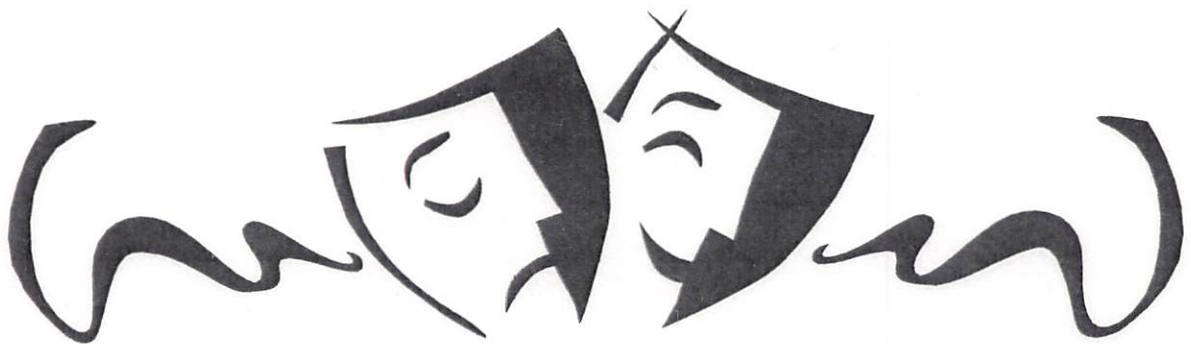


# Youthwrite

2007 / 2008



*An Anthology of Winning Plays  
by BC Drama Students*

Published by:  
Association of  
British Columbia  
Drama  
Educators

# Youthwrite 2007 / 2008

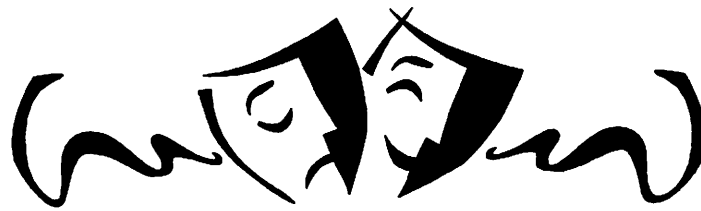
Dear Readers,

Welcome to the *Youthwrite* Anthology of 2007 and 2008. Included in this compilation are the winning entries from the ABCDE *Youthwrite* program for the last two years. As you read through, you will see a diversity of styles and content. Some plays address serious issues while others are poignant comedies that poke fun at life's foibles.

The *Youthwrite* program encourages BC Drama students to put pen to paper, or fingers to keyboard, and share their work with others in the province. All entries are read by our adjudicators and the top rated plays are invited to perform at the Provincial Drama Festival as well as published in this collection. Many thanks go to the adjudicators for their time and efforts in this selection process.

Drama inspires us to activate our imaginations and find inventive ways to communicate to audiences. These plays are perfect examples of this creative process. The young writers included in this selection have much to be proud of, as they have submitted inspired and thought-provoking theatrical works.

*Mary Niedballa*



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## Youthwrite Report 2007

The quality of the scripts in this year's *Youthwrite* was really great and we were pleased that we ended up with so many scripts to read. Many of the young writers took risks that belied their youth and were successful in writing about a number of mature topics, characters and circumstances.

We met together to read through most of the plays and briefly discuss each script as a group before separating to write our personal thoughts to the writers about their work. For me, that is the most challenging part of this job, which I take very seriously. I know that these kids have poured their hearts out onto the paper, and sometimes I think "*Who am I to tell this kid that I didn't like something about their script.*" I always hope that something that I didn't particularly like might tickle one of the other readers' fancy so they get a range of comments when the scripts are returned. However, with many years of experience producing, performing, writing, and being an audience member, I also know that being very honest is the best way to approach what I have to say.

Drama teachers Lana O'Brien and Mary Niedballa teamed up again this year to adjudicate the 2007 *Youthwrite* submissions. Also a reader on this year's panel was English Literature specialist Mike Allen, who brought a fresh new-to-drama approach to the material.

Thank you very much to the sponsoring teachers who supported and encouraged their young playwrights. This year's top choices include:

"Play" by Carter West

"Soul Solutions" by Robyn S. Lawrence

"In The Absence of Sarah" by Charlotte Macaulay

I sincerely thank Mary and Mike for their time and commitment to this project. And, again, thank you to the students and sponsor teachers who submitted scripts to this year's competition.

~Lana O'Brien

# Youthwrite Report 2008

It has been a truly rewarding experience to coordinate this year's *Youthwrite* program. I would like to congratulate all students who submitted work for *Youthwrite* 2008. The range of dramatic and theatrical styles was impressive. It was quite a challenge to select the top choices for this year.

I would also like to say what a distinct honour it has been to adjudicate the plays alongside Linda Beaven and Jason Donaldson. Linda, recently retired from teaching Drama at Summerland Secondary School, has also founded and coordinated the GoodWill Shakespeare Festival in Summerland. Jason is a member at large on the ABCDE Executive and teaches Drama at Gulf Island School of Performing Arts on Salt Spring Island.

After Jason, Linda, and I read and evaluated the entries, I had conversations with both of them to narrow down our search for the top 3 script choices. We had such difficulty choosing them that we decided to ask the executive to allow 4 top choices. Here are our four choices (in alphabetical order according to the writer's name):

"Beauty" by Marlee Coulter et al. *company of 17 writers*

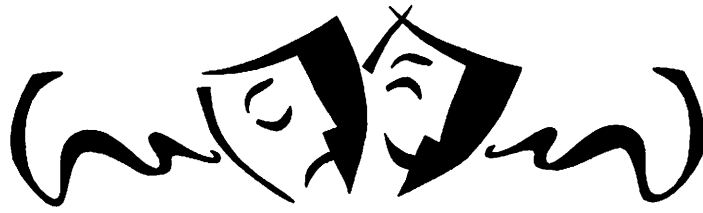
"The Hook" by Caitlin Forsyth

"Caught in the Rain" by Christine Park

"Dirty Laundry" by Barbara Reid

This is my third year adjudicating the *Youthwrite* competition and I have enjoyed reading all entries. My philosophy behind *Youthwrite* is to encourage and empower students to share their works with other professionals in the Province. Thank you to these talented and brave individuals for their hard work and creative efforts.

*Mary Niedballa*



*Play*  
By  
*Carter West*

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**play**  
**by carter west**

## DRAMATIS PERSONAE

*Guide*- A playwright

*Jacob*- A character

*Tom*- A tool

*Techie*- A fool

### **GUIDE**

The character of *The Guide* is a tricky and complex one. To play it accurately requires a great deal of subtlety and understanding. Though androgynous, anyone approaching said role must do so with a great deal of authority and playfulness. The primary pitfall is in believing the character should be played with complete honesty. It is essential to remember the playful nature of the Guide. He is someone who is vain, self-centered and ultimately misguided, but he is *eccentric* NOT insane on his own ambitions. Imagine a filmmaker who has had one success and believes that all other work he produces will prove to be infallible. As we have seen these filmmakers are almost always proven wrong (Mendes, Verhoeven, Spielberg, etc.). At his core his intentions are amiable, he is truly trying to question the theatre and challenge institution, but in the end we see that theatre is an old Queen no one dare challenge. His relationship with *Jacob* should be similar to that of a pup and its master. *Guide* knows that he is the one with wisdom and he is eager to share it with *Jacob*, but only to an extent. Condescension inevitably should seep in but should NOT be the overall tone of the relationship. In certain sections when he repeats words or sentences to *Jacob* ("in time") the actor must do this a happy tone, and not with a dark one. In terms on *Tom*, he is merely a tool to be used to illustrate a point to *Jacob*. With *Tom*, there is no threat of anarchy, only obedience. *Guide* should be a fun and the actor must not become bogged down in his own pretentious trappings.

### **JACOB**

Far less confined than *Guide*, *Jacob* should be a blank slate that is slowly filled with details. Though he should in any way resemble *HAL* circa. 2001: A Space Odyssey. *Jacob* slowly transitions through a variety of emotions, but should not become too complex until the closing moments as he realizes that his "God" truly does have fallacies. This destroys him in a way and his final lines to *Guide* should emulate that feeling. He must be a representation of the audience and its experience of being thrust into this stage world of absurdist theatre. His reaction should be true to what the audience itself is feeling. It is important that *Jacob* never does anything to alienate himself from the audience, as he is their only link to this tricky world. Everything has the confusion of a new born baby while have the motor and linguistic capabilities of a full grown man. Upon acceptance of the *Guide's* teachings there should be somewhat of an Adam & God sentiment, a complete reverence to the character. Towards *Tom*, *Jacob* should view him simply as an extension of the *Guide*. *Jacob* must be careful not to appear too whiny or submissive; a questionable respect.

### **TOM**

A puppet of the *Guide's* design and someone who really has no sense of free will. WHATEVER the *Guide* says he must do, otherwise the dominance illusion is lost. The actor of *Tom* should shine through at the very end of the piece.

### **TECHIE**

Disgruntled, but aware of the flub and of the fact there is a large audience watching the play. Embarrassed but blunt.



# PLAY

Carter West

**GUIDE:** Silence. Lights down please; let's get started.

*(We are in a time and place that is not known. The stage lights are dark except for a faint light coming from the sides of the stage. In the dim, a figure enters. He places a coat UPC. Lights slowly fade up and we are able to see the figure of another man lying down. Once the coat has been set our GUIDE sits directly at the head of the second man, Jacob.)*

**GUIDE:** Jacob.

*(The man in white stirs.)*

**GUIDE:** Jacob, open your eyes.

*(JACOB sits up and is fully awake.)*

**JACOB:** *(groggily)* Wha...?

*(The man in white black smiles and stares.)*

**GUIDE:** Hello Jacob.

**JACOB:** *(Startled by the voice)* Jesus. *(Looks around in shock)*

**GUIDE:** Welcome Jacob. How are you?

**JACOB:** Christ you scared me...

**GUIDE:** I apologize it was not my intention to frighten you. I was just trying to ensure you were awake.

**JACOB:** Who are you?

**GUIDE:** I am your guide. I'm here to ensure that you have a safe and comfortable journey.

**JACOB:** What... where am I?

**GUIDE:** You will see.

**JACOB:** When?

**GUIDE:** As you progress through your journey.

CARTER WEST

play

1

**JACOB:** What journey?

**GUIDE:** You will see.

**JACOB:** Where will this journey take me then?

**GUIDE:** You will see.

**JACOB:** Stop saying that! God... I just want to get out of here.

*(He begins to exit SL)*

**GUIDE:** Jacob, you're journey does not begin that way. You must come back.

*(Jacob returns and stands face to face with GUIDE)*

**JACOB:** Alright, what is going on here? Where am I for starters? What the hell is this "journey"? And most importantly who ARE you?

**GUIDE:** I am the playwright. I created you as I sat on a bus. You were developed over a period of 3 weeks. During that time you festered from a germ of the mind to a fully functioning mental character that was then transmitted to paper. As you can see that character in paper has become a character I flesh and is currently being represented by the actor who is playing you.

**JACOB:** Kay, buddy. You're nuts. Goodbye.

*(Begins to walk out again)*

**GUIDE:** How did I know you're name...? Jacob?

*(Jacob, seriously considering this point turns to face the GUIDE)*

**JACOB:** Lucky guess.

**GUIDE:** There are over 10 million names currently in use. I find it hard to believe that I got you're name from a "lucky guess". I created you. You are an extension of myself. In time you'll realize it.

**JACOB:** In time?

**GUIDE:** Yes. In time.

**JACOB:** Let me guess... In time... You mean on my magical journey?

**GUIDE:** I don't ever recall saying magical Jacob.

**JACOB:** Whatever.

**GUIDE:** Whilst on your journey you will discover where you are, where you are going, and ultimately that I am your master.

**JACOB:** My master... Hmm. That's quite a statement. Prove it.

*(GUIDE smiles.)*

**GUIDE:** TOM!

*(TOM enters SR dressed in black.)*

**GUIDE:** Tom lets see some Beckett... Godot if you don't mind...

*(As GUIDE instructs TOM, he instantly breaks into the specific character. Should be slightly over dramatic to emphasize the absurdity of the occurrence)*

**TOM:** *Sometimes I feel it coming all the same. Then I go all queer.*

**GUIDE:** Williams...

**TOM:** STELLA!!!

**GUIDE:** Wilde...

**TOM:** *Child, you know how anxious your guardian is that you should improve yourself in every way. He laid particular stress on your German, as he was leaving for town yesterday. Indeed, he always lays stress...*

**GUIDE:** Couldn't stand another word of that... umm... How about some Mar...

**JACOB:** That's enough...

**GUIDE:** You see?

**JACOB:** All I see is you've got some guy doing what you tell him to do.

**GUIDE:** How about some Chekhov..?

*(GUIDE smiles. JACOB gets up and begins a very intense scene from Chekhov's: The Cherry Orchard. Actors need to be completely committed to their new found roles and unaware of any previous happenings)*

**JACOB:** I had a lot of money yesterday, but there's very little to-day. My poor Varya feeds everybody on milk soup to save money, in the kitchen the old people only get peas, and I spend recklessly. There, they are all over the place.

**TOM:** Permit me to pick them up.

**JACOB:** Please do, Yasha. And why did I go and have lunch there? . . . A horrid restaurant with band and tablecloths smelling of soap. . . . Why do you drink so much, Leon? Why do you eat so much? Why do you talk so much?

**GUIDE:** Thank you Tom. Jacob, if I were to ask you the definition of God, you would say that he is the omnipotent spiritual and moral force who is evident in all cultures throughout the world. You could say that God is specific to the environment he is in. The prisoner who is about to be sentenced puts his faith in a judge. The judge is the one who has the power to send him back to his family or send him to the gallows. The judge holds God like authority over that prisoner. In the same way I am your judge. What I decide determines who you are, where you go, and how long you stay here.

**JACOB:** I'm out of here (*Begins to leave*)

**GUIDE:** Jacob, if you leave those people will be very displeased with you.

**JACOB:** What people?

(*GUIDE beckons JACOB to come back from the exit.*)

**GUIDE:** The people sitting watching you.

**JACOB:** There are no people.

**GUIDE:** You can't see them.

**JACOB:** But you can?

**GUIDE:** Yes. Right now they seem a bit puzzled at what they are seeing.

**JACOB:** And why is that?

**GUIDE:** Well it could be for one of two reasons. They could be surprised that what they are seeing is not the conventional form of theatre... OR they are thinking that this is another piece of absurdist vomit that should never be allowed to be funded.

**JACOB:** There is no one in front of me. Look. The only thing I know is that I've woken up in some sick dream and I want out.

**GUIDE:** That is not possible. Your journey has begun and will continue until you reach its end.

**JACOB:** I don't want to be on any journey, and YES it is possible. *(Begins to leave again. GUIDE runs to block him from the exit. Though still calm he is slightly shaken.)*

**GUIDE:** I fear for your life if you were to leave right now.

**JACOB:** What are you talking about?

**GUIDE:** When a writer creates a character he gives birth to something. By putting that much thought into something, he creates it. The energy of thought makes you real, by you being here you are real. But outside of the theatre you do not exist. If you leave... you die. Here let me show you. **TOM!**

*(The actor playing TOM re-enters carrying a skull.)*

**TOM (as HAMLET):** Alas dear Yorick, I knew him well.

**GUIDE:** You see Jacob. What you just witnessed was the reincarnation of a character created hundreds of years ago. You also witnessed the death of Hamlet. As soon as that actor stops portraying Hamlet, in a sense he dies... But only in the sense that he is no longer physically present, but only emotionally present.

**JACOB:** So if I stay here I live.

**GUIDE:** For a time.

**JACOB:** What do you mean "for a time"?

**GUIDE:** We are in the middle of a play. Even the longest play only clocks out at four hours and I'm afraid our time is much more limited than that.

**JACOB:** So, no matter what I only have a few hours to live.

**GUIDE:** Minutes Jacob, this is a one act.

**JACOB:** No! No, I'm sorry this is not a one act. I'm not in a play. I'm not apart of you. I'm not on a journey. I'm Jacob. I'm my own person who is real and controls himself. Even if you were the playwright why would you write a play about this? It doesn't make sense.

**GUIDE:** The reason I wrote it is because I wanted to prove a point. That point was that, there can never be any type of control without direct physical participation from the author. So often you find actors take out their own personal vanities and, for better or worse, change the show to their

liking. You see, in any decent play, the author has carefully constructed every word. The text is a house of cards that threatens to tumble should the slightest piece be moved or replaced. With my presence I can assure that all aspects are carried out appropriately.

**JACOB:** Its not possible... You CANT have ultimate control.

**GUIDE:** Really? Tom! Tom, come here a minute.

*(TOM enters)*

**TOM:** Yes.

**GUIDE:** Tom, have you forgotten something?

**TOM:** Yes. My coat.

**GUIDE:** Tom your coat is behind Jacob there.

*(Tom grabs it)*

**GUIDE:** That will be all for now Tom, thank you.

*(TOM exits.)*

**GUIDE:** I have the control. I am the author and I will dictate what happens.

**JACOB:** If you really are the author than why don't I buy what you are saying? Why wouldn't I just accept what you're telling me?

**GUIDE:** Because then there would be no play. Every story needs conflict.

**JACOB:** Says who?

**GUIDE:** Aristotle... Ever since him, all authors, (well... most of them), have included conflict within their works. You are my conflict. And soon you will be resolved.

**JACOB:** Even though you and I have conflict, you still have ultimate control? You are still the dictator of the events.

**GUIDE:** Yes.

**JACOB:** And as I speak right now I am uttering the words that you determined I should be speaking.

**GUIDE:** Right. And when this play is over you will live on in the memory of the playwright of the actor, the director and all of those audience members watching you. Your energy is transferred into a mental state where you will live on for eternity, or at least the memory of you will, your physical presence will dissolve into that of the actor playing you.

**JACOB:** And throughout everything you will retain control?

**GUIDE:** Absolutely. When you became Lubov, a while back, you were able to pick up the character instantly because I had been written that at that specific moment you would become that character. Jacob, in this world control is everything to a person. It is our one undeniable freedom. No matter how much pain is inflicted, or what circumstances we are put under, every human being is given ultimate control. But you don't have any...

**JACOB:** ...because if I were to have any I would jeopardize your notion of control and step off the path of my so-called journey.

**GUIDE:** Precisely.

**JACOB:** What if I were to exit?

**GUIDE:** It is not written and therefore it will never happen.

**JACOB:** We'll see about that.

*(JACOB in a burst of movement runs to the very edge of the stage but before going over the edge stops short.)*

**GUIDE:** *(Amused by this display of anarchy)* What's wrong Jacob?

**JACOB:** There are people in front of me. They're watching... Who are they?

**GUIDE:** You're audience. They've come to see you. Why don't you exit Jacob? Why don't you jump off the stage?

**JACOB:** Because...

**GUIDE:** Hmm? It's because you can't. It is mentally impossible for you to do that because that would be a breach of what has been written into you.

**JACOB:** *(On the verge of tears)* I can do it.

**GUIDE:** Really...? Then go ahead... Do it.

*(After a brief pause JACOB returns from the edge and starts back towards the GUIDE. GUIDE smiles in approval, but after a step of two, JACOB stops turns on his heel and jumps into the audience.)*

**GUIDE:** What are you doing?

*(JACOB is now running up and down the aisles interacting with the audience.)*

**GUIDE:** Get back! Now!

**JACOB:** I thought you said this was impossible? What's wrong? No control?

**GUIDE:** TOM!

*(TOM enters.)*

**GUIDE:** Tom! Go get him.

*(TOM also jumps into the audience and a very brief chase occurs. Eventually JACOB, under no coercion from TOM returns to the stage.)*

**JACOB:** This isn't a play. This is a sad sack failing to prove a point.

*(JACOB turns to exit.)*

**GUIDE:** You're right. I've failed. I had not planned on that happening at all.

**JACOB:** But...

**GUIDE:** You honestly think that I didn't write that?

**JACOB:** Well why would you?

**GUIDE:** Because, every play needs action. It can't all be dialogue.

**JACOB:** So that was intentional.

**GUIDE:** Yes Jacob. If I can make you perform Chekhov spontaneously I can certainly orchestrate a chase around the theatre.

**JACOB:** But...

**GUIDE:** It's alright Jacob. You're journey is about to come to an end. You have realized that I am the master of this entire production. You see, the thing about theatre is that it's live. An author may pour countless hours into a script that in the end becomes tampered by actors during the live performance. Whether they do it willingly or not, it always happens in some form. So the only way for an author to have full control of his work is to become apart of it onstage. It doesn't matter what you do, or what Tom does, in the end I have the control. That's what it's all about Jacob;



control. When I sat down to write this play I began it as an endeavor, a quest for control. Every author writes for themselves. Whether it is a comedy or drama, authors write for monetary gain or moral gain but in the end it's for their own gain. A stage play is the ultimate vanity project...an opportunity where the writer has the chance to play God. But when God made all of us humans he discovered that he can't control every one of us so he sent down his messenger to guide him. You know what the problem with that was? It wasn't god... it was a secondary figure, a son, a prophet, an enlightened being, an all-wise teacher. People want the real thing and God ever gives it to them! Well here I am... and not only am I playing God but I am your God.

*(At this moment the lights suddenly go out. There is an awkward silence onstage)*

**GUIDE:** What's happened?

**VOICE FROM BOOTH:** Sorry! The light boards gone screwy.

**GUIDE:** Fix it!

**VOICE FROM BOOTH:** It's going to take a while. I'm going to have to turn the fluorescents on for right now. I'll get it up and running as soon as I can. Sorry folks!

*(Fluorescents go on. JACOB is looking in shock at the GUIDE)*

**GUIDE:** Now Jacob where were we?

**JACOB:** Nowhere. We...are nowhere. You've just spent all this time explaining...control... but you've gone and proved yourself wrong. There is now way you and control everything...

**GUIDE:** Now Jacob...

**JACOB:** No. No! No you have NO control. You have nothing! You can't control what happens up there, you can't control what goes on behind there, you can't control if this whole place goes up in smoke, you cant even control me! I am an actor! There is no way for you to control my inflections, emotions, facials expressions.

*(Begins to dance wildly about)*

**JACOB:** Oh... What's that? Cant stop me can you?

**GUIDE:** Now stop that!

**JACOB:** Or what? You'll scribble me out? It's too late for that. You've lost control... you never really had it.

*(Extremely worried the GUIDE searches for a response.)*

**GUIDE:** Perhaps... perhaps this is planned.

**JACOB:** No, don't do that. The board blew a fuse, and now everything's messed up. I may be a playing character and you may have written this damn thing, but you're not the one with ultimate control. Ultimate control exists in the collective... not the singular.

*(JACOB exits. The GUIDE in shock looks down in wonder he then looks up.)*

**GUIDE:** Jacob. JACOB! *(Beat)* Oh God. He's right. I have no control. I am a sad sack. I've failed. Shut it down!

*(TOM enters)*

**TOM:** What about our curtain call?

**GUIDE:** There is no curtain call! Get out. It's over.

*(Both exit)*

*(Guide exits and fluorescents switch off. Stage lights come back on.)*

**TECHIE:** Fixed it! *(Beat)* Guy's?

**END**



# *Soul Solutions*

*By*

*Robyn S. Lawrence*

**Caution: Professionals and amateurs are hereby warned that "Soul Solutions" by Robyn S. Lawrence is subject to royalty. It is protected under Copyright Law. Inquiries regarding performance rights and royalties should be directed to Robyn S. Lawrence at 1387 Weldon Rd. Quesnel, B.C. V2J 5A8. The fee for a single production of this play will cost \$20.00.**

## Soul Solutions

A play by Robyn Lawrence

In Order of appearance:

Gluttony (Denial) – Max Galliazzo  
Pride (Denial) – Rebecca Raynor  
Greed (Anger) – Adrianna Couto  
Envy (Bargaining) – Ashley Klassen  
Lust (Depression) – Tina Jovovich  
Wrath (Realization) – Melissa Erickson  
Sloth (Acceptance) – Katie Stringer  
Receptionist- Katelyn Escott  
1<sup>st</sup> Person- Reagan Lusk  
Guy- George Coleman  
Girl- Jen Baker

*Separate lights come up and down, one at a time on each of the sins.*

Gluttony- Ah, I hate weddings, I musta gained ten pounds at least. The enemy *slight pause* all you can eat buffets. *Sigh* man I got the munchies. I'm saying to myself, one, just one Nanaimo bar and I'm screwed. Tenth one comes along and I'm NO! *slaps hand*. This isn't happening to me.

Pride- are you kidding me? I will not stoop to your level. You can't possibly think I would do something like that. Do you know who I am? Do you know who you're looking at? I mean, please your nothing compared to me. I know fame, fortune, and all the pleasures, matter of fact we went to lunch just yesterday.

Greed- One thousand and one, one thousand and two, one thousand and three, one thousand and four one thousand and *slight pause* five, FIVE! Where is five? Five is mine? Who the hell stole my five? Yah that's right my five, nobody else's five. Why me? Why is this happening to me? I know why. Its you, its your fault! Now just give it back slowly and no one gets hurt. *Silence*

Envy- I want to be just like that. Exactly like that. I want to do the same things, say the same things. If you would just give me the chance I know I can be exactly how you want me to be. I'll do anything I swear. What do you want me to do? I'll do it, anything. I wish you would see me like that; I just want to be someone new. Please?

Lust- are you blushing? *Giggles* I do believe you are. Come on now don't be shy. *Pause* Are you even looking at me? Look at me! How can you resist this? You're always pushing me away. It's like I no longer exist to you. No matter how many new faces I try on, new moves I create, it's never enough for you. I'm never good enough. Why am I never good enough? *Cries*

Wrath- why couldn't you have just controlled yourself! Its not that hard, just ration! It doesn't matter that you're short one? It's not like the world's just going to end because you don't like who you are! You're so damn self absorbed! And I don't care if nobody wants you, your fine all on your own! You don't need anyone but yourself!

Sloth- I don't have to do this anymore, I don't want to go on. It's over; I'm just going to end it all and I accept that. I know it's done, it's nobody's fault. I no longer have to try; I'm saying my last goodbye to everything. Now it's time to just sit back and watch things dissolve.

*Lights slowly rise to a desk center stage and four chairs. In the desk sits the receptionist, in one chair a man is seating alone with his head down over his papers, he begins to tap his pencil slowly. He then walks to the receptionist.*

Receptionist: All finished then?

Guy: *hesitating* I- I believe so.

Receptionist: Well alright then, the pink form is yours to keep and the yellow one is for his records.

Guy: That's all then?

Receptionist: Yes please sign here and here and that'll be all.

Guy: *signs once* Wait, I think I forgot something.

Receptionist: We don't normally do returns but I guess since you have yet to sign completely, I'll make an exception.

Guy: Thank you, it will only take a second I am sure. *He returns to his seat where he leans over his paper and begins to tap his pencil again.*

1<sup>st</sup> Person: *walks up to the receptionist* Hi.

Receptionist: Hello Sir, Welcome to "Soul Solutions" How can I help yo-- oh you, why must you always come here?

1<sup>st</sup> Person: I got a lot of soul. *Silence, while the receptionist puts together the papers* So you been getting a lot of business?

Receptionist: *not wanting to engage in conversation* Please fill out the pink form, it is for you, and the yellow copy is for his records.

1<sup>st</sup> Person: That's it I just fill out a form? And my soul is his?

Receptionist: Simple as that. *Hands him the papers* Now can you please just go sit down. *He takes his seat by the other man*

1<sup>st</sup> Person: Have you been here before?

Guy: It's kind of a one time thing; you can only sell your soul once.

1<sup>st</sup> Person: Once eh? So why are you selling yours.

Guy: I figure I am not getting up there so I may as well be on good terms down there.

1<sup>st</sup> Person: I see. That seems reasonable enough. *Silence* Don't you want to know why I'm here?

Guy: Not that.

1<sup>st</sup> Person: It is if you believe.

Guy: Prove it.

1<sup>st</sup> Person: Don't tempt me.

Guy: Me and you will walk through that door right now, walk right up to the devil himself and invite him for a beer.

1<sup>st</sup> Person: I don't drink.

Guy: A guys here to sell his soul and he isn't even a drinker.

1<sup>st</sup> Person: Nah I'm not fond of the bottle. My son enjoys a glass of wine now and again.

Guy: You have kids? How many?

1<sup>st</sup> Person: Just one son.

Guy: I never had kids.

1<sup>st</sup> Person: There is still time.

Guy: I wouldn't have been a good father.

1<sup>st</sup> Person: You don't give yourself enough credit.

Guy: You don't know me. You have no idea.

1<sup>st</sup> Person: I know more than you think.

Guy: You seem to have all the answers don't you?

1<sup>st</sup> Person: Not the first time I've been told that.

Guy: Then answer me this why are you here? Why am I here? Why would anyone be here?

1<sup>st</sup> Person: People just loose there way sometimes.

Guy: Maybe you're right. I guess I'm lucky then.

1<sup>st</sup> Person: Why's that?

Guy: I know exactly where I am going.

1<sup>st</sup> Person: You're still determined on going down that path are you?

Guy: Nothing's stopping me now.

1<sup>st</sup> Person: Only your own free will.

Guy: Are you trying to talk me out of it?

1<sup>st</sup> Person: Well it is my job.

Guy: Your job? What's your business?

1<sup>st</sup> Person: You.

Guy: Me? Your business is me?

1<sup>st</sup> Person: Precisely.

Guy: Who's your boss?

1<sup>st</sup> Person: I'm the boss.

Guy: Who are you?

1<sup>st</sup> Person: The boss

Guy: Boss of what?!!

1<sup>st</sup> Person: Everything

Guy: how can you be the boss of everything?

1<sup>st</sup> Person: I am the almighty one.

Guy: What?

1<sup>st</sup> Person: Creator of all, the heavens and earth.

Guy: oh really?

1<sup>st</sup> Person: well I don't like to brag or anything.

Guy: You- you think I- me, am going to believe that you are god.

1<sup>st</sup> Person: Many believe in me.

Guy: Ok so let me get this straight. You're god and you golf with the devil? *Laughing* Your nuts buddy!

1<sup>st</sup> Person: Well *thinking about it* I am present in all things so, yes! I am nuts...and all other things.

Guy: So then, tell me "God" or nuts or whatever you claim to be, what are you doing in "Soul Solutions"?

1<sup>st</sup> Person: I'm the boss, it's my job.

Guy: You're in business with the devil? He's your partner? Well now I've heard everything.

1<sup>st</sup> Person: No, not at all.

Guy: If your god, then why don't you just make me leave?

1<sup>st</sup> Person: I won't mess with free will.

Guy: This makes no sense.

1<sup>st</sup> Person: Yes it is confusing. But I am here to be the solution.

Guy: *looking around* am I in the wrong building?

1<sup>st</sup> Person: I thought you said you weren't lost?

Guy: I'm not; I think you're the one who's lost.

1<sup>st</sup> Person: No I've been here before. I know where I am.

Guy: You come here often?

1<sup>st</sup> Person: Everyday but Sunday.



Guy: You're a regular customer at a place that buys souls?

1<sup>st</sup> Person: More of a consultant.

Guy: What do you consult people about?

1<sup>st</sup> Person: Everything and anything.

Guy: Well you must have a profession, what field are you in?

1<sup>st</sup> Person: All fields.

Guy: But what's your specialty. Or you're major?

1<sup>st</sup> Person: I major in all things.

Guy: What university did you attend?

1<sup>st</sup> Person: All of them.

Guy: All of them? This is the most ridiculous conversation in history! *Stands up out of chair*

1<sup>st</sup> Person: umm nah there was a few that could top this. *Staying very calm still seated.*

Guy: And of course you would know. *Sarcastic*

1<sup>st</sup> Person: Well I am god.

Guy: If you claim to be god one more time I swear ill-

1<sup>st</sup> Person: Please don't swear.

Guy: If your god then just prove it!

1<sup>st</sup> Person: Though shall not tempt the lord.

Guy: So you're nuts and your chicken?

1<sup>st</sup> Person: I did say I was present in all things.

Guy: if your god I want to see you part the sea. *Throws plant out of vase.*

1<sup>st</sup> Person: That wasn't completely me.

Guy: Then walk on water! *Dumps water on the floor*

1<sup>st</sup> Person: Ah that was technically my son.

Guy: Your not god!

1<sup>st</sup> Person: You just have to believe.

Guy: So then "God" where does the universe end?

1<sup>st</sup> Person: Where it began.

Guy: Oh! God help me! *Frustrated, throws his hands in the air then covers face.*

1<sup>st</sup> Person: Yes? That's what I am here for.

Guy: Oh that's it! This is ridiculous, I'm out of here. *Storms off stage away from hell. God (1<sup>st</sup> Person) walks to the receptionist*  
Receptionist: You've got to stop doing that, your bad for business.  
Guy: Sorry, it's my job. *Exit, a few moments later a woman enters.*  
Girl: hi *nervous*  
Receptionist: Welcome to Soul Solutions. The pink form is yours to keep and the yellow one is for his records. *The woman takes the papers a sits to fill them out. When she is finished she brings them to the receptionist*  
Girl: I think I am finished *hesitating*  
Receptionist: Yes please sign here and here and that'll be all. *She signs the papers and continues to walk through the door, just before the door closes she stops and is about to say something to the receptionist. The receptionist cuts her off.*  
Receptionist: You can sell your soul, but you can't buy it back.  
*Lights fade music rises.*

*Note:*

*The intention of this play was simple at first; it began with the effects of a comedy in mind but then grew to have a more important agenda. There is a man who could be anyone, lost as to where his life is going as he sits signing away his soul. The seven sins at the beginning of the play are the sins of the man and his path through grieving, as he sits and looks deep within his flaws. The man is going through the steps of grieving about what has come of him. God meets him in "Soul Solutions" a place where lost souls go to give up on life. They engage in conversation about the man's life. The man gets so annoyed by God that he leaves the building, away from hell. After the man and God have both left a woman enters. This woman takes the same steps as the man did towards the end, but she makes the mistake of thinking things through after she acts. She signs both papers before hesitating and is unable to return. The receptionist then speaks out the moral of the play which is "you can sell your soul but you cant buy it back"*



# *In The Absence of Sarah*

*By*

*Charlotte Macaulay*

Caution: Professionals and amateurs are hereby warned that "In The Absence of Sarah" by Charlotte Macaulay is subject to royalty. It is protected under Copyright Law. Inquiries regarding performance rights and royalties should be directed to Charlotte Macaulay at 3411 Browning St. Victoria, B.C. V8P 4CA. The fee for a single production of this play will cost \$20.00.

**In the Absence of Sarah**

**By**

**Charlotte Macaulay**

## Characters:

**ELSIE** is 21: She is the oldest of the five siblings. She is mute (not deaf). It is her secret fear that Sarah didn't stay with her kids because Elsie was born mute and therefore is 'defective'. Throughout the play she communicates with her family through sign language.

**CAROLINE** is 17-19: She is the second oldest. She tries to keep spirits up in everyone, by thinking positively, and hoping that Sarah will come back.

**JONATHAN** is 16-17: He doesn't trust Sarah, and believes that she doesn't love them at all. He admires Elsie a lot, and is probably one of her closest friends.

**MAX** is 13. He still believes that Sarah is going to move back to be with the family someday. Although not the youngest, he is less mature than Abby.

**ABBY** is 11. She is mature for her age. She is slightly sceptical about Sarah, but, unlike Jonathan, is positive.

**GRAMPS** is 50-65 (but also deceased). He is the Father of Sarah and the Grandfather of the five siblings. He raised the siblings. He was very kind and did as much for the kids as he could to make up for Sarah's absence.

**SARAH** is 36-38. She is trashy and inattentive to her five children. She only comes around if she thinks that it might benefit her. Of all her children, she is especially negligent to Elsie.

***THE SET:** Mid-stage left is an old kitchen table with some dishes on it, and five old rickety chairs sit around it. Down stage right is a big old chair. Up centre stage is an old cupboard piled with phone books, and an old phone receiver. On the far stage left apron corner is a small table. On the table is a lazy-Susan with two plants on it. The plants are the same type and in the same pots, however one is living and the other is dead. At the start of the play, the dead plant is facing the audience.*

## Scene 1

**Early morning, 7 o'clock, present day.**

*The Curtains are drawn.*

*(Voice over)*

**ABBY:** Hi! You've reached Abby!

**JONATHAN:** And Elsie, Max, Caroline and Jonathan-

**ABBY:** Leave me a message!

*Beep sounds*

**SARAH:** Ah, hi kids, It's me. I'm coming for a visit... tomorrow afternoon sometime... I'll see you then.

*Elsie walks out onto the apron; behind her the curtains are still closed. She takes a breath, as though she intends to say something, but when she opens her mouth the first time nothing comes out.*

ELSIE: You'll have to excuse me- I... I don't get the chance to talk- like this- often.... ever. Sometimes I think that if, when I was born, if I had not been damaged the way that I was; the way that I am- if I had been that beautiful little child, the one that all parents secretly dream of giving birth to, then maybe my mother would have kept me. I'm twenty-one now, Gramps died two years ago. Now it's just the five of us. Caroline is three years younger than me and is the voice I never had. Jonathan is only 16 this year but is the biggest support I have. I worry about Max he's so hopeful it scares me. At 11 Abby understands the most important thing this family has: is each other. On the rare occasion that Mom decides to visit, we all realize how much we miss her. Of course, these days- the ones when she visits- are the longest, hardest days; because everything must be perfect.

*Curtains open. Everyone but Elsie slowly makes their way to the table when they are all seated they start passing dishes around and getting ready to eat.*

MAX: Elsie, grab the cereal before you sit down, would you?

JONATHAN: Caroline and I are taking the car to do some grocery shopping today, Elsie, right? You don't need it?

CAROLINE: yeah, we talked about it last night- she's catching the bus to work- Abby did you finish your homework?

ABBY: Max couldn't help with one of the questions but I got most of it down.

MAX: Abby helped me with colouring my pamphlet in.

*Elsie arrives at the table with the cereal and sits down next to Max. Max takes out his pamphlet to display it to the family.*

MAX: What do you think?

*Elsie looks at it and points something out on the front.*

MAX: What... what's that?

JONATHAN: pass it here...

*Max hands the pamphlet to Jonathan.*

JONATHAN: you spelt *elephant* wrong.

MAX: What do you mean I spelt elephant wrong?

JONATHAN: see just there- you forgot the "N".

MAX: I did not- I wouldn't forget the N in- Abby you read it over- why didn't you say something? I've out lined it now- its all done up in pen-

JONATHAN: Abby's younger than you are; don't give her a hard time. You'll just have to hand it in with out the N

MAX: I can't hand it in with out the N. It's right on the cover in huge letters, Mrs. Blaville is going to notice!

ABBY: what if you wrote the N on a scrap of paper and taped it to the back? That way she can't say you forgot the N

MAX: Oh, Ha, Ha, very funny Abby.

CAROLINE: Elsie are you all right?

***ELSIE: mom called yesterday.***

CAROLINE: What do you mean mom called yesterday...

MAX and ABBY: What?

CAROLINE: Why didn't you tell us?

***ELSIE: She's coming today.***

JONATHAN: She's coming *today*?

MAX: Abby! Did you hear that?

ABBY: I know, Max. She's coming!

***Caroline, Abby and Max jump up.***

CAROLINE: Abby, Max you start in here; I'll take care of the Bathroom.

***Abby, Max start picking things up from around the stage, and then follow Caroline off stage left.***

JONATHAN: She won't come, Elsie. You know she won't. We can't keep doing this, everything is turned upside down for *her* and, and she never shows up. Gramps' funeral was the first time we saw her in two years. *Two years!* She calls less, and when she does call she fills Max and Abby with false hope. Not to mention that she's awful to you-

***Elsie stands up and clears the table. She walks with the dishes off the stage right. .***

JONATHAN: *Elsie*, come on! *I just think that this is really lame!*

## Scene 2

**Mid-morning, six years in the past of scene 1.**

***GRAMPS (off stage): Johnny? Where are you boy? Have you had a bath yet?***

JONATHAN: I'm in the kitchen, Gramps.

***Enter Gramps from stage left. As he enters the stage he turns the plant around so that the living plant is facing the audience. He waters the plant.***

GRAMPS: What are you doing there Johnny?

JONATHAN: Well *you* said that mom called a day ago, and that *she* said that she was going to call you again today! And that it was *important!*

GRAMPS: that's right, that's what the message said.

JONATHAN: She must be coming to visit! It's my birthday next week, and she must be coming to stay! Turning 10 is really important right? So she must want to be here for it. So, I'm making her a picture. I know that it's my birthday and she's supposed to give me gifts instead, but wouldn't it be nice for her to get something too!

GRAMPS: I think that's a wonderful idea. Tell me about your-

*Phone rings. In rush Abby, Max, Caroline from stage left and Elsie walks slowly in after from stage right, Elsie is carrying a phone.*

ABBY: Can I talk to her please?

MAX: Its my turn first Gramps! Abby spoke first last time

ABBY: Nu huh. Gramps Max is lying.

GRAMPS: Kids- calm down what if it's only a telemarketer- so much enthusiasm from just a ring or two.

CAROLINE: You'd better answer it or will miss the call- Mum or no....

*Elsie passes the phone to Gramps who answers it.*

GRAMPS: Hello? Yes, Hi dear, how are you?

MAX: Knew it!

ABBY: Tell Max I'm first!

GRAMPS: Good, Good, that's good. So you had some important news, did you? Well the kids are very excited, let me tell you. Well- they're excited because we all thought that you might be coming for a visit... Oh, I see. Well what is the news?

CAROLINE: I..ah.. Why don't you go and wait in the other room- turn the radio on, Jon should talk first its his birthday, Elsie or I will get you when-

MAX: No I want to stay!

CAROLINE: Abby?

ABBY: *Max is staying.*

GRAMPS: Oh. Right. Of course. Really. Not like rest. *You're moving?* Where too? How long have you know him? Sarah- you can't just quit your job to move in with this- you were fired? When? What for? Sarah he got you fired and your going to move in with him? He sounds an awful lot like the rest to me? Your right. Of course. Never mind. When do you move. That sounds nice dear.

*Abby looks hurt and takes Max's hand. He tries to pull loose, but she tugs his arm and they exit stage left.*

GRAMPS: When are you going to come and see the kids? Sarah that's not good enough! *Sarah!* They're children! They need a proper answer!

*Caroline squeezes Elsie's shoulder and exits stage left.*



GRAMPS: Fine. What would you like me to tell them? What, that you don't care. I'll do it, Sarah! If you don't come to visit them- would you at least like to talk to Jon? You should talk to the boy. Because it's his birthday next week. You forgot? Sarah! He's had the same birthday for nearly ten years; you'd think you would have caught on. What? Yes... she's standing right here. No you can't talk to her! Why? Because you know as well as I do that she can't talk to you over the phone. I am not going to put Elsie on, Sarah that not fair to her. Talk to Jonathan- he's been dying to talk to y-

*Gramps takes the phone from his ear, and turns to face Elsie and Jonathan.*

GRAMPS: She had to go. It looks like something important has... come up. Something about work... She can't make it. She was really busy, but she was dying to talk to you, Johnny! You know- I've been thinking- Its about time we got ourselves a DVD player, don't you think? We can rent ourselves some movies- go all out and get new releases, how about that? Sounds... okay?

JONATHAN: Yes.

GRAMPS: Alright. It's a plan.

*Gramps exits stage left, Jonathan crunches the drawing he was working on as Elsie walks up behind him an taps his shoulder.*

*ELSIE: I'm sorry that's she's not coming*

JONATHAN: It's ok. I don't mind- I mean, she's never been here right? 'Sides I got you.

*ELSIE: Yes you do, I love you very much*

JONATHAN: Would you like a picture? I was working on it all day.

*Jonathan smoothes out his drawing and hands it carefully to Elsie. She takes the picture and exits stage right.*

### Scene 3

#### Only seconds after the end of scene 1.

*Enter Caroline from stage left. As she enters she turns the plant around so that the dead side faces the audience.*

JONATHAN (*to himself*): The whole stupid thing is lame.

CAROLINE: What's a bad idea?

JONATHAN: Oh, nothing.

CAROLINE: Are you going to mope around all day- there is tons to do. I don't know what's gotten into this family, but the place is a lot messier than I remember it being.

JONATHAN: Ah- its cleaner than it has been all year.

CAROLINE: I know- shocking isn't it. Shocking. Look how shocked you are- Will you please get somebody to water Gramps' plant? It is going to blow away like dust in the wind if it gets any drier. *Elsie?* I was thinking... maybe you should...

*Elsie enters from stage right, pickets up the phone and hands it to Caroline. Caroline takes the phone and dials. Jonathan takes a glass off the table and walks towards the plant- be fore he reaches the plant he turns back to Caroline and Elsie.*

CAROLINE: Elsie, You read my mind Hello? Yes Hi, Adam. It's Caroline, Elsie's sister? Would you mind covering for her today? Yes I know its short notice- our... our mother is coming in today. *Thank you-* we really appreciate this. We owe you one. Yes. Yes of course I'll tell her.

*Caroline hangs up the phone.*

CAROLINE: Adam says to say Hi. You know Elsie- he's a really great guy- He's so nice to you- he speaks sign even.

JONATHAN: Adam's my favourite.

*ABBY (shouted from off stage): MINE TOO!*

*Elsie gives Jonathan a very dirty look.*

*ELSIE: I've got the family to worry about, I don't need him too.*

CAROLINE: You don't need to worry about us- we all get along fine in your absence- besides; I see that smile you give him when you think we're not looking. I think we should have him over again, it was so nice last time. Remember it Jon, he brought Chocolates- Won Abby's heart in the blink of an eye.

*ELSIE: Not today*

JONATHAN: Even Max likes him.

CAROLINE: Of course not today Elsie- But soon, we'll have him over soon. Well you might as well come and do the shopping with me Elsie, now that your not working today..

JONATHAN: Who's going to stay with Max and Abby?

*Max runs on stage left.*

Max: Abby and I could stay alone.

JONATHAN and CAROLINE: *NO!*

*Elsie shakes her head firmly. Abby enters stage left.*

ABBY: Yeah we could- we'd be good, honest!

MAX: What trouble would we get into- we'd clean for Mom the whole time.

ABBY: We wouldn't even eat any of Jon's secret stash of chocolate- *even though* we know where it is!

JONATHAN: Hey!

MAX: please!

ABBY: You won't have to clean at all! Not a bit! Not even a speck.

MAX We'd dust even!

ABBY: I'd clean the toilet!

JONATHAN: Would you?

ABBY: Would you be able to tell if I didn't?

*Smiling, Elsie shakes her head and points at Caroline and then at Max and Abby (suggesting that Caroline should take care of the predicament)- she then exits stage right.*

CAROLINE: There you have it- Jon, you'll stay with them right?

JONATHAN: Sure, kick me off my shopping spree- fine.

MAX: Argue your right Jon- go and help choose apples! Leave us here to clean.

JONATHAN: How about you don't give me a hard time and I'll clean the bathroom.

ABBY: Sounds fair. Bye Caroline!

*Abby grabs Max's hand and pulls him off stage left.*

MAX: Abby! Wait!

ABBY: Don't argue a good thing, Max, the toilet is taken care of.

JONATHAN: You know the brand she likes.

CAROLINE: The beer- course I do. I'm surprised you do though-

JONATHAN: Who says I do?

CAROLINE: Do you?

JONATHAN: Well- you know. Know thy enemy.

CAROLINE: She not your-

JONATHAN: Enemy? Yeah I know- but if the sack of broken promise's fits, right.

CARLOINE: Jon.

JONATHAN: I can keep going- got a million

CAROLINE: Days like today are hard enough- don't make them worse.

JONATHAN: I know, I know, don't poison the mood, or shoot down the little wings that Abby and Max always grow, don't stress out Elsie. Sure, I got it.

CAROLINE: She's still our mom.

JONATHAN: Where's the line Caroline- and when is she going to cross it. It can't be that far off right? After everything she's done- Gramps' funeral, the time Elsie had the flu, you're graduation? The same fate for *five* children- how come I'm the only one who-

*Caroline kisses Jonathan on the cheek.*

CAROLINE: Elsie's waiting- we'll be back soon. BYE MAX, BYE ABBY!

*Caroline exits stage right. Max and Abby enter stage left. Abby is holding a toilet plunger and Max is carrying a toilet brush.*

ABBY: What your all talk? Knew it.

JONATHAN: Oh is that how it is? Are you ready for this, a cleaner toilet the world will never know.

*Max and Jonathan exit stage left. Abby pauses and then shifts the plant so that the living side is facing the audience.*

#### Scene 4

**3 am. About 25/30 years in the past of present day.**

*As Gramps enters to sit in the large armchair he turns the plant around so that the living side faces the audience. Sarah walks across a dimly lit stage (she moves from stage left to stage right), she's carrying a backpack. The lights come up suddenly to show Gramps is sitting the large armchair. He's dressed in Pyjamas and a dressing gown. He looks very tired.*

GRAMPS: Where are you going Sarah?

SARAH: Nowhere, Dad.

GRAMPS: Why are you taking a pack with you dear?

SARAH: Dad, I thought I would just go out for a bit with Brett.

GRAMPS: Sarah, it's late it's nearly three in the morning. I know you feel like an adult, but your only 15- your not even legal-

SARAH: (sighs) Brett is waiting for me, I can't let him wait he'll be mad

GRAMPS: Sarah, why do you want to be with a guy who will be angry if you let him wait a few minutes?

*Sarah rolls her eyes and looks away.*

GRAMPS: I'm sorry I was so angry early, I just, I thought we had plans. I was looking forward to a dinner- just the two of us... When you showed up so late, barely an hour ago, I was angry Sarah! Come on, Honey it's three in the morning. I was worried something had happened to you.

*Sarah looks unimpressed*

GRAMPS: Sarah! Don't you care that you left me worrying half the night?

SARAH: Yea Dad, Sorry I made you worry. But I better go, Brett's waiting.

GRAMPS: You care more about meeting some guy you met a month ago instead of talking to your own father?

*Sarah looks away*

GRAMPS: Sarah! Don't you look away from me! Look at me Sarah.

SARAH: I got to go. I got to go now.

GRAMPS: No, Sarah you CAN'T go! Please go upstairs. I know you think he loves you but it's just puppy love. He's 19, your 15. He's just too old for you, maybe in a few years... but it's--

SARAH: Puppy love? Puppy love is something that happens when you're a kid and I'm not a kid. He loves me and that's just the way it is!

GRAMPS: Ok, ok Sarah. How about you go upstairs and we can talk about this in the morning when we both have had some sleep. You can call Brett and tell him you won't be coming tonight but that you can see him tomorrow. All right? Does that work for you?

SARAH: Ok, Dad.

GRAMPS: Good sweetie.

*Gramps turns away from Sarah to go and water the plant. Sarah thinks carefully about it, looks like she is going to exit stage left then shakes her head and leaves stage right half way through Gramps' next line.*

GRAMPS: Sarah, you don't understand how much this means to me! You understanding that you should be here with me.

*Gramps turns to see that Sarah is gone. He sits down, defeated in the large armchair. He exits stage left as Jonathan enters..*

## Scene 5

### Present Day, 2 hours after Scene 1.

*Enter Jonathan stage left. He flips the plant over so that the dead side faces the audience. He clears the table and straightens out the book selves.. Enter Max Stage Right who is carrying a considerably large duvet blanket that is covering his face. Because he can't see he bumps in to Jonathan.*

JONATHAN: What are you doing with that?

MAX: Sorry, didn't see you there.

JONATHAN: *What are you doing with that?*

MAX: I was just getting the spare sheets from the closet-I'm setting up Gramps', well, the spare room for mom.

JONATHAN: Max, don't take this the wrong way but don't bother because she's not going to come- let alone stay the night.

*Jonathan turns away; Max drops the duvet and shoves Jonathan in the back.*

JONATHAN: hey, what are you-

MAX: Don't say things like that about Mom. Of course she's coming- she said she would. She said it yesterday, today she is coming for a visit!

JONATHAN: Max- please- She always says she's going to come, *Max*- but she never does... Don't you get it? We're wasting the whole day, no wait. We're wasting our whole lives waiting for someone who doesn't care about us.

MAX: She does care! Elsie and Caroline think she's coming. Why do you hate her so much?

JONATHAN: BECAUSE ALL SHE DOES IS LIE TO US.

*Enter Abby stage left.*

MAX: Don't say that! She does care! She cares a lot!

ABBY: What are you fighting about.

JONATHAN: SHE HATES US! SHE CAN'T EVEN STAND TO LOOK AT US!

ABBY: STOP YELLING!

MAX: Don't say things like that Jon. Stop it! You'll see today, when she comes, you'll see how wrong you are! She loves being with us, she just doesn't have time too- she's really busy.

JONATHAN: Yeah. With other men. Come on! Don't you see it! She slept around and then dumped Gramps with the consequences. That's what we all are! A drunken night and nine months of morning sickness, that's what we are to her.

*Abby starts hitting Jonathan's chest.*

ABBY: JONATHAN, Stop it. What are you saying?

*Abby continues to hit Jonathan harder and harder until she breaks down and starts crying and falls into his arms*

ABBY(*crying*): Don't say things like that Jon. We're more than that. We know it, even if she doesn't. Hasn't Elsie and Gramps taught you anything? Now come on! We've got stuff to do. If she does come-

MAX: And she will come-

ABBY: Do we want her seeing us like this? Jon? No.

*Abby picks up the big duvet and exits stage left.*

JONATHAN: You check- Max. If she even comes. You ask her when your birthday is. See if she can tell you.

*Jonathan exits stage right. Max exits Stage left as he leaves he turns the plant around so that the living side faces the audience.*

## Scene 6

**Two years in the past of present day, Gramps died one week earlier.  
8 pm, the night before the funeral.**

*All of the siblings enter, Elsie is carrying a Monopoly board and as Caroline enters from Stage left she turns plant so that the plant have the living side facing the audiences. The siblings sit around the table. They set up and play Monopoly, A few moments of playing monopoly before the dialog starts.*

MAX: Oh, oh! Look at that, Abby your in Jail.

ABBY: Don't look too happy Max

MAX: I'm just trying to have some fun.

ABBY: We're not supposed to be having fun.

MAX: I think that He would have wanted us to have a good time, Abby.

ABBY: Max, it's been a week. One week. We're not allowed to have a good time until we're ninety

MAX: Your just grumpy that your in jail. *Again.*

ABBY: *this isn't about monopoly, Max. Gramps died a week ago. I'm not angry that my little boot is in jail. I don't care about a little boot.*

JONATHAN: Abby its okay. Calm down.

ABBY: Its not about the game Jon, honest.

JONATHAN: I know. It's all right. Max, you roll next.

*Jonathan passes the dice to Max.*

CAROLINE: What do you think she's doing in there?

JONATHAN: Who? Say- has anyone watered Gramps' plant.

CAROLINE: Mom of course.

JONATHAN: The plant?

MAX: Crying?

CAROLINE: Maybe...

MAX: But we'd have heard

JONATHAN: The *plant?*

MAX: Maybe she's writing something for the ceremony tomorrow?

JONATHAN: Did you water the plant Elsie?

*Elsie shakes her head.*

JONATHAN: Has anyone watered the plant recently?

CAROLINE: Maybe- probably.

JONATHAN: Is anyone but Elsie listening to me?

ABBY: For what it's worth- I thought I smelled hair dye earlier. I heard you Jon- and If haven't watered it?

CAROLINE: Watered what? *Don't be crazy Abby*; she wouldn't be dying her hair now.

*Laughing, Elsie shakes her head. Sarah walks out from stage left drying her hair with a towel.*

SARAH: Sorry about the smell everyone but I was just so sick of my hair colour... Tom liked it and seeing as I'm not with Tom anymore: why keep it, right? Oh how *cute*, you're all playing monopoly. Oh, listen Elsie; I've got something to ask you.

*Elsie sits up to listen.*

SARAH: I don't know if I want to say something at dad's ceremony tomorrow... You know, we were never that close. You probably know him better than I did. Maybe you could say something for me?

*Elsie looks blankly at Sarah.*

SARAH: Oh, right. I wasn't thinking, of course *you* can't speak at the funeral- maybe Caroline you could say something in stead...

*Elsie turns to Caroline.*

CAROLINE: Are you sure, mom? I mean, you don't want too.... Yeah mom, sure anything for grandpa. And Elsie can help me, *she* knew Gramps the best.

SARAH: Don't be silly Caroline; You've got a much better way with words than Elsie, how can she help? Just figure it out please we need to say something. How would it look if his own family had nothing to say about the man- god, people might realize what a loser he really was.

*Shocked, the kids close up the monopoly game and all but Jonathan slowly exit stage left, looking at their feet.*

SARAH: Oh, don't stop on my account- really. Jonathan, don't stare at me like that. You make me nervous.

*Jonathan continues to give her a cold stare, Sarah absently drying her hair, walks over to the plant. She plays with it for a moment, picks off some leaves then switches the plant around so that the dead side faces the audience. She exits stage left.*

## Scene 7 Present day, 1:30 p.m.

**The phone rings, Jonathan answers.**

JONATHAN: Hello? Oh Hey Adam- thanks again for covering for Elsie today- no, is something wrong at work.... Well, no actually She's not here- she and Caroline are out shopping... Well they should be back any time now, really, they've been gone ah... an hour, no two. Yeah two hours. I tell her you –

CAROLINE (off set): Hey guys- we're back.

JONATHAN: Oh hang on there Adam, I think they just got in... Caroline?

*Enter Caroline and Elsie from stage right, both carrying several shopping bags.*

CAROLINE: Who is it?

JONATHAN (*Mouths the words excitedly*): Its Adam! What do I do?? I don't know-



CAROLINE (*mouths*): *talk to him!*

JONATHAN (*Mouths*): *No I don't want too (Into the phone)*: Hey, yeah No were still here. Ah well yeah what ...what is up. Ah yeah. One sec. (*To Elsie*): Do you have a sec...

CAROLINE: Well, this looks like it may take a while, why don't you just hand me those bags there, Elsie. I'll start putting things in the kitchen.

*Caroline takes the Bags from Elsie.*

*ELSIE: I think I should Help*

CAROLINE: Oh no- I think you should stay right here and see what Adam wants.

*Caroline turns to exit stage right.*

CAROLINE (*Mouths to Jonathan excitedly*): *Oh my god!*

*Caroline Exit stage right.*

JONATHAN: Yeah – alright- just-just a sec, I'll ask her. Elsie! Ok- Mr. Grondale was going to give you these tickets for tonight- there are two of them, but because Adam was there he gave them to him... Anyways Adam wants to take you- its for tonight.

*ELSIE: You know I can't go tonight.*

JONATHAN: Elsie, its for the Opera.

*ELSIE: Mom is coming*

JONATHAN: Elsie please, please don't do this! You've wanted to go to the opera since as long as I can remember! Do something for you tonight. Get dressed up, Let him take you out to dinner!

*ELSIE: Mom is coming*

JONATHAN: *Don't* do this. You think that things will be different tonight? Sarah takes away so much that belongs to you! Don't let her take away this too! You always talk about the opera. If not for the opera- this is Adam. He's so great! Elsie he can sign! He can talk to you. Not you through us, but to *you*. Stop shaking your head! He likes you *a lot*.

*ELSIE: I can't tonight.*

JONATHAN: You *can* tonight.

*Elsie shakes her head.*

JONATHAN: Adam- its ah, not going to work tonight- Our mother is coming- oh, well thanks for the thought. She really wants to go, but our mother is dying to see her. No problem- thanks again. Hey do you want to join us for dinner next week...? Wednesday? Sure. Yeah. That'd be great.

*Jonathan hangs up the phone.*

JONATHAN: Elsie- he's the single greatest person I've ever met who isn't related to me.

*ELSIE: Better than your friends?*

JONATHAN: Sure.

*ELSIE: I'm telling them you said that.*

JONATHAN: You can tell them all you like, but you know what... I think my friends would seriously understand why I think that the guy who likes my sister is the best person on the earth. You know, I think he honestly wants to give you everything that you deserve- and its about time you took someone up on that offer.

*Jonathan exits Stage Right, Elsie turns the plant around so that the living side faces the audience, she then sits down next to the armchair.*

## Scene 8

### 16 years in the past of Present day, Elsie is 5.

*Gramps enters stage left, caring a large storybook. He sits himself in the large chair.*

GRAMPS: Alright here we are. The Bee Man of Orn. Are you comfortable down there dear?

*Elsie nods her head vigorously.*

GRAMPS: Here we go. ' In the Ancient Country of Orn there live an old man who was called the bee-man, because his whole time was spent in the company of bees. He lives in a small hut which was nothing more than-'

*Someone knocks on the door off stage right.*

GRAMPS: Hang on, love. Here look at the picture while I see who that is.

*Gramps hands Elsie the book and exits stage right to answer the door..*

GRAMPS(*off-set*): Sarah what a surprise, what is that.

SARAH(*off-set*): Hi Dad. How's it going? Will you take her?

GRAMPS(*off-set*): Sarah what is this?

SARAH(*off-set*): A Baby what does it look like?

GRAMPS(*off-set*): When were you going to... when did you have her...

SARAH(*off-set*): She's nearly one. I call her Caroline. Will you take her?

GRAMPS(*off-set*): I think you'd better come in.

*Sarah enters the stage. She is carrying a bundle of blankets. Gramps follows her in. They sit at the kitchen table.*

GRAMPS: You'd better tell me what is going on Sarah.

SARAH: Dad, don't you want to hold her? Everyone tells me she's really cute.

GRAMPS: Give me the child, and then explain. You... *you said that this wouldn't ever happen*

SARAH: Well... I broke up with Jack, and Nick doesn't... Nick isn't a baby type person.

*Sarah hands the bundle to Gramps who takes it carefully.*

GRAMPS: Who's Jack and Nick.

SARAH: Jack's her daddy. He's an asshole. (*Changes tone*) I'm never going to talk to him again. Nick is perfect for me dad. He's so wonderful. But he doesn't want her.

Which is ok, I don't... I mean I can't really look after her. Jack was all over this family thing, I mean he was so whiny. I couldn't stand it any more.

GRAMPS: So that's it then. You're just going to drop them all off as they don't fit into your life anymore Sarah? What sort of ethic is that?

SARAH: Dad.. I'm not interested in your parenting lessons, they don't interest me.

GRAMPS: Well that's clear. So you're going back to Jack's now?

SARAH: No dad, to Nick's. I'm not with Jack anymore, you don't even listen! you're talking to be about parenting.

*Sarah gets ready to leave. Gramps takes a calming breath.*

GRAMPS: Aren't you going to say hello to your first daughter?

SARAH: Dad... What's the point? She can't say hello back.

*Sarah exits stage right. Gramps stands with the child and moves towards Elsie.*

GRAMPS: How are you honey?

*Elsie stretches out her arms towards Baby- Caroline. Gramps hands Caroline over to Elsie gently.*

GRAMPS: Be careful dear; support her head. A baby's head is very delicate.

*Elsie smiles and kisses the bundle.*

GRAMPS: She's very beautiful. Must have got her fathers genes, don't you think. Never you mind, love. Do you think that Caroline wants to hear about the Bee Man of Orn too?

*Elsie nods excitedly.*

GRAMPS: Well, bring her with us, we'll finish up in the spare room. That's where your old crib is... Caroline's Room.

*Elsie Exits stage left with the Baby. Gramps picks up the book, he walks to the plant and waters it, then turns the plant around so that the dead plant faces the audience. He exits stage left.*

**Scene 9**  
**Present day, 2 pm**

*Elise sneaks on to the stage (Stage left) and looks around suspiciously. Seeing no one she starts to sneak across the stage. Jonathan enters stage right, and walks casually up behind her.*

JONATHAN: *Hey there!*

*Elsie jumps and turns around.*

JONATHAN: See now, I've been trying to make sense of why my beautiful, charming, funny big sis would cheap out on the date of the century, and I've come to only one plausible conclusion- The reason that you don't want to date Adam is that your really married to Brad Pitt, and this is some weird Truman show deal where we're all on TV all the time.... No? not close, well okay what about the fact that *your secretly part of the CIA* (which, of course, stands for the Canadian Intelligence Agency) And Adam's a double agent working for Norway- and your selling him our country's deepest secrets....

*ELSIE: What sort of secrets.*

JONATHAN: Like that this country wasn't founded on beaver pelts obviously, but rather the wonderful pelts of the Canadian Giraffe, which has since then become extinct because over hunting. ....Duh.

*Elsie rolls her eyes.*

JONATHAN: Well fine if you don't want to tell him that you love him, I'll just have to call him up and date him myself.

*ELSIE: Do you prefer men now?*

JONATHAN: Oh I wouldn't need to change my sexuality he's so hot that he could be a girl, hands down.

*ELSIE: Will you call Abby so I can have some backup?*

JONATHAN: Yeah sure... Hey ABBY! Will you come in here and give your sister some support.

*Enter Max and Abby from stage left.*

ABBY: Whats going on?

*Elsie motions to Abby, who walks towards her. Elsie grabs Abby by the shoulder and holds her at arms length between herself and Jonathan.*

JONATHAN: I was just talking with Elsie about our favourite dream boy.

ABBY: Ohhh! Adam! He's *so* cute. Do you think he's too old for me?

MAX: I'm going to have to say they're right, Elsie... he's got the dreamiest blue eyes.

ABBY: Oh I know- and that smile, talk about drop dead.

JONATHAN: But if Elsie doesn't want him- being the second oldest in *this* room I proclaim him mine.

ABBY: No way Jon- I want him.

MAX: I'll fight you for him. If Elsie's sure she doesn't want him.

ABBY: I'd clean the toilet from now until I move out if I could have him!

JONATHAN: That's a tempting offer-

MAX: I Won't eat anymore of your chocolates!

JONATHAN: its *you!*

ABBY: Told you it wasn't me, Jon- you never listen to me.

JONATHAN: I'm sorry Abby.

ABBY: No worries, If I get captain pretty pants we'll call it even.

MAX: Captain pretty pants- I like that.

JONATHAN: Even you have to admit, Elsie. He did have very nice pants.

*Elsie shrugs in agreement.*

JONATHAN: Bet your going to get married.

ABBY: And have babies

*Elsie shakes her head, but is looking more uncomfortable than before.*

MAX: bet you are- you gonna have *so* many kids that you could start your own country!

**ELSIE: Stop it.**

MAX: Stop what? We only speak the *truth!*

ABBY: I think that the first hundred will call me auntie A and then rest will call me Abigail- nobody calls me Abigail, but it makes me feel important.

**ELSIE: It's not funny anymore.**

MAX: It makes you sound *old!* But then again- by the time Elsie on Baby 43 you *would* be old!- \_\_\_\_\_

**ELSIE: Its not funny anymore!**

JONATHAN: Elsie are you ok?

**ELSIE: No!**

JONATHAN: What's wrong?

**ELSIE: How could you think I'd be like that?**

JONATHAN: Be... be like what? What are you talking about?

**ELSIE: Like mum! How can you think I'd be like... mum?**

ABBY: Oh- Elsie... we're sorry, we-

JONATHAN: We didn't mean it like that Elsie.

ABBY: You're not like mum. You won't ever be like her.

MAX: Beside- mums gonna be around more anyways. I can feel it! I think the whole thing had to do with her and Gramps- they always seemed grumpy with each other- but she's coming today and its going to be great!

*Max's enthusiasm lightens the mood. The phone rings, and Elsie, Jonathan and Abby get very still, Max continues to smile, he jogs over to the phone and answers it cheerily.*

MAX: Hello? *Hey mom!*

*Everyone except Max turns away from the phone in unison.*

MAX: We're so excited for you to come, we got you the beer you like and we're going to get movies and we figured you'd want to spend the night too, so Abby and I made up Gramps' old bed

*Jonathan turns back to watch Max.*

MAX: and we got a the sheets all folded nicely and their the nice floral ones- the ones you said you liked last time you were here-

*Max notices Jonathan looking at him. Jonathan raises his eyebrows.*

MAX: And mum, I was just thinking... It's my birthday next week- right- any we were thinking maybe you could stay for the party...?

*Max holds the phone away from his ear in shock. He continues into the phone.*

MAX: Mum- my birthday isn't in a week- its months from now... how could you not know that?

*Lights come up on Sarah, she is sitting on a chair on the far stage right apron. She is holding phone. She and Max carry out their conversation on the phones.*

SARAH: Oh, right sorry dear- I was thinking of Abby!

*From Max's expression it is clear that Abby's birthday isn't in a week either.*

MAX: So why are you calling- we... well I thought that you would... be here already.

SARAH: Yeah- I'm sorry Max. I'm really busy you know-

MAX: Yeah. I know. You're always busy.

SARAH: That's right, gosh you're so smart.

MAX: Yeah- I'm getting A's in P.E.

SARAH: Well Max- that's so good. But look- I've got to run.

MAX: Yeah okay, so I'll see you soon then.

SARAH: Well *no*.

MAX: What? Why?

SARAH: Well like I was saying- I'm going to be busy tonight. Something has come up. I can't make it- you'll tell the others right?

MAX: Yeah- sure Mum.

*Sarah hangs up the phone at her end and the lights on her fade. Max continues talking into his phone.*

MAX: All right Mum. That- that sounds... *great!* Yeah Ok. I love you too! See you then.

*Max hangs up the phone and faces Abby, Jonathan and Elsie.*

MAX: She's gonna be late there is a HUGE accident on the highway... so she can't get down right now.

ABBY: But she *is* coming?

MAX(*awkwardly*): Yeah. Sure.

*Caroline enters from stage right.*

CAROLINE: Who called?

JONATHAN: Mum.

CAROLINE: What did she say- she's still coming right? She didn't cancel?

MAX: No. No, she's coming.

CAROLINE(*relieved*): Oh that's great- why'd she call.

MAX: Uh. She's late. Why- why don't we play monopoly while we wait for her- she said she could be very late- it was a really big accident. Really big. Huge even.

JONATHAN(*uncomfortably*): Yeah, I could play some monopoly.

ABBY: Sounds good to me.

*The family moves to the table and Abby exits stage left and enters again with the monopoly board. They sit around the table and set up the Game. Music comes up as they continue to play. Eventually Abby falls asleep on the table. Later Caroline wakes up Abby and together they walk off stage left. Later Elsie also goes to bed, waves good night and exits stage left. The music fades.*

MAX: Okay, we'll only roll for them once more around the Board.

*Jonathan rolls and moves a piece.*

MAX: So the rule is that unless they ask you for the rent you don't have to pay it right?

JONATHAN (*whisper*): Elsie, he landed on Illinois... are you going to collect? (*beat*) I don't think she cares, don't bother paying. Pass them here-

*Max rolls and moves.*

MAX: Abby owes me \$76 dollars.

*Max starts to count cash from Abby's pile.*

JONATHAN: Max its, like, four in the morning I think we should-

MAX: And what? Leave you here with all the money, not in your life.

JONATHAN: Max...

MAX: What- it's Caroline's roll- go already.

JONATHAN: I'm sorry that she didn't come.

MAX: It's not your fault, Jon.

JONATHAN: Max?

MAX: Yeah.

JONATHAN: What did she really say on the phone?

MAX: That she loves us and she wished more than anything she could be with us.

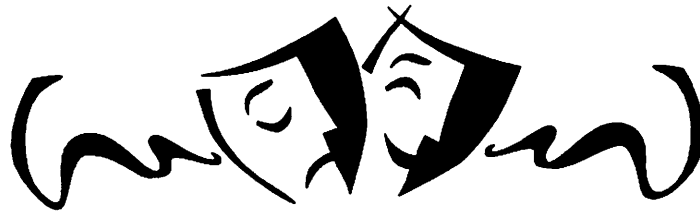
JONATHAN: Right. Of course. She's always saying that isn't she.

MAX: Yup.

*Music fades in, Jonathan and Max continue to play. The lights fade and so does the music. The curtains close and Sarah walks to center apron, a spot come up on her. She moves like she is about to say something, then thinks better of it. It takes a moment for her to compose her self, when she is ready she speaks.*

SARAH: You'll have to excuse me- I... I don't get the chance to talk- like this- often.... ever. People rarely get the chance to explain themselves- and least of all the people who've made so many bad choices. I mean. Year 15 alone I made enough bad choices to last me a life time- last other people their lifetimes. But I was grown up right? The big one five! *I could handle a baby.* But I was wrong. Who isn't wrong at 15? I didn't even finish high school and they were telling me I'd need to know another language just to communicate with her? I couldn't handle that! And they just kept coming- Caroline and Jon right after- I couldn't raise them! They- they needed a family and I wasn't a family. The life I was leading is not a place and mother would want her children to be around. So I made a choice- probably the only good choice I've ever made. Understand that they *had* to *hate* me. So I created reasons to hate me. I said awful things, I forgot things I should have remembered and I never show up when I say I will. But its okay, because I *know* that they are *happy* with out me, and that in my absence they all will grow up anyways.





*Beauty*  
By  
*Langley Fine Arts Ensemble*

Caution: Professionals and amateurs are hereby warned that "Beauty" by Beauty Drama Ensemble is subject to royalty. It is protected under Copyright Law. Inquiries regarding performance rights and royalties should be directed to Lindsay Bleackley at 9096 Trattle Rd. Fort Langley, B.C. V1M 2S6. The fee for a single production of this play will cost \$25.00.

## **BEAUTY SCRIPT**

### Opening – as audience enters.

*Cast members are dressed as Make-up sales representatives. They mingle with crowd and try to 'sell' their various products (lipstick, perfume, eye cream). Their voices grow with intensity.*

### **(House Lights to Half)**

*A young girl enters from stage right and walks to a light centre stage.*

Girl: "Excuse me?"

*The sales reps rush the stage and swarm the girl. There is a commotion. When they step away, the young girl is disheveled – her hair is messed, she has lipstick and blue eye shadow all over her face. The sales reps exit. The young girl is left centre stage by herself, shocked.*

Girl: "But - I just wanted to be beautiful."

### **(BLACKOUT)**

(Title of the show, "**BEAUTY**", appears on the screen).

### **(Lights Up)**

### SCENE – News Anchor

Good evening and welcome to a special edition of Dangerous Diets. This evening we will uncover why society's distorted perception of beauty is encouraging young women to adopt unhealthy eating habits. Tonight's story starts with early signs of Bulimia. (*turns to 'other camera'*) Bulimia often starts when a person hears others talking about eating anything and as much as they want, but without ever gaining a pound! It sounds too good to be true ... and, unfortunately, it is. By knowing these symptoms you can help your daughter or loved one and prevent this sickness.

The first symptom involves secrecy surrounding eating and the time period afterwards. This includes frequent trips to the bathroom after meals, signs and smells of vomiting. In further, there may be odd eating behaviors; such as avoiding eating with others, skipping meals, and drinking excessive amounts of diet drinks. (*turns back to 'other camera'*)

After the break we have shocking statistics concerning the early age these diets start. Could it be your daughter? We will also have answers as to why **THERE IS AN EYELASH IN MY EYE - CINDY!!!!**

What have I said time after time?? I can't handle this anymore!! I need make up on my face NOW CINDY!! Can you do anything right this morning? Look - I'm sorry. I am having a rough week. It's nothing big...(starts to cry)

Cindy: what's wrong?

It's just that my boyfriend broke up with me last night and I don't know why... actually I do know why - it's because I'm FAT right? God I hate my job.

Director: okay guys we're back on in 5, 4, 3...

Anchor: Cindy Cindy stop! Stop!!! What do you know about make up!! GOD what do you know about beauty anyway!!

Director: Uh let's roll another commercial. Tammy – take a break and we'll re-shoot after lunch.

*(Stage clears as we hear a voice over)*

**VOICE:** We now bring you a paid presentation from our sponsors.

*Lights up on down stage right.*

**SCENE – Infomercial: 2 adult television salespeople.**

1: Thanks Tammy Barbara! I have to agree with what she says about teenagers and their obsessions with beauty.

2: Me too.

1: But no need to worry!

2: That's right Penelope. Today we are going to show you a new eight step solution to all your beauty problems.

1: And I know what you're thinking. Eight steps seem like an awful lot. But really, it is quite quick and simple!

2: Absolutely. And your time and money are worth it.

Both: Trust us!

1: With this eight step solution, you'll be beautiful ALL the time.

2: All the time!

1: All your worries will be gone!

2: No more pimples!

1: No more under eye circles!

2: No more pesky love handles!

1: No more stray hairs!

Both: No More Ugly!

2: And how can they get this hot new product?

1: It's simple. Just call 1-800-no-more-ugly.

2: And if you call within the next 10 minutes, you will receive our clay mask absolutely free!

1: That's right!

2: You don't want to be the ugly one in the bunch do you?

1: You don't want to be the one they call "fat" do you?

Both: Nobody wants that!

2: But don't take our word! Hear it right form our satisfied customers.

1: Please welcome Jane.

*(In walks a girl and joins the ladies)*

Jane, what is it you don't like about yourself?

GIRL: Well –

1: Where do you start, right? Jane, with this program you *will* achieve beauty. Later in the program, we'll visit with Jane again to see her progress.

2: You'll see just how amazing our eight step program has been for her.

1: And how it can work for you! So what are you doing sitting on the couch? Call 1-800-no-more-ugly!

Both: Don't you want to be beautiful??

**SLIDE "STEP #1 – CLEANSE" (all slides are accompanied by soothing spa music.)**

**SCENE – Morning Ritual Documentary**

**PROFESSOR:** Good evening ladies and gentleman! Tonight I will be speaking to you about the female species and the first step to attaining beauty.

*(Enter Zombies)*

See here the female species in her morning state. As you can plainly see this state is repulsively unattractive. For her to be able to successfully continue in her day, she must obviously clean up her look and become some what beautiful.

*(Enter Face Washers)*

There are many steps that one must go through to obtain beauty but first involves starting with a clean slate. See how they pop and pick, pry and pluck but are not deterred by any oozing that may occur. Watch as they exfoliate, rinse and tone in order to achieve a clean slate. VOILA, the caterpillar is now ready to begin its transformation into the butterfly.

*The Face washers leave. The Zombies eye one another, then move forward to begin the face washing ritual.*

Zombie: *(to another)* Wow! You look gorgeous!

*All Zombies perk up and look 'presentable' – they blow a kiss to the audience as they leave.*

**SLIDE “STEP #2 – PURIFY”**

**SCENE – The Clique – 2 high school teenagers.**

1: Suzy, now that we've accepted you into our clique...  
2: ...we feel like there's a few things you don't quite understand yet.  
1: But don't worry – we know all about it...  
2: ...and we're here to guide you in every way possible.  
1: First of all,  
Both: *Beauty is everything.*  
2: But it's not you.  
1: It's not a flower.  
2: It's not a song.  
1: It's not a sunrise.  
2: It's not a baby.  
1: 'Cause babies make you fat and that is -  
Both: *NOT beautiful.*  
1: So let's just get this straight –  
Both: *Beauty is everything.*  
1: It's perfection.  
2: It's flawlessness.  
1: It's the cover of a magazine.

2: It's not like they'd put an ugly person on the cover of a magazine!

1: Why would you pay money to see an ugly person?

2: I could get that in the computer lab for free!

1: Beauty is following the crowd. Why think for your self...

2:...when others can think for you!

Both: You're so lucky you have us to guide you!

1: So here's what you're going to have to do.

2: It's going to take a lot of

1: Tweezing

2: whitening

1: dieting

2: styling

1: tanning

2: covering

Both: It's going to take a lot of money.

1: But it's gonna be so worth it!

2: What else does she have to know?

1: There should be a mirror on you 24/7.

2: Cosmopolitan is the bible!

1: Hallelujah!

Both: And Johnny is off limits! Trust me. I've been there.

1: Yeah but it didn't really work out.

2: For you.

1: What are you talking about?

2: I think you know what I'm talking about.

1: I think you know I'm gonna punch you right in the –

2: HE'S MINE!

1: See – isn't this wonderful?

2: Don't you wanna be like us?

1: Don't you wanna be JUST like us?

2: We're happy.

1: We're beautiful.

2: And we're worth it.

1: Dammit we're worth it!

2: So you should go home.

1: Think about what we said.

2: And get plenty of beauty sleep.

1: Oh and tell your mom to stop packing your lunch.

2: We don't eat lunch.

1: We don't eat.

2: Period.

1: Love ya!

2: See you tomorrow!

*As the two walk off stage right, a line of girls with chairs enters in the same style from stage left.*

## SCENE – Food Battle: The Pure vs. The Gluttons.

This scene is done almost entirely in mime, with the exception of the odd grunt or choral phrase.

The Pure enter and a choreographed lunchtime ritual proceeds. They share a rice cake, they crunch a carrot and they sip their water, all with proper manners. They are visibly ‘stuffed’ at the end of it.

The Gluttons enter and disrupt the peace of The Pure. They are grossly eating bags of chips and making rude noises.

The Pure look disgusted. They “bite their carrots” at the Gluttons, thus challenging them to a duel.

Two Gluttons come forward and chug cans of pop.

The Pure snap their celery at The Gluttons.

Two Gluttons scarf back tubes of mayonnaise.

The Pure whisper with one another, then throw their celery at the Gluttons.

The Gluttons retaliate with three that squirt whip cream into their mouths.

The Gluttons begin to gloat and laugh, and finally leave.

The Pure pack up and leave in their synchronized way, except for one.

She remains onstage and looks around, checking that she is alone. When she feels that no one is watching, she runs to an empty chip bag on the floor, rips it open, and starts to lick the bag.

Another Pure enters, clears her throat, and looks on with disgust.

The first Pure takes the chip bag and runs offstage.

## SLIDE STEP #3 – “CONCEAL”

### SCENE – MASK SCHOOL

Scene done in masks that are painted with ‘make up’.

*A school bell rings, and enter students wearing masks. They are all proper and well made up.*

**OFFSTAGE:** Jasmine! You forgot your lunch!

**Jasmine:** I can’t mom! I’m already late! Bye!

*Jasmine runs into the hallway (without mask) and trips centrestage. Her books go flying and everyone stares. When they realize that she is not wearing her mask, they are all shocked. Whispers, comments, staring, etc. A student quickly runs to the office (Downstage right) and whispers to the principal.*

**P:** Would Jasmine Polky please report to the principal’s office immediately.

*Jasmine enters the Principal’s office. She is also wearing a mask..*

**P:** Hello there Jasmine. Just as I had been informed. This is unacceptable. You know, here at Yorkshire we have standards. Now today, we did not meet those standards, did we?

J: I'm sorry...I completely forgot...

P: Shhh. Everyone is busy in the morning Jasmine. Yet every other girl in the school managed to get their face on. With a smile, I might add. But you...it's always you. This is the third time this month Ms. Polky. And to be quite frank, I am sick and tired of it. You know here at Yorkshire it is mandatory to wear your face every day. You wouldn't want to be different, now would you?

J: I am SO sorry. I slept in, so I was already late, and then I just forgot.

P: When you walk in that door in the morning without your face, I feel disrespect. Piles and piles of disrespect being launched at the Yorkshire face. This is not a good feeling Ms. Polky.

J: I am not trying to dis –

P: Now you know that concealing your individual features is an important task which must be done. We want our school to be represented with beauty. And being different, well that is not the type of beauty we are looking for. And when you constantly forget to apply your face, well you are just another moose in the way of the school's success. Now Ms. Polky, a moose can make the decision to get out of the way and join the herd, or stand in the headlights and be another stain on the windshield. It's your choice Ms. Polky. I suggest you choose wisely. Thank you. That is all.

*Jasmine gets up to leave.*

P: Go see Ms. Jebrier for a spare face.

*Jasmine exits.*

*The Principal grabs her purse, leaves the office, and walks across the stage. She stops at centre, checks her watch, and then swings her purse when she realizes it's lunchtime. As she does this, the song "Isn't she Lovely" by Stevie Wonder comes on...as she exits, a choreographed routine with purses begins.*

**SCENE: PURSE DANCE – “Isn't She Lovely”**

**SLIDE STEP #4 – “ENHANCE”**

**SCENE – CHANGEROOM**

Lindsay- So...how are ya doing in there?

Madison- Great. Just great. In fact, I think I uh...may need a size smaller. How about you?

Lindsay- Yeah, yeah me too ha... a size smaller

*(both look out the dressing room door and smile at each other and laugh awkwardly)*



Madison- Hey...you with the head set, me and my uh friend both need a size smaller. Actually maybe 2 sizes smaller in these jeans...these ones right here.

Lindsay- Yea, definitely smaller.

*( motion to the clerk for bigger jeans while they think the other isn't looking)*

Sales Lady- Ohhhhh riiiiiiight I gotcha (winks)

Lindsay: Me and Madison have been best friends forever. We like the same music we like the same movies hell we even have the same birthday. Sometimes I even feel like we're the same person, except in situations like this one. Look at her! Perfect body with curves in all the right places, great smile and the most perfect complexion ever. She is beyond compare, especially when compared to me. I mean every time she says "hey lets go to the mall" I feel sick because we go and shop and everything fits her flawlessly. I don't even stand a chance to be as gorgeous as her. I mean come on...

Madison: ...First look at me and then look at her. Can you see how I might feel. She is perfect, I don't even compare to her, she is skinny, tall, her hair is always soft and shiny. Not to mention the perfect shade of strawberry. All the boys stare at her and she doesn't notice. I bet she doesn't even try. She probably just wakes up and walks out the door while I try so hard to look like she does and what do I get? Not even a glance. I don't blame her or the boys. Come on, what do I have to offer? A personality? Ha. And I mean she is my best friend and always will be.

Together: But I just feel I will never live up to her.

**Transition – as the girls push off the change room divider, a mom rushes onstage.**

## **SCENE – MEDDLING PAGEANT MOMS**

*Mom #1 enters by herself with a chair and begins to set up her area.*

M1: Come on honey, stop lagging behind! I need A LOT of time to get you ready!  
*(yells offstage, then daughter enters slowly, not in as much of a panic).*

D1: Ah mom it's fine. I already put some makeup on at home.

M1: Ugh. That is not enough. That is more like a pre-coat.

D1: Right. Sorry. I forgot.

**FREEZE**

*Daughter 2 enters first, dragging her mom in. Mom 2 carries the chair.*

D2: Hurry up mom! Pick up the pace! We're already late. Look – we aren't even the first ones here this time!

M2: Don't worry about it! Everything will be fine. We have plenty of time and you're already pretty much ready to go

D2: Ready?? Mom I still have to finish my makeup, curl my hair, and put on my false eyelashes. Mom!!! Where are my eyelashes??!?!?

M2: Sweetheart...you look so good already. Do you really think you need to go to all this effort to change yourself? If you win, don't you want to look like yourself?

*(daughter realizes mom is right, but doesn't want to admit it)*

D2: But I won't win looking like myself. *(she starts to get ready in a rush).*

*Other pair unfreeze – both pairs are getting ready now..*

M2: Do you need any help?

D2: NO! I know how to do this. I've only been doing it since forever on my own thanks to you. *(looks over at other pair).* Look at that mom.

M2: I would do that too, but I just don't think you need that much help to look beautiful. You do that already when you just smile.

*Mom 2 sits and waits....watching her daughter. Mom 1 is spraying her daughters hair for a long time, and fluffing it up/backcombing it..*

M1: Oh! *(looks into bag, panicked)* We need more hairspray! I can't believe I forgot to pack the extra hairspray.

D1: It's ok mom. I'm sure it looks good. It'll be fine.

M1: No, it won't be fine. You can't win a pageant without hairspray. There's no way I want your hair boucin' all over the place. *(she sees hairspray over on the other side).*

D1: I'm sure we can just borrow some if it's that big of a deal. *(goes to other mom)* Excuse me, but do you have any hairspray?

*As she is asking, Mom1 sneaks in behind and steals it from them.*

M2: Oh sure! I'll just grab it.

*She looks for her hairspray and can't find it.*

M2: I found our extra hairspray baby! I guess it was in the front pocket after all! Who knew?

D2: MOM! WHERE is my hairspray??? I need it or else my hair will be totally flat and deflated!!!

M2: Ok, well it must be around here somewhere. (*goes over to other mom*) Excuse me, but could my daughter please borrow your hairspray?

M1: OUR hairspray? No you cannot. This is a competition and you need to come prepared!

D2: Great. Now I'm never going to win!! This is all your fault.

FREEZE

BOTH: My mom entered me into a beauty pageant when I was 6 years old. She told me I was beautiful

- 1) after two hours of primping
- 2) just the way I was – without any help at all.

She told me I was going to win

- 1) as if my life depended on it
- 2) as if it didn't matter either way.

She bought me a nice dress

- 1) I wasn't comfortable. It was too –
- 2) It should have been tighter.

I didn't actually win it.

- 1) she blames me
- 2) I blame her

I remember being compared to other girls Whether I was

- 1) tall enough
- 2) skinny enough
- 1) had the right posture
- 2) the right smile
- 1) the right eyes
- 2) the right hair

How perfect I was. As I've gone through life

- 1) school
- 2) work

I see the same comparisons and pressures in society

- 1) and I always feel the need to add another layer or enhance what I was born with.
- 2) and I remember my mom always saying, "makeup may be seen across the room, but beauty is within."

- 1) I never go anywhere without makeup on
- 2) I begin to see past all the accessories and fakeness of layers.

Both: Then I can see real beauty.

*Lights Fade – video segment begins.*

**SCENE – DATE TIME**

*This scene is filmed and uses time lapse editing to speed up certain sections.*

*Split screen. On one side, Laura is sitting on bed reading magazine waiting for a phone call. On the other side, Gabe is sitting on a couch watching TV. Gabe calls, she jumps to the phone.*

**Laura – Hey babe!!!!**

**Gabe–** Uh, hey. So I was talking to Mark and I think we should just go for dinner and meet them at the movie. Sound good?

**Laura–** Yah that’s great!

**Gabe –** Pick you up in 20?

**Laura –** Give me half an hour?

**Gabe –** K, see you then.

*TIME LAPSE: Laura straightens hair, picks out an outfit – see clothes flying everywhere – gets dressed, does make up, phone rings. Gabe is lounging on couch the whole time still watching TV and sprays cologne (axe or something...) realizes the time then he calls.*

**Gabe –** Are you ready?

**Laura –** Are you here?!?!?

**Gabe –** No, no but I am on my way and I was just thinking, it’s kinda late now, lets just stay in. I will bring a movie over.

**Laura –** Oh, ok sure-that sounds good too, be here in 20 minutes?

**Gabe -** 20???? *(realizes it gives him more time to watch TV)* Alright.

*TIME LAPSE: Laura is flustered. She just got all ready now she has to dress down and look ‘comfy’ and ‘relaxed’. Finds new outfit – rummage through clothes, end up all over the floor- removes and re-applies makeup. Gabe sits on couch watching TV, receives a short phone call or text message and calls. Laura finishes getting ready and tidying up when phone rings.*

**Laura** - hello?

**Gabe** – Hey, so Mark just text/phoned me and they are going out to the club in a bit. Why don't we do that with them? We are going downtown so let's leave in 15 minutes?

**Laura** – Right, that will be fun. *(close up of facial expression, she is getting PISSED!!)* Give me 25 minutes??

**Gabe** – Yah yah that's good *(he leans back to relax and watch tv)*

*TIMJE LAPSE: Laura slams down the phone and rushes to dig through the clothes on her floor. Finds an outfit, catches herself in the mirror, books it to bathroom. Curls her hair while doing her make-up and changes to new outfit and puts on perfume. Gabe sniffs his pits, changes his shirt and sprays more cologne till he smells better. He waits until the last minute to get her while she is still getting ready.*

*SWITCH TO ONE SCREEN PLAYING ON THE STAGE.*

*Gabe knocks on the door and Laura answers.*

**Laura** - Ok I am ready! Lets go. *(big smile)*

**Gabe** – Actually, Mark called me while I was on my way and he wasn't feeling good, got food poisoning I guess. Lets just stay in tonight *(as he walks in the door past Laura)*

**Laura** – Perfect *(huge fake smile as he walks past, then pissed after he passes her and slams the door)*

## SLIDE STEP #5 – “UPDATE”

### SCENE - America's Next Top Model

*(Screen in center stage, lights behind it creating shadow; contestants wait behind)*

**TYRA:** Welcome to the series finale of America's Next Top Model. I'm Tyra Banks. As you may well know our world's perception of beauty has been updated through the ages. On last week's episode we asked the ladies to choose a time period that they thought best represented ultimate beauty.

Now let's bring out the ladies.

*(Contestants come out one by one down the "runway")*

**TYRA:**

Wow! Uga and Cawa sure 'rock' the runway in their Cavewomen fashions! Looking Twiggy ladies!

And 'All the World's a stage' when it comes to Victoria and Diane in the Elizabethan era. I say let them eat cake – just not too much!

Here we have Roxie and Velma bringing some razzle-dazzle to the runway with their 1920's charm. Keep on flapping ladies!

Sandy and Jan make the perfect pair of Pink Ladies. Watch out! They are like Greased Lightening!

Let's welcome Justine and Chantal modeling the style of the 1960's. You look fabulous! Break me off a 'peace' of that!

Karen-Lynn and Genevieve sure know how to move! Look at how they disco dance down the runway. Is it hot in here, or am I coming down with a case of Saturday night Fever?

Watch out! Olivia and Tiffany are going to get physical with the 1980's! Their look will spin you right round, baby, right round!

And finally, here come Janet and Grace with their gnarley nineties style! These girls are, like, totally as tight as their, like, tights!

Good evening ladies. You have all worked very hard to get this far. You've been chosen out of millions of girls to show off your talent and beauty. Now we are down to the final group of girls and only one can be on top. We will now move to our two finalists, and hear the question and answer segment. Would Ms. Grace please step forward.

*Grace wearing the nineties outfit steps forward.*

In a recent survey, it was found that 1/5 of Americans cannot locate the U.S on a map. Why do you think that is?"

**GRACE:** (spoon on Miss Teen USA) I personally beleive that U.s Americans are unable to do so because some people in our nation don't have maps... and I beleive that our education, like South Africa and the Iraq everywhere, like such as, I believe that our nation over here! ...should help the U.S or should help South America and should help the Iraq and the Asian countries, so we can help built up our future... (for our children)."

**TYRA:** Thank you. Would Ms. Diane please step forward.  
*Diane wearing Elizabethan steps forward.*

**TYRA:** Diane, Who do you prefer? Lindsay Lohan, Nicole Richie or Paris Hilton?"

**DIANE:** Well I wouldn't say they're my role models, but I would have to say Paris Hilton, because in the end, she knew what was right.

**TYRA:** Thank you ladies. I only have 1 photo in my hand. This photo represents elegance in every form, and somebody who I believe has truly updated the world's perception of beauty. This photo represents the girl who will be America's Next Top Model.

(They all pause, awaiting the big news)

**TYRA:** Me! None of you represent beauty because beauty needs to be updated. And I represent the 21st CENTURY.

(Tyra stands with a huge fake smile, as the contestants make angry remarks)

CONTESTANTS: What, bitch, gasps, not fair ETC.

CONTESTANT: GET HER!

(Tyra screams and runs offstage. The girls chase after her in a frenzy.  
She runs behind cyc, lights are behind. Big fight, dogpile – tableaux in shadow)

Theme SONG PLAYS

**SCENE – TIME LAPSE MAKEOVER (filmed)** A look at different images of beauty and the stereotypes that accompany them. Filmed with music background.

**SLIDE STEP # – “TRIM”**

**SCENE – Mother & Daughter**

*A mother and daughter sit in their housecoats looking through magazines.*

Mom: So honey, are you excited to start picking out your prom dress?

D: Sure mom, I guess about as excited as I could be...

M: Okay, well I picked out some magazines for us to look at. (*hands one to her*) Here you go honey.

D: Sweet...

M: Oh my goodness! Would you look at this lovely number right here!

D: Mom?

M: Yesssss?

D: That looks like a paper bag.

M: But it's perfect for covering certain things up.

D: Mom, I'm not going to my prom dressed like a nun.

M: Woah! It's ok. No need to raise your voice at me honey. Just keep looking.

D: OH! How about this one!?

M: Not with your calves honey. (*continues flipping through*)

D: OMG! This one looks perfect!

M: Oh honey, that is for girls *with* boobies.

*Daughter looks down at her chest.*

D: Oh.

*Mom pats her daughter on the lap and prepares for a 'talk'.*

M: Sweetie...remember that talk we had last week?

D: Yeah.

M: About the perfect body?

D: Yes, how I don't have one and I never will. You're either born with it or you aren't.

M: Right. So we need to find a dress to cater to all of this (*motions to her daughter*).

D: Fine. It's just hard to find a dress that's not made for the perfect body.

M: Well, we can't all look like Beyonce. If I could make you perfect, I would.

D: Thanks. Could we finish this tomorrow? I'm gonna go to bed.

M: Sure honey. Good night. *Kisses daughter on the forehead.*

*Daughter flips through some more magazines.*

D: This is so hard. Why can't I just be like the women in Hollywood?  
(Hollywood...Hollywood...Hollywood...echoes off)

***SURGERY NIGHTMERE SEQUENCE*** – choreographed to the song “Hollywood” by Beyonce and Jay Z.

*The young girl is in a surgery room with 15 doctors, and her mother is the surgeon. She is trying to make her daughter perfect.*

*Song ends and the young girl is lying on the table/bed, sleeping. She hears her mother say:*



**VOICE OVER MOM:** "The dress will fit you now"

*Girl wakes up, and looks behind her to see the surgeons all standing like Barbie dolls. She screams.*

**BLACKOUT.**

**SLIDE STEP #7 – "TRANSFORM"**

**SCENE – MONOLOGUE: "BARBIE"**

1959. Do you know what happened in that year? Barbie. Barbie was introduced to the world, and her grip on little girls began. This 29-15-27 female was playful, perky and perfect; she was the ideal for girls everywhere. The problem was, and still is, that she is nothing close to realistic. Girls, do you remember playing with her? Her hair never seemed to be quite right and there was always something wrong with her Velcro clothes and when Ken was around she was NEVER beautiful enough.

We put our Barbies through living hell, changing her hair sometimes three times in one play session. And her clothes were almost always in the process of being altered. But the worst part about Barbie, is that girls though she was realistic. I bet if you think back really hard you remember looking at her and thinking some day.....someday. Only then we grew up and realized that it is actually physically impossible to be Barbie. If Barbie was alive her waist would be so small that she would have no room for ribs, or intestines for that matter. Yes, I guess machines could breathe for her and digest her food for her, but what about standing? Her boobs are so big in proportion to her tiny hips that she couldn't support her own weight. Maybe her small hips are also to blame for the lack of children between her and Ken. She would be so unhealthy that it wouldn't be physically possible to reproduce.

So there's Barbie. The unrealistic, cheap, plastic, pink loving, perfect complexioned, constantly standing, Ken loving, but always fashionable DOLL. She is a doll and she will always be a doll, never a person, so we all need to stop striving for Barbie.

**SCENE – "REFLECTIONS" Choral Piece**

**Song**

*6 girls speaking. One girl centre stage, looking in a mirror. We see her lower legs. As they each speak their first line one after the other, they continue to rant in a stage whisper. Words in capitals are CHORAL – all cast.*

- 1: Another zit
- 2: My stupid hair
- 3: Flat chest
- 4: Wide hips
- 5: Waist too big

MY

*(unison)*

- 1: arms are
- 2: nose is
- 3: ears are
- 4: teeth are
- 5: thighs are
- 6: waist is

TOO BIG

MY

*(unison)*

- 1: boobs are
- 2: smile is
- 3: eyes are
- 4: hair is
- 5: lips are
- 6: eyelashes are

TOO SMALL

5: I was watching tv the other day, and I realized that I have NO booty.

1: In the bathroom at school I realized how thin my hair is.

3: Why can't my body just be

PERFECT

*ALL – ranting about body parts*

4: Why can't I be like everyone else?

WHY CAN'T I BE PERFECT?

Mirror Girl: Why do I depend on this mirror? This object that has let me down every day, yet I treat it as a precious friend. It is just a mirror. It is not who I really am.

2: Reflecting an image that can be interpreted

IN ANY WAY

6: I look to this object to see who I am.

Mirror Girl: But I never find an answer. I just find myself wanting...

MG/5/6: wanting...

ALL: wanting...

Mirror girl: ...to be perfect.

**SCENE - TRANSFORM!!!**

G=normal girls

PG=popular girls

G4=MAIN GIRL

G1: Do you guys want to come over on Saturday? My mom said I could have you guys over to watch a movie if I wanted.

G2: What movie?

G1: I dunno, is there anything you want to rent?

G2: I'm not sure, I don't know what's out.

G3: We could just figure it out when we go to the movie store.

G4: Is it a sleepover again, or do we need to get picked up?

G1: Do you remember a Saturday when we haven't had a sleepover?

G4: I dunno, I was just wondering.

G2: Ew, look at them. How can people wear that much makeup? I wonder if they can actually feel their faces with all that cover up on.

G4: I wonder what they actually look like?

G2: I don't understand how people can want to be friends with them.

**MONOLOGUE:**

I do. They're popular, they're beautiful, they get all the boys and they have parties. Not stupid sleepovers. Don't get me wrong - in the past having sleepovers with the girls was a lot of fun, but we're seniors now. I think its time we grew out of that tradition and started acting more our age.

G2: Oh guys! I thought of a movie we can watch tomorrow!

G3: No.

G2: But-

G3: No.

G2: Fine.

G3: I refuse to watch "The Bridge to Terabithia" ever again.

*G4 Enters*

G1: Woah, what are you wearing?

G4: What do you mean?

G3: Why are you wearing make-up?

G4: I dunno, just thought I'd try something new.

G1: But you hate make-up. You think it's completely fake.

G4: No I don't.

G2: Well you *did*.

G4: Anyways, what does it matter to you?

G2: Well, you look kind of dumb.

G4: What?

G1: It's just, different...

G3: You're different.

G4: No I'm not, I'm the same person I was a few days ago when we made plans for another stupid sleepover.

G3: No, you're not the same person. It feels like you're transforming into one of them.

G1: And what do you mean '*another stupid sleepover*'? You use to have fun with us.

G4: How am I turning into one of them? You're just jealous.

G2: Suzie-

G4: No. Whatever. Count me out on Saturday.

G1: What else do you have to do Suzie? You think they're ever going to actually hang out with you?

G4: I don't know, but I'm not sitting on your floor watching a stupid movie again.

#### MONOLOGUE

I knew they wouldn't understand! What is so wrong with trying to look pretty? They're just getting nervous because I'm starting to get noticed by the popular girls and they don't want to be left alone. I knew they couldn't just be happy for me...but all that doesn't matter. I've got everything I want.

PG1: So are you guys all up for coming over Saturday? My parents are going on some dumb retreat, so I'm definitely having another party.

PG2: As long as John doesn't hit on me again.

PG3: But that was funny.

PG2: Yeah, for you guys.

PG1: Anyways, it's going to start at 10. Make sure you're there at 8 though so we can all get ready.

PG3: What are you going to do with your hair?

PG1: I dunno, probably straighten it.

PG2: (to G4) What should we do with Cindy's hair?

G4: It's Suzie-

PG1: Do not talk unless you are spoken to.

G4: But-

PG1: Shut up. As I was saying, I really don't think there's anything we can do to fix that mop sitting on her head.

PG3: Anyways.

PG2: Yeah I have to go now. I shouldn't keep Adam waiting.

PG3: You have biology next block.

PG2: Not today. So I'll see you at 8 on Saturday at Bianca's house Cindy.

PG1: Oh, do you know where I live? (long pause) You can talk now.

G4: Oh, sorry. Um yeah I know where you live.

PG1: Ok, make sure you aren't late!

*(G4 exits, but is still able to hear the popular girls talking.)*

PG3: Oh my god.

PG2: It was so hard to keep a straight face that whole time. I can't believe she fell for that.

PG1: As if we'd actually invite an ugly chick to our party. She's definitely not ready. I just thought she might try a little harder if she wanted to hang out with us. Maybe next time.

#### MONOLOGUE

But...I thought they had finally accepted me. I completely transformed myself. I changed who I was, treated my friends like crap and then abandoned them. All for those girls...those fake, superficial girls. They never intended on being my friend. I thought I was chasing after happiness when I already had it. Now I have nothing.

#### SLIDE STEP #8 – “RESTRAIN”

#### SCENE – Family Dinner (filmed – “Leave it to Beaver” style)

*Mom is setting the table for a hearty meal, when Dad enters*

Dad: Honey, I'm home! What is that delicious smell filling my nostrils?

*Dad puts coat and hat on the coat rack*

Kids: We're having mom's specialty!

*The 2 children enter with many bags of fast food.. It's clear the mother isn't making the meal tonight. The son is carrying one bag, while the daughter is barely visible because she is holding lots.*

Dad: Look at those muscles on my strappin' lad. Atta boy son! Are you ready for wrestling tryouts tomorrow?

Bud: Sure am pop! Been practicing all week!

Dad: Oh uh... *(Snaps fingers trying to think of her name, and pulls a piece of paper out of pocket)*  
Jann! Will you take that bag from Bud? I want him to show me his rambunctious wrestling ways!

Jann: my hands are kinda full right now...

Dad: no, no, no. There's some room right.. *(puts the one bag that Bud was carrying, and puts it on the piles of bags Jann was carrying, completely covering her face)* there. Perfect!

Mother: Jann, what in tarnation do you think you're doing? Have my years of teaching you on how to be a lady gone in one ear and out the other!? Now please dear, put down the food and Restrain Yourself! We don't want to relive last thanksgiving!

*Jann puts down the bags of fast food with her mothers help. Mom then continues to dish the plates.*

Mom: *(to dad)* 2 for you.. *(To son)* 2 for you.. *(To herself)* and 2 for me!  
*All sit down happily except for Jann. Her plate is empty. She is NOT happy. Then the mother remembers something, and Jann gets excited.*

Mom: How silly of me, I almost forgot! Bud needs another scoop! *(To camera)* Tryouts are tomorrow!

Jann: Um, mom... Can you pass the bread please?

Mom: Do you really need more carbs today?

Jann: I guess not...

Mom: Alrighty dighty! Dig in!

Jann: I have nothing to dig in to!

Dad: About that. Now Jann.. Just remember that we love you and are here to help you in any way possible, but we just really don't want you to get...

Bud: FAT!

Mom: No, no, no Bud, Bud, Bud! We do NOT use the word FAT in this household! We prefer the word "grande!" OO! I'm so French!

Dad: Way to be cultured honey.

Mom: Thanks dear!

Bud: Hey Jann! Maybe you should listen to Mom and Restrain Yourself because you ARE getting FAT.

Mom: BUD! How many times do I have to tell you!? We do not use the word fat in this household! "grande!"

Jann: Mom, I don't know if you've noticed, but I AM RIGHT HERE and I can hear everything you guys are saying and I'm getting really upse—

Dad: *(interrupting)* Jann, what are you saying? How could we NOT notice you!? You know that saying "it feels like there's an elephant in the room?" Well there is. I'll give you a hint! It's pink and its name is Jann.

*Family imitates an elephant noise with the trunk gesture. All laugh and continue to eat merrily, but Jann.*

Jann: Okay guys, jokes over. Can I please eat now?

Mom: Sorry Jann, we got carried away.

*Mother exits and comes back with a bowl and a jug of water. She places it in front of Jann and pours the water in while handing her a spoon.*

Mom: Bonne Appetite!

Jann: Wait... is this WATER?

Mom: What's so upsetting about that? H2O is the way to go!

Jann: Well.. Thanks.. I guess.

Mom: No need to thank me! Just remember: Restrain Yourself!

*Later that night... Jann creeps to the fridge for food, and is about to eat some, but stops.*

Jann: What am I doing? Restrain Yourself.

VOICE: And now, back to our sponsors.

***(BACK TO THE INFOMERCIAL from the beginning) –***

M: Hello and welcome back to the show!

D: We hope that you have enjoyed our program and that we have opened your eyes to how you can become a better you.

M: That's right!

D: Now don't forget, there is still time to buy!

M: Call within the next 10 minutes, and you'll receive our clay mask, free of charge.



D: Now as promised, we've brought Jane back to see how our simple program has helped her to become a gorgeous, confident young woman.

M: No longer is she that unattractive, everyday girl with the frizzy hair. Now she has the power to be beautiful every day! But we are going to let her testimony speak for itself!

D: Here she is...

*The sales consultants leave as Jane enters. She stands centre stage, looking miserable.*

### **JULIE's MONOLOGUE**

First of all, let me tell you, I don't want to be here. My parents forced me to come here. I don't have a problem; they do. *(pause)* Yes, I know about your terms and conditions. I've been taken to 2 doctors, 2 psychologists, 2 nutritionists, and the Fraser Valley Eating Disorder's Clinic. *(Pause)* I won't do much talking, I told you, my parents forced me to come here, and it's not like talking is going to fix anything. *(Pause)* I don't care that they care! I have no privacy anymore! My dad made some sort of planner for everyday of the week, writing down the things I do, the things I don't do, the things I eat, and the things I don't eat! How do you think that makes me feel? *(pause)* I said I didn't want to talk about it. *(LONG Pause)*

I guess it started when my sister moved out to go to university. I was really close to her; I guess you could say she was my second half. But then when she moved I felt some sort of emptiness, some sort of sadness that I couldn't control. It's not that I want to be sad; but I don't have a choice. It seems like the world around me is slipping out of reach. Trust me, I have friends, I do, I just don't really acknowledge them anymore. It's like I built a wall around them, like I put myself in some sort of bubble that doesn't bounce. I don't think they understand but that's okay because I don't understand either. And it pisses me off because I can't control it. It's not like I can bring my sister back home. You can't pop a bubble once it has floated into the air. So I resort to food. It's the only thing I can control, the only way that I can prove to myself that yes, I do have at least a bit of control over what I do. So I don't eat, and it works. It worries my parents and I get them back, and it makes me feel in control. But when I eat, everything falls apart. I cry and stand in front of a mirror naked, and scratch my skin because I want to rip it off and I ask WHY? Why can't I be in control? This is the ONE thing I can do about everything, but no! I can't even control that! When I eat I feel useless, guilty and alone. And I hate it, I HATE it. *(pause)*

No, it's not because I think I'm fat. Not everyone in this world who has an eating disorder thinks they're fat. But it doesn't make any difference. Beauty has turned into some game, some... thing. It should be a way to find unconditional love for yourself, a definition of what it is to be perfectly fine with who you are. *(pause)* I agree, that does sound nice. *(pause)* You know, I really want to try to get better. I mean, as hard as it will be to fix this, I like to believe that maybe someday I'll find a way to fly, find my way to that bubble and finally pop it.

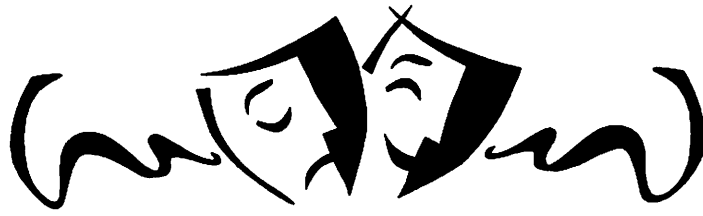
**SONG: "Fix You" by Coldplay starts.**

*A choreographed sequence with the masks begins. They move onto the stage, and attempt to put a mask on Julie. She resists, then almost gives in, then resists. Finally the masked people crowd her, and place the mask on her face.*

**“BEAUTY”** slide reappears.

*Final moment – tableaux of the masked women with the slide in the background.*

**THE END.**



# *The Hook*

*By*

*Caitlin Forsyth*

Caution: Professionals and amateurs are hereby warned that "The Hook" by Caitlin Forsyth is subject to royalty. It is protected under Copyright Law. Inquiries regarding performance rights and royalties should be directed to Caitlin Forsyth at RR#1, Site H, Comp 9, Hazelton, B.C. V0J 1Y0. The fee for a single production of this play will cost \$10.00.

**The Hook**  
By Caitlin Forsyth

CAST

Bree – Little girl, perhaps 6 or 7

Daphne – Bree's mother

Sean – Bree's father

*(Stage is set as a little girl's bedroom, the main props being a bed, a chair, and a bedside table with a lamp centre-stage. Room's exit is a set of stairs descending offstage. Lights come up in a way that conveys nighttime... blue wash, probably. When the lamp is on, it can either really be on or have a golden spotlight on the room.)*

*(BREE is in bed, sitting up. She twiddles with the covers impatiently and continuously looks towards the stairs. Her bedside lamp is on. Arguing voices of SEAN and DAPHNE can be heard from "downstairs" (offstage). Their voices are tense and unhappy, but not overly loud.)*

DAPHNE: It was in a tin of *mine*! So sue me, Sean, I misplaced some and some showed up in a likely place. It's a simple enough mistake to make!

SEAN: Well, maybe you should ask before claiming everything as your own property! This is *my* house!

DAPHNE: *(angrily)* Oh, that's ridiculous! I have a job, too; I pay rent!

SEAN: Yes, and it's obviously depleting your money so you have to take mine!

BREE: *(Calls over SEAN's last line)* Daddy. *(Pause.)*

SEAN: Why don't you – *(line continues while DAPHNE tries to speak over it.)* –learn to save your own money and then I'll take it *(getting louder while DAPHNE does the same)* and we'll see how you deal with that! Call me unreasonable?!

DAPHNE: *(starting slightly calmer)* I don't know why you have to make such a big deal out of everything. *(getting louder to try to talk over SEAN)* I apologized, it was a mistake... we all make them. *(loud again; the last two words of this line should be the last ones heard)* Everybody has misunderstandings, Sean!

SEAN: Right. Right. So as compensation –

BREE: *(calls again over the arguing)* Daddy.

DAPHNE *(uneasy, defensive)*: What are you –!

SEAN: --I'll take some money from *you* and in convenient misunderstanding, it'll be maybe, a hundred dollars more than what I remember. Who knows? I can just take this...

DAPHNE: Stop that! You bought me that! Will you just stop –

SEAN: I bought you this, so I can take it!

DAPHNE: Bree is calling you, Sean!

SEAN: Huh? So why don't you just take this necklace off before I have to break it?

DAPHNE: Sean, please, just calm—

BREE: *(calls again, loudly this time)* Daddy!

*(SEAN and DAPHNE fall silent.)*

SEAN: *(Offstage)* What?

BREE: *(Slides out of bed and goes to top of stairs)* Are you going to tell me a story tonight...?

*(There is a short pause, then BREE hops back towards bed, looking happy. SEAN and DAPHNE both mutter something quiet and inaudible for a few seconds. As BREE climbs back in bed, SEAN appears at the top of the stairs. He smiles tightly at BREE and sits in chair beside her bed.)*

SEAN: It's my turn? Didn't I tell you a story last night?

BREE: But that's because you said Mommy wasn't feeling well, so it's your turn again.

*(SEAN chuckles and smooths BREE's hair back)*

SEAN: Of course. Right. Okay, what kind of story do you want tonight?

*(BREE shrugs coyly.)*

SEAN: Alright, then, how about... "Once upon a time, there was a little girl named Bree who couldn't think of a story she wanted to hear, so her daddy didn't have one to tell her and he left"? *(Starts to get up, pretending to be about to leave.)*

BREE: *(Giggling)* No! I want a story about a... pirate.

SEAN: *(Sits back down)* A pirate? Tired of Mommy's princess stories? *(BREE is settling down in her bed and doesn't answer)* Okay, a pirate, then. *(Beat. Clears his throat.)* Once there was a pirate. A fearless, brave pirate with golden earrings and golden teeth—

BREE: Why did he have golden teeth?

SEAN: Because he could afford them.

BREE: He bought his teeth?

SEAN: Yes. And he had a black eye patch and a wooden peg leg—

BREE: Did you buy my teeth?

SEAN: *(looks at her)* Do you want a story or a dental lecture?

BREE: Sorry.

SEAN: So, he had a peg leg, and he also had a parrot that perched on his shoulder and talked to him. They sailed all alone on a big pirate ship, exploring new lands and finding treasure. And people called him... The Hook.

BREE: What was his real name?

SEAN: Nobody knew. Even he'd forgotten it. He was known only as The Hook, because one of his hands had been replaced by a hook.

BREE: *(closing her eyes and smiling)* Mm.

SEAN: One day, The Hook was sailing through the straits of Malacca. It was a stormy night—I mean day, but it was dark as night. The waters were very rough and the boat was rocking like *this* *(Grabs edge of bed and tips it back and forth. Bree squeals loudly.)*

DAPHNE: *(Offstage)* Sean, you're supposed to be putting her to sleep!

SEAN: *(Yells back, quickly angry)* You come tell her a bloody story, then!

BREE: Daddy, don't swear.

*(SEAN runs a hand through his hair and regains composure. Smiles at Bree.)*

SEAN: It was a very stormy day, and The Hook couldn't see where the land was, through the heavy rain and the dark waves all around him. His parrot was calling "Danger! Danger!" But The Hook wasn't afraid.

BREE: Why not?

SEAN: Because he was a brave and experienced pirate! He knew he could get through this. He could get through anything. Calmly he said to his parrot "Fly ahead and find where the coast begins." Then he gave the parrot one end of a long rope and said "When you get there, tie this to a tree."

BREE: How would a parrot tie—

SEAN: Shh, honey. My story. His parrot was very special, that's why he was so important to The Hook. So the parrot took one end of the rope and flew away through the pouring rain, swerving in the wind. The Hook held the other end of the rope and continued to steer his ship. It was a very difficult journey for the parrot, because the rope weighed him down and the wind was blowing him back and forth. But he was very dedicated, and he knew he mustn't let his friend down.

*(BREE is comfortably settled in her bed, eyes drifting closed occasionally.)*

SEAN: Then the parrot came across land! He quickly flew to the nearest tree and wrapped the rope around its trunk, tying it tightly with his claws. Then he flew back and perched on The Hook's shoulders. "Good job," said The Hook, and he grabbed the rope tightly, and started to pull. And the rain was very heavy and the wind was very strong, and the waves were very high, but slowly and surely The Hook pulled himself and the boat up to land.

BREE: *(Very quietly and sleepily)* I thought he only had one hand.

SEAN: *(Getting up)* Shhh. Goodnight, Bree.

*(BREE doesn't answer. SEAN flicks off the lamp and exits. Lights go down.)*

*(Lights come up, blue wash again. BREE skips into the room, holding DAPHNE's hand. She hops into bed and DAPHNE turns the lamp on.)*

DAPHNE: What story do you want tonight? I have an interesting twist on Cinderella.

BREE: No, I don't want Cinderella. Daddy started telling me a story last night.

DAPHNE: Did he? What's that?

BREE: It's about The Hook.

DAPHNE: The Hook? That doesn't sound like a story for little girls. Is it scary, darling? Has Daddy been scaring you?

BREE: Nnnno, it's about a pirate! He has gold teeth and a peg leg and nobody knows his name because he's called The Hook because one of his hands is a hook. And he's got a parrot and they sail together on a big pirate ship and have lots of adventures and stuff. I want a story about The Hook.

DAPHNE: Okay, that sounds alright. The Hook. Okay. *(Pauses and folds her hands in her lap while thinking. Bree snuggles into her covers.)* One day, The Hook was sailing his ship across the big blue ocean, the sun sparkling around him. And this day, his compass went missing. He looked all over for it, high and low, but it was nowhere to be found. "Maybe one of my crew stole it," he wondered, and he called a meeting amongst his men.

BREE: No, he sails all alone with his parrot. There's no one else.

DAPHNE: That makes no sense, honey. A ship can't sail without a crew.

BREE: But Daddy said they sailed all alone!

DAPHNE: *(Tightly)* Sometimes your Daddy is a silly man, Bree. The Hook needs someone to take care of the sails and be on lookout and... everything.

BREE: But—

DAPHNE: And man the cannons! You want cannons, don't you?

BREE: *(smiles slowly, broadly)* Yeah.

DAPHNE: *(Leaning back triumphantly)* Well, then. The Hook was a proud captain of a ship and its large crew of sailor pirates. And this morning, he could not find his compass. Finally he confronted his crew. "Has anyone seen my compass?" he asked, but everybody shook their heads silently. As he was walking away, frustrated, his parrot squawked. The Hook turned to look, and saw that his parrot - what's the parrot's name, Bree?

BREE: He doesn't have one.

DAPHNE: Well, let's call it Polly, then.

BREE: But Polly's a girl's name.

DAPHNE: Well, then Polly's a girl! There's nothing wrong with having a girl parrot.

BREE: I guess not.

DAPHNE: Or did your daddy say the parrot had to be a male?

BREE: No. Can you just tell the story?

DAPHNE: Alright, but make sure you tell Daddy that Polly's a girl tomorrow night, okay? Sometimes your father doesn't appreciate women very much.

BREE: Mom-mmyyy.

DAPHNE: Yes, the story. Polly was fluttering around the head of one of the crew members and making a terrible racket. "Polly, stop that," The Hook called, but his parrot continued. As The Hook came closer, to try and pull the parrot away, Polly suddenly ripped at the sailor's shirt pocket and out of it tumbled... The Hook's compass!

*(Looks to BREE to see her reaction. BREE is non-committal.)*

DAPHNE: "What were you doing with my compass?" The Hook demanded angrily. The pirate was very scared and said "I'm sorry, I found it lying on deck and I didn't know it was yours... I am very poor and I thought I was lucky to find this, so I could sell it back at home. I didn't know. I forgot I had it. I'm very sorry."

BREE: But he's a pirate. He can't be poor.

DAPHNE: He was a new recruit. He hadn't gotten much share of the treasure yet.

BREE: Oh. What's a recruit?

DAPHNE: He was a new member to the ship.

BREE: So he was a stealer?

DAPHNE: No, darling. He was a poor man and needed a way to earn money. And he hadn't known the compass he'd found belonged to the captain. He had done nothing wrong, really. Do you understand?

BREE: Yes.

DAPHNE: He didn't deserve punishment. The Hook didn't understand that, though, and he decided this man must walk the plank.

BREE: No, The Hook is nice.

DAPHNE: I--*(Pauses, and then says softly)* Yes, of course. You're right. The Hook is a nice man. What was I thinking? He was very understanding, he listened to the man and realized it was a small mistake. The only punishment was... he told the man that he would have to eat only dry crackers for a week.

*(BREE smiles.)*

BREE: I like crackers.

DAPHNE: Yes indeed. So, after The Hook had reclaimed his compass, they set sail for uncharted waters. Two days into the trip, once they were off the map and The Hook's cartographer—

BREE: What's a—



DAPHNE: *(Corrects herself)* –Map-maker was constructing a new map for these parts, the man in lookout cried “Ship ahead!” The Hook peered through his telescope, and sure enough, there was a rival pirate ship in the distance. “Man the cannons!” he cried.

BREE: Aye aye, Cap’n!

DAPHNE: Shh. Everyone jumped to their positions and started loading the cannons. This other pirate ship was an evil pirate ship, so it was okay for them to fight. As they got closer, they fired. The other ship tried to shoot back, but they were so silly, they’d forgotten their cannonballs at port. Soon they raised the flag of surrender, and The Hook’s crew swung onto the deck of the rival ship.

BREE: And took all the treasure?

DAPHNE: Well, they intended to. But there was no treasure on board! The Hook demanded to know where the treasure was, but the pirates only spoke Spanish. From what The Hook’s crew could understand, the treasure had just been buried on an island with silver-coloured palm trees. So they set off, in search of the island with silver palm trees. And that’s the story for tonight.

BREE: Awww.

DAPHNE: *(Rising, turns off light)* Goodnight, Bree.

BREE: ‘Night, Mommy.

*(Lights come up. Lamp is on. BREE is sitting in her bed playing with a doll half-heartedly. Offstage, her parents are arguing again.)*

SEAN: *Typical! What the hell, Daphne!?*

DAPHNE: Why are you angry about this!? I was trying to *solve* things!

SEAN: Well, you’re pretty bloody stupid then! What is this? What, is this?? This is *useless*, Daphne! Why not make some paper cranes out of our last bit of money!

DAPHNE: *(tightly)* This isn’t useless; I asked an employee, it’s perfectly operational, and you wanted to buy one with that money, so—

SEAN: *(mocking)* I’m sure the *emplyoree* knew exactly what I needed it for, and I’m sure *you* knew exactly the same...

DAPHNE: *Power trip!* You’re just on a power trip, and if you weren’t so full of testosterone that you think I can’t make any decisions you’d see—

SEAN: *(short scuffling sound)* And if you had any *brains* you’d learn to keep your clever ideas to yourself and stop *stealing* my money, and then *wasting* more on useless! Pieces! Of crap!

*(BREE suddenly reaches across and hits her lamp off the table. It crashes loudly to the floor on Sean’s last words (lamp light goes off, and the voices offstage stop. Enter SEAN.)*

SEAN: What the hell is going on?

BREE: *(Quickly, scared)* I’m sorry, Daddy, I tripped. I didn’t mean to. I’m sorry.

SEAN: *(Looking at her on her bed)* You tripped?

BREE: I was standing.

SEAN: Well, you should be more careful! *(Picks up lamp (in fragments or whole) and puts it back on the table. Turns to leave.)*

BREE: Are you going to tell me a story?

SEAN: No, I'm busy.

BREE: No you're not.

*(SEAN gives her a LOOK. BREE cowers but persists in a tiny, trailing off voice.)*

BREE: I mean, I'm just saying, you're just making yourself unhappy... and mommy... I mean... umm, nevermind, it's... *(trails off completely)*

*(SEAN hesitates, looks like he's about to refuse and then marches over to the chair and sits.)*

SEAN: Yeah, of course. Alright. The Hook, right? *(BREE nods)* Okay, so, The Hook had just pulled his ship to an island in the middle of a storm, right?

BREE: No.

SEAN: He hadn't?

BREE: No, he was searching for an island with silver palm trees. That's how it ended last night.

SEAN: Ohhh. I see. Silver palm trees.... *(Snorts)* Typical. Alright, and why was he looking for this island?

BREE: It had treasure.

SEAN: Okay. Alright. *(Pause)* For many days, The Hook sailed on the wide sea, looking for a gleam of silver in the distance. He hadn't been to land in many days by now, but he had enough food and water to last him, so he wasn't worried.

BREE: Did he have enough for his crew?

SEAN: He didn't have a crew.

BREE: Mommy gave him a crew.

SEAN: *(Rolls eyes)* Of course she did. Yes, there was enough food for his crew, too. Did Mommy add anything else that I should know about?

BREE: The parrot is a girl. She's named Polly.

SEAN: *(Laughs, astonished)* Go figure. There's probably women in the crew, too, right?

BREE: I don't know.

SEAN: Well, good. There isn't. Women aren't pirates or sailors. Even your mom can't dispute that.

BREE: It's just a story, Daddy.

SEAN: Right. Alright, lie down, Bree. We're getting off-track. (*BREE settles down.*) One day, The Hook was sailing in grey and drizzly weather. Looking through the rain with his spyglass, he saw nothing but water and sky. The Hook prepared himself for a dull day. However, around noon, the ship tilted and stopped. Confused, The Hook and his sailors looked down and saw that giant tentacles were wrapped around the ship.

BREE: Man the cannons!

SEAN: (*Looks at her, amused*) Yes. "Man the cannons!" The Hook yelled. But the cannons didn't point down far enough to hit the giant squid beneath their ship. So instead, The Hook swung down on a rope one handed and poked at one of the tentacles with his hook. Polly (*pronounces the name with an exaggerated flourish and obvious disdain*) meanwhile flapped around and pecked at the squid. Out of the water arose the squid's head, to see what was making the disturbance. "Hello," said The Hook. "Hello," said the squid. "Do you mind telling me why you have a hold of my ship?" asked The Hook. The squid replied, "I was hoping I could catch a ride to Mexico."

BREE: (*Laughing*) Squids don't talk!

SEAN: They don't latch onto pirate ships, either! (*BREE keeps giggling*) "Well," replied The Hook. "We're not going to Mexico. But we'll take you to a nicer place if you can find it." The squid asked, "Where's that?"

BREE: An island with silver palm trees.

SEAN: Exactly. The Hook told the squid that, and the squid said, sure, he'd swim ahead and look for it. So The Hook returned to deck and told the crew the news. They waited for a week, and one day the squid returned. "I've found the island!" he told them. "However, I don't like it. All the flashy silver things hurt my eyes. Now, you've wasted a week of my time when I could be vacationing in Mexico. I am hungry, and I think I will eat your ship."

BREE: (*Whining*) Noooooo.

SEAN: Don't worry. "Man the cannons!" The Hook yelled, because he had forgotten that they didn't reach. They fired and completely missed, but lots of gunpowder fell into the water and made the squid start coughing and sneezing. Turns out he was allergic to gunpowder, and he got all itchy and swam away. (*BREE giggles harder*) However, poor Polly was allergic to gunpowder too, and she got very sick. So they sailed on, wishing they had asked the squid where the island was before attacking him. (*Looks at BREE.*) To be continued!

BREE: Aw! Make Polly better.

SEAN: Nope. That's the story for the night. Go to sleep, now.

BREE: Sorry about the lamp.

SEAN: (*looks at it*) Ah, whatever. Accidents happen.

BREE: And can you and Mommy – (*Stops*)

SEAN: What?

BREE: Never mind.

SEAN: Can Mommy and I what?

BREE: *(Sinking back into covers. Looking down at her hands.)* Just, can you not be so loud please. *(SEAN opens his mouth and makes to speak a couple times, finally shakes his head once and just leaves. Fade out.)*

*(Lights come up. Green wash, preferably swishing around on the backdrop somehow in a way that conveys water reflections. DAPHNE, SEAN and BREE row onstage on a small rowboat, from the side with the stairs. The bed is in shadow, with a BREE stand-in under the covers. DAPHNE is standing, SEAN and BREE sitting. SEAN has an eye patch and both he and DAPHNE wear pirate hats. DAPHNE also holds a telescope. BREE is unchanged.)*

DAPHNE: *(Raising telescope)* Land ho! I see an island with silver palm trees! *(BREE rushes to the front of the boat, leans out and peers into the "distance". There is a long pause.)*

SEAN: *(Turns slowly to DAPHNE)* Where did you get that spyglass?

DAPHNE: *(Unsure)* I-I... I found it below decks.

BREE: The Hook. The Hook. *(Tugs at SEAN's sleeve)*

SEAN: *(To DAPHNE still)* That's my spyglass. You stole it.

DAPHNE: I'm sorry, I didn't know it was yours. *(Holds it out to him)*

BREE: We've come to the island! The Hook! Look! Silver palm trees... *(Starts to cough slightly while she points. SEAN continues to ignore her.)*

SEAN: *(Getting angry)* Polly is sick and my crewmembers steal my possessions! *(BREE's coughing gets worse. SEAN yanks the telescope out of DAPHNE's hands.)*

DAPHNE: I said I'm sorry!

SEAN: Then why did you take it? *(Stands up suddenly and grabs her by the arm)* You're going to walk the plank! We're going to feed you to the squid!

DAPHNE and BREE: No! *(BREE falls to her knees in a coughing fit. SEAN and DAPHNE struggle momentarily and then DAPHNE is pushed off the boat, upstage. As she falls, spotlight on the boat goes off and separate spotlight comes up on bed, as (other) BREE falls out with a scream. Covers can fall with her if she isn't a precise look-alike. She huddles on the floor for a few seconds while boat is taken inconspicuously offstage. Blackout.)*

*(Lights come up, blue wash. (Lamp is still broken) BREE is in bed with her head under the pillow. SEAN and DAPHNE are fighting downstairs again. Sounds of physical scuffles are heard throughout, breaking up dialogue)*

SEAN: --with your righteous little actions thinking you're an angel on earth--

DAPHNE: Stop it, Sean! This is *why*; can't you just-- *(scuffle, scuffle)* Stop!

SEAN: Why don't you tell them of *this*, too, huh? Your ever-so-concerned group, you poor oppressed bunch of--

DAPHNE: Please don't! (*scuffle, scuffle*)

SEAN: Who do you think you are?!

(*There is the sound of something being knocked over.*)

DAPHNE: (*Panicked, hurried voice*) I have to tell Bree her story.

SEAN: Oh, no you-- (*DAPHNE enters onstage in a hurry, smooths her hair and clothes. She has a black eye.*)

SEAN: (*Angrily from offstage*) We're not finished!

DAPHNE: (*Closes her eyes and breathes heavily. BREE raises her head and DAPHNE opens her eyes to smile shakily at her.*) I'm sorry about that, Bree.

BREE: (*In a small voice*) Why do you fight all the time?

DAPHNE: (*Sits down abruptly in the chair beside BREE's bed and puts her face in her hands.*) I'm sorry.

BREE: I'm not mad. (*Reaches over and hugs DAPHNE. They are motionless for a while.*) I'm scared.

DAPHNE: (*close to tears*) Me too, Bree. (*Beat, beat. Eventually DAPHNE lets go and BREE sits back on her bed.*) I guess you're ready for your story now, are you, dear?

BREE: I guess.

DAPHNE: (*Takes a shuddering breath and finally appears calmer.*) Where were we? Searching for an island with treasure, right?

BREE: Yeah.

DAPHNE: Have they found it yet?

BREE: No. Polly's sick.

DAPHNE: Oh dear. Okay, well, they're in luck tonight. One day, as The Hook was sailing, the lookout yelled "I see it! I see it!" and sure enough, through his spyglass, there The Hook saw it, the island with silver palm trees. They quickly sailed up to the shore and docked. As soon as they were on land, they started a trek to find fresh water. Not only did they find a spring of nice clear water very soon, it was full of fish.

BREE: Yucky.

DAPHNE: (*Smiles*) Well, they liked fish. And they were good fish which would make Polly better.

BREE: Fish don't just make things better.

DAPHNE: It's just a story, Bree. They caught some and ate—

BREE: Raw??

DAPHNE: They were big tough pirates. They could handle it.

BREE: Ewww!

DAPHNE: I'm just kidding! No, of course they cooked--

SEAN: *(Offstage)* I'm waiting and I have work tomorrow!

DAPHNE: *(Glances offstage and then leans forward. Quietly:)* Can you stay awake tonight, Bree? Stay awake, please. *(BREE nods, worried.)* So, they ate their fish, and then set off to look for the treasure. But where to start?

BREE: X marks the spot.

DAPHNE: But they didn't have a map, so they had no X.

BREE: Maybe there was an X on the ground. *(DAPHNE laughs slightly. BREE doesn't get it.)* What?

DAPHNE: Perhaps there was. So the pirates kept an eye out for X's on the ground *(There is the sound of SEAN knocking things over and breaking stuff downstairs and DAPHNE keeps glancing over at the stairs, distracted)* and also... also, um... *(refocuses)* ground that looked like it had been dug up recently. It was a beautiful day, the weather was nice, and they had just eaten and drank, so they were completely refreshed and... *(distracted)* and, uh. And happy, Bree. Good-natured... *(SEAN's footsteps start with resolution towards the stage.)* and prepared to spend a lot of time on this island if they had to, to find the treasure.

SEAN: *(appears at the doorway, impatient)* Taking long enough?

DAPHNE: Sean, please. Not now.

SEAN: Oh, not now! Yeah! It should have been before, but you took off!

DAPHNE: You want Bree to stay up all night waiting while we argue?

SEAN: It's just a bedtime story! She's not gonna die if she doesn't get it one night, Daphne!

DAPHNE: *(Pause. Appears to be choosing her words very carefully.)* I did not take off. I'm giving you a bit of time to calm down, so we can discuss this--

SEAN: Don't tell me to friggin' calm down! *(Strides towards her. Daphne leaps out of the chair to back up, away from him)*

*(DAPHNE and BREE speak out at the same time)*

BREE: *(Shrilly)* Don't!

DAPHNE: *(Scared)* Sean, please, Bree is right here!

SEAN: Then come back downstairs!

DAPHNE: *(Almost hysterical in her pleading)* I'm telling Bree her story!

SEAN: You're done! *(grabs DAPHNE by the arm)*

DAPHNE: *(In a rush)* Let go, let go, I'll come, just let go. *(SEAN is not listening, and DAPHNE half walks by herself and is half pulled out the door) (BREE jumps out of bed and starts to follow, hesitates, takes another step, hesitates again, and suddenly runs back to her bed instead. She sits on her bed and grasps the pieces of the lamp, throwing them hard onto the floor one by one (if it didn't break, just the lamp shade and the body can be thrown separately). No one pays attention downstairs. There is the sound of*

*a scuffle, and then a door opening and closing suddenly. It is quiet. BREE continues to sit on her bed, just staring out into space, hugging her pillow. The lights dim, in fragments, until onstage it is black.)*

*(The lights come up with the green watery reflections again. BREE is cross-legged on the floor wearing a pirate's hat. A closed chest is in front of her. She is about to open it when DAPHNE rushes in, wearing pirate garb.)*

DAPHNE: No, don't, you'll let it out!

BREE: It's my treasure.

DAPHNE: It's not your treasure, it's The Hook's. You're new, you don't get anything.

BREE: No, I need my fish!

DAPHNE: Don't open it! *(BREE opens the chest, screams, and slams it shut)*

BREE: Where is the treasure??

DAPHNE: There is no treasure! We're on the wrong island.

BREE: *(getting upset)* No, it has silver palm trees! It has my fish! I need my fish!

DAPHNE: *(loudly and firmly)* There's no such thing as silver palm trees, Bree.

BREE: It's just a story! It's just a story! *(Throws her hat down and runs, jumps onto the bed, standing. The more she screams, the more she sounds exactly like a little girl having a temper tantrum)*

DAPHNE: You won't get hurt if you don't get it one night. There's no such thing as fish.

BREE: It's just... a... story! *(Blackout.)*

*(Lights come up. BREE is sitting up in bed with the covers pulled up to her waist, her hands clasped and fidgeting slightly. DAPHNE and SEAN are full-out screaming at each other downstairs, with sounds of physical fighting and scuffles.)*

DAPHNE: This is what happens!? Like it's normal!? This isn't normal!

SEAN: *(yelling over her, starting after her "like it's normal" line)* No, it's what you deserve!

DAPHNE: *(crying)* No one deserves this!

SEAN: That's right, pull out your sob story! Go tell you friends again how badly off you are!  
*(DAPHNE starts to yell almost unintelligibly as SEAN continues)*

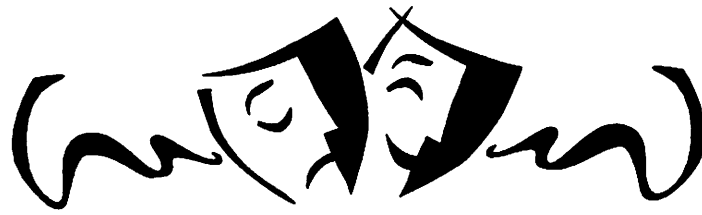
DAPHNE: We have a daughter! I can't just leave... but she's scared of you, too!

BREE: *(Talks over them. Ad lib in background.)* One day, The Hook was sailing across the big blue ocean. The wind was very strong, but he wasn't scared, because everyone knew The Hook and he was very brave. He had just gotten treasure from the island with silver palm trees, and they were all very rich and happy. *(Something crashes to the ground downstairs)* Polly was all better. Then the pirates saw in the distance, a bad pirate ship. *(DAPHNE yells downstairs "put that down!")* "Man the cannons," The Hook cried *(her last words are drowned out by a frantic "BREE!" from her mother, a crash and a heavy thud, and BREE leaps out of bed, races downstairs as there is the sound of the door opening and closing once more. There is complete silence for a long*

*moment, long enough for the audience to become uncomfortable. BREE re-enters, her face streaked with tears.)*

**BREE:** *(Unevenly)* The end. *(Collapses onto the floor. Blackout.)*





# *Caught In the Rain*

By  
*Christine Park*

Caution: Professionals and amateurs are hereby warned that "Caught In the Rain" by Christine Park is subject to royalty. It is protected under Copyright Law. Inquiries regarding performance rights and royalties should be directed to Christine Park at 5223 Malaspina Pl. North Vancouver, B.C. V7R 4L9. The fee for a single production of this play will cost \$20.00.

## Caught in the Rain

By Christine Park

*The stage is dark. A spotlight comes up on a woman wearing a bathrobe, sitting in a chair. She stares out at the fourth wall. After a few moments a boy comes out from stage right. He walks up behind her and places his hand on her shoulder. After a few moments, the woman brushes his hand away and he walks away stage right. He comes back, this time with a glass of water and places it on the table next to her. She simply looks at it, then turns back to the fourth wall. He picks up the glass and walks away. A few seconds later he comes back with the glass again and places it in her hand. She tries to give it back to him, but he pushes her hand back. This happens several times until she throws the water at him. He takes the cup and walks away. A man appears stage left.*

**Father:** Sophia? Sophia, I have something to ask you.

*Mother gets up and holds his hand.*

**Mother:** What is it?

**Father:** Well, we've been together a long time now...

**Mother:** Yes, It's been three years.

**Father:** Yes. Well I was thinking we should...

**Mother:** Paul?

**Father:** Sophia, will you marry me?

*Mother embraces father and lights fade. She reappears on the chair and the father is gone. Adam appears stage right.*

**Adam:** Good morning mother. It's a beautiful day outside.

*Silence*

**Adam:** Why don't we go for a walk? How does that sound? Just a short one, for some fresh air... a change of scenery.

*Silence*

**Adam:** I mean, look at the sun! It would be a shame to waste such...

**Mother:** It's raining.

**Adam:** No it's not.

**Mother:** Yes it is. Don't try to trick me. I know it is.

**Adam:** No. Here I'll show you. We've just got to get you up. *He bends down and tries to lift her off the chair, but she fights back.* Just got to lift you up. *He tries to lift her up again.* Fine. Sit there for all I care. I'm going to go enjoy the sun by myself.

*He starts to walk out stage right. Halfway to the exit, he looks back at her for a moment, then continues exiting. Father appears on stage left. Mother gets up and walks towards him. There are a few moments of silence while they do not look at each other.*

**Mother:** It's going to be alright. We're going to get through this. Businesses go under all the time, and people get through it.

**Father:** I guess...

**Mother:** Hey...look at me.

**Father:** I don't think I can. I let you down. I let Adam down too.

**Mother:** No, you haven't! The boy idolises you. And he believes in you, and so do I. We'll just have to start again. We'll find you a new job, and I'll get a job too.

**Father:** I don't want to talk about this right now. I'm going to go fishing in my boat. I'll see you at dinner.

**Mother:** Wait! I want to talk!

*Mother watches father walk off, stage left. She then returns to her seat. Adam returns stage right holding the glass of water.*

**Adam:** Good morning mother. It's a beautiful day outside.

*Silence.*

**Adam:** Mother?

**Mother:** Every day's a beautiful day for you.

**Adam:** Yes, so come enjoy it with me.

*Silence.*

**Adam:** Mother, please just come with me. *He begins to cry.* Please just come with me. Please.

*Adam cries a few more moments until he exits stage right. The lights fade and come back up. The father is standing on stage left again.*

**Father:** Sophia! Sophia! Come here!

*Mother gets up and runs to his side.*

**Mother:** What is it darling?

**Father:** Sophia, we've talked about this already. I won't take this anymore.

**Mother:** What on earth are you talking about?

**Father:** You sold my boat!

**Mother:** Alright! I sold it! But we need any money we can get! Times are going to be tough for a while and any extravagances we can do without we have to sell.

**Father:** My boat isn't an extravagance. It's my only escape.

**Mother:** Well, why don't you escape with your son for a while? He could use a bit of a diversion from all this mess himself.

**Father:** You don't understand. It was the only thing left that I enjoyed, and you sold it.

**Mother:** What about your family?

**Father:** I'm trying hard for you. I really am. So I need to be out on the water more than ever. It makes me feel like everything is going to be all right.

**Mother:** Everything will be all right. You don't need the water. All you need is your family. Right?

*The father exits the stage, the lights dim and the mother exits the stage. Adam walks back in with a glass of water. He places it down on the table.*

**Adam:** Drink it.

**Mother:** No

**Adam:** Drink it.

**Mother:** I said no!

**Adam:** Just drink it!

**Mother:** Persistent boy! A good boy would listen to his mother!

**Adam:** Just drink the water!

**Mother:** No! Just leave me alone!

*Adam grabs the water and walks back out. The lights dim and the father is on stage left, holding a fishing rod.*

**Father:** Sophia? Sophia?

**Mother:** Yes?

**Father:** I'm going fishing today. I'll be back by dinner, okay?

*Mother crosses her arms and stares.*

**Father:** Come on, please? I haven't gone in so long. I need to go relax.

**Mother:** I heard there might be a storm today.

**Father:** Nonsense, don't worry about me. Rainy weather is the best fishing weather anyway. I'm guaranteed to catch a nice big trout that way. I've been out in worse weather I'm sure.

**Mother:** Fine. If it will make you happy, go ahead.

**Father:** I'm glad you see it my way, dear. Tell Adam his daddy's gonna catch a big one today!

*Father hurries offstage.*

**Mother:** Oh, your gonna catch a big one. I bet you are.

*Lights fade and Adam enters with the glass of water again.*

**Mother:** You still have that glass of water, don't you?

*Adam says nothing.*

**Mother:** You still have that glass of water, don't you?

*Adam still says nothing.*

**Mother:** For Christ's sake, Adam! I'm not going to drink the bloody water!

**Adam:** Why not mother? Just answer me why not!

*Mother finally breaks her constant gaze with the fourth wall and turns to face Adam.*

**Mother:** You know perfectly well why not! Why are you so cold? So emotionless? Why are you doing this?

**Adam:** I only want you to leave the room.

**Mother:** Why does it matter if I leave the room! It's raining outside! There's nothing out there but cold and rain!

**Adam:** It's not raining mother! In fact, it's a beautiful day outside! You just won't try! You don't want to try! All you do is sit here! You haven't even opened the drapes since...since...

**Mother:** Finish the sentence Adam.

**Adam:** Since dad died. There. If I can say it, why can't you just go outside?

**Mother:** Because...because it's raining Adam!

**Adam:** And what is rain mother? It's just water!

**Mother:** Exactly! It's water!

**Adam:** You can't keep blaming water for dad's death mom! Water doesn't live mom! Water doesn't eat! Water doesn't breathe! Water doesn't feel! Water doesn't try to kill people! It's just there!

*Adam tries to hold mother's hands.*

**Mother:** Don't...you can't...Let me go!

**Adam:** Water doesn't live, but you do. And I'm worried about you! Would you please just go outside, or drink something? You're wasting away! You're going to be nothing sooner or later. Nothing...just like water.

*The mother starts to cry.*

**Adam:** Look at you! You're crying. Feel your tears! What are they? They're water! You're even made of water!

*There is a silence. The mother continues to cry.*

**Adam:** Dad's dead, and it's nobody's fault. Not yours, not the water's. So please, just come with me.

**Mother:** But I knew there was going to be a storm. I didn't stop him.

**Adam:** Would you have been able to?

**Mother** No, he was free and determined. Just like water.

*Adam holds out his hand. The Mother looks at it, and eventually she reaches for his hand. She gets up and she picks up the glass of water from the table. They walk out hand in hand.*



# *Dirty Laundry*

*By*

*Barbara Reid*

Caution: Professionals and amateurs are hereby warned that "Dirty Laundry" by Barbara Reid is subject to royalty. It is protected under Copyright Law. Inquiries regarding performance rights and royalties should be directed to Barbara Reid at 14484 18 Ave. White Rock, B.C. V4A 5R1. The fee for a single production of this play will cost \$20.00.



**Setting**

The laundry room of a suburban home. 3 PM.

**Characters**

Cael: the not-really-goth goth

Rowan: the gother-than-thou goth

Ben: the quiet goth

Margot: the crier

Mom: not goth at all

*(Cael is sitting center stage in front of some unlit candles with a compact, listening to Cyndi Lauper and trying to smudge his eyeliner. A knock is heard off stage and he quickly changes the music.)*

Mom: Caelykins! Your friends are here!

Cael: I'm in the laundry room mo—uh, Doreen!

*(Enter Rowan, Margot, with a book in hand, and Ben.)*

Rowan: *(snickering)* Caelykins?

Cael: That doesn't leave this room.

Rowan: Of course not. Something like that could damage your reputation at school.

Margot: Rowan, we don't have reputations at school...

Rowan: I know that. It's called sarcasm.

Margot: *(sniffing)* Oh, sorry.

Cael: What's the book for?

Margot: It's a spell book. It belonged to my great, great, great, great, great, great, great, great, great, great, great, great, great grandmother.

Cael: It's in perfect condition...

Margot: It's the revised edition.

Rowan: Margot, you need something that actually belonged to the person in order to contact their spirit.

Cael: Won't it still work? I mean, the spells are technically hers.

Rowan: She never touched them! Haven't you ever done a séance before?

Cael: Yes! Of course I have. I used to do them all the time, but the neighbours were always complaining about the noise the ghosts made...

Ben: Spirits.

Cael: Yeah. Them too.

*(Awkward silence.)*

Margot: But the book's my dad's. Who got it from my great Aunt Eleanor, who once contacted my great, great, great, great...

Rowan: Margot, short version.

Margot: ...great to the power of twelve grandmother's spirit.

*(Ben holds out a pack of matches)*

Rowan: Okay, Ben brought matches.

Cael: I have some candles.

Rowan: Good, but we only need... these are scented.

Cael: I know. They were the biggest I could find.

Rowan: They smell like cotton candy.

Margot: Really? Let me smell.

Cael: The guy at the dollar store said they'd be fine for spells.

Rowan: Is the guy at the dollar store a warlock, Cael?

Cael: No.

Rowan: Oh, well is he a sorcerer or a shaman?

Cael: No.

Rowan: Then what do you think the guy at the dollar store knows about black magic?

Cael: I dunno. He was wearing a Black Sabbath T-shirt.

Rowan: That's great, Cael, but we can't contact the dead with scented candles! Why don't we just prance around your basement and summon a friendly ghost with pixie dust?

Margot: *(Whimpering)* Does this mean we can't do the séance?

Rowan: No, Margot, it just means Cael's an idiot.

Cael: Oh, unclench. You didn't even bring anything.

Rowan: I didn't think I had to. If I'd known you weren't even capable of picking out candles, I would have brought my own.

Cael: The candles I picked are fine!

Rowan: They smell like candy!

Cael: Maybe Margot's great to the power of twelve grandmother's spirit likes candy!

*(Margot bursts into tears and moves to Ben, who is sitting up stage and going through Cael's CDs)*

Rowan: We're talking about the spirit of a woman who was burned at the stake, not Casper the Friendly Ghost, Cael.

Ben: Stop it, Margot's upset.

Rowan: Margot's always upset.

Cael: Okay, guys. Maybe my parents have some normal candles. I'll go check upstairs, you guys get everything else ready.

*(Exit Cael with the candles.)*

Rowan: One day we'll show up here and he'll have those candles lit with some James Blunt playing in the background.

Ben: *(Patting Margot's back as she whines)* What does that mean?

Rowan: Oh, come on. Don't you ever wonder about him? "I used to have seances all the time until the neighbours complained." It's so obvious he's lying! I mean look at his mother. She baked me Rice Krispie squares last time I was here. How dark can you be if that's what gave birth to you? And remember when we went to that Fetal Death Corpse concert and he ran out of the mosh pit as soon as he started bleeding? He said he went to get some water but I'm positive I saw him in the First Aid tent.

*(Margot stops crying and raises a hand.)*

Rowan: What?

Margot: Why were you in the First Aid tent?

Rowan: I was... I was helping some kid after I broke his nose. But that's not the point of the story. The point is that Cael's totally faking it.

*(Ben hands Margot a CD. She laughs and they stand up.)*

Ben: You shouldn't be so hard on him. He's so unusual.

Rowan: What are you talking about?

Ben: It's just that he's showing his true colours. He just wants to have fun.

*(Margot snickers.)*

Rowan: I don't get it.

*(Margot gives the CD to Rowan)*

Margot: Well, I bop, you bop, uh they bop.

Rowan: Cyndi Lauper?!

Margot: Cael bop.

*(Ben and Margot laugh.)*

Rowan: See? This is exactly what I've been talking about!

**Margot:** It's just a CD, Rowan.

**Rowan:** But maybe it isn't just a CD. For all we know, Cael could have a stuffed unicorn named Fluffy and a shrine to Madonna in the back of his closet!

**Margot:** Why would he name his unicorn Fluffy?

**Rowan:** It was just an example.

**Margot:** It's just that unicorn's aren't really fluffy...

**Rowan:** That's not the point! Why are you both so okay with this?

**Ben:** Okay, say he has a stuffed unicorn. Does that really change anything?

**Rowan:** It changes everything! Has he ever mentioned Cyndi Lauper before? No, because he's lying to us. He's faking it!

*(Enter Cael with tapers and a candlestick.)*

**Cael:** Faking what?

**Rowan:** What are those?

**Cael:** Dinner candles. They're the only ones I could find, but they're not scented. Faking what?

**Margot:** Rowan thinks you have a unicorn.

**Cael:** A what?

**Margot:** A unicorn. Named Fluffy.

**Cael:** Why would I name a unicorn Fluffy?

**Rowan:** That's not the point!

**Ben:** Are we doing this séance or what?

**Margot:** Yeah, I have to be home for dinner.

Cael: I guess... yeah. Let's set up then.

*(Cael sets the candles up on the floor and the group sits around them.)*

Margot: Who's going to channel her?

Rowan: How about Cael, since he knows so much about it.

Cael: Oh, well... don't you think Margot should? I mean, it is her great to the power of twelve grandmother.

Rowan: Exactly. So don't you think she'd have some questions to ask her?

Cael: Right. Well, why don't you do it? The séance was your idea.

Rowan: Whatever. If you're scared, I guess I don't mind...

Cael: I'm not scared! I just thought maybe you'd... never mind, I'll do it.

*(Cael lowers his head and extends both his hands. Ben and Margot go to take his hand, but Rowan smacks Margot.)*

Margot: *(Whimpering.)* Do we need to chant or something?

Rowan: This isn't the Ghost Whisperer. Just shut up.

*(Enter Mom with a tray of milk and cookies.)*

Mom: I thought you kids could use a snack... are those my dinner candles?

Cael: Mom!

Mom: Sweetheart, you need to ask before you borrow my candles.

Cael: Okay! But we're busy!

Mom: And don't put them on the floor, you'll start a fire.

Cael: Mom!

Margot: Sorry, Mrs. Sellick.

Rowan: *(with false enthusiasm)* Thanks a bunch for the cookies Mrs. S! I love peanut butter!

Margot: I'm allergic to peanuts...

Mom: Oh, kitten. Do you want me to make you something else? Maybe some Rice Krispie...

Cael: Mom!

Mom: Use your indoor voice, honey.

Cael: GET OUT!

*(Awkward silence, broken only by Margot's occasional whimpering. Mom takes the tray and begins to exit slowly.)*

Mom: I'll be back with some allergy-safe snacks, then.

Cael: We don't want any.

*(Mom sighs and exits.)*

Ben: *(petting Margot as she sobs.)* Cael, that was sort of...

Rowan: Awesome!

Ben: What?

Cael: What?

*(Margot whines.)*

Rowan: Emotionally destroying your mother for the sake of our séance... I underestimated you. That was pretty hardcore.

Cael: What?!

Rowan: What?

*(Margot whines.)*



Cael: How does upsetting your mother make you hardcore? And what do you mean you underestimated me?

Rowan: It just makes you seem less... you know, preppy. It makes up for your fear of spiders and terrible taste in music. *(Holds up the CD.)*

Cael: That's not mine!

Rowan: Cael, it's okay. What you said to your mom was seriously...

Cael: *(Interrupting.)* What I said to my mom was cruel and I'll apologize once she's baked off her anger!

Rowan: I knew it was too good to be true, you're just a peach!

Cael: Peach?

Rowan: You try to be hardcore, but all you get is the pit.

Cael: Ooh, tell me off with a pun! That's so edgy!

Rowan: Oh, I'm sorry. Would you rather I tease my hair and we can have a dance-off?

*(Rowan skips around Cael singing Time After Time.)*

Margot: *(Between sobs.)* Stop... fighting!

Cael & Rowan: Shut up, Margot!

*(As they argue, Ben takes the candles and book, moves up stage and sits with them in front of him. Margot follows.)*

Rowan: I wouldn't yell at her. She and Ben are the only ones here that are buying your front.

Cael: In other words, you're the only one here that isn't.

Rowan: Oh come on, just admit it, Cael.

Cael: Admit what?

Rowan: Look, you never let us in your room, we always end up in your basement. You own two copies of Wang Chung's Greatest Hits and not one of Smells Like Children. Your little sister's fuzzy jacket looks suspiciously like a hand-me-down. You have a keytar! You've never done a séance, have you?

Cael: Why are you always trying to prove that I'm not goth enough for you guys?

Rowan: *(Holding up the CD again.)* Can you blame me?

Cael: Would you forget about my music for a minute? What is it with you? If something doesn't fit into this little box, you refuse to accept it. You're so obsessed with being the gothiest goth that ever gothed a goth...

Rowan: Excuse me if I'm not going out of my way to conform to some socially acceptable...

Cael: Not going out of your way to conform? How is spending all your time trying to be abnormal any better than trying to be normal?

Rowan: As if you're any better! You only dress like this to hang out with us!

Cael: You only hang out with me because I dress like this!

*(Ben begins to cough and hack.)*

Rowan: That's not true!

Cael: You wouldn't even look twice at me before I stole my sister's eyeliner!

Margot: Guys...

Rowan: I didn't know you then!

Cael: Did too! I sat behind you in German, we even had a conversation once!

Rowan: What?

Cael: You asked what time it was, and I said I didn't have a watch.

*(Ben laughs.)*

Rowan: You remember that?

Margot: GUYS!

Ben: You young people and your fighting. Always with the yelling... you'll have plenty of time for it when you're older, trust me.

Rowan: Why are you talking like that?

Ben: Like what, doll?

Rowan: Like a rabbi with a smoker's cough. Cut it out.

Margot: *(to Cael)* I think he really did it.

Ben: Oh, turn the hostility on me now that you're done with the poor boy. Listen to me, young lady...

Cael: Stop it, Ben.

Ben: Ben! Oh boy, you call a person from the afterlife, you think you'd have enough courtesy to learn their name! *(grumbling)* Ruined my game of rummy... with Duke Ellington no less!

Cael: Afterlife?

Rowan: What does that mean?

Margot: Who's Duke Ellington?

Ben: Ugh...

Cael: Seriously Ben, stop.

Rowan: Yeah, you're scaring Cael.

Cael: Oh, shut up. I'm not scared.

Rowan: Then why are you holding my hand?

Cael: What? Oh... sorry.

*(Awkward silence.)*

Ben: Hello? Spirit in the room! Not to toot my own horn but...

Cael: Ben, really.

Rowan: Yeah, it was funny for about five seconds.

Margot: GUYS! He did it. I watched him.

Cael: No way.

Rowan: Margot, Ben can't channel your great to the power of twelve grandmother by himself.

Margot: He did!

Rowan: Ben, you need to stop now. Margot's losing her mind.

Ben: Teenagers... the name's not Ben, sweetheart. It's Eleanor.

Rowan: Eleanor?

Cael: Wasn't that your aunt's name?

Margot: Maybe this is who she was named after.

Ben: Named after? Oh honey, it's your aunt. I used to diaper you before my accident.

Margot: What accident?

Ben: Oh, nothing special. Just a little mishap with whipped cream, and here we are.

Rowan: I told you we couldn't contact your great to the power of twelve grandmother with that spell book.

Ben: What spell book?

*(Margot gives the book to Ben/Great Aunt Eleanor.)*

Ben: Oh, kitten, this is a cook book! I gave it to your parents as a wedding present!

Margot: But dad said it belonged to his great to the power of eleven grandmother...

Ben: It did.

Rowan: And it's full of spells.

Ben: They're recipes.

*(Rowan grabs the book from Ben/Great Aunt Eleanor and flips through it.)*

Cael: *(reading over Rowan's shoulder)* How are these recipes for food? Myrrh resin? Guinea Pepper? Eye of newt? Toe of frog?!

Ben: Wool of bat and tongue of dog, yeah, yeah. They didn't have McDonald's in your great grandmother's day.

Margot: That's sick.

Ben: Oh, some of them aren't so bad.

Margot: You've tried them?

Ben: Oh, sure. Back when I was your age, my friends and I used to go down to the pond and catch a few toads just to test out...

Cael: You ate toads?!

Ben: Oh, as if your generation's any better, sweetheart. At least we boiled ours before we licked 'em.

Rowan: Look, not that your childhood eating habits aren't fascinating, but maybe we could move on to a topic we can't discuss with someone who's alive. What's the afterlife like?

Ben: It's alright.

*(Silence.)*

Cael: That's it?

Ben: I don't want to get your hopes up or anything. I'm sure you'll miss all the yelling. *(Points at Rowan.)*

Rowan: Yelling? Why?

Margot: *(pouting.)* Because you do it all the time.

Rowan: Oh, shut up.

Margot: *(quietly)* Well, you do.

Rowan: I don't yell nearly as much as you cry, Margot! At least I have a spine!

*(Exit Margot in tears.)*

Rowan: Crap. *(to Cael)* Way to go. Margot, get back here!

*(Exit Rowan.)*

Cael: Wait, what did I do?!

*(Cael kicks the washing machine, immediately grabbing his foot and stifling a whimper. He turns to catch Ben/Great Aunt Eleanor staring at him.)*

Cael: What?

Ben: Can I ask you something?

Cael: *(hesitantly)* Sure.

Ben: Well, you may have noticed that I'm dead.

*(Cael nods.)*

Ben: And, if I were in my own body instead of your friend's here, I'd probably be quite pale. My eyes would be sunken and dark, my hair, stringy and flat. I'd be despondent, but all that would only be a result of my, you know, lack of pulse.

*(Cael nods again.)*

Ben: So I guess my question is... why the hell do you kids try to look dead?!

Cael: *(taking out his compact)* We don't look dead. We look...

Ben: Stupid.

Cael: *(sighing)* I know.

Ben: So wash your hair! And your face. I mean, if a boy your age likes that gunk on his face, who am I to judge, but...

Cael: It's not that simple.

Ben: You don't have to quit cold turkey. Just one dog collar at a time.

Rowan: *(from offstage)* Cael, do you have any paper bags? Margot won't stop hyperventilating!

Cael: In the kitchen! *(smiles and takes a sudden interest in his shoes.)*

Ben: That's the shouter, yes?

Cael: Her name's Rowan.

Ben: Mhm. I see now. She's a pretty girl.

Cael: I know! I mean... if dark and gorgeous is your thing.

Ben: It's clearly yours.

Cael: Me? Oh, I don't... I mean, she's really... but we're just friends. *(starts pacing)* That's it, nothing more. I mean, if you're thinking I just look this way to get her attention you're way off. Sure, sometimes it gets a little warm when you're wearing all black and maybe, every once in a while I like to sit back and nod along to a few pop songs from the 80's but it's not like I have a crush on Rowan and please don't say anything... oh God.

Ben: Mhm, mhm.

Cael: Look, it doesn't matter anyway. She thinks I'm a dork.

Ben: Of course she does. You're obsessed with being the "gothiest goth that ever gothed a goth." Why would she respect such a... a... poseur.

Cael: She'll have more respect for a poser than a conformist.

Ben: What, this girl can't like you for you? You need that kind of girl like a hole in the head!

Cael: The regular me isn't exactly her type. He's boring and he listens to Cyndi Lauper. At least I know she can tolerate the goth version.

Ben: I'll tell you one thing, I'd much rather spend my time with a Cyndi Lauper fan than the living dead.

*(Ben/Great Aunt Eleanor tosses Cael a rag from the laundry. He catches it and looks from the rag to Eleanor before wiping off his make up.)*

Ben: Oh, and whatever that scent is you kids use... Eau de Decay? Yeah, it's not pleasant.

Cael: I told you it gets warm wearing all black.

*(Enter Rowan.)*

Cael: Where's Margot?

Ben: I'd like to say goodbye before I give your friend here his body back...

Rowan: Your mom's making her hot chocolate, so she stopped sobbing. Her make-up's ruined though.

Ben: The horror!

*(Cael laughs.)*

Rowan: Something funny?

*(Cael looks at Ben/Great Aunt Eleanor, then hesitantly back at Rowan.)*



Cael: Well, yeah. See, Eleanor's little outburst was actually sarcasm, implying that she thought Margot's make-up was unattractive, and could therefore not be ruined further.

Rowan: Yeah, I got that. Thanks. What's wrong with your face?

Cael: This is how it looks when it's not covered in make up.

Rowan: Oh. Well, how'd you get a tan?

Cael: My family and I went to California in May.

Rowan: You said you locked yourself in your basement to properly mourn the anniversary of Ian Curtis' death.

Cael: I lied.

*(Enter Margot with a mug of hot chocolate and a can of whipped cream, sniffing.)*

Ben: There you are. I should get back to being dead, sweetheart, but—wait, what's that?

Margot: Hot chocolate?

Ben: *(pointing from the whipped cream to the candles)* Haven't you been told not to keep that near an open flame?!

Rowan: It's nowhere near...

*(Margot sprays the whipped cream on her hot chocolate and Ben/Great Aunt Eleanor shrieks. Margot bursts into tears.)*

Ben: That noise! I... er... *(closing his eyes and suddenly changing his speech)* but as I said, Slash, you're gonna have to learn to play on your own eventually.

Rowan: What?

Cael: What?

*(Margot whines.)*

Ben: You don't have to cry about it! I'll teach you. Just give me Axl's body for a while.

Cael: Axl?

Rowan: Slash?

Margot: *(sobbing)* Eleanor?!

Ben: What? Who's there?

Cael: Uh... Margot's friends.

Ben: Margot who?

Rowan: Your niece, Eleanor.

Ben: Eleanor! Ugh, this again.

Margot: What's going on?

Ben: She's always doing this. Panicking and dropping the connection. Getting our lines crossed when I'm on an important call! What happened this time?

Rowan: Nothing. Margot just came in with some whipped cream and...

Ben: Whipped cream?! Don't you know that's what killed her?

Rowan: So?

Ben: So she's terrified of it! What you have to be scared of when you're already dead, I don't know, but...

Margot: *(sobbing again)* I didn't think she'd mind!

Ben: Don't worry. We'll just have to wait for her to calm down.

All: Oh.

*(Silence.)*

Cael: So, what was that you were saying to Slash?

Rowan: What do you care?

Cael: I...I don't... just making conversation.

Ben: I'm not at liberty...

Cael: 'Cause it sounded like he's been channeling you to play...

Ben: Really, there are a lot of legal restrictions. I can't talk about it.

Rowan: As if Slash has a business deal with some random dead guy. This is such a joke.

Ben: Hey, I was a household name when I was alive!

Rowan: Doubt it.

Cael: Who are you?

Ben: Ricky Wilson. Rock Lobster, at your service.

Cael: No way!

Margot: Who?

Cael & Rowan: From the B-52's!

*(Cael and Rowan exchange glances, but Rowan contains her excitement.)*

Cael: You like the B-52's?

Rowan: I... just because I know his name doesn't mean I like them Cael!  
God, don't be such an idiot!

Margot: The Love Shack guys? You mean you've been playing for Guns N  
Roses?

Cael: Well you don't have to be rude about it. He's right there.

Ben: Don't worry about it, kid. I liked us.

*(Margot whines as she is ignored.)*

Cael: It just wasn't necessary, is all.

Ben: Meh, everyone's a critic. Life's too short to pay attention to that sort  
of thing.

- Rowan: That's a little ironic.
- Ben: Aren't you a little young to be bitter—er... ugh... *(starts speaking gibberish.)*
- Rowan: God, Cael. You can't hold a spirit in your house.
- Cael: Forgive me, our long-distance plan doesn't involve the post-living.
- Ben: *(covering his eyes.)* Get it out of here!
- Cael: What?
- Ben: The whipped cream. Put it away!
- Margot: *(throwing the can off stage)* It's gone.
- Ben: Sorry about that, sweethearts. Sometimes, when I get a little upset...
- Cael: Don't worry. Ricky Wilson already explained.
- Ben: Ricky? Oi, he's gonna give me an earful when I see him!
- Margot: *(sniffing)* I'm sorry. I didn't mean to.
- Ben: It's alright, lovey. But I should go before I interrupt anybody else's calls.
- Margot: Already?
- Rowan: You can't go! We didn't invoke a spirit just to find out that her great to the power of twelve grandmother ate frog toes and Guns and Roses still suck! Aren't you going to tell us something more? Give us some sort of profound advice?
- Cael: *(quietly)* She did.
- Ben: It's advice you want? Alright. *(in an eerie voice)* Heed the warnings on aerosol cans!
- (Rowan pouts as Margot hugs her aunt goodbye.)*
- Ben: *(to Rowan)* Look, sweetheart, I know you think it all gets easier after death, but it doesn't. I'd tell you the meaning of life if I knew it... but I don't.

Rowan:        Whatever. Just go.

Ben:         I'm sorry. *(to all)* I'll see you soon, kittens.

*(Cael and Margot exchange worried looks as Ben/Great Aunt Eleanor laughs.)*

Ben:         Just kidding.

*(Ben gasps and falls to the floor. The other three surround him as he slowly sits up.)*

Margot:      *(offering Ben her hot chocolate)* Are you okay?

*(Ben nods.)*

Cael:         Well, how do you feel?

*(Ben shrugs.)*

Rowan:       Do you remember anything?

Ben:         Nothing after the mention of Wang Chung's Greatest Hits. *(to Cael)*  
What's wrong with your face?

*(Cael starts to reply but is interrupted.)*

Rowan:       Well, you did it wrong anyway. You channeled Margot's great aunt.

Margot:      She ate toads.

Ben:         Cool.

Rowan:       Yeah. Cool. We've been planning this séance for months and all we get out of it is a caution for whipped cream and a disgusting cookbook.

Margot:      I thought it went well.

Rowan:       Did we contact a dead witch, Margot?

Margot:      No, but...

Rowan:       Exactly, so this was all just a waste of time.

Cael: Why do you have to look at the negative side of everything?

Rowan: Sorry, I forgot. You just wanna have fun.

Cael: Let it go!

Rowan: How are we supposed to trust a liar?

Cael: Do you want to trust me or judge me?

Rowan: You can judge me, but I can't do the same?

Cael: I don't judge you, none of us do! We just sit back and take your abuse.

Rowan: My abuse? *(to Margot and Ben)* Do you feel "abused"?

*(Margot grabs the hot chocolate from Ben.)*

Margot: Oh, no! It... it's cold. We should get more. Ben?

*(Margot grabs Ben by the arm and exits.)*

Rowan: I don't know how you managed to get them on your side but I'm not abusive. Being opinionated doesn't make you mean.

Cael: No, being mean makes you mean.

Rowan: I'm sorry I have a low tolerance for stupid.

Cael: You think everything's stupid. You judge everyone for everything, you constantly accuse me of faking...

Rowan: You are! I knew from the beginning you...

Cael: Shut up.

Rowan: Excuse me?

Cael: Shut up. Let me talk for five seconds and then you can go back to yelling. *(Clears his throat.)*

*(Rowan starts to count to five on her fingers, but Cael takes her hand.)*

Cael: I shouldn't have to defend myself. If I need to try to out-goth you just to hang out with you, then fine. I give up. I'll leave you alone. But let's get a few things straight first. I like bad 80's music. I like Madonna and Wham! and when I was five I wanted to be Rick James when I grew up. But I also own every Siouxi and the Banshees album... even Superstition. I like music that would make my grandmother sick. I like performing seances in my basement. I like taking spiked wristbands to the face in a mosh pit. And... I like you.

Rowan: Superstition was terrible.

Cael: I know.

Rowan: I like that Divinyls song. You know, "when I think about you..."

Cael: Me too.

*(Silence.)*

Rowan: Okay, are you gonna kiss me or what?

*(Enter Ben and Margot as Cael and Rowan kiss.)*

Ben: Oh, gross.

Margot: *(sobbing)* That's beautiful.