

ALL RIGHTS RESERVED

Copyright Protection. This play (the “Play”) is fully protected under the copyright laws of the United States of America and all countries with which the United States has reciprocal copyright relations, whether through bilateral or multilateral treaties or otherwise, and including, but not limited to, all countries covered by the Pan-American Copyright Convention, the Universal Copyright Convention, and the Berne Convention.

Reservation of Rights. All rights to this Play are strictly reserved, including, without limitation, professional and amateur stage performance rights; motion picture, recitation, lecturing, public reading, radio broadcasting, television, video, and sound recording rights; rights to all other forms of mechanical or electronic reproduction now known or yet to be invented, such as CD-ROM, CD-I, DVD, photocopying, and information storage and retrieval systems; and the rights of translation into non-English languages.

Performance Licensing and Royalty Payments. Amateur and stock performance rights to this Play are controlled exclusively by Playscripts, Inc. (“Playscripts”). No amateur or stock production groups or individuals may perform this Play without obtaining advance written permission from Playscripts. Required royalty fees for performing this Play are specified online at the Playscripts website (www.playscripts.com). Such royalty fees may be subject to change without notice. Although this book may have been obtained for a particular licensed performance, such performance rights, if any, are not transferable. Required royalties must be paid every time the Play is performed before any audience, whether or not it is presented for profit and whether or not admission is charged. All licensing requests and inquiries concerning amateur and stock performance rights should be addressed to Playscripts (see contact information on opposite page).

Inquiries concerning all other rights should be addressed to Playscripts, as well; such inquiries will be communicated to the author and the author's agent, as applicable.

Restriction of Alterations. There shall be no deletions, alterations, or changes of any kind made to the Play, including the changing of character gender, the cutting of dialogue, or the alteration of objectionable language, unless directly authorized by Playscripts. The title of the Play shall not be altered.

Author Credit. Any individual or group receiving permission to produce this Play is required to give credit to the author as the sole and exclusive author of the Play. This obligation applies to the title page of every program distributed in connection with performances of the Play, and in any instance that the title of the Play appears for purposes of advertising, publicizing, or otherwise exploiting the Play and/or a production thereof. The name of the author must appear on a separate line, in which no other name appears, immediately beneath the title and of a font size at least 50% as large as the largest letter used in the title of the Play. No person, firm, or entity may receive credit larger or more prominent than that accorded the author. The name of the author may not be abbreviated or otherwise altered from the form in which it appears in this Play.

Publisher Attribution. All programs, advertisements, and other printed material distributed or published in connection with the amateur or stock production of the Play shall include the following notice:

**Produced by special arrangement with Playscripts, Inc.
(www.playscripts.com)**

Prohibition of Unauthorized Copying. Any unauthorized copying of this book or excerpts from this book is strictly forbidden by law. Except as otherwise permitted by applicable law, no part of this book may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted in any form, by any means now known or yet to be invented, including, without limitation, photocopying or scanning, without prior permission from Playscripts.

Statement of Non-affiliation. This Play may include references to brand names and trademarks owned by third parties, and may include references to public figures. Playscripts is not necessarily affiliated with these public figures, or with the owners of such trademarks and brand names. Such references are included solely for parody, political comment, or other permitted purposes.

Permissions for Sound Recordings and Musical Works. This Play may contain directions calling for the performance of a portion, or all, of a musical work, or performance of a sound recording of a musical work. Playscripts has not obtained permissions to perform such works. The producer of this Play is advised to obtain such permissions, if required in the context of the production. The producer is directed to the websites of the U.S. Copyright Office (www.copyright.gov), ASCAP (www.ascap.com), BMI (www.bmi.com), and NMPA (www.nmpa.org) for further information on the need to obtain permissions, and on procedures for obtaining such permissions.

The Rules in Brief

- 1) Do NOT perform this Play without obtaining prior permission from Playscripts, and without paying the required royalty.
- 2) Do NOT photocopy, scan, or otherwise duplicate any part of this book.
- 3) Do NOT alter the text of the Play, change a character's gender, delete any dialogue, or alter any objectionable language, unless explicitly authorized by Playscripts.
- 4) DO provide the required credit to the author and the required attribution to Playscripts in all programs and promotional literature associated with any performance of this Play.

For more details on these and other rules, see the opposite page.

Copyright Basics

This Play is protected by United States and international copyright law. These laws ensure that playwrights are rewarded for creating new and vital dramatic work, and protect them against theft and abuse of their work.

A play is a piece of property, fully owned by the playwright, just like a house or car. You must obtain permission to use this property, and must pay a royalty fee for the privilege—*whether or not you charge an admission fee*. Playscripts collects these required payments on behalf of the author.

Anyone who violates an author's copyright is liable as a copyright infringer under United States and international law. Playscripts and the author are entitled to institute legal action for any such infringement, which can subject the infringer to actual damages, statutory damages, and attorneys' fees. A court may impose statutory damages of up to \$150,000 for willful copyright infringements. U.S. copyright law also provides for possible criminal sanctions. Visit the website of the U.S. Copyright Office (www.copyright.gov) for more information.

THE BOTTOM LINE: If you break copyright law, you are robbing a playwright and opening yourself to expensive legal action. Follow the rules, and when in doubt, ask us.

Playscripts, Inc.
325 W. 38th Street, Suite 305
New York, NY 10018

Phone: 1-866-NEW-PLAY (639-7529)
Email: info@playscripts.com
Web: www.playscripts.com

Cast of Characters

(In order of appearance:)

DANNY
LAURA
ISAAC
MINDY
LARS
SHAWN
BOB
VIVIAN
SHANIQUA
EBONY
RAPTO
TAYLOR
RILEY
ANNAH
KENDRA
HITCHCOCK
JASMIN
GRACE
NATE
LINDSAY
JULIA
MICHAEL
JOSEPH
TANNER
RUSTY
GINNY
DEVIN
MOTHER

Production Notes

This should be a casual, honest presentation. It is not a story per se, but the exploration of an idea. The actors should be relaxed, comfortably listening when not directly involved in a scene. Gender changes, doubling and tripling are all possible. Feel free to re-assign lines to whichever character makes sense for you; the lines were originally written without any character names assigned to them. The stage can be open or have a few neutral platforms for levels.

Acknowledgments

But We Don't premiered at Blue Valley North High School in Blue Valley, Kansas on December 17, 2007. It was directed by Max H. Brown with the following cast:

Sara Belhouari
Brandon Bishop
Bailey Borchardt
Catherine DeWalt
William Easley
Alana Gaffen
Teal Holliday
Rebecca Neill
Chelsea Nuemann
Madison Newman
Samuel Passer
Olivia Petkash
Hannah Powell
Rachel Reese
Shaun Sutton
Emily Terranova
Daniel Valentine

Acknowledgments (continued)

But We Don't had its second production at Windsor High School in Windsor, Vermont on January 17, 2008. It was directed by Julie Aylward with the following cast:

DANNY	Cody Sullivan
LAURA	Lillee VanReeth
ISAAC	Devin Wilkie
MINDY	Cora Churchill
LARS	Kyle Washburn
SHAWN.....	Nathaniel Williams
BOB	Josh Poland
VIVIAN.....	Elizabeth Bennett
SHANIQUA.....	Nikki White
EBONY	Cherie Hannah
RAPTO.....	Scott Conner
TAYLOR.....	Sherrie McHugh
RILEY	Austin Soule
ANNAH (STONE GIRL).....	Aleigha Sykes
KENDRA	Mallory McGee
GINNY.....	Katie Knox
NATE	Nathan McMahon
JASMIN.....	Brittany Aldrich
GRACE	Stephanie Morse
RUSTY	Jacob Ockington
MICHAEL	Michael Young
JOSEPH.....	Joseph Greene
TANNER	Tanner Dow
HITCHCOCK.....	Nate Shambo-Hitchcock
JULIA	Kimberly Olmsted
LINDSAY	Mariah Williams

BUT WE DON'T

by Alan Haehnel

DANNY. Do you realize that...

LAURA. At this moment...

ISAAC. Right now...

MINDY. Here...

LARS. On this stage...

SHAWN. We could do...

ALL. An infinite number of things.

BOB. I could pick my nose.

VIVIAN. I could scream obscenities.

SHANIQUA. I could run in circles.

EBONY. I could begin to walk and keep walking until I reached Kentucky.

RAPTO. I could punch myself in the face.

TAYLOR. I could admit to every lie I can ever remember telling.

RILEY. I could take off all my clothes.

ALL. Just about anything!

ANNAH. I could go outside and pick up a stone. I could bring it back in here and set it down. I could then go get another stone. I could keep doing that until every stone light enough for me to carry within a five-mile radius was sitting on this stage.

MINDY. I could hyperventilate.

KENDRA. I could sing Christmas songs.

HITCHCOCK. I could chew on my shoe.

JASMIN. I could lie down and pretend to make snow angels.

LAURA. I could shout my undying love for my brother.

GRACE. I could say the words “dill pickle” repeatedly for ten minutes.

NATE. I could pray.

LINDSAY. I could punch him (*Referring to a fellow actor*) in the face.

RAPTO. I could cry.

JULIA. I could vow never to speak again.

KENDRA. I could say the name of that Scottish play by Shakespeare.

RAPTO. I could run into that wall repeatedly, head-first.

RILEY. I could belch.

MICHAEL. I could demonstrate how to tie my shoe.

JOSEPH. We could, you know.

DANNY. We could do any of these things.

SHANIQUA. We really could.

BOB. But...

DANNY. We don't.

ISAAC. Why don't we?

ANNAH. Excuse me a minute.

(She exits. Others watch her go, mildly puzzled.)

TANNER. So why don't we do the things we've just mentioned?

VIVIAN. No justification, I suppose.

KENDRA. Sure. Listen: (*Singing:*) “Deck the halls with boughs of holly, fa-la-la-la-la, la-la-la-la.” I did it, but I felt a bit odd, and I didn't want to continue because, well, it's not Christmas—or, that December holiday, if you prefer—and, even if it were that particular time of year, without the right context, I probably wouldn't break into song by myself onstage.

EBONY. But if we were all in a play portraying a bunch of carolers, well then...

ALL. " 'Tis the season to be jolly, fa-la-la-la, la la-la-la."

JULIA. Then it would work.

NATE. But that's not what we're doing, so we will not sing carols, even though we could.

ISAAC. So sometimes we don't do a thing we could do because the situation just doesn't call for doing it.

MICHAEL. Did someone call for a shoe-tying demo?

ALL. No.

JASMIN. Snow angels, anyone?

ALL. Not now.

EBONY. How about that walk to Kentucky?

ALL. Uh-uh.

SHANIQUA. Question: Does anyone here have a need for me to run in circles?

SHAWN. Do you have a need to run in circles?

SHANIQUA. I think I might have a need to run in circles.

ISAAC. Then, if you feel the need, you have created a situation that calls for that action, so go for it!

LAURA. Great.

SHANIQUA. (*As she is running circles:*) First, a tiny one, now a bigger one, now a really big one, and now I will end with a smallish-but-not-as-tiny-as-the-first one.

TAYLOR. How do you feel?

SHANIQUA. Frankly, a little winded.

GRACE. Are you glad you did it?

SHANIQUA. Uh—so-so. I felt a bit foolish, a bit like my justification wasn't all that justified, but one could do worse than be a random circle-runner, I think.

RILEY. How about a belch? Anybody up for me to do that?

LARS. Wait, wait—that's in a different category, I think.

ANNAH. *(Entering:)* Hello. Coming through. *(She comes in, puts a stone down in the middle of the stage, steps back to look at it.)* Hm. There. *(She turns to look around at the other actors for a moment.)* I'm off again.

(She exits. Everyone observes the stone for a moment, then turns back to the discussion.)

RILEY. You were saying something about me possibly belching.

LARS. Right. See, I should think you wouldn't do that not just because it would be unjustified, but also because it would be kind of improper.

RILEY. I could do it.

LARS. Agreed.

RILEY. Not everybody could do it, but I can.

LARS. I understand.

RILEY. My sister wants to be able to do it, but she doesn't get the swallowing air technique that you need to be able to burp on command. Or belch. I prefer the word belch.

LARS. Right.

RILEY. So should I?

LARS. No.

RILEY. Why not?

VIVIAN. It's gross. It's socially unacceptable.

RILEY. How about just a little one?

JASMIN. How about no?

RILEY. See, that's another reason why we don't do what we could do—because society basically tells us we shouldn't.

BOB. Picking my nose is in that category.

VIVIAN. Ditto screaming obscenities.

GRACE. And getting naked.

HITCHCOCK. You know, in China it's considered polite to belch to show your appreciation for a good meal.

EBONY. Uh-huh. Two problems with that.

LARS. What's that?

EBONY. You didn't just eat a good meal and we're not in China.

RILEY. I still can belch, though.

EBONY. Yes, you can, but you... *(He belches.)* Did.

VIVIAN. That was inadvisable, socially unacceptable and gross.

RILEY. Uh-huh.

DANNY. But you did anyway.

RILEY. Uh-huh.

JASMIN. Why?

DANNY. Perhaps because he carefully weighed the rewards of belching against the consequences of belching and made an informed decision that the rewards outweighed the consequences.

MINDY. Is that why you did it?

RILEY. Unh-unh.

LARS. Then why?

RILEY. Because I wanted to.

VIVIAN. Brilliant analysis. Thank you.

RILEY. You're welcome. Do you want me to do it again?

ALL. No.

JULIA. He did bring up a good point, though.

EBONY. If he keeps burping, he's liable to bring up all kinds of interesting stuff.

TAYLOR. No, about the China thing. We say belching is socially unacceptable, but that changes, doesn't it?

RILEY. True. If this society were, say, a nudist colony and I said, “I could take my clothes off,” the response would be...

ALL. Go ahead!

TAYLOR. Right. But it gets more complicated if, within a society, there are different levels of acceptance. I said I could pray, but as soon as I started, there would be trouble. (*Kneeling down:*) Dear God, please bless us all...

BOB. Hey!

TAYLOR. What?

BOB. You can't do that!

TAYLOR. Why not?

EBONY. Yeah, why not? She can do that if she wants.

BOB. I don't like it. I'm an atheist.

NATE. Well, I do like it. I'm a Christian.

TAYLOR. Actually, I wasn't praying to a Christian God, necessarily. My conception of God is the Inner Light we all possess.

NATE. You don't accept Jesus Christ as your Savior?

TAYLOR. No.

NATE. Then you can't pray here.

RAPTO. Do you worship Allah?

TAYLOR. No.

RAPTO. Then you can't pray here.

TANNER. She has a right to pray here, no matter what particular God she believes in.

BOB. No, she doesn't!

EBONY. Yes, she does!

TAYLOR. See? I could pray, but, unless I'm ready to deal with the complications, I don't.

(ANNAH comes back in, puts down the next stone, regards it for a moment, then leaves.)

GRACE. Dill pickle.

LINDSAY. What?

GRACE. Dill pickle. Dill pickle, dill pickle, dill pickle. That actually turns out to be sort of a tongue twister. Dill pickle, dill pickle, dill pickle, dill pickle.

LINDSAY. What are you doing?

(GRACE repeats the words "dill pickle" ten times.)

RILEY. Okay, thank you. You've proven that you can do it.

GRACE. Dill pickle, dill pickle, dill pickle.

JULIA. Enough, all right?

GRACE. Dilllllllll pickllllllllle. Dill. Pick. L. Dill pickle.

JULIA. Are you done?

GRACE. Dill pickle, dill pickle, dill pickle.

ALL. Stop it!

GRACE. Okay.

JULIA. What was that supposed to prove?

TAYLOR. Besides that you can be incredibly annoying?

GRACE. Well, actually, "prove" is a good word, because that was an experiment, of sorts. I mean, obviously, as I said at first, I could say the words "dill pickle" repeatedly. I could do it, but I wasn't quite sure why I wouldn't. I knew that there would probably never be a situation calling for it, but I hypothesized that, if I persisted long enough, my saying "dill pickle" would also become socially unacceptable. And it did.

TANNER. So you're done.

GRACE. I am.

TANNER. Good.

GRACE. Dill pickle, dill pickle. Just kidding.

HITCHCOCK. I'm not even going to try chewing on my shoe to see how socially unacceptable that would be. I pretty much know.

DANNY. You're intuitive that way, huh?

HITCHCOCK. It's a gift. But you—what about that Scottish play thing? What's that about? What Scottish play?

GINNY. The one by Shakespeare.

HITCHCOCK. Uh—Hamlet?

LARS. No, that's his Danish play.

HITCHCOCK. Which one's his Scottish play?

GINNY. I'm not saying.

HITCHCOCK. McRomeo and McJuliet?

NATE. You're getting close, but you'd better stop now.

HITCHCOCK. Oh, you mean Mac... *(Hand clapped over mouth.)* Ow! What was that for?

NATE. Don't say it.

HITCHCOCK. Why not?

ISAAC. It's a social acceptability thing. In theatre society, it is highly impolite to say the name of that particular play.

LARS. No, no, it's not just that. We're talking about safety factor here.

EBONY. Now, come on. I'll grant you, danger is an issue. I was going to bring that up. Some of the things we could do we don't do because someone might get physically hurt.

JOSEPH. I do not punch myself in the face because it would damage me.

RUSTY. I do not punch him the face because it would damage him.

JOSEPH. Thanks for caring.

MINDY. I do not hyperventilate because I might eventually faint and damage myself.

(RAPTO yells and runs into the wall, then falls down.)

MINDY. How was that?

(RAPTO doesn't reply, but gets up, takes inventory of himself.)

VIVIAN. Are we experimenting again?

(RAPTO yells and runs into the wall again. This time he falls down and groans.)

DANNY. He should not run into the wall because it damaged the wall. Look—he chipped the paint.

RAPTO. Oh, my shoulder.

ISAAC. And he might damage himself.

RAPTO. I'm done doing that.

KENDRA. So, yes, those things we do not do for obvious—or what should be obvious—health reasons. But not saying Ma...

GINNY. Don't do it!

DANNY. Shakespeare's Scottish play? That's not a safety issue. That's just superstition!

GINNY. Superstition? Just superstition? You don't know the stories.

KENDRA. What stories?

GINNY. My uncle—he directs a lot of theater: high school, community, even a couple professional things—and he will tell you, from personal experience, you never say that word if you want to stay safe. One guy thought it was just an old wives' tale, like you...

KENDRA. I'm not an old wives' tale.

GINNY. He thought the thing about the Scottish play was an old wives' tale, and he said the name, like, three times while he was working on *Peter Pan*. Know what happened to him? Do you?

DANNY. Uh...Tinkerbell mugged him.

GINNY. No. He died. He got tangled in the rigging as they were flying Wendy; the ropes got wrapped around his neck and (*Making a fatal sound:*) ...goner.

DEVIN. That's terrible, but we have a name for that type of occurrence—coincidence.

GINNY. I don't know. Maybe it's not worth the risk. It's like in *Harry Potter*, where nobody dares say the name Voldemort. Things could happen.

KENDRA. Only one problem with that line of reasoning—*Harry Potter* is completely fictional. If you signed up to attend Hogwarts next year, I don't think you're going to get in.

GINNY. But that's not all. My uncle was involved in another show—oh, what was it? *You're a Good Man, Charlie Brown*—and someone said the cursed name down in the green room. Just let it slip, by accident. Snoopy fell off his doghouse that very night. A concussion and twelve stitches, I kid you not.

KENDRA. Well, I kid you not when I say I still think it's complete superstition and if I want to say Mac...

GINNY. Don't!

KENDRA. Nothing's going to happen! It's a word!

DANNY. It's a word with power. I happen to agree with you, that's it's just a superstition, but that doesn't make any difference as far as safety goes. What if the word itself isn't the issue, but the associations and fears that have been built up around it? So if you say it, somebody starts getting so worried that they actually do hurt themselves because of the distraction.

GINNY. Bottom line—why risk it?

KENDRA. Fine. For the sake of feeble theatrical minds, I will refrain.

GINNY. My uncle...

KENDRA. Uncle! Uncle! I give up! No more uncle! I say uncle to your uncle stories, okay? You win.

GINNY. I don't like your attitude.

KENDRA. And I don't like your uncle. We're even.

(ANNAH enters with another stone. She sets it down and turns to leave again.)

DANNY. Hey, how's that going for you?

ANNAH. Well, I don't know, exactly.

DANNY. Doesn't it feel a bit—no offense, but—dumb?

ANNAH. No offense taken. I have to admit, I don't know what my purpose is, but I'm doing it anyway. Because I can. Didn't some guy climb a mountain for a reason about like that? Besides, there's something comforting about the activity. You see the world in a different way when you're looking for rocks.

DANNY. Are you really going to gather every stone you can carry within a five-mile radius?

ANNAH. Um—don't know. For now, I'll keep it up.

DANNY. Well, good luck with that.

ANNAH. Thanks. See you in a bit.

DANNY. 'Bye.

(ANNAH exits.)

NATE. You know, this has all been a cute little riff about doing things and not doing things...

ISAAC. No, no, I don't think it's just a "cute little riff." We're talking about mind-blowing concepts, here; we're talking about possibility. We're talking about, about, possibility.

NATE. You already said that.

ISAAC. But that's the bottom line—possibility. The fact that, right now, I am talking to you, arguing with you...

NATE. Are we arguing? I don't think...

ISAAC. Discussing. Whatever. I could be doing something different. Every moment, I could be doing something different. There is a whole universe of possibilities...

NATE. Actually, there's a theory in quantum physics.

RAPTO. Oh, boy. Just say the words "quantum physics" and watch me get lost.

NATE. The multiverse theory would have us believe that there are an infinite number of parallel universes besides our own, and so, in some other universe, an exact duplicate of ourselves is doing everything we haven't done.

RAPTO. See, told you: lost am I.

NATE. Yeah, but in some other universe, you understood what I just said.

ISAAC. And in some other universe, you said what he just said.

NATE. Yeah, and he didn't get it.

RAPTO. Okay, I'm feeling more ignorant by the minute.

NATE. It's like this: Universe one...

KENDRA. Although numbers are useless when you're talking about infinity, of course, but for the sake of our limited human minds...

NATE. Universe one, I reach out and grab your arm.

GINNY. And I say, "Hey, quit grabbing my arm."

NATE. Universe two, I reach out to caress your arm.

GINNY. And I say, "Hey, keep caressing my arm."

NATE. Universe three, I grab your arm and then caress your arm.

GINNY. And I say, "I like your caressing better than your grabbing."

NATE. Precisely! Every possible thing we could or could not imagine doing, every possible thing we could or could not imagine happening in response...we are doing it and the responses are happening.

GINNY. At the very moment we are doing what we are doing in this universe.

ISAAC. You know what? If that's true, all we need to do is figure out some way to communicate between universes to see how a particular action would turn out, you know?

RUSTY. That's all we need to do, huh?

ISAAC. What's so funny?

RUSTY. You said, "All we need to do is figure out some way to communicate between universes," like it was no big deal.

ISAAC. That's all we need to do.

EBONY. Well, then, how about if we first figure out how to cure world poverty, move objects through telepathy, turn lead into gold, and read the mind of God. Then, after supper, we could tackle that little intra-universe communication thing.

TANNER. Cool.

ISAAC. Never mind.

NATE. So then, I could, like, go up to some girl and say, Hi.

GINNY. Hello.

NATE. And then, if I wanted to kiss this girl, I could just call up myself in the universe where I kissed her.

(NATE dials an imaginary cell phone. Someone makes a ringing noise and picks up his imaginary cell phone.)

DANNY. Yo.

NATE. Yo, is this me?

DANNY. Yup, this is you, fifty million universes over.

NATE. How'd that kiss thing go?

DANNY. She liked it.

NATE. Great! And then I could go for it. *(He kisses JASMIN. She slaps him.)* Hey!

JASMIN. Just because I liked it in that universe doesn't mean I liked it in this one.

TANNER. Bummer.

NATE. It could work as a pick-up line, maybe. (*Turning to someone else.*) Hey, did you know in one of the infinite number of simultaneous universes besides this one, you are finding me incredibly attractive right now?

KENDRA. Actually, I'm having an easier time imagining ten billion simultaneous universes where I am finding you incredibly disgusting right now.

NATE. Okay, okay, that's all nice and theoretical, like I was saying, but what interests me...

(*ANNAH enters with another stone.*)

ANNAH. Hey.

NATE. Hey, Anna. (*She sets the stone down.*) That's a nice one.

ANNAH. Thanks. Well. See you.

(*She exits.*)

BOB. All right, now, fine, we've had all that and a new rock for the collection, but what interests me...

MINDY. Are you going to tell us what interests you?

BOB. What really interests me...

MINDY. He's going to tell us what really interests him.

BOB. I'm going to tell you if you'll shut up and let me tell you.

MINDY. Okay, okay—just joking; go ahead.

BOB. What really interests me, in *this* universe, is when you have the right situation, the right justification; you don't have danger; you don't have any social taboo against the thing. In fact, you have the set-up to do this thing, whatever it is. In fact, a lot of voices are telling you that you *should* do this thing you're perfectly capable of doing...but you don't.

JULIA. Like...

BOB. Homework.

MINDY. Last week, I had this lab report due. I knew I had the lab report due. Help me out with this, okay? (*She moves forward; several*

other actors gather around her to play out the scene.) I'm not doing too hot in chemistry, so Mr. Walsh had called the house.

JULIA. I hate that.

MINDY. Yeah, tell me about it. But anyway, you talk about voices—I had a million of them telling me I had to get this lab report done. My mother.

MOTHER. Mindy, Mr. Walsh e-mailed me and said you have a big lab report due tomorrow.

MINDY. I know, Ma.

MOTHER. Do you have all the materials?

MINDY. Right in my backpack.

MOTHER. Do you know what you're supposed to...

MINDY. I've got the requirement sheet.

MOTHER. Because Mr. Walsh attached that to the e-mail in case you didn't bring it home. Do you want me to print it out?

MINDY. No. I've got it. *(To the audience:)* And I did. I had the requirement sheet. I had all the data. I had done the lab. I had everything I needed, plus plenty of pressure.

(Cell phone rings. MINDY answers it.)

MINDY. Hey.

JULIA. Hey, girl; how's the lab report going?

MINDY. What are you doing?

JULIA. I'm checking in. You know it's due tomorrow.

MINDY. I know that. Walsh told me; my mother's about to put me in handcuffs if I don't get it done. Why are you bugging me?

JULIA. Because, Girlfriend, if you don't get it done you're probably going to fail Chemistry, and if you fail Chemistry, you're probably going to get grounded, and if you get grounded, I'm not going to have a ride to half the places I want to go.

MINDY. Oh, so you don't care about me; you care about my ride.

JULIA. You got it. So get it done. 'Bye, Girl.

MINDY. 'Bye. (*To audience:*) So there you have it. I *could* have done the lab report, I *should* have done the lab report, I even *wanted* to do the lab report.

BOB. But you didn't.

MINDY. No.

BOB. Why not?

MINDY. I've been trying to figure that out.

BOB. See? See? That's the fascinating thing. How is that we can have every reason to do a thing and still not do it?

MINDY. I did other things. I let other things take up my time. It was like...it was almost like voices distracting me.

BOB. You heard voices? Hello, schizophrenia. I wonder if Walsh would accept that as an excuse: I couldn't get my lab report done because I came down with schizophrenia last night.

MINDY. I said it was *like* that. It's hard to describe.

LARS. I know what you mean. Suddenly, all sorts of other things insist they have to be done—everything but the one thing you really should do.

MINDY. Yeah.

SHAWN. I am Mindy's pencil. Sharpen me. No, not sharp enough. Do it again!

RILEY. I am Mindy's pencil sharpener. Empty me.

EBONY. I am Mindy's CD collection. Look at me. Decide which CD will be best to listen to while doing a lab report.

KENDRA. I am Mindy's headphones. Find me! Find me!

SHANIQUA. I am the Mindy's [*Names contemporary artist*] CD. Listen to me for ten minutes. Decide I'm not right.

JASMIN. I am Mindy's [*Names another contemporary artist*] CD. Listen to me for fifteen minutes. Decide I am not right.

LINDSAY. I am Mindy's [*Names an unpopular contemporary artist*] CD. Listen to me for 30 seconds. Decide I am definitely not right.

RAPTO. I am a repeat of *Law and Order*. Watch me, Mindy, even though you know my ending. Watch me!

JULIA. I am Mindy's bed. Lie down on me!

MINDY. Exactly. So there I was, perfectly capable of doing the lab report, but also perfectly capable of doing all these other things...so I did all the other things including lying down on my bed. I didn't wake up until just before school the next morning.

DANNY. You have just described the curse of high school students everywhere. It's called (*Stereotypical sinister "music":*) dun, dun, dun... Procrastination!

TAYLOR. Yeah, of course, everybody says that when they don't do something they're supposed to. "I procrastinated again." "Procrastination is my worst enemy." Yada, yada, yada. But procrastination is sort of like that disease we talked about in history.

SHANIQUA. Leprosy?

TAYLOR. No, no—this sort of general name that people gave for several different types of illness. Uh...

EBONY. Malaria!

TAYLOR. No.

LARS. Chicken pox!

TAYLOR. No—it was more of a lung thing.

LARS. Leaky, lousy lung disease.

TAYLOR. Come on. I think it ended in -shun.

LARS. Sickness of the motion.

SHANIQUA. Evil witch's potion.

LAURA. You're not helping.

RILEY. Wicked constipation! Can you die from that?

TAYLOR. Consumption! That's it—consumption. When people died of consumption, they could have died of any number of more specific sicknesses. Procrastination is like that—it's a general idea that doesn't really get at the problem.

ISAAC. No, no—it's not that complicated. If procrastination is a disease, it's as specific as polio, and it has one cause: better options. Why do I procrastinate cleaning my room? I could do it, yes, but wouldn't I rather be playing Xbox or watching T.V. or hanging out with my friends? Don't I have a hundred better options? Yes. So does my room get cleaned? No.

MINDY. But the voices I heard when I was trying to get my chem lab report done—those were not about better options. Those were just...distractions.

DANNY. Right—distractions to keep you from the one option better than doing your report—not doing your report.

MINDY. But I wanted to do it! I really did!

TAYLOR. You wanted to have it done, but you didn't want to do it.

MINDY. Well, yeah, I suppose, but I still don't think you've hit it quite right.

JASMIN. Fear.

MINDY. What?

JASMIN. We call it procrastination a lot of times when actually we fear the thing we aren't doing. Your chem report—it had a lot riding on it, didn't it?

MINDY. You better believe it.

JASMIN. So, even though you thought you wanted to do it, even though you thought you wanted it done, maybe, subconsciously, you were afraid of doing it and failing. Psychologically, it's easier on the ego to be able to say, "I would have succeeded if I had done it" than it is to have to say, "I did it—and failed."

ISAAC. (*With accent.*) Egad, Dr. Freud, you have plumbed the depths of her unconscious mind!

JASMIN. It makes sense, though.

MINDY. Kind of, but it still doesn't quite capture what was going on with me and that lab report.

TAYLOR. Procrastination—the complicated killer, killer, killer, killer!

(EBONY notices LINDSAY looking around at each person.)

EBONY. What are you doing?

LINDSAY. Oh, I'm just trying to remember all the different things everybody said they could do, way back at the beginning. You could run in circles; you could punch yourself in the face; you could take off all your clothes; you could belch.

RILEY. And I did. Want to hear it again?

ALL. No.

VIVIAN. Do you remember mine?

LINDSAY. Christmas carols!

KENDRA. That was me.

LINDSAY. Cry, pray, tie shoes... What about you? I think I can remember everybody but you.

HITCHCOCK. Uh...geez, I forgot, too.

RUSTY. I didn't.

HITCHCOCK. Shut up.

LINDSAY. *(To LAURA:)* You said you could profess your undying love for your brother.

EBONY. That's right; you did say that.

LAURA. Yeah, well, uh...

ISAAC. That's an interesting one, actually.

LAURA. No, it's not.

SHAWN. As your brother, I think that's a very interesting thing you could do.

LAURA. Actually, I couldn't do it. I lied. I was mistaken.

SHAWN. Sure you could. Why couldn't you profess your undying love for me?

LAURA. Because you are a dweeb.

SHAWN. I could profess my undying love for you. Sis, my undying love for you is absolutely undying! I love, love, love you, oh, ever-loving sister of mine.

LAURA. See? My point exactly. Dweeb.

SHAWN. Thank you. So go ahead.

LAURA. Go ahead what?

SHAWN. I'm waiting.

LAURA. I am not going to do it.

SHAWN. Why not?

LAURA. Forget it.

ISAAC. No, no—this is interesting, actually. It's not a justification problem—he's asked you; we're interested; it's always supposed to be appropriate to express love for your family members. It's definitely justified. It's not taboo; society doesn't frown heavily on sisters saying they love their brothers.

MINDY. If all sisters had brothers like this one, it would be taboo.

SHAWN. Come on; I'm not so bad. You love me.

JULIA. (*To LAURA.*) You do, of course.

LAURA. How do you know?

TANNER. He's your brother. Your flesh and blood.

LAURA. Yeah, well, that doesn't guarantee anything. Why are you guys pressuring me, anyway? I said I could do it, but remember what we're calling this whole thing: *But We Don't*. Don't. I do not profess my undying love for my brother.

RILEY. Then why did you mention you could?

LAURA. I don't know. It was a mistake.

SHAWN. No, it wasn't. Subconsciously, you needed to profess your love for me. Come on, Sis—do it. Free yourself!

LAURA. You know what you can go do with yourself.

TANNER. Why don't you, though? I mean, really—you do love him. I don't think you can honestly admit that you don't.

MICHAEL. Of course she can't.

LAURA. Try me.

JULIA. If he died tomorrow, you would be extremely sad. You would be devastated. Wouldn't you?

LINDSAY. She would cry buckets.

KENDRA. So what's keeping you from doing it now?

LAURA. Okay, number one: He's being a sarcastic jerk, so I just do not feel justified in saying it.

TAYLOR. No justification. Good.

LAURA. Number two: It's just not normal in the society of our family to go around saying we love each other.

SHAWN. But I do love you, Sis. I've said it over and over.

LAURA. And you haven't meant it once. You're just showing off.

SHAWN. How can you say that?

GINNY. She can probably say that because every interaction I've ever seen you have with your sister has been either cruel or sarcastic or both.

LAURA. I rest my case.

NATE. So—in the society of your family, it's just not done, generally.

LAURA. Right. And reason three—which really isn't necessary because the first two are enough—if I told him I loved him now, he would win. And I refuse to let him.

ISAAC. Ah-ha! Pride. How many things we could do we don't do because we might lose face? That's a big part of the dance.

LAURA. The dance?

ISAAC. Yeah—my psych teacher is always talking about “the dance.” We get locked into these patterns of behavior and reaction, and we tend to just stay with these patterns not necessarily because they work, but because they’re familiar. We do the same dance, over and over.

SHAWN. Yeah, Sis., you’re just doing the same old brother-sister cha-cha with me, aren’t you?

LAURA. (*Grabbing SHAWN.*) Listen, you little twerp: You taunt me, you tease me, you annoy me, you make a career out of making me miserable at every possible opportunity.

SHAWN. We all have our talents.

LAURA. But I love you. I will always love you. If you died tomorrow, I would cry buckets. I would cry frigging oceans. I’m not sure how I would survive without you as part of my life. I’m not being sarcastic and I’m not doing a dance. I am seriously confessing my undying love for you, my brother. So there. (*She hugs him as the rest of the cast cheers and claps.*) But do not start thinking this in any way gives you permission to mess with my stuff! Now go away; you bother me.

LARS. Dude, she toasted you.

SHAWN. Yeah, right.

MINDY. You know, this has been fun and everything—I mean, we’ve kept it pretty light, which has been cool.

LAURA. You think that thing about my brother was light?

ISAAC. Relatively, yes.

LAURA. Relative to what?

ISAAC. To the conversation I had with my grandfather a month ago, just a few days before he died.

LAURA. All right; I can buy that.

ISAAC. He was home. He wanted to be; there wasn’t anything more they could do for him at the hospital. Cancer, you know.

Anyway, I was sitting with him. Near the end, a lot of us in the family took turns, just to be sure he wouldn't be without at least one of us when...the time came. It was sort of a weird roulette game, come to think of it. So, I was sitting with him, and he had his eyes closed so I thought he was asleep. That's what he did most of the time. I was pretty much asleep myself. He began to talk. I'm not sure he knew which one of us was there. And I wonder if he didn't want to know. I wonder if he didn't open his eyes because what he was saying...maybe he just wanted to say it, with his eyes closed, to whoever was there, because if he had known who it was maybe he would have decided not to say it. Because it was hard. And harsh. He started out pretty much the way we started this whole discussion; that's why I've been thinking about it.

DANNY. (*As Grandfather:*) I've had a million choices to make in my life.

ISAAC. That's the first thing he said. Then he stopped. I squeezed his hand to let him know I was there. But I didn't say anything. The room felt like...like all the reverence and history of a cathedral packed into a small space. He said it again.

DANNY. I've had a million choices to make in my life.

ISAAC. He didn't say anything for quite a while. Then he went on.

DANNY. All those possibilities. I wasted them. I chose not to choose. I chose to let myself get pushed along and pushed around by the people around me—what they were doing, what they thought I should do. I always thought I could build a boat. I always thought I could gather together the wood and the tools and the know-how to build a boat. I wanted to do that. I wanted to be out on the water in a boat I had built, with my own hands. One day, I ordered the plans for a boat. I got them in the mail and I laid them out on the desk. I had the money. I was ready to do it. But Mother came in and she said, "Oh, Albert, what in heaven's name is this?" I loved that woman. God, I loved that woman.

ISAAC. He was talking about Grammy. He called her Mother. She died three years ago.

DANNY. I rolled up those plans and I put them on a high shelf in the garage for 30 years. Never took them down again. The garage

THIS PLAY IS NOT OVER!

In order to protect our associated authors against copyright infringement, we cannot currently present full electronic scripts.

To purchase books with the full text, and to apply for performance rights, click ORDER or go back to:

www.playscripts.com