

ACT ONE SCENE ONE

THE PLAY TAKES PLACE ON AN ALMOST BARE STAGE APART FROM TWO ARMCHAIRS. THE ANALYST SITS IN ONE OF THEM. THE RAPIDLY CHANGING CONTEXTS AND TIME FRAMES FOR THE PLAY SHOULD BE SIGNIFIED BY THE USE OF SPACE AND SOUND TO ALLOW THE FREE-WHEELING STYLE OF THE TEXT TO HAVE MAXIMUM IMPACT. THE ANALYST MOSTLY STAYS ON STAGE THROUGHOUT AND WHEN NOT SPEAKING TO RACHEL HE MAKES NOTES ON EVENTS. OTHERWISE, ALL CHARACTERS ENTER AND EXIT AS STATED; WITNESSING THE ACTION WITHIN THE OTHER CONTEXTS AS PART OF THEIR UNDERSTANDING OF THE SITUATION.

THE ACTION SHOULDN'T FREEZE AT ANY POINT AS THE PLAY MOVES FROM CONTEXT TO CONTEXT BUT THE ACTION SHOULD ALLOW THE AUDIENCE TO SHIFT FOCUS, OR AT LEAST HAVE THE CHOICE TO DO SO. THE DIALOGUE THOUGH DOES SEEM TO CROSS-OVER AT TIMES BETWEEN FRAMES, CREATING A SENSE OF TEMPORAL COEXISTENCE.

RACHEL, A WOMAN IN HER EARLY FORTIES ENTERS DRESSED CASUALLY FOLLOWED BY A YOUNG WOMAN, HER DAUGHTER LORNA, IN HER EARLY TWENTIES. THE CONTEXT IS RACHEL'S FLAT.

RACHEL

You'd better come in.

LORNA

Now there's a welcome.

RACHEL

What did you expect?

LORNA

Not that, clearly.

RACHEL

Then what?

LORNA

I don't know.

RACHEL

For future reference, when you start something, make sure you've got an exit strategy.

LORNA

Is that what this is?

RACHEL

I didn't start it.

LORNA

Didn't you? Seems to me like you had it all planned.

RACHEL

Is that what you think? I couldn't carry on the way things were, Lorna. Not anymore.

LORNA

Why do you always have to exaggerate everything?

RACHEL

Honestly. I didn't expect you to understand, but I did think you might appreciate something of what it was like for me living in that house. I had to get away. Make a new start.

LORNA

A blank canvas.

RACHEL

If you like.

LORNA

How convenient. But it's not, is it? We're all still here, in case you hadn't noticed. You can't just wipe us out.

RACHEL

And I don't want to.

LORNA

Well that's not how it feels.

RACHEL

I've not set out to hurt anyone, Lorna.

LORNA

Really?

RACHEL

No. And if I have... I'm sorry.

LORNA

It's a bit late for that.

RACHEL

I never wanted for you and me...

LORNA

What did you think it would be like?

THE CONTEXT SHIFTS TO THE ANALYSTS
OFFICE. IN A COMFORTABLE ARMCHAIR SITS
THE ANALYST. LIKE RACHEL HE IS MIDDLE
AGED.

ANALYST

Was that a surprise?

RACHEL

A bit.

ANALYST

How did you think she'd react?

RACHEL

Sometimes, when we used to talk, when she was still at home, I thought... She understood. Not that she ever said anything. Exactly.

ANALYST

Did you?

RACHEL

No. I've never gone along with the idea that your children should be your best friends. They're your children; that's more than enough for them to cope with. You read about it though, don't you; mothers who use their daughters like that. Whenever I see that in a magazine I always think, 'What a nightmare.' I always want them to go back ten years later and interview the daughters again, see what shit they're in now.

ANALYST

So, saying nothing would be your advice, would it?

RACHEL

Who wants to hear your mother's unhappy?

ANALYST

Who indeed?

RACHEL

Maybe that's where we all went wrong. Where did our generation get the idea we have a right to be happy? I can't imagine having that conversation with my mother.

ANALYST

Was she happy?

RACHEL

I don't know. I never asked. That's terrible, isn't it?

ANALYST

Is it?

RACHEL TAKES A MOMENT TO REFLECT

RACHEL

Thinking about it now, I don't suppose she was. I'm not saying never, but... not for much of her life. But people just got on with it, didn't they. Expectations were lower.

ANALYST

And your expectations? Are they too high?

RACHEL

I don't think so.

ANALYST

Would your daughter agree?

RACHEL

I don't know.

ANALYST

Did she want you to confide in her?

RACHEL

I don't think so.

ANALYST

But is she hurt that you didn't?

RACHEL

I don't know. You'll have to ask her.

ANALYST

I'm asking you.

THE FOCUS SHIFTS BACK TO RACHEL'S FLAT

LORNA

Why didn't you say something?

RACHEL

I couldn't. You're close to your Dad and I thought...

LORNA

I'd tell him.

RACHEL

I didn't want you to have to choose.

LORNA

So you made the choice for me.

RACHEL

I didn't want to get you involved; not in something that even I wasn't sure about.

LORNA

You were sure enough to pack your bags and leave.

RACHEL

Maybe I would have gone anyway?

LORNA

And you couldn't talk to me about that?

RACHEL

Somethings you just have to do alone.

LORNA

Well, you've achieved that. Well done. I'm going. Dan said it was a mistake to come.

RACHEL

You may not believe me, but I am sad about the way things have turned out. But if you really want to know why I didn't share any of this with you... Look at us now.

LORNA

Are you blaming me?

RACHEL

No, but... You're so angry.

LORNA

With reason. Everywhere you go it's carnage.

RACHEL

That's not true.

LORNA

I'm surprised Dad put up with you for as long as he did.

LORNA TURNS TO MAKE HER WAY TO THE EXIT

RACHEL

That's not fair, Lorna! If you knew the whole story!

LORNA EXITS. THE CONTEXT SHIFTS BACK TO
THE ANALYST'S OFFICE

ANALYST

And that's the last time you saw her?

RACHEL

Yes.

ANALYST

So it didn't end well.

RACHEL

No.

ANALYST

How did it leave you feeling?

RACHEL

Resentful.

ANALYST

OK. Let's begin there next time. Have a word with Sheila on your way out; pop a few into the diary. It'd be good to jot to shift this one.

RACHEL

Thanks, Andrew.

ANALYST

Next time, then.

RACHEL

Yes.

ANALYST

You might find it helpful to jot some of your thoughts down in a journal between appointments.

RACHEL

I already do. Have done for years. Take it everywhere with me.

ANALYST

Good.

RACHEL EXITS AS LORNA ENTERS. SHE IS ENTERING THE FAMILY HOME IN AN EARLIER TIME FRAME. SHE CALLS OUT.

LORNA

Mum? It's only me!

ENTER BEN, LORNA'S FATHER

BEN

Lorna?

LORNA

Dad? What are you doing home? I thought you had a concert; mum said you were away.

BEN

I was supposed to be; had to sort someone out to step in for me at the last minute.

LORNA

Is everything alright?

BEN

Not really. Was she expecting you?

LORNA

No. I just thought I'd pop round to see her; keep her company for an hour or so.

BEN

She's gone, Lorna.

LORNA

What? When?

BEN

This afternoon; you've not long missed her.

LORNA

But where?

BEN

I don't know.

LORNA

Didn't she say?

BEN

Not to me.

LORNA

She must have said something.

BEN

Only that she was going.

LORNA

But... She's done this before. Right?

BEN

Not like this.

LORNA

She'll be back; once she's calmed down.

BEN

I'm not so sure, Lorna. Not this time.

LORNA

Did you have a row?

BEN

No.

LORNA

So it came right out of the blue?

BEN

Pretty much.

LORNA

Didn't you try to stop her?

BEN

Her mind seemed made up.

LORNA

Is there someone else?

BEN

I don't know.

LORNA

Didn't you ask?

BEN

You think she would have told me?

LORNA

Are you worried?

BEN

Honest answer?

LORNA

That would be good.

BEN

I gave up trying to fathom your mother years ago; she'll do what she wants, whatever I say.

LORNA

I hope you didn't say that to her.

BEN

To be honest, Lorna, I can't remember what I said. Truth is, I'm worn out with it. Worn out with her.

BEN EXITS

LORNA

Dad? You can't just leave it like this. Dad? Don't you disappear on me too.