

A Guide for Staging a Live Performance of Missed Opportunities



Centre for Research & Education
on Violence against Women and Children



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DIRECTOR'S GUIDE

MISSED OPPORTUNITIES

INTRODUCTION

This Director's Guide has been written for community leaders and directors who want to stage the play *Missed Opportunities*. The play was written by London teacher and director, Toni Wilson, as a forum theatre production designed to actively engage audiences in the issue of domestic violence, specifically woman abuse. Funded by the Ontario Victim Services Secretariat, the play was performed in a series of workshops for business and community leaders in the London area during the fall of 2007. The response to the play was overwhelmingly positive and demonstrated clearly that theatre is an excellent forum to engage audiences in community-based dialogues.

Augusto Boal is the founder of Forum Theatre, also known as Theatre of the Oppressed. Boal, a Brazilian theatre director, writer and politician, used theatre to confront oppression in various forms. His belief that theatre enables us to create rather than wait for the future has inspired people all over the world. Boalian audiences do not sit passive in a darkened theatre but rather are encouraged to become part of the actor's struggle. With the help of "the Joker" (Facilitator), the audience confronts different forms of oppression that make up the human experience. Boal (who died in May 2009) was inspired by internationally renowned educator Paulo Friere and his groundbreaking work on oppression.

In the spirit of Boal's vision, *Missed Opportunities* is a Forum Theatre production. The play is filled with inappropriate language and behaviour and ongoing moments of abuse – verbal, psychological and physical. There are many opportunities for the bystanders and the witnesses to step in and say or do something that could alter the world in which they and the victim live.

CAST OF CHARACTERS

Sam: is the angry male character who is behaving abusively toward his family. He deflects blame and justifies his actions.

Dianne: is the female victim trapped in a violent relationship that is escalating out of control. She deflects concern and tries to hide her situation.

Hannah: is the daughter of Sam and Dianne. She is afraid of what is happening with her father and is concerned for the safety of her mother.

Dean: is Sam's friend but also a teacher who has an obligation to do the right thing. He is Adam's father and Susan's husband.

Susan: is Dianne's friend. She is aware that there is something wrong in Dianne's life but does not know how to address it.

Adam: is Hannah's boyfriend. He is worried about her and really wants to help but he is bound by keeping Hannah's secret.

Roy: is Sam's friend and Dianne's boss. He is concerned about Dianne and Sam but doesn't believe he can make a difference.

Reverend Hanley: is a family friend and minister. He has a professional and personal obligation to try to help.

FORUM THEATRE

The audience will see the play twice. The first time, the entire play will be presented. Before beginning, ask the audience to watch for the warning signs of abuse and think of things they could do to make a positive difference.

The second presentation of the play will happen scene by scene. Direct the audience to stop the play when he or she sees opportunities to change the story. They will be invited on stage to role play the moment followed by brief discussion of the particular intervention. (See Facilitator's Section)

Director's Assistant, Responsibilities:

- Compiles the music CD and takes care of the sound cues during the performance
- Ensures that there is a black backdrop placed on the stage approximately 15' back from the edge of the stage which the actors can all gather behind during the performance along with props and set pieces
- Gathers all of the set pieces and props and makes sure that they are properly placed and used at rehearsal and at performance
- Checks that the costumes are appropriate to the characters and that all pieces are used at rehearsal and at performance
- Listens carefully that the lines are delivered correctly
- Checks that there is a wireless microphone for the facilitator/joker to use during the performance.

GETTING STARTED

- Read the play carefully.
- It is important to cast the play well so that the characters are believable. The actors need to be passionate about the issues in the play. The characters of Sam and Dianne are critical to the success of the play. The

actor who plays the role of Sam must be a convincing, strong male personality who commands attention through size, looks, sexuality. The actor who plays the role of Dianne must be a convincing, sympathetic female personality who moves between despair and defensiveness through her physical and emotional presence.

- To facilitate the rehearsal process, have the actors arrive with the lines learned.

REHEARSALS

- Rehearsal #1 introduction / warm up / blocking of scenes
- Rehearsal #2 final blocking of scenes
- Rehearsal #3 Characterization
- Rehearsal #4 Characterization
- Rehearsal #5 Music / tableaux / opening lines / transitions
- Rehearsal #6 Full run through of the play
- Rehearsal #7 Interventions

Rehearsal #1

- Invite participants to sit in a circle
- Introduce yourself and the participants as well as the forum theatre project
- Engage actors through the use of a few warm up activities:
 - Sample warm ups:
 - Sit in a circle say your name and one reason you are interested in this project. (introduction)
 - Walk around the room and when the director says “face to face” turn and face the closest actor, introduce yourself and then as instructed, touch similar body parts i.e. one hand to one shoulder, knee to elbow, thumb to forehead etc. –
 - Continue walking around the room and when the director says “face to face” turn and face the closest actor, introduce yourself and then as instructed, talk about where you grew up or, a favourite holiday or, someone who has influenced you etc. – continue the activity for several minutes.
- Next, sit in a circle and read the play through with the actors – as a group discuss the play, the characters, clarify language etc.
- Walk through the play scene by scene determining entrances, exits, movement etc. using scripts and writing notes in pencil in the script

Rehearsal #2

- Sit in a circle / warm up (see sample warm ups on page x)

- Walk through the play scene by scene finalizing entrances, exits, movement etc. with scripts
- Go through the play scene by scene without scripts

Rehearsal #3

- Sit in a circle / warm up
- Go through the play scene by scene several times without scripts focusing on characterization (line delivery, timing, conviction, consistency, emotion, the actor's relationship to every other character in the piece.....)

Rehearsal #4

- Sit in a circle / warm up
- Go through the play scene by scene several times without scripts focusing on characterization (line delivery, timing, conviction, consistence, emotion, your relationship to every other character in the piece)

Rehearsal #5

- Sit in a circle / warm up
- Introduce music/tableaux/opening lines
- Determine and perfect transitions with set pieces and props

Rehearsal #6

- Full run of the play several times with music, props, set pieces...so that everyone is confident for performance

Rehearsal #7

- Interventions occur the second time the play is seen by the audience. Audience members are encouraged to stop the play whenever they see opportunities to intervene. When someone from the audience comes on stage and to try their idea for intervention, the actors need to stay in character to test the merit of the intervention.
- The actors need to prepare for these interventions – during rehearsal anticipate the points at which you think someone may intervene and discuss with the cast possible lines people will say or actions people will take and then take turns role playing the intervention moments.

Staging

MUSIC is critical to the emotional success of the play – use appropriate, current music at the beginning of the play and for each transition – there is no music at

the after the final scene because the play ends at the moment of crisis and all of the actors freeze and individually state their thought at that moment in time.

The first song sets the stage for the play – during the song the actors are lined up behind the curtain and as the song begins they come out from behind the curtain on both sides of the stage and line up facing backwards – as the song plays the actors create a series of 6-8 tableaux which tell the story – during the last tableau the music fades, the actors move to the front of the stage and one by one from stage right to stage left they convincingly state one phrase that best captures their situation.

The phrases they choose are a mix of painful, shocked, offensive and angry statements, all directed at the audience. Each actor says his or her line, one at a time. Next the actors repeat their lines in unison building to a crescendo that is followed by a few moments of silence as the actors stare at the audience in a moment of truth. They then turn and take their places behind the curtain ready to begin the play.

TRANSITIONS

Transitions must be precisely planned – determine which set pieces and props are essential to the success of the scene and use only a few – determine who will place the pieces and who will take the pieces off and rehearse this so that everything is slick and smooth.

INTERVENTIONS

Scene One: At the Grocery Store

Reverend and Dianne

- The Reverend has opportunity to support Dianne – affirm/ask/assess/act
- Dianne is unwilling to say very much because she is afraid of the repercussions and does not feel safe

Susan and Dianne

- Susan needs to assure Dianne that she is concerned about her and that she is there for support
- Dianne listens and may reveal that she is having difficulty or she may say that she will consider what Susan has said and talk to her later

Scene Two: At Home

There are no possible interventions in this scene because the victims, Dianne and Hannah need support – victims cannot effectively challenge oppressors and Sam is a dangerous character

Scene Three: At Work

Roy and Dianne

- Roy needs to tell Dianne that he has noticed her hand, assess the situation and offer support – he needs to cautiously ask questions, affirm her feelings and tell her that he is there for her anytime – call me if you need me – suggest counseling or talking to a trusted friend

Scene Four At School

Adam and Hannah

- Adam wants to support his girlfriend – he needs to listen and affirm her feelings - he needs to ask good questions, assess her safety and tell her that he will talk to someone for advice and go with her to his parents or to a guidance counselor or a trusted adult to get help

Dean and Adam

- Dean is an adult, a parent and a teacher – he needs to support his son effectively - he needs to offer help for Hannah by suggesting that she go with Adam and see her guidance counselor – he needs to tell both Adam and Hannah that he is there for them and that he will go for advice as to how to effectively deal with his friend Sam

Scene Five Golfing

Roy, Dean and Sam

- Dean wants to tell Roy and Sam that he does not appreciate their sexist humour – Dean also wants to address Sam's criticism of Adam (a fag who goes to plays and doesn't play football)

Roy and Dean talk about Sam

- They talk about what they can do to help their friend
- They could plan to meet with Sam as friends and talk carefully about what they have noticed without judgment (Sam lost his promotion, he seems angry, he puts women down, he is sexist and homophobic, he reacts negatively very quickly...)
- because Hannah has told Adam about the abuse, Roy and Dean cannot ignore this knowledge and need to talk to someone for advice so that they can support Dianne and Hannah.

Scene Six: At the Barbecue

Adam and Hannah

- Adam needs to listen to Hannah's concerns and offer support

Susan and Dianne

- Susan needs to talk to Dianne and tell her that what she sees in Dianne and Sam's relationship is not okay and suggest that they go together to talk to someone and get help

Hannah and Dianne

- Hannah needs to tell her mother that she is worried about her and that she is afraid for their safety – she needs to try to convince her mother that they need help

Dean, Roy, Reverend, and Sam

- the men need to step in early in the scene before Sam loses control and take him away from the main action just to talk and listen and through doing this offer support – Sam will continue to deny or simply accept a grain of truth, deflect or project blame, minimize his actions with strong evidence, and justify his behaviour - we need to think carefully as to how we truly support victims and effectively and carefully challenge the cover up of the abuser/oppressor.

FACILITATOR'S GUIDE

***Missed Opportunities* The Role of the Facilitator/Joker**

- The role of the facilitator/joker in Forum Theatre is to help audience members try out their ideas for intervention. Interventions need to be realistic and short. The actors stay in role to help the audience see the impact of their approach and ideas.
- Be sure to perform the play with the house lights on. It is important to create intimacy between the audience and the performers. The audience should not be too large. (no more than 100 people)
- Before the play begins, the facilitator/joker introduces the play with a clear explanation of what is to come.

Below is the information and introduction that Toni uses as the Joker:

“Missed Opportunities is filled with inappropriate language and behaviour as well as verbal, psychological and physical abuse. There are many missed opportunities for the bystanders and witnesses to step in and say or do something which would alter the world in which the victim lives.

You will see the play twice. The first time you see the play, think of something you could do or say to make a positive difference. Pay attention to the obvious moments as well as the subtle moments. It is important that

you de-escalate situations, that you refrain from judgment and that you talk honestly about how you feel and what you want. It is important to ask for support from others particularly when dealing with the oppressive male character in the play.

Always affirm what someone tells you, ask for information, assess the situation in terms of safety and support and then act appropriately. Remind people that you are there for them if they need you. The second time you see the play, I will ask you to raise your hand and stop the play, join me on stage and role play a moment. My actors will help you initially with a few lines and then you will take it from there. I will coach you and when you are finished the role play we will talk about the experience.

This is my challenge to you: if you let moments go by you are actually condoning the behaviour you see. You are saying that it's okay and we all know that it is not okay. Also, it's the little things that make a difference. We must decide to say something early rather than let things pass up by so that the victims' lives don't end up in tragedy. The play is called *Missed Opportunities*."

Note: Tell the audience that the play is difficult to experience and let them know who the professionals are and where they can be accessed if they need support following the experience.

As soon as the play ends in tableaux, the facilitator/joker arrives on the stage to talk to the audience. Have the actors stand in a line upstage. The facilitator/joker will introduce the characters and explain to the audience:

"This is the world we have created for you; I will now introduce the characters:

Sam: is the oppressive angry male character who cannot see clearly and continually justifies his actions. He deflects blame and minimizes his abusive behaviour.

Dianne: is the female victim who feels worthless and helpless and desperately needs the support of others.

Hannah: is the female witness to abuse who is afraid of her father and concerned for the safety of her mother.

Dean: is Sam's friend but also a teacher who has an obligation to do the right thing but is not as effective as he could be.

Susan: is Dianne's friend. She is aware that there is something wrong with her friend but does not give enough support or advice.

Adam: is Hannah's boyfriend who is worried about her but does not know what to do and needs more effective support from his father.

Roy: is Sam's friend and Dianne's boss. He encourages Sam's inappropriate humour and tries to speak to Dianne supportively but the bottom line is that he wants to stay out of other people's business.

Reverend Hanley: is a family friend but misses the opportunity to really help Dianne.

Before we see the play again from the beginning, I will explain the rules of forum theatre:

1. As a spectator, watch for moments where the story could be changed to create a different outcome. Put your hand up and say stop when you see something inappropriate or see the opportunity for change. You may play both male or female roles. Be yourself. We are interested in your positive idea.
2. Do not bring magic into the play. Do not add anything to the story. Maintain the relationships that have been presented. e.g. Yes, it is true that Dianne loves Sam. It would be unrealistic for her to walk out the door and leave him just like that.
3. You cannot take out the oppressive male character in the play, Sam. The reason for that is simple. In real life these difficult characters do not magically disappear. They are there again each and every day. They are at work, at school, at home.....We need to practice strategies to use in these difficult situations.
4. I caution you not to play the role of Dianne or Hannah in scene 2 when Sam/Dad is extremely confrontational. It is too late for Dianne and Hannah to change the situation at that point. They need help!
5. Before we begin let's play a game called Circles and Squares. With me, please make a circle in the air with your right hand. Very good. Now, please stop and make a square with your left hand. Very good. Lastly, please stop and now at the same time, make a circle with your right hand and a square with your left hand. Enjoy the moment and comment on the excellence of the audience. This activity has two objectives: one is to engage the audience in preparation for the interaction to follow; secondly it is to make a point. We need to practice what we do and with practice we will always get better. Just as we practice sports or music, we need to practice strategies to use in abusive situations. Our hope is that you take these ideas and strategies with you and use them in your real lives and in so doing help and support victims and make a positive difference in the world.

Let's begin – we will struggle together and hopefully learn something at the same time.”

Now the play will commence from the beginning:

The facilitator/joker knows where the audience will probably want to stop the play. He/She should encourage the audience to raise a hand and stop the play. If the audience does not stop the play early on, it is important that the facilitator/joker stop the play for them. At this point, he/she needs to talk to the audience, ask them perhaps to share a possible idea or strategy with the person beside them (Think, Pair, Share) and then encourage one person to venture on stage and role play the moment followed by dialogue.

The facilitator/joker should not tell the audience member what to say or do but whisper a few considerations to the participant as he or she proceeds in the moment. Remember just how difficult and emotional it is to be on stage in front of an audience trying desperately to effectively affect positive change. Be understanding; be supportive; make the moment as comfortable as possible. Do not be afraid to jump in and ask the actor to stop pushing and let the intervener speak.

The actors have been trained to push back so that the moment is as realistic as possible. The struggle between the actor and the intervener is central to skill building and finding solutions. Do not be afraid to ask the intervener questions to encourage further ideas. When the intervention is complete, ask the intervener what he/she was hoping for? Ask if he/she felt the idea worked? You may ask the actor how he/she felt the intervention affected him/her. Always thank the intervener and then move on with the play.

It is not necessary to replay every part of the play. It is a good idea to begin again at a point in the play that leads to the next probable intervention moment. Be sure not to let the actors coach the audience members. It is the responsibility of the facilitator/joker to carefully and respectfully manage not only the audience but the actors as well. It is absolutely critical that the integrity and dignity of each person who is part of the forum experience is maintained by the sensitivity and professionalism of the facilitator/joker.

At the end of the forum experience be sure to thank everyone for their commitment and conscientious participation in the process and leave everyone with words of encouragement for the future. Remind the audience that there are professionals to talk to should anyone feel the need for further support after the event.

The play is approximately 15 minutes long and the following interventions usually take approximately 45 - 60 minutes.

REFERENCES

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MISSED OPPORTUNITIES
Toni Wilson and Gillian Fournier

CAST

Hannah Kelly: Abused daughter
Dianne Kelly: Abused wife
Sam Kelly: Abusive husband
Adam Van Buren: Hannah's boyfriend
Susan Van Buren: Dean's wife, positive influence
Dean Van Buren: Teacher at the school, Adam's dad, healthy influence
Roy Dodge: Dianne's Boss, healthy influence
Reverend Hanley: Local minister from the church the Kelly's attend

HOUSE LIGHTS TO BE LEFT ON

EVERY BREATH YOU TAKE (POLICE)

TABLEAUX: (presented one by one depicting each of the scenes as the song plays)

1. Dianne Susan Hannah
2. Hannah Sam Dianne
3. Roy Dianne
4. Adam Hannah
5. Adam Dean
6. Sam Dean Roy
7. Dean Susan Roy Adam Hannah Sam Dianne Reverend

OPENING LINES: (as the song fades out, the actors move downstage in a line and one by one convincingly state each of the following lines repeatedly getting louder and louder and then silence)

Sam	“Shut the hell up!”
Dianne	“I thought he loved me.”
Dean	“He’s such an asshole.”
Susan	“Why do you stay with him?”
Adam	“I don’t know what to do.”
Hannah	“This isn’t fair.”
Roy	“It’s none of our business.”
Reverend	“What are we supposed to do?”

Scene 1: At the Grocery Store

[Scene opens with DIANNE walking to the car from the grocery store, holding keys in her hand and a grocery bag in the other; DIANNE'S left hand is wrapped, and she is in a hurry; enter Reverend]

DIANNE: Reverend Hanley, how are you?

REVEREND: Fine, thank you. How are you?

DIANNE: Oh good thanks.

REVEREND: I haven't seen you at church in quite a few weeks.

DIANNE: I know. Our family has been awfully busy.

REVEREND: How is everyone?

DIANNE: Oh, good. Hannah made the school play, and is a part of the yearbook committee and Sam, well, he's busy with work. It can be awfully stressful for him.

REVEREND: I can imagine. How's "Dodge Real Estate" running these days?

DIANNE: Great, thanks. Roy's thinking about opening another office. But we're not sure when that'll happen.

REVEREND: I see. Now what happened here? *[Motioning to DIANNE'S hand]*

DIANNE: Oh this, uh... nothing really, I guess I spilled some water while I was trying to strain spaghetti.

REVEREND: Well it looks like it hurts.

DIANNE: It's nothing serious.

REVEREND: Have you seen a doctor?

DIANNE: I don't have time. Really it's nothing.

REVEREND: I see. Are you sure you're okay?

DIANNE: Oh yes, I was just doing too many things at once I guess.

REVEREND: Dianne, I'm concerned.....

DIANNE: Well, actually Reverend, Sam and I are having some difficulties....

[Enter SUSAN]

SUSAN: Dianne, Reverend, how are you?

DIANNE: Fine thanks.

REVEREND: Well isn't this a lovely surprise!

DIANNE: It's been a long time.

SUSAN: You know how it is; things just seem to get busier and busier.

REVEREND: Everybody's in the same boat these days.

DIANNE: Anyway I should probably get going; Sam was expecting me fifteen minutes ago.

SUSAN: *[Jokingly]* So supper should be ready the minute you walk in the door right? *[Laughs]*

DIANNE: *[Laughs nervously]* I'm not sure about that. I will talk to you later.

SUSAN: Take care Dianne, oh and make sure to call me about Sunday!

DIANNE: I won't forget. Goodbye Reverend. *[DIANNE exits]*

SUSAN: Yes, Dean's fifty-fifth birthday is this Sunday.

REVEREND: Well, soon he'll be nearly as old (or young) as me.

SUSAN: We're having a barbeque and I would love for you to come. I know that Dean would really appreciate it.

REVEREND: I'll try to make it.

SUSAN: Well you have our number. Take care, Reverend.
REVEREND: Goodbye.
[REVEREND and SUSAN exit in opposite directions]

WITH OR WITHOUT YOU (U2)

Scene 2: At Home

[Scene opens with SAM sitting on the couch, drinking a beer; HANNAH enters timidly, wearing a backpack]

HANNAH: Hi dad.
SAM: Hi honey.
HANNAH: How was your day?
SAM: Work's work. Did you bring in the mail?
HANNAH: Oh, no I forgot. Sorry.
SAM: Fine, I guess your mother will pick it up when she comes home.
HANNAH: Alright.
SAM: So how was your biology test?
HANNAH: You mean math?
SAM: Yeah, whatever.
HANNAH: Uh, it was alright.

[Hannah begins to unpack her things and the telephone rings: RING RING RING]

SAM: Well, are you going to get that?
HANNAH: Hello? – Oh, hi Mr. VanBuren. – Yes, he's right here. *[Covers the receiver]* Dad, it's for you. *[Passes the phone to SAM where he is sitting on the couch]*

SAM: Hello? – Oh, hey Dean! How are you? – Glad to hear it. Listen, are we still golfing Saturday? – Yep, tee-off is at three. – Sounds good. – Alright see you then. – Bye. *[Hangs the phone up]*

HANNAH: Dad, can I still use the car on Saturday night?

SAM: We'll have to see about that.

HANNAH: But, on Monday you told me-

SAM: I don't know what the hell you're talking about. Why don't you just take your mother's car?

HANNAH: Well, I asked you and you said that-

SAM: Speaking of which, where the hell is she?

HANNAH: I don't know.

SAM: She said she'd be home by four-thirty.

HANNAH: She probably will be home soon.

SAM: We're supposed to eat at five. It's the same every night; I don't understand why she has such a freaking problem with that.

[SAM angrily starts flipping through channels on the television]

[DIANNE enters carrying groceries]

DIANNE: Hello.

HANNAH: Hi mom.

SAM: Where were you? *[Rises and crosses to DIANNE]*

DIANNE: I had to get groceries. I left a message.

SAM: You always do this. You make your own plans. Hell, why do you have to live in your own little world Dianne?

DIANNE: I'm sorry but the line was busy when I called.

SAM: You make me so tired you know that? I work my ass off all day and come home to this. All I ask is for supper at five o'clock and here you are waltzing home at quarter to five.

DIANNE: I'm sorry alright?

SAM: You're always sorry.
[Dianne bends to pick up the grocery bags, slowly; SAM doesn't feel she is moving fast enough and grabs the bags from her]

SAM: Christ! You're useless you know that?

DIANNE: Sam, what do you want me to say?

SAM: Just fucking make supper!
[HANNAH crosses to pick up the remainder of her mother's bags]

SAM: Go do your homework Hannah.

HANNAH: I was just trying to help.

SAM: Go! Do your homework!

DIANNE: Sam...

SAM: What?!

DIANNE: Leave her out of this.

SAM: You shut up!

DIANNE: Sam, I-

SAM: What did I say? *[Violently grabs her wrist]*

DIANNE: Sam, stop it!

SAM: What are you doing with that stupid bandage on your hand?!
[Pulling on her hand]

DIANNE: Don't touch me!

SAM: I'm going to do whatever the hell I want!

DIANNE: You're hurting me!

SAM: You're stupid you know that? You never amounted to anything.
[Angrily let's go; DIANNE nearly falls over]

[SAM returns to the couch, angrily; HANNAH tries to seem inconspicuous off to the side of the room; SAM changes the channels over a few seconds of silence onstage]

SAM: Hannah, you can take the car on Saturday night. I'll be home by six.

HANNAH: *[Timidly, afraid of SAM'S reaction]* Thanks dad.

SOMEDAY (NICKELBACK)

Scene 3: At Work

[It is morning; DIANNE walks into work late and encounters her boss ROY]

ROY: Good morning Dianne!

DIANNE: Sorry I'm late Roy.

ROY: Don't worry about it, there's another five minutes until we open anyway.

DIANNE: *[Sits down and shuffling papers at a desk]*

ROY: How is your hand?

DIANNE: It's fine.

ROY: What did the doctor say?

DIANNE: I haven't had time to have it looked at.

ROY: You really should.

DIANNE: *[Changing the subject]* You know what, I forgot to call the lighting company about the Dawson contract.

ROY: The Dawsons will be here around eleven; do you think their contract will be ready or do we need to call them?

DIANNE: It'll be finished, I'm sorry, I'll find the number here and I can make the order.

ROY: That's good. Oh, and what about the Carter contract? What did the brick-layer say?

DIANNE: Staintons' left a message confirming the brick order yesterday.

ROY: Perfect, would you please call the Carters and ask them to come in to choose their flooring?

DIANNE: Yes, of course.

ROY: Would you like a cup of coffee?

DIANNE: Yes, thank you.

ROY: Did Susan VanBuren call you about the barbecue on Sunday?

DIANNE: She did.

ROY: Good, do you think that you will all be able to make it?

DIANNE: I'm not sure yet, I haven't had a chance to talk to Sam about it.

ROY: Ah, I see.

DIANNE: Our family has been so busy these past few weeks.

ROY: I know what you mean; I remember when my kids were teenagers.

DIANNE: I can imagine.

ROY: Those were the good days.

DIANNE: I'm sure they were.

ROY: I remember how hard it was on Martha and me sometimes.

DIANNE: It can be difficult, but Hannah isn't much of a handful.

ROY: Very true, she's a good kid.

DIANNE: *[Hesitantly, obviously thinking about something else]* Sam and I are lucky.

ROY: Are you okay Dianne?

DIANNE: I'm fine, why do you ask?

ROY: I guess. In the five years I've been working with you...well, you're not usually late.

DIANNE: Oh, I'm terribly sorry about that, Hannah missed the bus this morning and I had to drive her to school.

ROY: How's Sam doing?

DIANNE: He's fine, I guess work has been getting the best of him lately, but that's how it is for everyone now and then.

ROY: Hmm. Are you two planning on going anywhere over Christmas this year?

DIANNE: I don't think so.

ROY: You should really think about it, I think you two could use a vacation.

DIANNE: Well, I don't think that Sam would be up to it.

ROY: Why do you say that?

DIANNE: He's not big on vacations.

ROY: Please don't think I'm being too forward but, how are things between you and Sam?

DIANNE: They're fine. Well, I really should call the Carters.
ROY: Are you sure? I just mean that... Well before Martha and I were divorced...
DIANNE: Thank you Roy, but my family has just been very busy. Everything's fine.
ROY: Of course, I'm sorry I brought it up.
DIANNE: Not to worry; I really need to make a few calls.
ROY: Alright, I have an appointment at nine, but I'm free at ten-thirty to wrap things up.
DIANNE: That sounds perfect.

FAST CARS (TRACY CHAPMAN)

Scene 4: At School

[Scene opens with ADAM waiting for HANNAH in the hallway]

ADAM: Hey beautiful how are you?
HANNAH: I'm alright.
ADAM: Where were you this morning?
HANNAH: I missed the bus. Our stupid driver has been coming earlier this week; I almost missed the bus yesterday.
ADAM: That sucks.
HANNAH: Yeah.
ADAM: So how did you do on the math test?
HANNAH: *[Unhappily]* You tell me how you did first.
ADAM: Eighty five.
HANNAH: Shit!
ADAM: What is it?
HANNAH: I bombed it. I got a 70. My dad is going to kill me if he finds out.
ADAM: Don't worry about it, it's just one test.
HANNAH: I know, it's just that I...I guess I didn't get much sleep the night before.
ADAM: Why?
HANNAH: Well, between that history paper and my parents.
ADAM: Are they fighting again?
HANNAH: Yeah.
ADAM: Man; that does suck.
HANNAH: No kidding. I guess...It's just been getting worse.
ADAM: What do you mean?
HANNAH: Well, they used to yell. That was it, right? But now...
ADAM: What happened Hannah?
HANNAH: He's started hitting her okay?
ADAM: What?
HANNAH: He's been hitting her and no matter what I say ... you know, it just doesn't stop.
ADAM: God, that isn't right.
HANNAH: I know. I don't know what to do about it.
ADAM: There has to be something.
HANNAH: I guess I'm just worried that it's going to get worse.
ADAM: You know, sometimes this stuff just works itself out.

HANNAH: I don't know Adam...A few days ago; he ended up pouring a pot of boiling water on her hand.

ADAM: Oh man...

HANNAH: He's really scaring me.

ADAM: *[Hugs HANNAH]* It'll be okay Hannah, trust me. You're fine.

HANNAH: Promise me this will stay between us.

ADAM: Yeah, for sure.

[Enter DEAN VANBUREN]

HANNAH: Alright, I have to go to the yearbook meeting. Can I call you tonight?

ADAM: Yeah, I'll be home.

DEAN: Hey Hannah, how are you?

HANNAH: Fine thanks Mr. VanBuren.

DEAN: I'm glad to hear it.

ADAM: Dad, did you pick up the tickets for the play on Saturday?

DEAN: Not yet, but I ordered them online just now.

ADAM: Thanks.

HANNAH: Yes, thank you. Well, I better go before Ms. Farley gets upset.

DEAN: Sounds like a good idea. *[Laughs]* You don't want to get that old bird angry.

HANNAH: I'll talk to you later, take care!

ADAM: I'll talk to you tonight.

DEAN: Bye.

[Exit HANNAH]

ADAM: Are you ready to go?

DEAN: Yes, I just need to pick up my briefcase from my office, and one of my students should be finished writing a test he missed in the next five minutes.

ADAM: Alright.

DEAN: Did you get your math test back?

ADAM: Yep.

DEAN: How did you do?

ADAM: Eighty-five.

DEAN: Did you spell your name wrong again?

ADAM: You're funny dad.

DEAN: Naturally.

ADAM: Dad... Do you remember that kid that you had a few years back that you were really worried about?

DEAN: Uh yea. Why?

ADAM: Okay, um. His dad was abusive right?

DEAN: As far as I remember... Why do you ask?

ADAM: What can you do about something like that?

DEAN: Well, I guess I spoke to the student, and when I found out that he was being hurt at home, I called CAS.

ADAM: You did?

DEAN: What's this about Adam?

ADAM: What would you say if I told you that it was happening to one of my friends?

DEAN: Adam, tell me what's going on.

ADAM: It's Hannah.
 DEAN: Are you sure?
 ADAM: Yeah, it's been going on for a while I guess.
 DEAN: *[Takes a deep breath]* What has she said to you.
 ADAM: Well, Sam and Dianne haven't been getting along for a while. Hannah's been saying that it's just been getting worse. But dad, you can't say anything.
 DEAN: What do you mean by worse?
 ADAM: Sam's been hurting her.
 DEAN: He's been hurting Hannah?
 ADAM: No, just Dianne. Please, you can't say anything; I promised Hannah that I wouldn't repeat this.
 DEAN: Don't worry.
 ADAM: What am I supposed to say to her?
 DEAN: It sounds like you just need to be there for her right now.
 ADAM: That's it?
 DEAN: I suppose. Sometimes relationships can be funny.
 ADAM: I guess.
 DEAN: If anything else happens, you know you can talk to me about it right?
 ADAM: Okay.
 DEAN: The same goes for Hannah. Maybe you could tell her that.
 ADAM: Yeah.
 DEAN: Does that help?
 ADAM: Uh, yeah, I guess that's all I can do right?
 DEAN: *[Sighs]* Pretty much. I am going to check on that student of mine and pick up my things. I'll meet you out in the parking lot in ten minutes?
 ADAM: Yeah, I'll see ya.

BETTER MAN (PEARL JAM)

Scene 5: Golfing

[Scene opens, SAM, DEAN, and ROY are having a beer together on the driving range after golfing, each hold a club; SAM takes a swing at the green]

ROY: And I said "Lick her... I hardly even know her." *[Laughs at his own joke]* Get it? *[Continues his laughter]*
[SAM and DEAN look at each other then laugh at the absurdity of ROY'S joke]
 DEAN: *[Sarcastically]* Good one Roy.
 SAM: Hey, I've got one: How many men does it take to open a beer?
 ROY: Tell us.
 SAM: None, she should have it open before she gets to the couch!
 DEAN: *[Laughing nervously]* Oh, man Sam.
 SAM: Good one eh?
 ROY: Learned from the best. *[Referring jokingly to himself]*
 DEAN: So you're all coming over for the barbeque tomorrow?
 ROY: Yep *[Takes his turn driving; takes a swing]* I forgot you were so old!

DEAN: It's only my fifty-fifth. How about you Sam, do you think you can make it?

SAM: I just found out about it today. The wife forgot to give me the message.

DEAN: It's not a big deal. I just need to know if you plan on coming.

SAM: Yes, we'll be there.

DEAN: Good. We can break in the new pool table.

ROY: Maybe I can teach you young'uns how to play! *[Laughs]*

SAM: I don't know about that. Remember when we were at the cottage.

DEAN: *[Laughs]* You're not counting that.

ROY: You beat an old man with a bad back! Nice try Sam.

SAM: Can you get the cottage for the same weekend this year?

ROY: I'll have to see when my sister's not using it.

DEAN: Figures eh?

SAM: Women!

ROY: Tell me about it. In any case, I'm sure that I can work something out.

SAM: I should go soon. I promised Hannah the car to take *your boy* to the play! *[Teasing DEAN]*

DEAN: What's wrong with a play?

SAM: I wouldn't want a son of mine hanging out at the Grand Theatre like some fag.

DEAN: Whoa, Sam. They're going to see the play because their friend is in it, as are a few of my students.

SAM: And you wonder why he never made the football team.

DEAN: Sam-

ROY: *[Trying to de-escalate the situation; awkwardly]* To each his own, eh boys?

DEAN: I would be going if Susan weren't having her sister down from Barrie.

SAM: Well, that's unfortunate for you then. I should go. I'll see you tomorrow.

ROY: See ya.

DEAN: Bye.

[SAM exits, obviously aggravated by DEAN]

ROY: What is his problem?

DEAN: God, I don't know.

ROY: Things have gone downhill for him ever since he lost that promotion last fall.

DEAN: He's never been like this.

ROY: Something's not right.

DEAN: Adam was telling me that things have gotten pretty bad between him and Dianne.

ROY: That makes sense, she seems agitated lately.

DEAN: But that's not it...

ROY: What do you mean?

DEAN: I shouldn't be saying anything.

ROY: What's going on?

DEAN: Between us... I think he's been abusing her.

ROY: Are you serious?
DEAN: I know, I had a hard time imagining it too... but I guess Hannah was upset and told Adam.
ROY: I hope they're okay.
DEAN: So do I.
ROY: Well there's nothing we can do.
DEAN: I'm not sure. I've been thinking about it, I mean...
ROY: I remember a guy my sister dated, God it was years ago, but it was the same thing. Then one night she came home in tears. Her boyfriend drove her home from the movie theatre, screaming at her the whole way because of the way she looked at one of the ushers. It was ridiculous. You can't stop these guys, Dean.
DEAN: There's got to be something Roy. *[Sighs]*
ROY: Just let it be, it's none of our business.

WAITING ON THE WORLD (JOHN MAYER)

Scene 6: At the Barbeque

[Scene opens with ROY and DEAN standing by a cooler, drinking beer; SUSAN is sitting with ADAM and talking about the play from the night before; as conversation passes from group to group, the conversations continue inaudibly]

ROY: And then the bastard told me that he put the wrong windows in.
DEAN: Seriously?
ROY: Exactly! All he's doing is creating more work for the rest of us.
DEAN: I can imagine that your clients were unimpressed.
ROY: Unimpressed is right. They threatened to call their lawyer. It's just created this huge mess.
DEAN: No kidding.
ADAM: *[Flipping through a playbill]* See Mom, there's Sarah, and Mark. She was amazing, I mean, her solo was unbelievable.
SUSAN: I wish I could have seen the play.
ADAM: You would have enjoyed it.
SUSAN: I'll have to ask her mother for a copy.
ADAM: Yeah.
ROY: So you're fifty-five, eh old man?
DEAN: Yeah, yeah.
ROY: Soon enough you'll be playing with your grandkids!
DEAN: I don't know about that.
ROY: Well that Adam of yours, he and Sam's girl are quite the couple.
DEAN: Don't get me started Roy.
ROY: I'm just razzing you.
[Enter SAM, DIANNE, and HANNAH]
SAM: Happy birthday!
ROY: Hey!
DEAN: Hey, thank you.
[SAM shakes his hand vigorously and hands him a bottle of wine]
SAM: For fifty-five years of being a smart ass.
DEAN: Funny, Sam

DIANNE: Happy birthday Dean.
[Hugs DEAN politely; obviously having been family friends for a long time]

DEAN: Thank you Dianne.

SUSAN: Hello everyone! I'm glad you were able to come out!

ALL: Hello/Hi/Hi there/etc.
[Having entered but not spoken, HANNAH is obviously upset, and crosses the stage to speak to ADAM]

ADAM: *[Hugs HANNAH]* Hey, are you alright?

HANNAH: I don't know.

ADAM: What's wrong?

HANNAH: I can't stand this anymore.

ADAM: What do you mean?

HANNAH: He yelled at her nearly the entire way over, and now they're acting like everything's perfectly fine.

ADAM: I know it sucks Hannah. You just have to be there for your mom.

HANNAH: I don't know how much longer I can take this.

DIANNE: So how was your sister?

SUSAN: Good, you know. It's always fun having family over.

DIANNE: Tell me about it *[Laughs]*.

SUSAN: How is your hand doing?

DIANNE: Oh, I told you, it was nothing.

SUSAN: You have a second-degree burn Dianne; it doesn't take a rocket scientist to know that you should see a doctor.

DIANNE: I'm fine alright?

SUSAN: I'm just worried about you.

DIANNE: It's not a big deal Susan.

SUSAN: Alright.

DEAN: Don't let me forget to show you two the new pool table. It's a beauty; a chore to get into the basement, but a beauty.

SAM: *[Has been watching HANNAH talk to ADAM about her family's problems and is extremely unimpressed]* Was that your birthday present from the wife?

ROY: I bet that's not all you got.

DEAN: Her sister was over last night.

ROY: Poor baby. *[Laughs]*

SAM: I'll be back in a second *[Crosses to HANNAH]* Hannah, will you come here for a minute? *[Grabs her wrist and forcefully brings her over to the extreme of the stage]* What the hell do you think you're doing?

HANNAH: Dad, I'm not doing anything.

SAM: No one needs to know about what goes on between your mother and I.

HANNAH: Dad I-

SAM: You better not have told your dumb-ass boyfriend about any of this!

HANNAH: We were just talking about school.

SAM: You're a liar! You're so much like your mother sometimes, do you know that?

HANNAH: But Dad-

SAM: If I find out that you have said anything about our family's private business to anyone, you have no idea what's coming! Do you understand me?!

HANNAH: Yes.

SAM: Good!

[SAM crosses back to where the other men are standing by the cooler and DIANNE rises and crosses over to where HANNAH is standing]

DIANNE: Don't get him started Hannah.

HANNAH: I didn't do anything Mom, I was just talking to Adam, and Dad snapped.

DIANNE: I don't care.

HANNAH: But Mom-

DIANNE: Grow up Hannah. Your father isn't going to change. You just need to learn to live with it. Just don't set him off again. Not tonight.

HANNAH: Alright.

DIANNE: Okay.

[Enter REVEREND]

REVEREND: Hello.

ALL: Hey/Hi/etc.

SUSAN: I'm glad that you could make it Reverend Henley.

REVEREND: As am I. Happy birthday Dean.

DEAN: Thank you Reverend.

ROY: Sam, you were saying that you brought your camera?

SAM: Yeah, Dianne should have it. *[Crosses to centre stage]* Dianne?

DIANNE: Yes?

SAM: Where is the camera?

DIANNE: Did you not bring it?

SAM: No. You said that you had it.

DIANNE: Well, maybe it's in the car. I remember handing it to you.

SAM: It's not in the car. Fuck, why do you always screw things up?

DIANNE: I'm sorry Sam, but I remember giving it to you before we left.

SAM: It's always like this with you.

ADAM: Hey, uh, I can get my digital camera from upstairs, it should be charged.

SAM: Thank you Adam, but maybe you should stay out of other people's business.

ADAM: Sorry...

DEAN: Sam...

SAM: Don't worry about it Dean.

DEAN: Sam, calm down.

SAM: I am calm, what's your problem?

DEAN: There isn't a problem. Adam, I would really appreciate it if you would get your camera.

SAM: There's no need, Hannah can just go out to the car and find ours. Right Hannah?

HANNAH: Yes...dad.

SAM: *[To DIANNE]* Do you have the keys?

DIANNE: No, you drove. I saw you put them in your pocket.
SAM: Well, I don't have them.
DIANNE: I don't know where they are then.
SAM: You're useless Dianne.
ROY: Sam, take a breather, it's not a big deal. I'm sure they're around here somewhere.
SAM: No she probably lost them; she does stuff like this all the time!
REVEREND: Well, I'm sure if we all look then-
SUSAN: Here they are. *[Hands the keys to Sam]*
[Sam takes the keys and forcefully puts them into Dianne's injured left hand]
DIANNE: Sam!
SAM: Why can't you just take the fucking keys?
DEAN: Sam-
SAM: Stay out of this. No wonder your kid's such a nosy prick.
DEAN: That's enough...
DIANNE: Sam please!
SAM: You shut up! Hannah, take the freaking keys and get the camera from the car...Now!
[HANNAH bends down to pick up the keys and doesn't pick them up as quickly as SAM had wanted; SAM pushes HANNAH over violently]
DIANNE: Sam, stop!
SAM: *[Grabbing DIANNE'S hand]* Quit making a scene Dianne!
DIANNE: You're hurting me!
DEAN: Sam, stop it!
SAM: Back off Dean!
DIANNE: Sam!
SAM: Shut the hell up! *[Pushes her over to the ground]*
[All FREEZE into a tableau]
SAM: I'm finished with you!
DIANNE: Why does he do this to me?
DEAN: I can't believe he's acting like this?
HANNAH: When will he stop?
SUSAN: I never knew.
ROY: He's out of control.
ADAM: I don't know what to do.
REVEREND: He's tearing them apart.

END SCENE