh [simulation of wave]
May please him;

— And the song of the seabird
->> **Chorus III:** Ahr, Ahr, Ahr
May render him speechless -

But he loves his child
And he loves his wife
And he loves his little house
by the sea.

CUE: loves

So does he dismiss these thoughts;
And he vows to fulfill
The dreams behind those kisses.

CUE: dismiss
untilt head

[First rhythm resumes.]

Chorus I His wife turns to look
With her eyes
Hollow with hunger.

CUE: wife

assume WIFE with mask

She does not kiss
And she does not plead:

She only stares
To cut and to chill -

A stare for the frailty
She does not deserve;

A stare for the hunger
She cannot endure;

A stare for the monotony
She cannot suffer.

She stares through and through
And all in all:

A stare for the frailty
She does not deserve;

Chorus II A stare for the hunger

She cannot endure;

Chorus III A stare for the monotony

She can no longer suffer.
[volume and intensity increase from
frailty to suffer (climax)]

[Beat ceases. Pause.]

Chorus II The man's heart breaks
For he can only offer
The undesired
To his wife and his child.

He remembers the sea's promise.

So he leaves his little house,
His staring wife
And his pleading child.

CUE: man's
*assume MAN with mask;
bury face in RH*

And lo -

— The cool green waters
->>Chorus I & III: cooooooooool [breathlike]
Are tempting;

— The rush of waves upon the shore
->>Chorus I: Sh [simulation of wave]
Does please him;

— And the song of the seabird
->>Chorus III: Ahr, Ahr, Ahr
Does render him speechless.

He loves his wife
And he loves his child
And he loves his little house
by the sea;

But his wife does not love him
And his child does not love him:
And what is a home without love?

So he slips into the bosom of the sea.

[Pause.]

Chorus I It is a sunny day
When the wife ventures
Out of the little house,
For something bright on the shore
Has caught her eye.

CUE: lo
look up

CUE: loves

CUE: But
free RH

CUE: slips
bow head down, then body
forward

CUE: It
body upright, kneeling,
assume WIFE with mask

CUE: bright
brief flash of palm, eye-level

CUE: eye
thumb and 2nd finger make
peeping hole, then swiftly
draw RH from left to right,
eye-level, then free

Chorus III And the child is amazed
When its mother carries
A fish into the little house -
The largest fish that it will ever see.

CUE: child
assume CHILD with mask

CUE: amazed
raise RH to mouth

CUE: see
free hand

CUE: wife
assume WIFE with mask

Chorus I The wife sells
The fish to a fishmonger
For a goodly sum
And brings back to the little house
The answer to hunger,
Frailty,
Poverty
And monotony.

So her dreams are fulfilled.

Chorus II And so is his vow.

CUE: And
assume MAN with mask

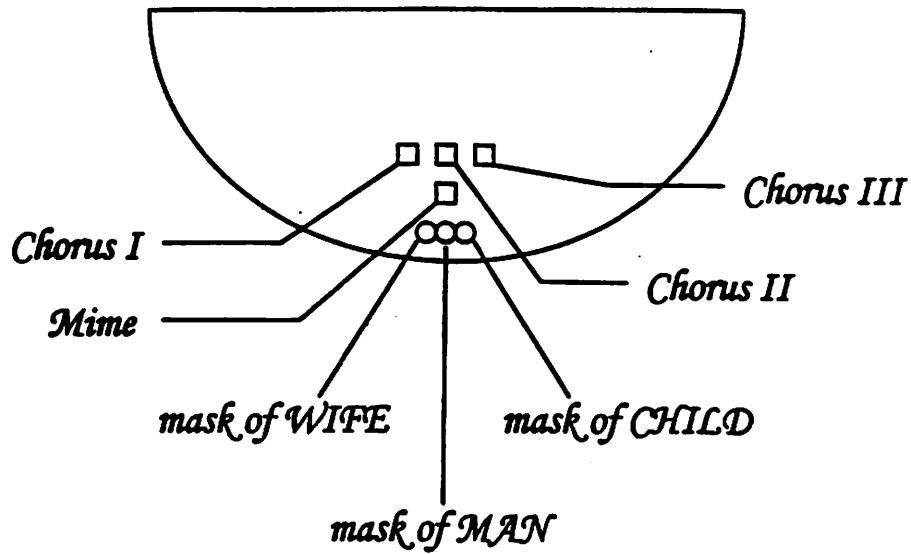
[Pause.]

Tutti There once was a man
Who desired little and owned little.
He was a fisherman
But caught no fish
For they were not to be caught
by this man.
He loved his wife
And he loved his child -

So he slipped into the bosom of the sea.

[Finit. Exeunt omnes.]

Set Design



Props

Mask of MAN
Mask of WIFE
Mask of CHILD
Staff

Lighting Design

- Cue 1: **There is a man...**[page 2]
Fade in on Chorus and Mime.
- Cue 2: **So he slipped...**[page 9]
Fade out.
- Cue 3: **sea** [last word]
Blackout.

Graduation Night

by Christopher Davyd

characters

Melissa Lisa Robles

Toni..... Jason Gillis

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Graduation Night

CHARACTERS: Melissa - 18 years old, popular, bouncy, highschool graduate, nice, does not know she's really in love with Toni.

Toni - 18 years old, highschool graduate student, a little on the shy side, semi-popular, usually optimistic, doesn't quite know he is in love with Melissa.

TONI & MELISSA HAVE BEEN BEST FRIENDS SINCE KINDERGARTEN.

PLOT: Two young highschool graduates face the so-called reality of the world; forced to realize that they soon won't be kids anymore. They are coming of age and finding themselves, discovering mixed, confused feelings about life, their past, and their futures, and finding love for each other.

SETTING: Small country town, , outside their high school on prom night. A nice midsummer night, with a nice school-campiness spirit to it in the night.

GRADUATION NIGHT

BLACKOUT, EXCEPT FOR A LIGHT BLUE WASH IN THE BACKGROUND, LIGHT WIND SOUNDS ARE WHISTLING, AND MELISSA AND TONI'S VOICES COME ON, AND RECITE THIS SHORT, MEANINGFUL PIECE ;

"It's not how many years you've lived, but how you've lived them. Someone once told me that time is a predator that stalks us all our lives. But maybe time is also a companion...who goes with us on our journey, and reminds us to cherish the moments of our lives...because they will never come again. We are after all...only mortal."

THE SONG, *Head Over Feet*, by *Alonis Morissette* COMES ON AND AT THE BACK, CENTER STAGE, THERE IS A SLIDE SCREEN, AND IT STARTS TO SHOW PICTURES OF TONI & MELISSA GROWING UP FROM KINDERGARTEN, SHARING MEMORIES AND EXPERIENCES, AND FINALLY, IT SHOWS THEM IN HIGH SCHOOL, GETTING READY FOR THEIR FINAL DANCE IN HIGH SCHOOL, THEIR PROM NIGHT. THE TWO OF THEM HAVE DIFFERENT DATES, BUT YOU CAN SEE THEM LOOKING AT EACH OTHER, AND THEIR DATES, AND GETTING A BIT JEALOUS! THERE ARE MORE SLIDES OF THE STUDENTS, AND CRYING ON THEIR LAST DANCE NIGHT. FINALLY, YOU CAN SEE TONI BY HIMSELF, HIS DATE DISAPPEARED SOMEWHERE, LEAVING OUT THE GYM DOORS, AND MELISSA, (ALSO TEMPORARILY DATELESS), SEES HIM DOING SO AND STARES OUT AT HIM. THIS FINAL SLIDE OF HER DOING THIS CORRESPONDS WITH THE ENDING OF THE SONG, AND THE SLIDE MACHINE GETS TURNED OFF AT THIS POINT, JUST BEFORE THE SONG FADES OUT AND ENDS. IT FADES UP ON TONI SITTING ON A BENCH, THAT IS APPARENTLY OUTSIDE, BENT OVER, WITH HIS HANDS IN HIS HAIR, LOOKING FRUSTRATED. IT IS NIGHTTIME, AND THE BLUE WASH REMAINS IN THE BACKGROUND, AND THE CRICKETS CRICKETING ARE HEARD.

TONI "Damn! What are ya' doing Toni? Sitting on a bench outside your school on prom night, while everybody is inside enjoying themselves, and having fun on what might be their last night together. What's your problem? It's pathetic!! Oh well..., at least Melissa's probably having a good time!! Her and Trevor...God what an idiot he is!! I don't know why she picks these guys to go out with..... She could at least pick a guy with a little bit of depth to him, someone who knows more than just about cars and football!! Oh, jeez Toni, What are you doing? It's not your decision, or even any of your business who Melissa goes out with. I mean, ..what do you care anyways? What am I talkin' about, of course I care, Melissa's been your best friend since kindergarten, I'm supposed to be there for her, not put down her decisions, I mean, after all, they're her decisions not yours. But Trevor.., what an idiot!!"

MELISSA WALKS IN, SURPRISING TONI, SAYING;

Melissa "Who's an idiot?"

TONI TURNS AROUND, SURPRIZED TO SEE MELISSA STANDING THERE,
BUT THEN RELAXES, REALIZING THAT IT IS ONLY HER.

Toni "Oh, Hi!, Melissa, how're ya' doin'?"

Melissa "Oh, kretty good, but,..-I can see you're not
having the best time, why are you out here?"

Toni "Oh, I don't know, honestly."

Melissa "Wait, you can't be bored,--not tonight!?"

Toni "No, it's not that, it's just, - it's weird,..."

Melissa "I know what you mean, I think. Tonight's just so
weird, like you said,.. I mean,- this is something
you think about all during school, but you never
really think that this night would come, at least
I didn't. It's like I'm in a dream or something,
just floating around on the dance floor, taking it
all in!"

Melissa "Prom night's a pretty big thing, isn't it?"

Melissa "I mean, like, do you know how much this whole
outfit cost mv'folks?"

Toni "(Laughing) Yes, unfortunately, so, now's Trevor doing?"

Melissa "I don't know, fine I guess." ~~say~~

Toni "You guess?"

Melissa "Actually, I probably don't know how he's really
doing, he's been hanging around with the guys most
of the night."

Toni "...Oh,....."

Melissa "The music has been nice, though."

Toni "Can't argue with that!!!"

MELISSA TAKES A FEW STEPS FORWARD, TO LOOK UP INTO THE
SKY. SHE RUBS HER ARMS FOR WARMTH. TONI JOINS HER.

Melissa "-,..Do you remember when we used to do this when
were kids?"

Toni "What- go to proms? No, can't say that I do!!..!"

Melissa "Ha-Ha..I mean do you remember when we used to
sit on your lawn at night when it was nice out
and watch the stars?"

Toni "Yeah, I knew what you meant...Yah, I do
remember. We used to put a big old blanket
on the lawn, and watch them for the longest
time. It was nice...."

Melissa "Yeah, and your Dad would bring us out some hot
chocolate to drink, and warm ourselves up!!"

Toni "I remember we never used to finish them, either.."

Melissa "promised not to get pissed off in the first place, and we can't get pissed off at each other, that would be bad, right?"

Toni "Yeah, that would really piss me off..."

Melissa "Shut-up! I'm being serious! Now, do you promise?"

Toni "Yes, I promise I won't get pissed off at you, now will you please tell me what I'm not supposed to get pissed off about?"

Melissa "Well,....for one, she was voted to be one of the most disappointing dressers in the group this year,-"

Toni "Oh, no,..You've got to be kidding!!!"

Melissa "-AND,....-...she talks behind everybody's backs', which probably means yours, too....,"

Toni "Is that the worst you've got for me?"

Melissa "No, now get prepared for this one, Deborah Johnson said she walked into the changeroom before class one day,...and she saw Melissa in there,.....Toni, your girlfriend,....stuffs!"

Toni "(Broken up in laughter) What?"

Melissa "We're talking total plywood here,I mean seriously."

Toni "You guys are nuts!"

Melissa "But do you really want to go out with a board-chested backtalker who can't dress?"

Toni "Listen, why are we even talking about this?"

Melissa "Hey, I'm just looking out for your best interests. I mean, I wouldn't want my friend to go out with somebody they didn't really like,..would you?"

Toni "Nah, of course I wouldn't."

THERE IS AN UNCOMFORTABLE SILENCE BETWEEN MELISSA AND TONI FOR AWHILE. MELISSA STANDS UP ABRUPTLY, AND BREAKS THE SILENCE. SHE WALKS OFF TO THE SIDE A BIT.

Toni "Which makes me want to talk about something to you too. It's about Trevor,-"

Melissa "Oh, spe ing of which, I should be getting back in there soon, Trevor's probably on the patrol for me."

Toni "Yeah, well you know,-"

Melissa "You know, I shouldn't have said that thing about Trevor, I mean, this might be the last night while school's still in to hang around with the guys, his friends.It's only fair,-right?"

Toni "Yeah, but-he's your date!"

Melissa "What are ya' talking about,, I never leave a good
~~drink~~ anything but empty!"

Toni "We didn't! I remember, because they were too hot to finish, so we left them out to cool off, when they were half-full, we ended up falling asleep on the blanket, and my Dad would carry you home next door. After that, he'd wake me up, and make me wash my face, and go to bed."

Melissa "Wash your face?"

Toni "Yes, because, for some reason, the rest of my hot would always end up spilled all over my face, somehow. Believe me, I remember, we never finished our drinks!.."

THEY BOTH LAUGH, AND THEN THEY WALK BACK TO THE BENCH. THE TWO OF THEM SIT DOWN.

Melissa "So, why aren't you inside with Sal?"

Toni "I ~~don't~~ know I came out here and,.....

Melissa "..... She never showed up."

Toni "Yah.. I did, but, actually, I never really went inside, she probably disappeared with her friends!

Melissa "Hmmm.."

Toni "But, Oh Well....."

Melissa "Don't take this personally or anything, but"

Toni ".....--but what?"

Melissa "Naaahh,....."

Toni "No, really,--what!!? I want to know....."

Melissa ".....Promise you won't get pissed off at me?"

Toni "What?. Why would I?"

Melissa "Just promise you won't get pissed off at me!?!"

Toni "What would I get pissed off about?...."

Melissa "Don't answer questions with questions, just promise!!"

Toni "O.k., I promise,..."

Melissa "Are you serious? 'Cause my friends say that to each other, but they never really mean it, and they get pissed off at me, and then I get pissed off at them for getting pissed off at me, and then all of our friends get pissed off at us complaining about being pissed off at each other, and then everyone just ends up REALLY pissed off at each other, and that TOTALLY pisses me off, because they

Melissa "Yeah, big Whoop."

Toni "Speaking of Trevor, (Looking back through a door), from the looks of it, he's getting ready to leave. He's getting his coat on and he's got his keys in hands. I think he IS looking for you..I guess you better go."

MELISSA BECOMES UNCOMFORTABLE, AND NERVOUS, AND GLANCES BACK TO SEE FOR HERSELF, AND HIDES AWAY FROM SIGHT OF THE DOOR.

Melissa "Here. Come here, I don't want him to see me,...- Quick.."

TONI DOES SO, AND STANDS IN FRONT OF MELISSA.

Toni "There, I don't think he'll be able to see you now, -uh.., he's going the other way,.....You're safe..."

Melissa "Don't joke around about that....."

Toni ",Melissa, what has gotten into you all of a sudden? Is something wrong?"

MELISSA WALKS ACROSS THE STAGE AWAY FROM TONI AND STARTS PACING, BECOMING NERVOUS.

Melissa "Anyways, about Sal, I really think-"

Toni "There is, isn't there?"

Melissa "What? No, of course not...But, back to you-"

Toni "Melissa?-"

Melissa "WHAT?"

Toni "You and Trevor? What's going on?Why are you acting like this?"

Melissa "Like what?"

Toni "Melissa, I've never seen you so nervous before, now what's going on between you two?"

Melissa "For the last time, i don't know what you're talking about."

Toni "Is he,.....does he hurt you? Does he hit you? Look at me, I can tell when you're hiding something..."

THE CONVERSATION IS BECOMING MORE INTENSE ALL OF A SUDDEN, AND MELISSA, FOR A STRANGE REASON, IS IN TEARS ALMOST.

Melissa "Toni, no"

Toni "He does, that son of a bitch beats you, doesn' he?"

Melissa "No, Toni, don't, please....It's not that."

TONI STARTS TO HEAD TOWARD THE DOORS.

Melissa "Toni, no, please, It's not that...."

Toni "I'm gonna get him,....--"

Melissa "Toni..."

Toni "What?"

Melissa "That's not why I didn't want him to see me right now, okay,?"

Toni "Well, if that bastard isn't hurting you, how come you looked so scared when I said he was lookin' for you?,... 'Tell me....."

MELISSA STANDS FROZEN, AND ALL OF A SUDDEN STARTS TO CRY. SHE COVERS HER FACE IN SHAME. TONI CALMS DOWN, AND GOES TO HER.

Toni "Melissa, come on, sit down, (HE LEADS HER TO THE BENCH, AND THEY BOTH SIT DOWN), now, come on, what's going on?"

Melissa "This is not supposed to be how Prom night is. I'm not supposed to be sitting here, crying,.. I'm supposed to be having fun, and dancing with my boyfriend who cares about me,..- ME.., aren't I??"

Toni "Shhh.....Sssshhhhhhh.....Of course you are, of course you are."

Melissa "(CRYING HARD, BUT TRYING TO PULL HERSELF TOGETHER), The other night, at the point, Trevor took me up in his car, and he said it was going to be a romantic evening,.....-and then,.....- he tried to,....--"

Toni "Oh, my God, he raped you, didn't he?"

Melissa "(SHE SHAKES HER HEAD AND CONTINUES), He tried to, you know, and he tried and tried, and I wouldn't let him., So, he got angry, and started calling me all of these nasty names, telling me if I don't give in to him soon, that I'd be yesterday's news, and that I would be thrown out with the rest of his trash,..He said that,...."

Toni "And? What happened?"

Melissa "He told me that tonight would be my last chance, and that I better put out or else,....."

Toni "Or else what?"

Melissa "He just said that I'd never want to show my face at school again,.....I'm just a whore, he said,...."

Toni "Sssshhhhh.....No you're not. (HE PULLS HER CLOSE TO HIM INTO A HUG.)"

Melissa "I just don't think I was ready for this all! My older sister told me that it doesn't really hit you until September, when we've always gone back to school, .. then we realize that it's all over, and it's strange, because you're not spending the day with all you friends all the time, -but do you know what? I think I must be premature, or something, because, I'm getting it all now!"

Toni "You're not premature, I think a lot of people are feeling the same way you and I are right now."

Melissa "Ya' think?, I mean, everyone looks so happy,.....- and especially tonight! "

Toni "Well, look at you, you've been acting as bouncy as you ever have all year, and YOU'VE been feeling down, too! They're probably feeling just as scared as you are,"

Melissa "Do you think people actually find the person that they were meant for, or they just find someone, and settle for them, because they're just lonely?"

Toni "I'd hope they find each other, because that's what I'm freaked out of the most."

Melissa "What?"

Toni "Well, when you get out of highschool, what's going to happen? Some people are going to go to college or University, some are just going to go right to work, we're going to get old, and if you're still alone, you might begin to wonder what it's all for, and what it's all worth? It just seems to me that if you don't have someone to love, ,uh,.....--"

Melissa "You don't have to finish, I know what you're talking about. For me, I know it sounds corny, but -I love being a teenager! I love going to parties, I love the basketball games, cheerleading, going out on dates, I love it all!!!"

Toni "Yeah,..."

Melissa "Will it just all end like that? I mean, on the last day of school, when the bell rings at the end of the day, and everyone leaves, is that it? Our whole lives, like we've been living them for the past 13 years, just changing like that."

Toni "It's hard to think that in twelve years, we'll be 30! And ten years after that, we'll be 40, and so on.....We'll probably have our own kids, and then the cycle will just start again, they'll start their lives, and eventually go what we're going through."

Toni "You're far from a whore, in fact, do you know how many girls have gone out with him? Do you know how many times he's probably tried to, you know, with? If anybody's the whore, it's Trevor!"

Melissa "But think of all the girls that didn't turn him down?"

Toni "Exactly, which makes you the one who's different.."

Melissa "What?"

Toni "Guys like that are scum. Sure, they've got the good looks, the money, and the attitude, but they don't appreciate women. I'd just like to see the day, when girls finally realize that they won't be happy with jerks like that, and that all the nice guys have slipped away. God only knows why some girls prefer to be treated like dirt, instead of being treated like they should be, and deserve to be. Same thing goes the other way around, too!"

Melissa "..... Oh..... I guess that I feel better, thanks."

Toni "No problem, just promise me you're going to break it off with him right away, .o.k!?"

Melissa "O.K!"

Toni "Now, listen, wipe your tears with this , this is your prom night, and you deserve a happy one, not not a depressing one. At least nothing happened to ya'."

Melissa "O.K., Thanks,"

Toni "No problem, What are friends for, right?"

Melissa "Right, friends....."

Toni "Now look at us, the way we are right now, people would probably think that we were going out,....."

MELISSA AND TONI SIT UP PROPERLY AGAIN, CHUCKLING, MELISSA'S NOW HAPPY AGAIN. THE LAST COMMENT MAKES AN UNCOMFORTABLE SITUATION.

Melissa "What's going to happen to us?"

Toni "What do you mean?"

Melissa "All of us, this whole class, ..what's going to happen to us all?"

Toni "I couldn't tell 'ya, Melissa."

Melissa "Don't you ever think about that?"

Toni "Actually, that seems like the only thing I've been able to think about since the end of last summer, thinking, this is it, this is our last year....."

Melissa "--,..I'm NOT going to turn into my mom."
 Toni "You know the strange thing about it? Usually kids our age think of parents as stone-cold figures who's only purpose is to ruin their kids good times, but you know, lately I've had more respect for my parents. I've just been thinking about how it was for them when they were in highschool, I mean, they were probably just as clueless as we are now."
 Melissa "I never really thought of them like that. Especially my parents, it seems to me like they just care about how much money they can make."
 Toni "Well, I'm not saying that everyone's perfect, or anything."
 Melissa "Yeah, well, I know that."

TONI WALKS TO THE SIDE, AND PICKS TWO GLASSES UP.

Melissa "What're you doing?"
 Toni "Well, if Sal's not going to drink this punch, somebody's got to,.."
 Melissa "Oh, thanks."
 Toni "Here, I never thought I would hear myself say this, but -a toast to school."
 Melissa " A toast to school. Minus the work."
 Toni "Yeh,.."

TONI AND MELISSA TOAST TO EACH OTHER, AND MELISSA ACCIDENTALLY SPILLS DRINK ON TONI, AND STARTS LAUGHING UNCONTROLLABLY.

Toni "Oh, no no not on my Tux.. Why are you laughing so hard?"
 Melissa "I have something to tell you,you have to promise you won't get pissed off, though,....."
 Toni "Oh, God, now, not this again..Tell me...."
 Melissa "O.k., you know those hot chocolates that used to spill all over you face?"
 Toni "Yeah, ?"
 Melissa "Well, they didn't actually spill on you.."
 Toni "Oh, no?"
 Melissa "No, Ya' see, I kinda always stayed up later than you, and I,.....well, - I kinda poured them all over your face.."
 Toni "You what? You were the one doing it?, Oh, I'm going to kill."
 Melissa "I'm sorry, it was just so funny, I couldn't help myself. I'm sorry, - well I was young and eve--
 --rything right?"

ew I'm sorry v to kill you. one

Toni "That's it.. That's it.."
 Melissa "NO,.NO,."

TONI CHASES MELISSA AROUND, AND EVENTUALLY CATCHES HER, BUT SHE TURNS AROUND, AND SPLASHES THE REST OF HER DRINK ON HIM. HE HOLD HER, AND DOES THE SAME. SHE SCREAMS , AND SHAKES ALL THE JUICE SPILLED IN HER HAIR, ONTO TONI. A TEACHER'S VOICE IS HEARD FROM THE DISTANCE.

Teacher's Voice " Hey, You kids be quiet out there, and settle down.."

MELISSA AND TONI LOOK AT EACH OTHER , AND BURST OUT IN LAUGHTER AT THE SAME TIME. TONI STILL HAS A HOLD OF MELISSA, AND HE TAKES A LOUSY STEP, AND FALLS BACKWARDS, WITH MELISSA ON TOP OF HIM. THEY FINALLY SETTLE A LITTLE BIT.

Toni "Being a kid was so much fun, remember?"
 Melissa "Yeah, I do. I'm just glad that you were there all the time to be my friend."
 Toni "Me too,.Although, it did get tiring when everyone was always asking us if we were going out or if we were brother or sister, I mean ,..- it's pretty amazing how people can't seem to understand that a guy and a girl can be best friends, nothing more, nothing less."
 Melissa "I know what Ya' mean,."
 Toni "But I liked it."
 Melissa "Think it'll be hard? Life after highschool,..?"
 Toni "I don't know, but all I can say is that we better stay friends forever, even when we die. Even if we just talk just once a year on the telephone, or by letters."
 Melissa "You can count on it."
 Toni "And we'll have to explain to our other halves that we're just friends, and that they don't have anything to worry about."
 Melissa "I think the person who we marry should be perfect."
 Toni "Someone you share memories with,"
 Melissa "Someone you care deeply about,....."
 Toni "Someone who you won't be afraid to grow old with,....."

MELISSA AND TONI STAND UP, BRUSHING THEMSELVES OFF. AND STAND IN AN UNCONTROLLABLE SILENCE.THE SONG, 'DON'T YOU FORGET ABOUT ME', COMES ON LOWLY IN THE BACKGROUND, AS IF THE DANCE IS PLAYING IT. IT VERY DISCREETLY GETS LOUDER DURING THE NEXT BIT OF SHORT CONVERSATION.

Melissa "It was great, it was a great time. At least went through it. At least now we have memories to look back at, that's all that matters, I think."

Toni "Yeah, It was great."

Melissa "We should go back inside, after all, we're not going to see these people for much longer, and I'd like to spend the time we have left with them."

Toni "Yeah, Yeah, you're right, so do I. Let's go back inside,--...ready for the future,-right?"

THERE IS A PAUSE OF SILENCE BETWEEN THEM, AND MELISSA TAKES HER RISKS, AND BRAVELY PUTS HER HAND REACHED OUT TOWARDS TONI'S. TONI'S HAND MEETS HERS, SLOWLY, AND THEN THEY STARE AT EACH OTHER IN WONDER, AND IN FRIGHT, AND THEN, SLOWLY REALIZING WHO THEY REALLY LOVE, THEY KISS EACH OTHER. THEN, AFTER THE KISS, THEY STARE AT EACH OTHER, AND SMILES FORCE THEMSELVES ONTO BOTH THEIR FACES.

Toni "Together,....--"
Melissa "Let's go,,...--"

THE SONG THEN GETS UP TO FULL VOLUME, THEN THEY SMILE AT EACH OTHER, AND THEN HEAD FOR THE DOORS, GOING BACK INTO THE PROM, ...TOGETHER. THEY'VE FINALLY REALIZED THEIR LOVE FOR EACH OTHER. IT FADES OUT, AND THE SLIDE SCREEN LIGHTS BACK UP AGAIN, AND THE SLIDES THIS TIME SHOW MELISSA AND TONI WALKING INTO THE PROM. THEY WALK PAST SAL, WHO'S STANDING BESIDE TREVOR, WHOM TRIES TO GRAB MELISSA, BUT, SHE PUSHES HIM AWAY, AND WALKS AWAY WITH TONI. TREVOR IS EMBARRASSED, AND THEN, TREVOR AND SAL LOOK AT EACH OTHER, AND YOU CAN TELL THAT THEY HAVE AN IMMEDIATE LIKING FOR EACH OTHER. TONI AND MELISSA DANCE TOGETHER, FAST, THEN SLOWLY, AND YOU SEE THEM IN A ROMANTIC EMBRACE, AND THEY KISS AGAIN. THEN, YOU SEE PEOPLE LEAVING, AND THEN YOU SEE TONI HOLDING HANDS WITH MELISSA, WALKING DOWN THE HALLWAY OF THEIR SCHOOL, TOWARDS THE DOORS. YOU SEE THEM FROM A BACK-VIEW, FIRST THEY ARE CLOSE, THEN THEY ARE GETTING FARTHER DOWN THE HALLWAY, AND THEN, THEY ARE RIGHT BY THE DOORS IN THE DISTANCE, AND THEN THEY ARE GONE OUT THE DOORS, AND YOU CAN'T SEE THEM ANYMORE. THEY ARE GONE TO FACE THE FUTURE TOGETHER. THE SLIDE SCREEN GOES BLACK, AND THE SONG FADES OUT VERY SLOWLY AFTER THE SLIDES ARE ALL DONE, AND IT ENDS.

THE END.

AFTER

Stranger Things Have Happened

by

Monica Sparks

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at Brookwood in May '96**

**Brookwood Sec. School
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**Ms. Sharon Conrad
ABCDE**

Characters and Setting Description:

Jennie: An eighteen year old girl looking to find who she really wants to be in a somewhat mixed up world. Jennie is a pretty girl who tries incredibly hard to please everyone, especially her parents. She has dreams and ambitions but isn't quite sure that she is able to reach them.

Chris: An eighteen year old boy who can't seem to understand why people expect him to grow up so fast. He hasn't really had a whole lot of support from his family, and he is extremely independent. When it comes to learning he believes that no one person can learn everything in a classroom, people have to go out and taste life to learn about it.

The Cast:

Jennie

Chris

Girl #1

Business man

Woman #2

Man #1

Man #2

Man #3

Mother

Kid #1

Kid #2

Setting.

This play takes place in an underground subway station, where no light from the outside is evident. It is extremely dark. There are two benches and behind those two benches is a wall covered in articles, ads, and posters. There is a turnstile by the only exit. There is one garbage can placed in between the two benches. The only sounds in there are the voices of the few people that wait for the train and the train itself.

CHRIS: Help wanted. Responsible male willing to travel. Earn up to \$1500 a week. Ha, yea right! Now that's just way too good to be true. *(he takes the poster off the wall and crumples it up into a ball, looks at it and smiles. He starts dribbling.)* Oh he's dribbling down the court. There is no stopping this man. There's 10 seconds left in play and they're down by one, Chris needs to make this shot. He shoots... And it's good. He won the game, and the crowd goes wild. *(he begins jumping around and celebrating when Jennie walks in. She looks at him oddly.)* I was just....practicing?

JENNIE: I see. *(She sits down)*

CHRIS: *(Chris tries to continue looking at the ads but he is embarrassed. Chris looks at Jennie.)*

JENNIE: Yes?

CHRIS: I'm sorry, it's just that... you look familiar.

JENNIE: Oh

CHRIS: *(Chris stands there. He is trying to think of something else to say.)* So.. do you take the subway often?*(She looks at him. He smiles half-heartedly.)*

JENNIE: Actually, no. *(she turns around. Pause. She turns back and faces him.)* Can you tell me when the next train might be coming?

CHRIS: Lost hey! *(he smiles)*

JENNIE: No *(she becomes very defensive)*...I was just wondering when the train might be coming.

- CHRIS:** I'm not sure. *(There is a pause. Chris sits back and on the bench, he looks at Jennie. She walks over and begins to look at the ads and posters on the walls. Chris tries to think where he knows her from. He stands up and walks towards her.)* You... you were at the concert at the stadium a couple of weeks ago.
- JENNIE:** What? *(She is confused because she doesn't know how he knew that.)*
- CHRIS:** Well, you looked really familiar to me and I didn't know where I knew you from.
- JENNIE:** And you remember me from the concert?
- CHRIS:** *(Aside.)* How could I forget you!
- JENNIE:** Do you know how many people were there?
- CHRIS:** A lot... *(trying to make up an excuse for remembering her.)* It's not all that often that I forget a face. I was with my friend Joe. *(she looks at him, she doesn't remember Joe)* He knew your friend Andrea.
- JENNIE:** Oh? I met a lot of people that night.
- CHRIS:** The name is Chris.
- JENNIE:** Seems familiar.
- CHRIS:** It's Jennie right?
- JENNIE:** Right! But how did you remember that?
- CHRIS:** I'm good with names. *(He smiles, Jennie looks at him with raised eyebrows, she sits back on the bench. There is another pause. Chris sits on the same bench as Jennie.)* So..*(she looks at him, he searches for something poetic to say to her.)*..What made you take the subway tonight?

- JENNIE:** What kind of question is that, to ask someone?
- CHRIS:** I was just curious. Haven't you ever wondered where people are going?
- JENNIE:** I guess I never really thought about it.
- CHRIS:** Some people are going to the coolest places. (*Jennie looks at him she wants some examples. Chris catches on.*) I met this one old lady at the bus stop, on fourth, and she had just come back from the museum where she went to see some pictures of her husband.
- JENNIE:** Why was he in the pictures?
- CHRIS:** I'm not sure, her bus came.
- JENNIE:** Oh.
- CHRIS:** Then there was this man who had just returned form his trip across the country...On his motor bike.
- JENNIE:** Why did he go across the country?
- CHRIS:** How am I supposed to know...I didn't want to pry.
- JENNIE:** But asking him where he was going isn't considered prying, now is it?
- CHRIS:** Actually, to tell you the truth, he started talking about it.
- JENNIE:** So, let me see if I've got this straight, he walked up to you and just decided to tell you he motor biked across the country.
- CHRIS:** He was proud of it, and what is so unusual about that?

JENNIE: *(shakes her head)* Nothing.

CHRIS: So let me guess where you are going.

JENNIE: It is not a big deal why do you need to know...

CHRIS: *(Cuts her off.)* So I bet you were on your way to work when...

JENNIE: Actually I just needed to think.

CHRIS: Oh.. *(there is a pause but he doesn't feel he needs to ask for an explanation)*

JENNIE: Do you have any idea when the next train will be coming?

CHRIS: I have no idea.

JENNIE: *(She looks around and the station is creepy because it is so empty. She looks over at Chris and he's looking at her. She stands up and walks around, she mumbles to herself)* Why did I have to end up here?

CHRIS: What?

JENNIE: Nothing.

CHRIS: What brought you here anyway?

JENNIE: The wrong train.

CHRIS: Oh! *(pause)* No I mean what...

JENNIE: *(She interrupts)* Actually my car was in the repair shop.

CHRIS: So you decided to ride the subway.

JENNIE: Yes.

CHRIS: And you came here because....

JENNIE: Well, it is kind of a long story.

CHRIS: Oh well, it'll help pass the time.

JENNIE: It isn't a really good story.

CHRIS: Well, if you don't care to share it.

JENNIE: No, that's not it.

CHRIS: Well, what is it then?

JENNIE: *(said quietly)* It's kind of embarrassing.

CHRIS: What was that?

JENNIE: It's kind of embarrassing!

CHRIS: So what. Embarrassing things happen to everyone.

JENNIE: Alright. Well, *(said extremely quickly)* I knew where I wanted to get off but I got off too early and when I got on the other train *(breath)* it was the wrong one. *(A faint noise of the train is in the background. Jennie stands up and walks downstage. Chris remains seated. She hears the sound of the train. She runs after the sound.)* Hey! Wait! Stop! *(She turns around and looks at Chris.)* What just happened here?

CHRIS: Not all the trains stop here.

JENNIE: What do you mean, not all the trains stop here, don't they have to?

- CHRIS:** I don't think so. (*Jennie tries to calm herself down by walking around the station. She sits down on the bench and looks exhausted.*) Where were you going?
- JENNIE:** What?
- CHRIS:** Where were you going, you know, to end up here?
- JENNIE:** Oh, I was coming home from the park.
- CHRIS:** The park?
- JENNIE:** It's beautiful there this time of year, you know.
- CHRIS:** I love the park. I take it you go there often?
- JENNIE:** Sometimes.
- CHRIS:** Oh.
- JENNIE:** I go to the park to think. (*She stands up and walks around*) You know try to sort out my life in twenty minutes.
- CHRIS:** But instead of going to the wonderful world of nature, you ended up here in a subway station, talking to some man in the middle of nowhere. I guess it could be worse?
- JENNIE:** How could it be any worse?
- CHRIS:** I could be some deranged lunatic.
- JENNIE:** Somehow you don't look like the type.
- CHRIS:** How do you know, maybe this is all part of my devious plan?
- JENNIE:** I think if you were some deranged lunatic, you would have done something deranged and... lunatical by now. You

wouldn't have waited this long. *(Pause he smiles at her.)* Do you have the time?

CHRIS: No, but I imagine that the next train should be here soon. *(pause, Chris checks to see if there are any trains in sight. He turns around.)* How old are you?

JENNIE: Eighteen.

CHRIS: Do you still go to school?

JENNIE: What is this, twenty questions?

CHRIS: No, I'm just curious. And since we are both down here waiting for the same thing, we might as well talk.

JENNIE: Why?

CHRIS: To make things more entertaining. Or we can just sit in silence if you'd like.

JENNIE: No, I don't really like the silence.

CHRIS: Well, you still haven't answered my question.

JENNIE: And what was that?

CHRIS: Do you still go to school?

JENNIE: Yea. I just got accepted to University.

CHRIS: Wow! That is impressive. Then what do you need to think about?

JENNIE: I don't really know what I want to do.

CHRIS: What is making you decide right now?

JENNIE: My parents, they want me to be some big hot shot lawyer.

CHRIS: University is a really good opportunity, if I had the chance..

JENNIE: Then you take it... Try going through your whole life doing everything everyone else wants you to do.

CHRIS: I guess I was lucky that way. I always made my own decisions. Nobody ever told me what I should or shouldn't do. Although, sometimes I wish that they had.

JENNIE: I wish I could have had some experience in screwing up my life, that way I would only have had myself to blame.

CHRIS: And I wish someone planned my life out for me so I wouldn't have to make every choice by myself. Then maybe I could have someone else to blame.

JENNIE: I don't think you understand.

CHRIS: What is there to understand, you have your whole life planned out for you.

JENNIE: Exactly, I just wish I had the chance to plan it... Look at me I'm eighteen, miserable, and telling my problems to some guy in a subway station that I barely even know. *(There is a pause while Jennie tries to burn off some steam. She goes and reads the posters on the walls. She notices an ad for a job.)* Wanted. Strong, responsible student. Hours flexible.

CHRIS: Which company?

JENNIE: I beg your pardon?

CHRIS: Which company?

JENNIE: *(she looks)* It doesn't say.

CHRIS: Oh...

JENNIE: Why?

CHRIS: Because most of the ads in here are usually too good to be true.

JENNIE: What else is new. Most things are too good to be true.

CHRIS: It is like my father always said, "If it is too good to be true, it probably is."

JENNIE: Everything is too good to be true nowadays!

CHRIS: That's not a very optimistic view.

JENNIE: Well I am far from an optimistic person.... Now that I think about it, I'm not a pessimist either. I don't know what you'd call me.

CHRIS: Realistic.

JENNIE: Exactly!

CHRIS: It's the same with me.

JENNIE: It's like I know that nobody will ever ride off into the sunset with me, but I'd like to think someone would. Part of me wants to believe some pretty unbelievable things.

CHRIS: And if you believe it bad enough you never know it might come true, right?

JENNIE: Exactly. But then there is the other side of me that tells me not to get my hopes up because once you do there is room to get your hopes smashed... It's like the more I try to get

ahead the further back I get. My father told me something once.

CHRIS: And what was that?

JENNIE: Life is like a highway (*pause*)

CHRIS: How so?

JENNIE: I wasn't finished!

CHRIS: Sorry. You paused.

JENNIE: Haven't you ever heard of pausing for effect.

CHRIS: Yea, but that wasn't an (*does the quote thing with his fingers.*) effect pause.

JENNIE: Well if you would have let me finish.

CHRIS: I thought you were finished.

JENNIE: Well I wasn't.

CHRIS: Sorry, sorry, finish.

JENNIE: Life is like a highway, there is always someone ahead of you.

CHRIS: That is so true... Your whole life everyone tells you, "you can do anything" but as soon as you get out in the real world you realize that it is far from true.

JENNIE: My father used to tell me, "Anyone can do anything but everyone has limitations, it is just a matter of stretching them out."

CHRIS: You have a smart dad.

JENNIE: Thanks.

CHRIS: Why do parents tell their kids things like that? Why don't they just tell them the truth?

JENNIE: And what is that?

CHRIS: That you're lucky to succeed in life, but you have to work your ass off to do it.

JENNIE: Nobody ever told me that it would be this hard.

CHRIS: But nobody ever said that it would be easy either.

JENNIE: True enough. I think everyone should get a warning when they're born.

CHRIS: Sort of like a birth certificate?

JENNIE: Kind of.

CHRIS: I can see it now, you've just been born and the doctor gives you a piece of paper that says: You should have turned back when you had the chance.

JENNIE: *(She smiles. The sound of the train coming.)* Now this one has to stop, right?

CHRIS: Maybe?

JENNIE: *(She walks out to where you are supposed to load the train. The sound of the train goes by.)* Hello. Am I invisible or something? Don't you know the meaning of the word STOP. You stupid idiot. *(Chris walks towards her to try and calm her down.)* What is going on?

CHRIS: Calm down.

- JENNIE:** How can I calm down when there is some idiot driver who won't stop to let me on. (*Chris holds her arms to try and calm her down. Jennie moves her arms, Chris lets go, the way Chris was looking at her made her feel somewhat uncomfortable. She walks away, stops and looks back at him.*).. Am I going to be stuck here?
- CHRIS:** Of course not. Don't worry. We'll try to get the next one.
- JENNIE:** But you can't promise me we'll get the next one, or the next one, or the one after that, can you?
- CHRIS:** No, I'm sorry.
- JENNIE:** When I walked into the subway station, I kind of figured I could get in the train and go somewhere. And not just listen to it pass by. (*Pause. Jennie sits back down on the bench.*) Things usually happen in threes, right.
- CHRIS:** That is what they say, why?
- JENNIE:** Because that means only one more bad thing should happen, right?
- CHRIS:** I wouldn't count on it.
- JENNIE:** Why?
- CHRIS:** Because bad luck follows me everywhere, and I've certainly had more than three shots of it, that's for sure.
- JENNIE:** Well thanks for giving me something to look forward to.
- CHRIS:** Sorry, I was just being honest.

JENNIE: Thanks. Honesty is a very noble quality that not everyone possesses. *(pause she stands up to check for the train.)* Trust is a hard thing to come by nowadays. It seems that everyone has a hidden agenda.

CHRIS: *(He stands up and walks towards her)* It seems that in order to get the real truth you need to offer them something or show them the consequences if they don't.

JENNIE: I'd like to give that driver his consequences if he doesn't stop! *(Chris sits down and Jennie paces behind him. He turns around.)*

CHRIS: Would you mind slowing the pacing down, you're making me dizzy.

JENNIE: I've got it!

CHRIS: You've got what?

JENNIE: A way to stop the train.

CHRIS: And what pray-tell is that?

JENNIE: When the next train comes I'll stick part of me out, maybe the driver just didn't see me.

CHRIS: And what if he doesn't see you again? *(The sound of the train approaching, Jennie walks towards the train.)*

JENNIE: And what are the odds of that happening? *(The train is about to go by)* Hey stop, can't you hear me. Hello. Stop! *(she pulls her arm in off the tracks. The train goes by.)*

CHRIS: I guess he didn't see you.

JENNIE: Yea, that's it. Either that or he is blind.

(They both turn around as they hear the sound of the turnstile, it is the first person they have seen since they got there. It is a man dressed in a suit, with a briefcase in one hand and a newspaper in the other. Jennie sits on the bench, Chris walks and looks at more ads.)

BUSINESS MAN: *(The business man walks towards Chris.)* Good morning Chris, how are things?

CHRIS: Good, and you?

BUSINESS MAN: Oh the same as always. *(he walks and sits on the bench, opens his briefcase and takes out the morning paper. He reads.)*

CHRIS: On you're way to work?

BUSINESS MAN: Yes, that's the story of my life.

JENNIE: How do you know him?

CHRIS: I see him around all the time.

JENNIE: Oh. *(Jennie and Chris are both sitting on a different bench then the business man. Chris looks at Jennie. Jennie looks back.)* What?

CHRIS: Nothing *(He continues to look at her)*

JENNIE: No seriously, what?

CHRIS: Do you have a boyfriend?

JENNIE: Where did this come from?

CHRIS: It was just a question.

JENNIE: Oh.

CHRIS: Well?

JENNIE: No.

CHRIS: No?

JENNIE: No! (Pause) Relationships, I gave up on them a long time ago.

CHRIS: What?

JENNIE: I gave up. I mean I'm eighteen and I've never been in love before.

CHRIS: Neither have I, that's not so unusual.

JENNIE: It is for me. I don't even believe something that powerful could exist.

CHRIS: It does exist. Just because you haven't felt something, doesn't mean it doesn't exist.

JENNIE: I don't understand what is so great about love anyways. I mean it doesn't feed you, it doesn't shelter you, it can't cloth you...

CHRIS: But it makes you happy, and isn't that what life is all about?

JENNIE: I guess so. (She walks to check the train)

CHRIS: It's not so bad, I've herd that there are things that are worse.

JENNIE: Yea (Pause) like waiting.

CHRIS: I guess.

JENNIE: *(Jennie trying to get out of the conversation. She tries to think of a new plan to catch the train. She sits down on the bench beside him)* The next time I hear the train, I'll jump on the tracks, and force it to stop.

CHRIS: Or force yourself to get killed!

JENNIE: Well if I don't die stopping the train, I have a feeling that I'll end up dying here.

CHRIS: What is keeping you here?

JENNIE: I have no other way home. And this is the closest subway system that runs remotely close to where I have to go.

CHRIS: Oh. I know that problem.

JENNIE: Where are you going anyways?

CHRIS: Anywhere away from here that's for sure.

JENNIE: Why? If you don't mind me asking.

CHRIS: No, I asked you a good share of questions, it's your turn, it's only fair.

JENNIE: Well?

CHRIS: Everything is too familiar, I just need a change to give me a new perspective on things.

JENNIE: Everyone needs a change once in a while. I think I understand.

CHRIS: It's nice to have someone understand. Sometimes I don't think anyone understands.

JENNIE: But do you want to know something. (*Chris nods*) I think everyone understands. Because most people go through the same thing.

CHRIS: I guess you're right. But it just doesn't seem possible that anyone could go through this.

JENNIE: I know. (*she hears the train coming and sits up*) This train is going to stop if it is the last thing I do. (*She walks towards the edge of the stage.*)

CHRIS: What are you going to do? (*he starts to walk towards her slowly*)

JENNIE: You already know. (*The sound of the train is closer she jumps on the tracks*)

CHRIS: Jennie come on you don't..

JENNIE: Yes I do. (*The train is coming straight for her*) Stop, stop (*Chris grabs her from the tracks, the train goes by.*) What did you do that for?

CHRIS: I just saved your life and that's the thanks I get.

JENNIE: Well maybe it was going to stop this time.

CHRIS: And what if it didn't?

JENNIE: I don't know.

CHRIS: You mean you didn't think about that before you tried to kill yourself.

JENNIE: I didn't try to kill myself!

CHRIS: I don't know, the last time I checked, jumping in front of a moving train was suicide.

JENNIE: You would have thought the driver would have stopped.
(She walked towards the loading area and looks down the tracks. Jennie's breath is still shallow from the experience.)

CHRIS: *(Chris walks towards her)* Just take deep breaths, calm down.

JENNIE: Calm down?

CHRIS: Yea if you don't breathe properly, you'll hyperventilate.

JENNIE: That stupid driver, he could have at least stopped.

CHRIS: Yea, the nerve of some people.

JENNIE: It's not funny.

CHRIS: You're right I'm sorry. *(Two men walk in discussing the atest in sports)*

Man #1: Did you see the game last night?

Man #2: Of course, I never would have thought they would have won that.

Man #1: I knew it all along, that team has talent let me tell you... Oh hello Chris, did you watch the game?

Chris: No but I herd it was good.

JENNIE: You know everyone.

CHRIS: No.

JENNIE: What time is it anyway?

CHRIS: I have no idea.

JENNIE: *(Said jokingly)* Well you're no help are you?

CHRIS: Hey shutup.

BUSINESS MAN: *(Said to Man #1, and Man #2)* It is a fine day out there isn't it?

Man #1: Not when I was out there, it was awful out there.

Man #2: I don't think that it will ever stop raining.

BUSINESS MAN: Oh, maybe the rain started after I came in here.

Man #1: Could have.

JENNIE: *(To Chris)* It was sunny when I came in.

CHRIS: The weather changes drastically all the time.

JENNIE: Good point. So how many other people are going to come in and know you?

CHRIS: Lay off! *(The sound of the train approaching. Jennie looks up, she looks at Chris, he smiles, she smiles a little smile back. She looks to where the train should pass. They all in the station look up. All the men go back to what they were doing. Jennie looks down then stands up and looks to the ads on the wall. She turns around to look at Chris who is now walking towards her.)*

JENNIE: It's never going to stop here, is it?

CHRIS: *(He doesn't say anything. He sits down on the bench. He turns around and looks at her)* I bet you're never going to go to the park again?

JENNIE: It depends if I have the chance. But I know one thing for sure. I'll never use the subway system again. (*Jennie sits down next to him.*) Everyone told me it was the safest way to travel.

CHRIS: It probably is.

JENNIE: How would I know? I'll probably never get to try it!

CHRIS: Stranger things have happened.

JENNIE: Tell me about it.

CHRIS: I bet you can't wait until you get home so you can tell all of your friends how crazy your day has been?

JENNIE: No, not really.

CHRIS: No? Why?

JENNIE: If you think about it who would believe me anyways?

CHRIS: It is pretty unbelievable.

JENNIE: Pretty unbelievable, (*she starts to get frustrated and looks as if she's about to cry*) I've had five trains go by, one of which could have killed me and the other almost took my arm off, and then I met you, who I barely even know and I feel like I could tell you anything no matter how important. Now who in their right mind would believe that? (*As Jennie is talking a woman with two small kids enters through the turnstile. Both kids have knapsacks and one of them is yelling at the other.*)

KID #1: I get the window seat.

KID #2: You got it last time.

BOTH KIDS: Mom!

MOTHER: Kids calm down. Now find somewhere to sit. (*they sit on the floor and take out a coloring book and crayons and start to color. The mother sits down and takes a deep breath.*) oh hello Chris. How are things?

CHRIS: Pretty good. How about you?

MOTHER: Well my two kids feel like twenty if that answers your question.

CHRIS: I think I understand. (*there is a pause and Chris moves to the other bench and sits beside Jennie.*) Jennie...(Someone comes through the turnstile again. This time it is a group of about four people discussing their plans for summer vacation)

WOMAN #2: I'm telling you Florida.

MAN #3: Florida, who are you fooling. Think Mexico.

WOMAN #2: What is so good about Mexico? Huh? (*Notices Chris*) Good afternoon Chris. (*Woman #2 holds out her hand and Chris shakes it and smiles.*)

MAN #3: Well hello. (*Man #3 tips his hat. Pause. Looks at Jennie, then looks at Chris. He signals Chris to come over and talk to him, meanwhile the others have found a place to sit. Jennie looks at some ads on the walls*) You've done well for yourself, I can see.

CHRIS: Oh you mean (*he looks at Jennie.*) It's not what you think.

MAN #3: Well what is it then? (*he smiles and walks away.*)

Both Kids: Hi Chris.

- KID #1:** Guess what I did at school today?
- CHRIS:** I don't know, what?
- KID #1:** I painted a real cool picture.
- KID #2:** And she gave it to Braaad.
- KID #1:** Shut up.
- KID #2:** You shut up.
- CHRIS:** Come on, calm down.
- KID #1:** Who's that? *(she points to Jennie)*
- CHRIS:** That's my friend, Jennie.
- KID #2:** She's pretty.
- CHRIS:** *(He looks at Jennie)* I know.*(he walks towards Jennie)* How are you holding up?
- JENNIE:** I guess you can say I have been better.
- CHRIS:** I know the feeling.
- JENNIE:** Do you have any idea when the next train might stop here?
- CHRIS:** I wish I could tell you.
- JENNIE:** I wish you could too! Well maybe someone else could. *(she walks towards the two benches which are now completely full of people)* Does anyone know when the next train might stop here. *(They all look at each other but do not answer.)* Excuse me but can anyone tell me when the next train might be coming? *(pause)* Hello. Chris you try and talk to them. Obviously I'm invisible to them too!

CHRIS: Just calm down.

JENNIE: Calm down! How can I calm down? People seem to think that I'm non-existent today.

CHRIS: Believe me you do exist. Don't worry about it.

JENNIE: That's easy for you to say, at least your existence is acknowledged in some way. *(Pause. They sit down on the bench. The sound of the train coming and they just watch it go by. Chris looks at Jennie. Jennie is still looking at the tracks. Pause. A girl enters the turnstile. Jennie looks over, then everyone else. The girl looks embarrassed, so she proceeds to look at the ads on the wall. Everyone turns around.)*

CHRIS: I don't know her.

JENNIE: Well there's a first. *(Pause. The girl looks back at all the people just sitting and waiting. She walks towards them.)*

GIRL #1: Does anyone know when the next train is coming?

JENNIE: I'm not sure. Soon I hope.

GIRL #1: You mean that for this station there is no set schedule.

JENNIE: Sort of.

GIRL #1: Oh.

JENNIE: What I mean is that, well, this train's schedule is somewhat...irregular. Sorry I can't help you out anymore.

GIRL #1: No problem, thank-you anyways.

(The sound of the train, everyone looks up. The girl walks over ready to board and looks back because she's not sure why no one else is getting ready. The train goes by. Everyone looks up to where the train might be stopping hoping that maybe.)

GIRL #1: Wait... Stop!

(Everyone looks disappointed, but goes back to what they were doing.)

GIRL #1: Don't all the trains stop here?

JENNIE: I don't think so. *(Another train goes by.)*

BLACKOUT.

The Network

by Ryan Steele

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THE NETWORK by Ryan Steele was first performed as part of YOUTHWRITE at the B. C. Festival of the Arts in Penticton, B. C. on May 26, 1996. The adjudicator was John Lazarus. It was directed by Ryan Steele. The teacher-supervisor was Mr. Ron Williams. Lighting and Sound were by Lyndsay Annely. The cast, in order of appearance, was as follows:

| | |
|-----------------|------------------|
| Stella | Rhonda Dent |
| Mother | Kim Moss |
| Father | Rob Day |
| Junior | Michael Knighton |
| Jo | Kim Leslie |
| Barb | Susan Boudreau |
| Person 1 | Jen McNeil |
| Person 2 | Jen Evans |
| Enforcers | Ryan Steele |
| | Michael Knighton |
| | Rob Day |

THE NETWORK
by Ryan Steele

(Lights fade in stage left where two women walk out in ratty clothing carrying popcorn and beverages in their hands. They sit down in their chairs and WOMAN #1 picks up a television converter. She points it in the direction of centre stage where the lights slowly fade up as a fuzzy sound is heard, like channels changing. The lights remain very dim on the two ladies. The centre stage is now fully lit and consists of a family room and a bedroom. There is a teenage girl lying in bed in the bedroom and she is just waking up.)

STELLA The dreaded morning has arrived. I would do anything to stay home from school today and do something fun. I want some adventure.....some risky business. (pause) Everyday is the same old blah, blah, blah. Any my family. Why must they be so boring? Why can't we go on hikes or have family picnics? I can't wait to move out of this hole and be far, far away from them.

(STELLA puts her head under her pillow and tries to fall asleep. Suddenly a knock is heard at her door.)

STELLA Come in.

(A woman walk in with a muffin for STELLA in one hand and a dust buster in another. She is dressed in tacky "mother" clothing is very attractive and young. STELLA does not notice her.)

MOTHER Good Morning, Stella. Time to rise and shine.

STELLA Leave me alone, mom. I'm going to stay home today and see how long I can sleep for.

MOTHER No way, you little 4.0 grade point average genius. You have to go to school.

STELLA But, why, mom?

MOTHER Because you have slipped to 97% in history and no college will accept that. Now get up and have some breakfast.

STELLA Mom, I am sick of my everyday life. I want some variety!

MOTHER (picking up frame from floor) I'm putting up your newest honour roll certificate on the wall. I think we're going to have to build anew room in this house just for your awards.

STELLA Please, mom!

MOTHER No! No! No! Education is the key to the doorway of success. Now get up and get ready for school.

(STELLA'S eyes have been closed during the entire situation and she has yet to look at her MOTHER. She finally does open her eyes and is shocked at what she sees.)

STELLA (Bewildered) Who are you?

MOTHER Why honey, it's me, your mother.

STELLA No, you're--

MOTHER (cutting in) Are you feeling okay? Would you like me to call Doctor Huxtable?

STELLA What are you talking about? (becoming angry and loud.) What are you doing in my house and where is my real mother?

MOTHER Please stop acting so foolishly. I think you just need some food. Here, have a muffin.

STELLA (becoming even more angry.) I don't want no muffin! I just want my real mother to come in here and drag me out of bed. Now, if you leave quietly, I won't call the cops.

MOTHER (breaking out of character) Listen, kid. Your old mother is out and I'm in. In fact, your whole family is gone. Didn't anybody tell you?

STELLA Tell me what?

MOTHER The Network thought the ratings would be better if you had a new family. Everybody thought your last household was boring and dull. In fact, you thought that too, didn't you? Anyway, we've been signed on to spice things up.

STELLA What ratings?

MOTHER You know.....the Neilsons.

STELLA Are they my new next door neighbors?

MOTHER No, no. Listen, don't worry about it. Just smile and act funny and cute. Okay?

STELLA No way! Now get out of my room!

MOTHER (getting very angry, but still retaining a smile) I'm not gonna tell you again, sweetie pie. Shut up and start acting like the sweet, lovable girl you are.

STELLA (finally giving in) Whatever. (pause) So where's my new family?

MOTHER Follow me.

(MOTHER and STELLA exit the bedroom and enter the family room. Sitting on the couch is the new family. It includes a handsome FATHER, a chunky 12 year old brother named JUNIOR, a cute little 5 year old named BARB and an adopted sister named JOE who is the same age as STELLA, but not nearly as attractive.)

FATHER (noticing STELLA) Why good morning pumpkin.

STELLA Uh.....good morning.....Daddy.

BARB Good morning pee pee head.

(the whole family laughs at BARB and over appreciates her cuteness, while STELLA just rolls her eyes and distances herself from these strange people.)

MOTHER We love you so much Barb. You are so cute. Giving birth to you was the best thing I have ever done.

BARB I know.

(family laughs again.)

FATHER Listen up, family. I have a very special announcement to make.

MOTHER What is it, honey?

FATHER What would you guys think about going on a world cruise?

(family becomes very excited, except for STELLA, who has not accepted this new situation yet.)

FATHER No problem. You see, my company had to pick a plumber to fix the drainage system on the Love Boat and i was the lucky guy to get picked. The captain told me I could bring my entire family for no cost.

MOTHER Oh darling! That's wonderful!

JUNIOR A cruise ship! Think of all the apple and cherry pie that there will be.

JOE Is that all you ever think about?

BARB No, he also thinks about raspberry and pumpkin pie, too.

(family ahhhhhhhh's)

STELLA (noticing a distinct aroma) What's that horrible smell?

JUNIOR Yeah, what is that smell?

FATHER (smelling it too) Joe, have you been smoking drugs again?

JOE Maybe. What's it to ya?

(MOTHER runs out crying)

FATHER Can't you see what you're doing? Your mother is going crazy. The thought of her daughter doing drugs just kills her.

JOE She's not my mother. I'm adopted. Remember?

FATHER Honey, just because you're adopted doesn't mean we love you any less.

JUNIOR Yeah.

JOE But, you guys hate everything about me.

FATHER We do not.

JOE Yes, you do. You hate my rock'n'roll, my motorcycle, my boa constrictor, my skeleton tattoo and my illegal use of drugs, man.

FATHER We love you with all our hearts and to us you are a Johnson.

BARB We wuv you Joe.

(The family ahhhhhhh's as they hear another phrase from BARB. The MOTHER re-enters the room and hugs JOE as both of them are crying.)

JOE I'm sorry, mom. I'm gonna change my dangerous ways and see how much love this heart is full of. And I promise that I'll never, ever do drugs again. The only thing I'll be getting high on now, is life.

MOTHER Oh, Joe. You may be boring and unattractive, you may be talented as a

flea, you may be nothing compared to my beautiful Stella, but I still love you.

JUNIOR Yeah, me too.

BARB Yeah, me three.

(the family laughs as STELLA starts to get irritated.)

STELLA Mom, can we have breakfast now?

MOTHER Sure, there is a plate of eggs and toast waiting for you in the kitchen.

JOE Actually, mom, there isn't.

MOTHER What do you mean?

JOE After eating all of his meal, Junior ate all of Stella's meal as well.

STELLA You pig!

JUNIOR (crouching into a ball and crying hysterically) I'm sorry Stella. I'm sorry.

MOTHER It's okay, Junior.

JUNIOR No, it's not, mom. I eat way too much food and I can't stop. I'm fat and I feel like I am going to blow up. I was too fat for little league, I was too fat for the swim club and I was even too fat for the chess team. Now, I'm too fat for my family. Nobody loves me.

STELLA Maybe he is too fat for our family.

FATHER Stella! Please be nice to your younger, but pudgy brother.

JUNIOR She's right, dad.

FATHER Listen son. You know what you get when you take the 'a' out of 'fat' and add an 't'?

JUNIOR What, dad?

FATHER 'Fit'. That's what you get. And that's what you're going to be after a little exercising and a proper daily food intake.

JUNIOR You mean it, pop?

FATHER Of course I do. Now, what do you say we go out and take a jog around the block.

JUNIOR Sounds great!

(FATHER AND JUNIOR exit)

MOTHER I'll go cook you some breakfast, Stella

(Right before MOTHER exits the room BARB begins to cry.)

MOTHER What is it, baby?

BARB One of my tooth is loose.

MOTHER (clutching her hand on to her heart) Oh no! Okay everybody just remain calm. I'll call 911.

JOE Quick, mom. Hurry!

(MOTHER rushes to the phone behind the couch and calls 911. While this is happening, STELLA can't help but laugh.)

MOTHER I need help. My 5 year old daughter's tooth is loose. What should I do?Okay.....uh huh.....I can do that.....thank you Mr. Old man...(hangs up phone) Okay, we might be able to get through this. I need both of your ladies' help.

STELLA (playing along) What do we do mom?

MOTHER I need Joe to hold Barb's head as I stick my hand in her mouth and (*pause*) pull her tooth out. Stella, you stand by the phone and be prepared to call 911 if anything goes remotely wrong.

(MOTHER and JOE join BARB in hysterical crying as STELLA watches with complete disbelief of the ladies' anguish. MOTHER reaches her hand in the mouth and pulls out the tooth with great emotion.)

MOTHER I did it! I actually did it!

JOE Way to go, mom!

BARB (suddenly fine) Tank-you berry much, mommy. --

(FATHER and JUNIOR re-enter and are puzzled by everybody's yelling and laughing

of joy. JUNIOR is now totally skinny and his clothes fit very baggy on his now thin body.)

FATHER What's going on here?

JOE Barb lost her first tooth!

FATHER (falls to his knees and hugs BARB) It's amazing, way to go Barb!

MOTHER (noticing JUNIOR'S dramatic weight loss.) And what has happened to you, young man?

JUNIOR I lost all that weight on our jog. Now I can play baseball and chess!

MOTHER Good job!

BARB Where did the rest of you go JUNIOR?

(FAMILY laughs. Stella begins to grind her teeth, as she doesn't know how much more she can take.)

MOTHER Well, after all your weight losing, I think it's a good time to tell everybody that I'm gonna be doing a little weight gaining.

FATHER What do you mean sugar?

MOTHER I'm pregnant! That's what I mean!

(the whole family joins in a group hug as STELLA can take the cuteness and happiness no more.)

STELLA Stop it! You guys are so fake. No family is actually like this.

FATHER Like what?

STELLA Likethis! You hug endlessly and every family problem is resolved within 5 seconds.

FATHER Looks like somebody overdosed on her cranky pills.

MOTHER Stella, turn that frown upside down.

STELLA This is stupid! I am going back to my room for a nap and when I wake up my old family better be back. (exits family room)

FATHER Now, what are we going to do with her?

MOTHER I think I know what she needs.

JOE What mom?

MOTHER A cake!

FAMILY Yeah!!!

(lights fade out on family room and fade up on STELLA's bedroom. STELLA is lying on her bed and sleeping like a baby. The family enter the room with a cake, balloons, party hats and banners all to show their love for STELLA.)

MOTHER Honey, wake up!

STELLA (face in pillow) Mommy, is that you?

MOTHER It sure is, baby doll.

STELLA (turning around and seeing family) No! This has to be a nightmare.

MOTHER It's time for your party, Stella

STELLA What party?

FATHER The "we know you don't accept us as your family, but we love you anyway" party.

STELLA You people are all crazy! Leave me alone and never come back!

MOTHER (becoming stern) Stella quit acting like a brat and eat the cake. We don't like it when our beautiful, perfect daughter is yelling at us and neither does the Network.

STELLA Who is the Network? Why did they change my family?

BARB Because we're cuter!

(family ahhhhhhh's)

FATHER We're her to stay, Stella. Get used to us because we're going to have a wonderful life together. Okay?

STELLA No way!

(STELLA becomes enraged and runs toward the window. She is about to jump out, when she turns around and says one last thing to her family.)

MOTHER Stella, I wouldn't advise you to jump out that window. Give us a chance. Without you, our rainbow of love will be one color show!

FATHER Come on honey. Our family has progressed so much lately.

JUNIOR Yeah, I lost over 100 pounds.

JOE And I don't do drugs anymore!

BARB And I lost my first tooth!

MOTHER And I'm pregnant!

FATHER And don't forget about our world tour!

FAMILY Yeah!!!

STELLA I'm sure the Network will make sure I survive this dramatic fall. Good-bye.

(STELLA jumps out the window and a loud thump is heard a few seconds later.)

MOTHER Well, we better not let this cake go to waste!

(BARB grabs the cake and sticks her face into it. The family laughs as the lights fade out on center stage and fade in on the corner of the stage, where the two ladies are still stinting in their chairs watching the 'television')

WOMAN #1 I guess not.

WOMAN #2 It makes no sense, though. Her new family became more like a nightmare to Stella.

WOMAN #1 Yeah. Her wish of a new family became more like a nightmare to Stella.

WOMAN #2 You must admit though, she was fairly picky. She was fed up with her original family and when she finally got her new family. She hated them even more.

WOMAN #1 It just goes to show, you never realize how lucky you are to have something until it is gone. (pause) Could you pass the peanut butter.

The Network /10

(A group of people in dark suits enter the room and pick up the television and chairs while the two women are still sitting in them.)

WOMAN #2 What's going on?

DARK SUIT PERSON The Network didn't like you two anymore. They thought it was time for a change.

WOMAN #1 A change? What are you talking about?

WOMAN #2 What is going on?

DARK SUIT PERSON Well.....you've been cancelled

(lights fade out)

Going Home

By Rebecca Heipel

Characters in order of appearance

- Homes.....23 year old nurse at the asylum**
Mrs. Patterson.....55 year old mother of Martha
**Martha Patterson.....35 year old patient in the asylum who
believes she is eight years old.**
Dr. Tsalem.....Martha's doctor since her arrival.
**Stephen Cools.....An 18 year old patient who has closed
himself off from the world except for Doug Jones.**
**Doug Jones.....A childhood friend of Stephen Cools. He
continues to visit even though he hates the asylum**

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(Homes enters Upstage, moves to Doctors desk, finds file and starts reading)

HOMES: Case study 00819. Patient, Martha Patterson. Birthdate, May 16, 1936. Age of admittance, eight years old. Date of Admittance, August 15, 1944. Receiver, Dr. Tsalem. Doctor's Log; August 15, 1944. Doctor Tsalem. Martha Patterson arrived at 11:45 am this morning. She needs extreme care and sexual abuse therapy to help her overcome this tragic event. *(Homes flips through a couple of pages)* Doctor's Log; January 26, 1968. Doctor Tsalem. Martha's attitude is continually disappointing. Still convinced that she is eight years of age. She needs to be persuaded out of her dream world and into reality. *(Homes flips a couple more pages, pulls out a pen and starts to write in)* Daily Log; June 12, 1971. Homes-Nurse. Martha's emotion control is getting much better as time progresses. Her behavior with other patients has improved greatly. It is possible that she'll be able to go home really soon. *(Homes closes the file and exits Stage left)*

(Lights go up on the stage right, Mrs. Patterson is seen cleaning a table. This represents Mrs. Patterson's kitchen. On stage left Martha is sitting on a chair behind another table This represents a room in the asylum. She is to be very quiet and not attract attention. There is a knock on the door, DR, and Mrs. Patterson answers it.)

MRS. PATTERSON: Hello, James. Lovely weather we're having today, isn't it? So, what do you have for me today James? A letter? Why I haven't had a letter in the longest of times. Where's it from? Young's Asylum! . . . No, James there's nothing wrong. Nothing.

(Mrs. Patterson shuts the door and starts trembling. She walks over to the table and sits down. Shaking she opens the envelope and pulls out a letter. As she unfolds the letter, a light on stage left, on Martha, is to come up. Martha is writing her letter as her mother follows it with her eyes.)

MARTHA: Dear Mom;

I can't wait until I get home. It's been so long since I've seen you. They say I'm getting better. I really miss you mom. How is my room? I hope you kept it the way it was when I left. I know it has been a long time, but I hope that you haven't thrown away my stuffed unicorns. They really mean a lot to me 'cause they're my favorite stuffies. You know what mom? I really miss your cooking. Everyday I dream of thick pork chops in that secret sauce, but they only serve grainy potatoes and rubbery meat. But that's okay because soon I'll be home and we'll have a big feast. I've been writing a lot of poems. Dr. Tsalem says it is good for me to let out my emotions on paper. It's better than hurting people she said. I remember when I first came here. They took away my purple jacket and my shiny black shoes and gave me ugly green pajamas and slippers to wear. They took all my clothes, even the gray necklace Missy gave me for my birthday. I was really mad at them, but I was scared even more. Dr. Tsalem says I get to come home now

because I have improved and she knows I'll never hurt anyone again. . . I'm sorry I hurt daddy. I really didn't mean to. It was an accident. I really loved daddy. . . I'm sorry. I'm wrong, it was my fault, I got mad and acted badly. But now Dr. Tsalem says I know how to think first and I won't hurt anymore. When I get home, I want to go play on the swings like we used to. I'm really excited about going home. I love you mommy and I'll do my best to make up for the long time I've been away. I'm going to show you how much I love you.

Love Always, Martha

(The lights on Martha go out.)

MRS. PATTERSON: Oh my. . . . My Lord. . . . no. It's been such a long time.

(Mrs. Patterson exits stage right and Dr. Tsalem enters, UC, with a small file folder and pen in pocket, moves to DC)

DR. TSALEM: Let's see. . . hmm. . . Case Study 00819 - Martha Patterson. Doctor's Personal File. 27 years and still no success. Attempted treatments: Counseling, failure. Group therapy, failure. Denial of privileges, it too was a failure. *(flip through some pages)* Possible treatments: Group therapy with sexual abuse victims, no, didn't work last time. Shock therapy, well, she hasn't done anything drastic, so I guess not. Experimental shock therapy, well, no, better not. What else have I got? No, no, wait. This might do it. Yes. I'll try to reach her through, hmmm. Yes, that just may work.

(moves on and sees Martha in his chair)

DR. TSALEM: Martha, you're supposed to sit in this chair.

MARTHA: But Dr. Tsalem, this chair is more comfee. How come you always get the comfee chair and I get the hard one?

DR. TSALEM: Because I'm the doctor. Now please sit in this chair.

MARTHA: Okay.

DR. TSALEM: Good girl. Now do you know why you are here today?

MARTHA: Cause we have to talk about how I'm going to get home.

DR. TSALEM: Yes, but we have something else to talk about today. Do you have any idea what we may do today?

MARTHA: I dunno. What?

DR. TSALEM: We're going to talk about God. Now, do you know who God is?

MARTHA: Nope!

DR. TSALEM: He is a heavenly father who . .

MARTHA: Father?

DR. TSALEM: Yes, father, but a good father who protects those who are his children. He lives in heaven and . .

MARTHA: My mommy told me all about heaven!

DR. TSALEM: What did your mom tell you about heaven?

MARTHA: My mom told me that heaven is a beautiful place. She says it has lots of trees and flowers and animals of all types, even unicorns. She told me that heaven is our home, a home for everybody where everybody is happy forever and ever. She also said that only good little girls get to go to heaven. I'm a good girl, aren't I Dr. Tsalem?

DR. TSALEM: You were a bad girl when you were younger.

MARTHA: Does that mean I don't get to go to heaven.?

DR. TSALEM: No it doesn't. You see God let his son Jesus become human so Jesus could protect man from his sin. If you pray to God and promise to be good and try your best to be good, then you still get to go to heaven. If you don't pray and are bad, then you don't get to go to heaven.

MARTHA: Oh no! I've never prayed to God, I don't know how. What should I do?

DR. TSALEM: Now, don't you worry Martha. Here, let's pray to God right now.

MARTHA: Right here!

DR. TSALEM: Right here.

MARTHA: Right now!

DR. TSALEM: Right now.

MARTHA: He will forgive me, even though I have taken really long to pray to him?

DR. TSALEM: Yes he will forgive you. Now get down on your knees like me. That's good. Now put your hands together like this.

MARTHA: Like this?

DR. TSALEM: That's right. Now bow your head and repeat what I say. Dear God.

MARTHA: Dear God

DR. TSALEM: I pray to you now to ask you for forgiveness.

MARTHA: I pray to you now to ask you for forgiveness.

DR. TSALEM: I have sinned in the past.

MARTHA: I have sinned in the past.

DR. TSALEM: and ask to be cleansed of my sins

MARTHA: and ask to be cleansed of my sins

DR. TSALEM: so I can go to heaven,

MARTHA: so I can go to heaven,

DR. TSALEM: and live with you forever by your side.

MARTHA: and live with you forever by your side.

DR. TSALEM: Amen

MARTHA: Amen

DR. TSALEM: You can get up now Martha.

MARTHA: That's it? I'm forgiven?

DR. TSALEM: Yes, that is all. God will forgive you if you are good. Now lets talk about you going home.

MARTHA: Yes, when do I get to go home?

DR. TSALEM: Well, you see Martha, there is a small problem.

MARTHA: A problem. Does it mean I can't go home?

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DR. TSALEM: No, no my dear. You see, Dr. Young doesn't feel that you are quite ready to home yet. So he wants you to stay here for a bit longer, just to make sure you are perfectly okay and able to go home.

MARTHA: But I am okay. I want to go home!

DR. TSALEM: Martha, if you continue to behave this way then I'll have to tell Dr. Young that you'll aren't able to go home.

MARTHA: I'm sorry Dr. Tsalem. Please don't tell Dr. Young I can't go home.

DR. TSALEM: I won't, if you promise to behave.

MARTHA: I promise I'll behave very good.

DR. TSALEM: Now that's a good girl. So, if Dr. Young sees you behaving properly for the following week I'm sure you'll be able to go home.

MARTHA: Oh thank you, thank you, thank you Dr. Tsalem! I promise, I'll be good.

DR. TSALEM: Okay, now lets get you back to your room.

(Dr. Tsalem brings the table to the back near the chairs and Martha brings her chair and places it next to the table, they exit stage left. Doug then enters up left with a unicorn in his arms and finds a seat closest to stage right. Lights go on stage right as Homes enters stage right and crosses to Doug.)

HOMES: Can I help you sir?

DOUG: Uh, yes please. I'm here to see Stephen Cools.

HOMES: And you are. . .

DOUG: Doug, Doug Jones. I'm an old friend of Stephen.

HOMES: Okay Doug, I'll go get him for you.

(Homes exits Right stage.)

DOUG: Thanks.

(Martha enters stage left and sits down on the chair farthest from Doug. She looks and sees he has a unicorn and slowly moves seat by seat until she is sitting right next to him.)

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MARTHA: Hello

DOUG: Uh, hi.

(Note, the entire time they are talking, Doug is never looking at Martha and is showing how uncomfortable he is here.)

MARTHA: How are you today?

DOUG: Fine.

MARTHA: What ya doing here mister?

DOUG: I'm seeing a friend.

MARTHA: I have lots of friends here. Is he a friend that works here, or does he live here?

DOUG: He, uh, lives here.

MARTHA: What's his name?

DOUG: Stephen Cools.

MARTHA: I know him. We call him Stevie. I like him a lot.

DOUG: You do huh?

MARTHA: Yep. He's really keen. He shows me how to lift weights, but I can't lift a lot. I'm only a little girl you know.

DOUG: I see.

MARTHA: Yep. I'm a little girl.

DOUG: Uh huh.

(Moment of silence before Martha continues on.)

MARTHA: Why are you here to see Stevie?

DOUG: I have a gift for him.

MARTHA: Ohh. Is it that unicorn you're holding?

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DOUG: Yes, it is. You're pretty smart.

MARTHA: That's not what Stevie says.

DOUG: Oh? What is taking them so long, I want to get out of here.

MARTHA: What did you say?

DOUG: Nothing.

MARTHA: You want to go don't you?

(This catches Doug off guard)

DOUG: Why yes, actually I do.

MARTHA: You don't like it here do you?

DOUG: Well, it's not that bad. . .

MARTHA: That's okay. A lot of us don't like it here either. I don't.

DOUG: I'm sorry.

MARTHA: That's okay.

(At this moment Doug actually looks at Martha and you can see pity for her on his face, but he quickly looks away when she looks at him with a big smile.)

MARTHA: I know how you can leave now.

DOUG: You do?

MARTHA: Yes I do. Do you want to know?

(Doug looks at Martha full of interest)

DOUG: Yes, tell me.

MARTHA: Give me the unicorn.

DOUG: Pardon?

MARTHA: I said give me the unicorn.

DOUG: Why would I do that?

MARTHA: If you gave me the unicorn I could give it to Stevie when I see him today and you could leave now.

DOUG: Well, I don't know.

MARTHA: I promise I'll give it to Stevie.

DOUG: You promise?

MARTHA: I promise. Scout's honor.

DOUG: Well, okay. Here you go. Make sure Stephen gets it.

MARTHA: I promise.

(She grabs the unicorn and gives a triumphant smile. Homes enters with Stephen from stage right just as Doug goes to exit.)

DOUG: Hey Stephen, how's it going?

STEPHEN: Pretty good I guess, that is if I can survive the lousy cooking here.

DOUG: That's great. You know it's been a long time.

STEPHEN: Yeah.

DOUG: You know, everybody back home misses you.

STEPHEN: They do?

DOUG: Yeah, your mom, dad, and especially Michelle.

STEPHEN: Really?

DOUG: Of course, would I lie to you?

STEPHEN: Nah, you got to be kidding. Michelle, still likes me, after being sent here.

DOUG: I'm not kidding. She is still crazy for you. She doesn't care where you are, she says she still loves you.

STEPHEN: Then how come she never visits me?

DOUG: Her parents won't allow her. They don't want her associating with, with. . .

STEPHEN: A mentally deranged nut case?

DOUG: Well, that's one way you could put it, although it wasn't exactly what I was thinking of.

STEPHEN: Yeah right. Try another one Doug.

DOUG: Well, I was just going to leave. I couldn't stay long. Just wanted to say "Happy Birthday Stephen", and give you my gift.

STEPHEN: Thanks, but where is my present?

DOUG: Oh, how stupid of me. You see that lady, err, girl, over there sitting on the chairs, well she said she would give it to you for me because I had to leave. Go over there and get it okay?

STEPHEN: Ah man, it's a unicorn. Far out man! Thanks Doug.

DOUG: No problem. Catch you later Stephen. Bye.

STEPHEN: See you later Doug.

(Doug exits stage right and Stephen approaches Martha)

STEPHEN: Hey Martha, how's it going?

(Martha just turns away from him)

STEPHEN: I just saw Doug and he said he left my unicorn with you. Thanks for holding on to it for me. Can I have it please?

MARTHA: It's mine.

STEPHEN: No, it's mine.

MARTHA: He gave it to me.

STEPHEN: He gave it to you to give to me.

MARTHA: No he gave it to me for a present.

STEPHEN: It's my birthday, not yours. Now give me my unicorn.

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MARTHA: Never, never, never, never, never!

STEPHEN: Give it to me!

(Stephen lunges for Martha and knocks her to the ground. They struggle fighting each other like little kids fight, the unicorn staying tight in Martha's arms. During the fight, however, the unicorn gets ripped in one place.)

MARTHA: Leggo of me!

STEPHEN: Give me my unicorn.

MARTHA: Oww! You're hurting me!

STEPHEN: Let go of my hair.

MARTHA: Leggo of mine!

STEPHEN: You stupid, dumb, person. Let go of my unicorn.

MARTHA: Owwwwwwwieeeeeeeeeee!

STEPHEN: Stop kicking me!

MARTHA: Lemme go, lemme go.

STEPHEN: Give me my unicorn first.

MARTHA: Never!

STEPHEN: Let go.

MARTHA: Never!

STEPHEN: I said let go!

MARTHA: Leave my unicorn alone!

(With that Martha pulls herself free from Stephen and scrambles to the front of the stage, curled up in a tight ball.)

STEPHEN: If you don't give me my unicorn your daddy is going to come and get you.

(Martha shows absolute fear at this news and Stephen starts to slowly move towards her.)

MARTHA: No.

STEPHEN: Yes. He's coming to get you and take you away.

MARTHA: No, you're lying.

STEPHEN: No I'm not. He's coming.

MARTHA: No! He can't come.

STEPHEN: But he is.

MARTHA: No, he can't.

STEPHEN: Yes he can. Wait, I think I hear him.

MARTHA: NOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOO!

STEPHEN: Oh yes. And he'll keep on coming to get you unless. .

MARTHA: Unless what?!

STEPHEN: Unless you give me the unicorn.

MARTHA: No! You're lying!

STEPHEN: No I'm not.

MARTHA: Yes, you are.

(By now Stephen has reached Martha and is to bend down and appear to be whispering in her ear as she squirms around.)

STEPHEN: He's coming.

MARTHA: No.

STEPHEN: He's getting closer.

MARTHA: Please, no.

STEPHEN: And closer.

MARTHA: Noooooooo. Please don't let my daddy come.

STEPHEN: And closer.

MARTHA: Nooo.

STEPHEN: He's going to get you now.

MARTHA: Please

STEPHEN: Here he comes.

MARTHA: No

STEPHEN: I can hear his footsteps.

MARTHA: Stop him.

STEPHEN: I'm sorry, it's too late now.

(Just then Homes comes in through the door and quickly approaches Stephen and Martha.)

HOMES: Stephen, Martha, what's going on here!

STEPHEN: She took my unicorn!

HOMES: Is that true Martha?

MARTHA: It's mine.

STEPHEN: No! It's my unicorn! Doug gave it to me!

HOMES: Stephen, go sit down and I'll get it for you.

MARTHA: No.

STEPHEN: Yes, Nurse.

HOMES: Now Martha, you better give Stephen back his unicorn.

MARTHA: It's mine.

HOMES: Now Martha, you know that's not true. Doug gave it to Stephen, not you.

MARTHA: But Stephen hurt the unicorn.

HOMES: You don't have to worry about that because it's Stephen's and Stephen can fix it. Now how about you giving me that unicorn?

MARTHA: No, it's mine.

HOMES: Look Martha, if you give me the unicorn, I'll get you a brand new one with no rips in it .

MARTHA: Get Stephen a new one.

HOMES: I can't Martha. That one is his.

(Homes reaches for the unicorn.)

MARTHA: Nooooooooo! Leggooooooooooooo!

(Dr. Tsalem rushes into the room to see what is wrong.)

DR. TSALEM: Miss Homes, what's the matter!

HOMES: Martha took Stephen's unicorn and won't give it back.

DR. TSALEM: I'll handle it. Martha what's wrong?

MARTHA: My unicorn has an owie.

DR. TSALEM: Can I see him?

MARTHA: It's a her.

DR. TSALEM: I'm sorry, can I see her?

MARTHA: You won't give it to . . .

DR. TSALEM: I promise.

(Martha hands the unicorn over to the doctor.)

DR. TSALEM: Hmmm. I see the problem. It has a little rip in it.

MARTHA: Can you fix it?

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DR. TSALEM: Of course. Now lets go get some tissue to clean up your face.

(They head towards the door. Halfway there the Doctor hands the unicorn to Homes and in turn Homes gives it to Stephen. At the door, Martha turns to give Stephen a look of triumph and when she sees that Stephen has the unicorn she breaks free from the doctor and charges Stephen, knocking them both down to the ground.)

MARTHA: You stupid, stupid, stupid idiot!

STEPHEN: Argh.

(Martha wraps her fingers around Stephen's neck and begins to tighten them. The Doctor and Homes rush to Stephen's aid.)

DR. TSALEM: Miss Homes, help me get her off of him.

(Together, Homes and the Doctor pin Martha's arms behind and pull her off of Stephen.)

DR. TSALEM: Miss Homes! Hold on to her! Stephen are you okay?!

(Dr. Tsalem helps Stephen to his feet.)

STEPHEN: Yeah I think so.

DR. TSALEM: Miss Homes! Take Martha to her room, Stephen come here my poor boy.

(Homes and Martha exit stage right and then the Doctor and Stephen exit through the door and shut it. After the Doctor exits Martha and Homes enter stage right and go to the table.)

MARTHA: Where are you taking me?

HOMES: Here.

MARTHA: Leggo of me!

HOMES: You know I can't do that.

MARTHA: I want to go back to my room!

HOMES: Now sit down and behave.

(Homes exits stage right and Martha pounds on an invisible door. Dr. Tsalem and Mrs. Patterson enter from the door and go halfway down the stage.)

DR. TSALEM: Here she is.

MRS. P: Oh, my poor baby.

DR. TSALEM: Your poor baby just tried to kill another patient yesterday.

MRS. P: No!

DR. TSALEM: I'm afraid so Mrs. Patterson. She is now considered highly dangerous.

MRS. P: Oh, not my Martha. My poor, sweet Martha.

DR. TSALEM: Yes, I'm sorry to have to have said that.

MRS. P: I understand. It's your job.

(Small moment of silence)

MRS. P: Does this mean, that she won't be able to come . .

DR. TSALEM: I'm afraid so.

(Martha starts screaming and running around the table)

MARTHA: I want to go home, go home, go home, go home! I want to go home! I want my mom. mooooommy!

(Martha bursts into tears and throws herself to the floor, sobbing hysterically and quickly resumes to tiny sobs.)

MRS. P: Martha!

DR. TSALEM: Don't even bother. She can neither hear us or see us.

MRS. P: My poor baby.

DR. TSALEM: You know, Mrs. Patterson, there really is no hope for your daughter.

MRS. P: No! There has to be something you can do.

DR. TSALEM: Well, there is something. But no, I shouldn't.

MRS. P: What, what is it!

DR. TSALEM: Well I don't think you'd really like it, so I better not even bother to mention it at all.

MRS. P: No please, tell me, you must.

DR. TSALEM: I don't know. . .

MRS. P: Please, if it'll save my baby, you have to tell me. Doctor, please!

DR. TSALEM: I don't normally recommend this, but in Martha's case, I would suggest experimental shock therapy.

MRS. P: Experimental shock therapy?

DR. TSALEM: See, I knew you wouldn't like it.

MRS. P: No please, tell me what it is.

DR. TSALEM: What you do is take the patient and hook her up to a box. Then you ask her questions which you already know the correct answer to. If she gets it wrong, then you allow a small amount of electricity to go to her, which produces the shock. You keep repeating this until she gives the correct answer. The truth is then permanently implanted in her mind.

MRS. P: It won't hurt her?

DR. TSALEM: Not at all. The small shocks may scare her a bit, but that is all.

MRS. P: Well, would it make her, normal again?

DR. TSALEM: You mean the way she should be?

MRS. P: Yes, will she be her normal age again? Is it possible?

DR. TSALEM: Yes, she will be normal again.

MRS. P: If it works, will she be able to come home again?

DR. TSALEM: You have my word.

MRS. P: And you promise you won't hurt her.

DR. TSALEM: I promise.

(Mrs. Patterson stares at the doctor as if she has heard those words before and starts to doubt if he really means it. She silently shakes the thought away from her head and looks at Martha.)

MRS. P: Do it. Help her.

DR. TSALEM: You've made the right decision Mrs. Patterson. Soon she'll be coming home.

MRS. P: *(in a whisper)* I hope so.

(Homes enters stage right, with Martha and together they exit stage right. Doctor and Mrs. P exit UC. Homes and Martha enter from door and go to DC)

MARTHA: Where are we going now? Nurse, why won't you talk to me?

HOMES: Stay here. *(Homes leaves Martha down center and gets two chairs and places them opposite of each other.)* Sit here.

MARTHA: Nurse, please talk to me. Please!

HOMES: Martha, I can't . .

(Dr. Tsalem enters with a cart, on it is the box, with dangling wires, and is hooked up top a battery box.)

DR. TSALEM: Miss Homes, leave.

HOMES: Yes, Dr. Tsalem.

MARTHA: What are you doing?

DR. TSALEM: Stop asking useless questions.

(The doctor starts attaching wires to Martha's arm, wraps the wire with tape or string. She keeps one wire, with tiny box on end, for herself and clenches it in her fist. Each time Martha gives an incorrect answer the doctor pushes the wire to give the shock.)

MARTHA: What are you putting on me?

DR. TSALEM: No more questions.

MARTHA: But what are you putting on me?

DR. TSALEM: I'll ask the questions from now on.

(the Doctor sits down in the chair opposite of Martha and turns the up to 1/4.)

MARTHA: Doctor.

DR. TSALEM: It's all right. Now all you're going to have to do is answer my questions. If you get them wrong, you'll feel a small tickle. That means to try again. It will stop when you get the right answer. Do you understand?

MARTHA: Yes, Dr. Tsalem.

DR. TSALEM: Good. Now tell me Martha are you a boy or a girl?

MARTHA: A girl.

DR. TSALEM: Good. What is your favorite color?

MARTHA: Purple

DR. TSALEM: Okay. What is your favorite food?

MARTHA: Mommy's pork chops and secret sauce.

DR. TSALEM: Do you like unicorns?

MARTHA: Oh yes, I love them!

DR. TSALEM: Whose unicorn was it that you had the other day?

MARTHA: Mine. Hey it tickles.

DR. TSALEM: Try again. Whose unicorn did you have the other day?

MARTHA: Stevie's.

DR. TSALEM: That's my girl. Now why did you take it?

MARTHA: Because I love unicorns and I wanted it.

DR. TSALEM: Do you know that what you did was wrong?

MARTHA: No. Ooh.

DR. TSALEM: Martha, was what you did wrong?

(Dr. Tsalem turns the dial up a fraction and Martha sees her do this)

MARTHA: Yes.

DR. TSALEM: Do you know what you did to Stephen after he had the unicorn.

MARTHA: I tried to choke him.

DR. TSALEM: Why?

MARTHA: Because I was mad that he had the unicorn.

DR. TSALEM: Why were you mad?

MARTHA: Because you promised that you wouldn't give it to Stevie.

DR. TSALEM: I didn't, Miss Homes did.

MARTHA: Oh.

DR. TSALEM: Do you feel sorry for what you did?

MARTHA: No. Ow.

DR. TSALEM: Martha, do you feel sorry for what you did.

MARTHA: Yes.

DR. TSALEM: Tell me Martha, do you love your mommy?

MARTHA: Yes, I love my mommy very much.

DR. TSALEM: Do you love your daddy.

MARTHA: No, never! I hate him!

DR. TSALEM: Calm down, calm down. Did you hurt your daddy?

(Martha fidgets in her chair)

DR. TSALEM: It's okay Martha. You can tell me. Did you hurt your daddy?

MARTHA: Well, uh *(trails off)*

DR. TSALEM: Did you hurt your daddy?

MARTHA: Um . . . Yes.

DR. TSALEM: Why did you hurt your daddy?

MARTHA: Because he hurt me.

DR. TSALEM: How did he hurt you?

MARTHA: He made me do things that I didn't want to do.

DR. TSALEM: Like what things?

MARTHA: He made me take off my clothes and he touched me all over my body.

DR. TSALEM: Did he ever make you touch him?

MARTHA: Yes.

DR. TSALEM: Where?

MARTHA: On his pee-pee.

DR. TSALEM: Did you try and make him stop?

MARTHA: Yes, but he wouldn't listen to me.

DR. TSALEM: Did you ever stop him?

MARTHA: Yes.

DR. TSALEM: How did you stop him?

MARTHA: I shot him with his gun.

DR. TSALEM: What happened?

MARTHA: He looked at me and came after me.

DR. TSALEM: Did he get you?

(Martha by now is near tears and starts crying.)

MARTHA: No, he fell down and died.

DR. TSALEM: How old were you?

MARTHA: I was eight.

DR. TSALEM: Do you remember what year it was?

MARTHA: It was my birthday. May 16, 1944.

DR. TSALEM: What happened afterwards?

MARTHA: A lot of policemen came and they took me from my mommy.

DR. TSALEM: And?

MARTHA: They took me to a different home and after a long time they took me to a place that had a judge.

DR. TSALEM: What did the judge do?

MARTHA: He said I was bad and dangerous and he sent me here.

DR. TSALEM: Do you remember how long you have been here Martha?

MARTHA: No.

DR. TSALEM: Twenty-seven years. That's a long time isn't it?

MARTHA: Yes.

DR. TSALEM: Do you know that the people here think you are dangerous?

MARTHA: No.

DR. TSALEM: Now you can't go home.

MARTHA: Noooooooo. I want to go home.

DR. TSALEM: But you can. Don't you remember what heaven is?

MARTHA: My home?

DR. TSALEM: Yes. Do you remember who God is?

MARTHA: He's our, uh, father. Wait! He's our heavenly father, right?

DR. TSALEM: If you are bad, (*turns up dial to 1/3 mark*) will you go to heaven?

MARTHA: No, but I am good. I want to go home.

DR. TSALEM: That's right. So tell me Martha, how old are you?

MARTHA: I'm eight. Ahhh!

DR. TSALEM: Try again Martha. Now, how old are you?

MARTHA: I told you I'm eight. Ouch!

DR. TSALEM: How old are you Martha?!

MARTHA: I'm eight, I'm eight! Owwww! Please stop it.

DR. TSALEM: Then give me the right answer Martha, how old are you?

MARTHA: I won't say.

DR. TSALEM: Don't make me use drastic measures, just tell me how old you are.

MARTHA: I'm eight. Owwww!

DR. TSALEM: Wrong answer! How old are you?!

MARTHA: I'm eight! Ahh!

DR. TSALEM: Stop making me hurt you Martha! Who is God!

MARTHA: Our heavenly father.

DR. TSALEM: Where does he live?!

MARTHA: In heaven.

DR. TSALEM: Now, how old are you?!

MARTHA: I'm eight.

DR. TSALEM: NO! Why do you keep saying that!

MARTHA: What am I supposed to say! I'm eight! Ahhh!

DR. TSALEM: Martha!

MARTHA: Why are you doing this to me? Why are you hurting me?

DR. TSALEM: Because you are lying!

MARTHA: No, I'm not. Please stop hurting me!

DR. TSALEM: Not until you answer my question! How old are you!

MARTHA: Please, I've already told you. I'm eight. Ahhhhhhhh!

DR. TSALEM: Wrong answer!

(Dr. Tsalem slowly turns the knob just before the red zone.)

DR. TSALEM: Now I have to take drastic measures. How old are you Martha?

MARTHA: Please, I'm eight. Aieeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeee!

DR. TSALEM: Answer it! Stop lying! See the truth! Realize who you are!

MARTHA: I am!

DR. TSALEM: Now I have to make you answer.

(He turns the knob onto full power.)

MARTHA: No, please don't. It really hurts.

DR. TSALEM: It won't hurt if you tell the truth! How old are you Martha?!?

MARTHA: I'm . . I'm . . I'm . . eight. AhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhARGHHHHHHHHHH!

(Martha convulses and passes out on the chair)

DR. TSALEM: Martha? Martha? Are you all right?

(He takes her wrist and reads her low pulse.)

DR. TSALEM: Oh my. Miss Homes!!! Come here!!!

(Dr. Tsalem starts ripping off the wires and Homes comes rushing in from UC.)

HOMES: What is it Dr. Tsalem?

DR. TSALEM: She's passed out!

(Homes feels for a pulse and then looks up at the table and sees the shock therapy equipment at high level.)

HOMES: You didn't. . .

DR. TSALEM: One word about this incident to anyone and you can find yourself without a job Miss Homes. Not one word to anyone! She'll recover, don't worry.

HOMES: Yes doctor.

DR. TSALEM: Good. Now help me out of here. Pick her up and I'll get the equipment.

HOMES: Yes doctor.

(Homes assists Martha and slowly walks UC while Dr. Tsalem gathers her equipment and wheels the cart out stage left. After Dr. Tsalem exits, Homes and Martha turn around, come to DC, and places Martha on the floor.)

HOMES: You'll be okay Martha, you'll be okay.

(Homes exits through the door. After he exits Martha starts to awaken. She slowly gets up and pulls the chair next to her and leans on the chair.)

MARTHA: Mommy? *(gets choked up a bit, then clears up)*

I can't really remember how I got here.

Why? Why . . . *(fade off)*

I want to go home. Why can't I go home? Why are they keeping me here?
It was an accident! *(cries more)*

No! I have to *(looks up)* go home. I have to wait patiently for my mommy. . . . Someday mommy will come home too. *(Martha feels a burst of pain in her heart)*

I know the answer. *(pause, pushes the unicorn away)*

I am thirty-five. *(lies down)*

BC hydro

