PORTRAIT OF A TIME LESS ORDINARY

A One Act Play

Will Mallon
wdmallon@yahoo.com
CHARACTERS

PATRICK
A high school dropout. Patrick is frail and looks sickly. He has no self-esteem and is detached from people. He is scared of authority.

TOM/MALE VOS
Patrick’s Father. 40s, very rigid and stern.

HELEN
Patrick’s Mother. 40s years old. Simple and caring.

SHARON
Girlfriend of Tom. Domesticated and proper.

PREACHER
The Town Preacher

MANAGER/ VOS

THE JOHN
30s something married, white professional

Production Note  The Preacher, The John and the Manager can be doubled.

Running Time
50 minutes

TIME & PLACE
1968.

A dingy, dark and small hotel room in the city and a small rural farmhouse

The hotel room has 1 small casement window, a dilapidated twin bed and single dresser. There is damaged chair by the window and an ashtray on the windowsill.

The small farmhouse is gray and rundown. The paint is chipping and gives an appearance of being weathered, beaten and not cared for. The interior of the house is simple.
SCENE 1

Interior of a small dark hotel room. Patrick is in the corner of the room, naked, sitting on the floor, rocking back in forth in the corner. He is mumbling and seems as if he is in shock.

MALE VOICE FROM OFF STAGE
Hey, shut the hell up in there. You hear me? I said, shut the hell up.

MALE VOICE FROM OFF STAGE
You son of a bitch! (Pause) Keep it down or so help me God!

MALE VOICE FROM OFF STAGE
I said keep it down! You don’t want me to have ta come in there!

A knock on the door. A pause. The knock becomes louder.

MANAGER
Hello? Is everything okay in there? Hello?

Another knock at the door.

MANAGER
Hello, this is the Manager. (Pause)
Hello?

(Pause)

People have been complaining about noise. (Pause)

Is everything ok in there?

Patrick finally looks up and wipes his nose with his arm.

PATRICK
(A confused, strained voice. As if he is waking up)

What?

**MANAGER**
Everything okay in there?

**PATRICK**
(Confused)
Huh? What?

**MANAGER**
This is the Manager. Can you open the door?

**PATRICK**
(Panned)
Yeah,

Yeah, give me a sec.

Patrick stands up and walks back and forth for a few moments. Patrick is anxious and appears as if he is worried about something. He takes the sheets off his bed and throws them on the far side of the bed on the floor. He looks at them and arranges them for a few moments.

**MANAGER**
(Annoyed)
Hello?

Knocking on the door again. Patrick is bruised and is holding his ribs on his right side. He cracks open the door enough for the Manager to see his face.

**MANAGER**
You okay kid? People have been complainin’ about noises and said they heard some yellin’?
PATRICK
(Confused)

What? Oh Yeah

Yeah, I’m ok. Just ah
rubbing his eyes
...just ah...bad dream you know?

MANAGER

Trying to peek into the room
You’re sure everything is okay?

PATRICK

Yeah, yeah, I’m ok.

MANAGER
(Irritated)
You gotta stop this shit kid. People are complainin’! I swear to God, if I gotta walk all the way up here again
(Pause)
you’re out. Hear me?

PATRICK

I’m good. Everything’s ok.

MANAGER

Still trying to peek inside
This is your last chance.

Patrick shuts the door and
stands in the middle of the
room. He walks back to the
window and takes a drag off
of the burning cigarette. He
picks up a letter that is on
the floor. He takes a
moment, reads the letter and
slumps in his chair and
begins to cry.

The lights fade as Patrick
stands up, picks up the
chair, smashes it against the
wall and screams.
SCENE 2

The backyard of a small rural house. There is a funeral in progress and only a Preacher and a man are standing over the coffin. Patrick walks from off stage. Patrick hides behind a tree and watches the funeral.

PREACHER
You know that if you need anything that we are all here for you Tom. I can only imagine how hard the past few weeks must have been.

TOM
Thanks, Reverend, that’s nice to know.

PREACHER
How’s your boy doing?

TOM
Your guess would be as good as mine. I sent him a letter about Helen last week.

PREACHER
Did he get a chance to talk you or Helen before she –

Kneading his hat in his hands

TOM
It’s been almost 2 years, I don’t even know if he is alive –

PREACHER
(Astonished) –
Tom, how can you think something like that

TOM
Sorry, Reverend.
Putting his hand on Tom’s shoulder

It’s ok Tom, you’ve been under a lot of stress.

(TOM)

(Letting out a deep breath)
I’m sorry. Patrick just gets under my skin. He’s been gone for 2 years and he still can get under my skin.

PREACHER
You need to talk to him Tom. You need to finish whatever this thing is between the two of you. Listen to me Tom. (Pause) A boy needs his father. Remember that Tom. A boy needs his father and a boy will always look to his Father as an example and seek guidance.

TOM
Sometimes that’s easier said than done Reverend. I just wish he coulda made it back here before Helen passed.

PREACHER
He’s over there Tom. I saw him walk up during the service and hide behind the tree. Go talk to him Tom. (Pause as he puts his hand on Tom’s shoulder) You lost your wife and he lost his mother. You both need each other right now.

The Preacher exits and Tom gets his composure in order to approach Patrick. He begins to address Patrick from across stage as he walks toward him. Patrick stays partially hidden behind the tree and seems afraid to greet his father.

TOM
I didn’t know if you got my letter. I sent it to the last address I had.

PATRICK
I got it a few days ago. When’d she die?
TOM
She went peaceful. She wanted you there.

PATRICK
(Angry and bitter) Then you should have written sooner and not waited until she was practically dead.

TOM
You shoulda been here.

PATRICK
Maybe she would still be alive if I was here and you weren’t.

TOM
(Angry and intimidating) You ungrateful Son of a Bitch! That’s your damn mother over there in that casket.

Patrick walks over to the casket and stares at it. He is silent and just looks at the coffin.

PATRICK
Why are you burying her here?

TOM
It’s what she wanted.

PATRICK
(Upset)
No it’s not. She always talked about being buried near her grandfather.

TOM
How in the hell would you know what she wanted?

She told me.

TOM
When? When the hell did she tell you? Before you left? Things change Patrick. People change their minds about things.

PATRICK
Pausing and looking down at the coffin

How’d she die?

TOM
What’s it matter? Your mother’s gone and it’s time for me to move on.

PATRICK
What the hell is that suppose to mean?

TOM
She was sick for a while Patrick. She suffered for weeks ‘n was in pain.

(Patrick is uncomfortable)
What? Can’t handle that? You wanna know why I didn’t write sooner? Because I didn’t need you here. You can’t even handle me talking about it now…how the hell did you expect to handle it in person?

Tom pauses and walks away. He stops then walks back toward Patrick

(In an apologetic tone)
Look, I’m sorry.

(Pause)
She’s in a better place now. That’s all that matters. It’s over. She’s at peace and I can start to get back to normal after the last few weeks-

PATRICK
Get back to normal? Get back to normal? She’s gone! How can you talk about getting back to normal?

Tom puts a hand on Patrick’s shoulder and makes a shallow attempt to comfort him.
Patrick pulls away

TOM
Take a look at yourself. Take a look around. Things haven’t been normal around here for a long time.

(Pause as Patrick begins to cry)
How ‘d you get home?

PATRICK
Took the bus as far as the money I had would take me. Then I hitched mostly.

TOM
Where’d you get money? You workin?

Patrick turns away from his father and doesn’t answer his question.

TOM
You hungry? You look like you haven’t been eating.

PATRICK
Wiping his nose
No.

TOM
What?

Awkward Pause

PATRICK
No, I’m not hungry

Tom walks toward the house, then turns back to Patrick.

TOM
Come in the house and have something to eat.

He pauses, then continues to the house.

It’s good that you’re back, it would’ve made your mother happy.

Patrick watches his father walk into the house. Patrick walks over to the coffin and kneels beside it. He puts a hand on the head of the coffin and then puts his cheek on the coffin and whispers.

PATRICK
Hi Mom.
(Pause)

He can’t hurt you anymore.

He looks over the coffin toward the house

Soon he won’t be able to hurt either of us anymore...

Lights Fade.

SCENE 3

Interior of the Kitchen - the kitchen is very small and dated. There is a wooden booth instead of a kitchen table. The booth is small. A vase with colorful fresh flowers is on the table as well as fresh chocolate cake. Tom is at the table cutting the cake. Patrick enters through a screen door.

Patrick walks to the cupboard and looks for a glass.

PATRICK
Where are the glasses?

Tom turns around and motions to the other end of the kitchen

TOM
There in the far cabinet now.

Pause as Patrick looks

No, not that one, the next one over. Yeah, right there, you got’um.

PATRICK
Why did you move the glasses?

TOM
Moved them a few weeks ago...seemed to make more sense.
PATRICK
But they have always been in the same place.

TOM
(Irritated)
And now they’re not.

PATRICK
Is that chocolate cake?

TOM
Yeah, it’s fresh, just baked yesterday.

Pushing the cake toward
Patrick
Here have a piece.

PATRICK
(Confused)
You baked a cake?

TOM
Um,
(Awkward pause)
food’s just been showin up the past few weeks. I forget
who brought this over.

Patrick stands across from
the table and leans against
the counter as his father
eats the cake, there is an
uncomfortable silence for a
few minutes)

PATRICK
Why isn’t any of mom’s family here?

TOM
She didn’t want them here. Seemed simpler that way.

PATRICK
But people brought over food?

TOM
(Looking up at Patrick with a sarcastic smirk)
People usually do that when someone dies.

PATRICK
But you told the neighbors, but not family?

TOM
I told you –

PATRICK
But –

TOM
Will you shut the hell up with your questions?

Tom pauses for a moment and gets his composure

TOM
Listen, she didn’t want her family here. I didn’t want my family here. Hell I didn’t even want the damn Preacher here, but somehow it was right. This is what your mother wanted Patrick.

(Pausing)
You haven’t been here. Remember leaving Patrick? Remember leaving in the middle of the night? Sure you do. But you don’t remember your mother keeping me awake each night worrying about you. Do you? DO YOU!

PATRICK
No –

TOM
Then shut up and be happy that I wrote you. Why can’t you be happy that you had a chance to say goodbye.

PATRICK
To who?

(Pause)

You?

TOM
What?

PATRICK
Say goodbye to who?

TOM
Slamming the fork down on his plate

What the Hell is that suppose to mean?
(To himself)
Jesus, I think I know what’s best.

Patrick recoils more and walks further away from his father

TOM
(Apologetic)
Come on. Sit down.
(Pause)
Come on. Here, have a piece of cake.

Patrick slowly walks over to the table. He is very shy and sits down as his father cuts a piece of cake. They sit quietly and eat cake, not talking.

PATRICK
Is there any milk?

TOM
No
(Pause)
You’d have to check.

After a few moments, Tom gets up and begins to walk out of the kitchen. He turns and talks to Patrick.

TOM
There are sheets upstairs in the hall closet if you want to spend the night. Take your old room. I’m gonna try and catch some of the game.
Patrick doesn’t answer and quietly eats the cake.

Walking out of the kitchen

Try and get some rest tonight. I need your help in the morning.

(Lights fade.)

SCENE FOUR

Interior of a hotel room.

PATRICK opens the door and is followed by a man

JESUS, this is where you live.

PATRICK

If you don’t like it here we don’t have to do this.

JOHN

No, no, I just didn’t think anyone lived like this anymore.

PATRICK

I’m gonna have a smoke.

Patrick sits by the window and lights a cigarette. He gazes out the window and begins to speak out loud.

PATRICK

You ever watch people as they walk by? I like watching people as they walk by. I wonder what they do, where they’re going. It’s fun to make up little stories about them. I make up stories about people a lot.

Turing toward the John

What’s your story?
JOHN
(Confused)
What’s my story?

PATRICK
Yeah. Would you be walking to work, maybe walking home to your family?

JOHN
I don’t like to talk about those things. I just came here to have a good time.

PATRICK
I like stories; they make me forget about my own.

JOHN
Where’s your bathroom?

PATRICK
Down the hall, 3rd door on the left.

JOHN
Christ! You have to share a bathroom in this place?

PATRICK
(Annoyed)
It’s the 3rd door on the left.
(Condescending)
Walk out the door, turn right and go to the 3rd door on your left.

JOHN
Walks out the door and points right
This way?

PATRICK
Looking out the window and blowing smoke

3rd door on the left. Knock. Sometimes the lock ain’t working

Patrick takes a few drags and finishes his cigarette. He
looks at it. He looks at the door and turns away. He puts the cigarette out on his arm and winces while pattering his feet in pain. He stands up and puts the cigarette butt in an ashtray. The John walks back in and walks over to Patrick.

JOHN
Putting a hand on Patrick’s shoulder.

Ready.

PATOYH
What
JOHN
You ready?

PATRICK
Yeah, but the money is up front.

JOHN
Reaching for his wallet in his jacket.

Fifteen right?

Patrick walks over to the bed and begins to kick off his shoes and undress

PATRICK
Put it on the dresser.

The John puts the money on the dresser and begins to watch Patrick undress.

JOHN
You’ve got a nice body.

Eyeing Patrick

But you need to wear more flattering clothes. You could be so pretty.
The John begins to walk over to Patrick and is also beginning to undress. He approaches Patrick and puts his hand on Patrick’s chest. After a moment he leans in to kiss Patrick.

JOHN
You could be SO pretty.

PATRICK
No kiss. This is just a fuck. No more.

JOHN
(Pleading)
But you’re so pretty-

PATRICK
-Fuck only! Got it!

The John begins to kiss Patrick’s neck and strokes Patrick’s body. Patrick is mechanical and stands motionless, looking off into space. The lights fade.

Lights up – Patrick is laying in bed, naked, half covered by a sheet. The John is getting dressed.

JOHN
Fucking asshole! I pay you fifteen dollars and I want to get fucked. WHAT ARE YOU, SOME KIND OF FREAK?

PATRICK
You got what you wanted -

JOHN
- What I got was some strung out junkie, laying on a bed like a corpse. God Damn junkie-

PATRICK
I ain’t a junkie!
JOHN
Then you’re a fucked up freak!

PATRICK
Fuck you asshole! You got what you paid for. You’re the one slummin’ tonight, not me!

JOHN
If you think I’m paying for that shit –

The John reaches for the money on the dresser and begins to walk toward the door. Patrick rushes out of bed and grabs the John’s hand.

PATRICK
That’s my money!

JOHN
Reaching back and pushing Patrick down

Faggot weirdo!

Patrick gets off the floor and rushes in front of the door and demands the fifteen dollars.

Look at you. You’re pathetic! Whatcha gonna do faggot, call all your junkie faggot friends?

PATRICK
(Angry)
Take it back
(Pause)
n’ give me my fucking money!

JOHN
Pushes Patrick out of the way and reaches for the door.

Get the hell outta my way you pathetic faggot!
Patrick lunges toward the John and rams the John into the doorframe. They both fall. The John gets up, blood coming from his nose.

God Damn it! How the hell am I suppose to explain that to my wife?

The John begins to kick Patrick and calls him derogatory terms

PATRICK
(Mumbled)
GIVE ME MY FUCKIN FIFTEEN DOLLARS!

The John stops kicking Patrick and leans down over Patrick. He picks up Patrick’s head and spits in Patrick’s face

JOHN
You’re pathetic. A dumb, pathetic, faggot!

The John walks over to pick up his jacket. Patrick gets up and rushes at the John, knocking him down. The John falls face first onto the floor. Patrick is sitting on the John’s back

PATRICK
While ramming the John’s head into the floor.

FUCK YOU! Fuck you, Fuck you, Fuck you!
(Long Pause)
Asshole! Think you can just hit me?
(Pause)
Fuck you! Fuck you for everything that you did to me!

Patrick begins to ram the John’s head into the floor
until the man is motionless. Patrick checks the John’s pockets and takes the fifteen dollars. Patrick then walks over to the corner of the room, coils up in the corner and begins to cry. The lights fade in the hotel room and simultaneously begin to go up in Patrick’s bedroom in his parent’s house. Patrick wakes up scared and confused. He gasps for breath. He scrambles out of bed and hides in the corner of the room.

PATRICK
Rocking back and forth in bed.

It wasn’t real, it wasn’t real, it wasn’t real….

(Lights fade.)

SCENE FIVE

Late Morning in the back yard. Patrick and his Father are standing by the coffin and have shovels. They are slowly digging a hole.

TOM
If we keep this pace up we should be done in an hour or so.

PATRICK
(Out of breath)
Why are we doing this? Why are we burying her?

TOM
It’s what we are supposed to do. She lived here. She died here. She should be buried here.

PATRICK
Under this tree?
Yeah

(Pause)

under THIS tree that she looked at everyday.

Why not next to Granddad and her mom? Why not at the cemetery?

Because this is what she wanted.

(Under his breath)

She didn’t want this.

Stops digging

What?

Nothin’.

Listen to me you little son of a bitch. You leave for 2 years, just pull up one night, no note, no nothing, just gone. You don’t tell your mother where you are, don’t tell anyone where you are, you just leave.

Pause as he holds his shovel

You have no idea what you put me through or what your mother wanted.

I know that she wouldn’t want this. Buried in the backyard by her son and her husband. Buried the day after a funeral where none of her family or friends came? Who the hell wants to be remembered like that?

Slamming his shovel into the ground
God damn it! Your mother wanted this. What the hell’s wrong with you? You can’t do this simple thing?

PATRICK

Holds his shovel and distances himself from his father by walking to the far end of the coffin.

This is weird. I feel weird.

(Pause)

How’d she die?

TOM

While digging

In her sleep.

PATRICK

How’d she get sick?

TOM

Continues to work

She was sick for a few weeks. Fever, Chills, Upset stomach. One morning she just didn’t get up. Start digging.

PATRICK

Still not digging

That’s it, she just got sick? No doctors? Nothing else? She just got sick and stayed in bed and you did nothing to help her?

TOM

(Like he is lecturing a child)
What the hell you’d expect me to do? She said she didn’t feel well, so I left her alone. She’d ask for a drink so I’d get her a drink. She’d be cold so I would get another blanket. It was like that for a few weeks and then she didn’t ask for anything anymore because she was dead.
That’s it PATRICK. She died. She was sick. She was old. And she died.

PATRICK (Upset)
She was 41.

TOM
And people die at 41. Now start digging so we can finish this!

PATRICK
You’re 41.

TOM
What the hell is does that mean?

PATRICK
Maybe what she had could hurt you too.

TOM (Smiling and laughing to himself)
I think I’ll be fine.

Lights fade and the sound of digging is heard. The lights slowly come up and Patrick and Tom are now putting straps around the coffin and are getting ready to move it.

TOM
Okay, once we get the straps on, you have to put the weight on your legs, not your back. If the weight is on your legs it won’t be so heavy.

PATRICK
I don’t know if I can.

TOM
Stop your bitchin and just get ready to do this.

PATRICK
(Freaking out)
I don’t know if I can. This is weird. We shouldn’t be doing this.
TOM
(Angry)
Listen God Damn it! Just put the weight on your legs, lift and then take small steps! Then this is over.

PATRICK
(Straining)
Ahhhh –

TOM
That’s it –

PATRICK
(In pain)
I can’t.

Patrick stumbles and falls backward, dropping the coffin.

TOM
Dropping his side of the coffin

God Damn it! How hard is it for you to just do this one thing? I only asked you to help me with this one thing.

PATRICK
On the ground, wiping his nose and rubbing his leg

It’s wrong.

TOM
This is what she wanted.

PATRICK
(Frantic)
She didn’t want this! She didn’t want to die in that house. She wouldn’t a wanted a funeral without her family. Be buried here under this tree. She didn’t want this…

TOM
(Angry)
This is what she wanted
PATRICK
(Crying and yelling)
No it’s not! It’s not! She hated this place! She hated this place just as much as she hated you.

TOM
(Yelling)
What the hell do you know about what your mother wanted? You left, remember? Do you think she wanted that?

PATRICK
(To himself)
I know she didn’t want you to hit us anymore.

TOM
What the hell you’d just say?

PATRICK
Nothin’.

TOM
Tell me what you just said ya smart ass son of a bitch!

PATRICK
I said that she didn’t want you to hit me anymore.

Tom stops readjusting the straps and charges toward Patrick. Just as he reaches Patrick, he stops, pauses and looks back toward the house. He pauses again and then crouches down in front of Patrick.

TOM
Think you’re a tough guy now? Let me tell ya the facts of life buddy boy. Life is shit and ya die. You deal with the shit as you live and the deal with shit that’s around ya.

(Condescending)
It never gets any better, just easier.

PATRICK
(Nervous and scared)
Is that what we are to you? Shit?

TOM
(Angry)
I made a mistake. She was the mistake and you were the consequence. Is that what you wanna hear? I know you’ve been thinking that.

(Pause)
She’s gone and up until yesterday you were gone too. All’s I wanted was ta get this part of my shitty life over with.

Patrick begins to cry

TOM
Don’t act so fucking surprised.

Tom looks back at the house, then tries to pull Patrick up

Come on, get up.

PATRICK
Get your fucking hands off me.

Lights Fade.

SCENE SIX

Interior kitchen of Tom’s house later that afternoon. There is a woman in the kitchen cleaning. She is in a floral dress and is humming as she moves around the kitchen. The woman walks around the corner and disappears.)Patrick enters the kitchen through the screen door. He heads right to the refrigerator and removes a bottle of beer. He walks to the counter and opens the beer.
The woman returns to the stage and appears in the kitchen behind Patrick.

SHARON
(Startled)
Oh!

PATRICK
Startled and afraid he drops the bottle

What the hell!-

She rushes over to clean up the mess

SHARON
Oh, no. Look at that.
(Pauses as she cleans)
You must be Patrick. When I saw your daddy this morning he told me that you came home for your momma’s funeral.

PATRICK
Who are you?

SHARON
My manners,

I’m Sharon, a friend of your daddy’s.

PATRICK
Does he know you’re in the house?

SHARON
With a smirk on her face

Well I do believe he might –

PATRICK
Who are you?

SHARON
I told you, I’m a friend of your daddy’s. Come on over here and have a seat. Are ya hungry
PATRICK
No.

SHARON
Well have a seat and I’ll make you a little something to eat.

PATRICK
Where’s my dad?

Sharon begins to move around the kitchen and remove items from the fridge and the cabinets to make sandwiches. Patrick is staring at her as she moves from place to place, not asking questions about where things are located in the kitchen. She continues to talk to him while she works.

SHARON
He’s upstairs getting cleaned up. Y’all were working hard in the yard. It musta been hot out there. I saw you fall down while you were helpin’ your daddy.

What?

PATRICK
How do you know where everything is?

SHARON
While you were helpin’ your daddy with your momma. I saw you fall down. Sure seems like hard work. I know your father’s happy that you could come home n’ help out.

PATRICK
How do you know where everything is?

What hun?

PATRICK
How do you know where everything is in this kitchen? (Confused)
I had trouble finding the glasses yesterday and you know where everything is.
SHARON  
(Embarrassed)
Beginner’s luck I guess. Do you want Miracle Whip on your sandwich?

PATRICK
What?

SHARON
Miracle Whip... on the sandwich? It really is delicious. Do you want some?

PATRICK
I said I wasn’t hungry.

SHARON  
(Condescending)
Well even if you aren’t hungry now, you will be later. And when you are hungry you will thank me for making the sandwiches for you and your daddy.

Sharon walks over to the living room

SHARON  
(In a loud voice)
Tom? Toooooooommmmm? Lunch is almost ready.

She walks back into the Kitchen

PATRICK
How do you know my dad?

SHARON
We’re friends. We’ve known each other for a few months.

PATRICK
Why weren’t you at the funeral then?

SHARON
She stops making the sandwiches and looks over at Patrick
It wouldn’t a been right. It would a been awkward for your daddy and

(Pause)

and he’s a private man. He said it was a lovely service though. The way the Preacher talked about your momma and how strong your daddy was while she was passin’. Your daddy’s a good man.

As Tom enters

Speak of the devil himself –

Tom enters the kitchen and is adjusting his shirt. He has showered and has combed his hair. He is wearing new clothes.

TOM

I see you’ve met Sharon.

Walking over to Sharon and kissing her on the cheek

I don’t know how I would have made it through the past few weeks without her.

SHARON

Straightening Tom’s shirt and brushing off his shoulders

Your daddy was so strong. He went through so much by himself and without his family here or you here to support him.

Kissing Tom on the cheek

Such a brave man.

TOM

What did ya make for lunch?

SHARON

Perky and bumping Tom on the hip

Sandwiches. I put Miracle Whip on them for you.
TOM
I don’t think we’ll have time to eat them before the movie... Maybe you should wrap them up so we can eat them in the truck.

SHARON
One step ahead of you hun. I already packed a few for us and some coca cola’s. What time does the movie start?

TOM
About 45 minutes. We’ll have enough time to get the tickets and find a good seat.

PATRICK
You’re going to a movie?

SHARON
Your daddy and I see a –

TOM
(Irritated)
We’re going to see a matinee.

SHARON
You should come along. Oh come on it’ll be fun. There’s room in the truck for the three of us, isn’t there Tom? –

TOM
– He has some things he needs to do around the house.

PATRICK
(Sarcastically)
No, I think I could see a movie.

SHARON
Oh come on Tom, we have a few minutes for Patrick to get cleaned up so he can come along. You both did work very hard this morning.

TOM
(To Sharon)
No, Patrick should stay and rest, the heat got to him earlier. Go ahead and put the bag in the truck ok-

She picks up the bag and walks out of the kitchen.
She hesitates and begins to turn around, but then walks out the screen door.

TOM
Don’t think I forgot what you said out there. I want you gone by tomorrow.

PATRICK
Leaning back in the booth and putting his feet up on the booth

Funny how your friend didn’t come to the funeral.

TOM
What the hell is that suppose to mean.

PATRICK
(Sarcastically and in a southern accent)
Nothin’ Daddy.

TOM
Your God Damn right it means nothin! I want you outta here by tomorrow, Got it!

Tom walks toward the door, then turns back

TOM
It’d be better if you were gone when we got back from the show.

PATRICK
So you can have the place all to yourself? –

Tom lurches toward the booth at Patrick as Patrick tries to get away. Patrick balls himself up in the corner of the booth

TOM
Smart ass, son of a bitch!
A car horn sounds from off stage. Tom stops reaching for Patrick and gets his composure. Tom walks toward the screen door.

**TOM**

Get out of my house! I want you gone by the time we get home!

**PATRICK**

So no one will hear you beat the shit out of your new girlfriend?

Tom charges toward the table and swings at Patrick. In the background, Sharon walks to the door.

**SHARON** (Off Stage)

Come on hon, we’re gonna miss the movie.

Sharon sees Tom trying to hit Patrick and rushes inside the door. Tom notices her and reaches for Patrick.

**SHARON**

Oh My God!

**TOM**

Shaking Patrick

Are you okay?

**SHARON**

What happened -

**TOM**

He passed out, must have been the heat. He fell down earlier -

**SHARON**

- I saw him fall while he was helping you. Let me get him some water.
TOM
Shaking Patrick

Are you okay son

Sharon is in the background, getting a glass of water

PATRICK

What? –

TOM
(Forceful and mean)

Are you okay?

Here, take this –

PATRICK

Taking the glass

Yeah

(Pause)

Yeah, I’m okay.

SHARON

We shouldn’t go. He’s not okay.

TOM

No, he’s okay. Aren’t you okay son?

PATRICK

(Nervous)

Yeah...yeah, I’m fin

TOM

See, he’s okay. He just needs some rest.

SHARON

You sure you’re okay?

PATRICK

Yeah, I’m fine.

Sharon leans in toward Patrick and runs her hand through Patrick’s hair.
I want you to get some sleep and eat one of those sandwiches, okay.

Patrick whispers something to Sharon.

Patrick

Ok –

TOM

What you’d say –

PATRICK

I’m ok.

TOM

See, he’s a big boy. Now come on (Pause) let’s go to the matinee.

Sharon and Tom walk out

Lights out.

SCENE SEVEN

Interior of the kitchen.
Patrick is sitting at the kitchen table. His Father and Sharon have just left. He is crying and acts out in anger and throws his glass of water across the room.

Enter Patrick’s Mother. She is frail looking and ghostly white. She is wearing a flowing, tattered white night dress. She has bruises on her face and body.

HELEN

Now why did you go and do that?

Patrick looks up towards the voice and is frightened. He tries to hide and protect himself in the booth.
PATRICK
Mom?

HELEN
Bending down to clean up the glass

You know how long it takes to clean up glass pieces. You’ll sweep up and think you have all of them and then low and behold, a few days later another one pops up and cuts your foot.

PATRICK
(Crying and terrified)
Mom?

HELEN
Stops cleaning and walks over to the kitchen table

It’s okay Patty. I’m not going to hurt you.

She kneels by the table and reaches for his hand.

PATRICK
But Dad said you were...the coffin...the funeral.

HELEN
Still reaching for his hand

It’s okay honey. I’m not going to hurt you. Come here. Take mommy’s hand. Come on, it’s okay.

Patrick hesitantly moves toward his mother and grabs her hand. When he touches her hand he begins to cry uncontrollably and his mother sits in the booth and holds him. Patrick buries his head in her chest and she comforts him and rocks back and forth.
until he stops crying and gains composure.

HELEN

Feel better?

PATRICK

(Wiping his nose and the tears from his face)

Yeah

HELEN

I’m glad that you came back home.

PATRICK

I wanted to see you before –

HELEN

I now honey, I know, but we’re together now. Just the two of us–

PATRICK

I miss you mom.

HELEN

I miss you too Patty. I’ve missed you terribly the past few years, but I always knew that you were okay. Somehow I could feel it. I didn’t know where you were, but I knew you were okay.

Patrick rests his head on his mother’s chest and she closes her eyes and runs her fingers through his hair. They are quiet for a moment.

PATRICK

Why didn’t you want to be buried with Grandpa?

HELEN

We don’t get a lot of things we want. I wanted a happy family, a husband and two children. Sometimes life isn’t fair, but I had you. My Patty. My Boy.

PATRICK

Noticing the bruises
What the Fuck-

HELEN
(Angry)
PATRICK! You know I hate language like that!

PATRICK
(Nervous)
Jesus Christ, you’re hurt everywhere!

HELEN
Reaching for Patrick

Shhh, Shhh. Calm down. Calm down…it’s okay. You didn’t hurt me.

(Pause)

Do you understand?

(Pause)

I’m okay. No one can hurt me now.

(Pause)

Understand?

(Pause)

I’m fine and no one can hurt me now.

(Pause)

PATRICK

How?

(Pause)

Dad said that you were sick. He said that you were in bed for weeks.

HELEN
I was. I was very sick and was in bed for several weeks.

PATRICK
But all the bruises…you’re hurt-

HELEN
At a slow pace, almost as if she is remembering a dream

It’s okay. Come here. I need to talk with you.

Turning to face Patrick

Things weren’t nice around here after you left. I won’t lie to you and tell you that things were good. You lived here and you know how things were. After you left, your
father was angry for a long time. He was angry that you left and he was angry at me for missing you. He was angry that I wanted to bring you back home. Somehow all that changed a few months ago. He seemed happier. He told me that he would be working longer hours. Somehow I thought that him working 12 hours days would be the end of me, but he generally seemed happier and things began to change. He wasn’t as angry. There was less yelling and fighting. Things were getting better, so I thought it was okay. Then things just changed.

PATRICK

How?

HELEN

I was pregnant a long time ago. A long time ago your father hurt me in a way that would never heal.

PATRICK

I don’t understand-

HELEN

You’re not suppose too.

Turning to Patrick

Listen to me.

(Pause)

I’ve been dead inside for a long time Patty.

She moves from the table and stands in the middle of the kitchen with her arms wrapped around herself.

HELEN

In almost a dreamlike state, as if she can see everything as she describes it.

He hit me because he was angry. He hit me because he could. He hit me because he hates me. He hated me since the day he met me. He hated me when I was pregnant with you.

(Pause)

He always seemed to hate me more when I was pregnant.
PATRICK
Did he hit you when you were pregnant with me?

HELEN
That’s not important anymore. What’s important is that you’re home and I had a chance to see you.
(She turns around and holds Patrick again)

You will always be my little baby boy and I want you to know that I loved you very much. I loved you and always wanted the best for you.

PATRICK
I can’t think about you being gone.

HELEN
Then don’t! Don’t think about me being gone. Think about me holding you
(Pause)
Laughing with you
(Pause)
Sharing moments with you.

PATRICK begins to cry as his mother holds him tighter.
She runs her fingers through his hair and begins to sing a lullaby to him

HELEN
(Singing softly)
Hush little baby mama's near,
To wipe your brow and calm your fears.
To kiss your cheek and hold your hand,
'Til you drift off to sleepyland.
To help you count those little white sheep,
And sing you songs 'til you're asleep.
To tell you tales of kings and queens,
And Jack and Jill and wonderful things.
So snuggle up and hug me tight,
And dream sweet dreams all through the night.
And every night when the sun goes down,
You'll still be the sweetest little baby in town.

She walks off stage with Patrick and the lights fade.
SCENE EIGHT

Interior of the kitchen. The kitchen is dirty and dingy. There is a light on and it appears to be night. The scene is a flashback to Patrick’s childhood. Patrick as an adult is standing in the doorway to the kitchen. Tom appears at the kitchen table and is looking at bills. Helen is in a plain dress with an apron on. She is standing at the sink and is doing dishes.

TOM
Jesus! I do everything I can to cut down around here and each month the damn bills keep going up. Have you been turning off the lights when you leave a room?

(Pause)

Helen?

(Pause)

Helen!

HELEN
(Confused)

What Tom?

TOM
I was talking to you.

HELEN
Sorry, I didn’t hear you.

TOM
(Under his breath)
Maybe if you did listen to me, the damn bills wouldn’t be so high.

(To Helen)
Have you been turning off the lights like I said? Not running the window unit as much?
HELEN

What?

(Pause)

Yeah Tom, I have.

TOM

Take a look a look at this. $4.50 for water. $7.50 for electric! You’re bleeding me dry!

Helen stops washing dishes and leaves the water running. She walks over toward the living room and turns back to talk.

HELEN

Be quiet! 

(Pauses then in a hushed tone)

For God’s sake, you’ll wake Patrick.

(Pause)

We’ll tighten up a little, cut back...it’s no big deal.

TOM

That’s the point. It’s never a big God Damn deal with you.

HELEN

Standing up and looking back toward the hallway

Will you keep your voice down!

TOM

Sitting back down

Or what!

- Keep you voice down!

TOM

Shut up and get me a beer.

HELEN

(Under her breath)

Get you own beer.

TOM
HELEN
What?

I said get your own beer.

TOM
You are some piece a work! Who the hell do you think I am? I’m your God Damn husband! When I tell you to do something, you do it! When I ask you nicely to get me a fucking beer out of the fucking fridge, you say, yes honey and GET ME A BEER!-

HELEN
(In a hushed, but angry tone)
Christ Tom! Patrick has school tomorrow.

TOM
Hitting the table
I don’t give a damn about Patrick. Now get me a beer.

HELEN
Look at yourself. You look like a fool.

TOM
Standing up
You think you’re some prize?

HELEN
What the hell is that suppose to mean?

TOM
You think anyone else would have married a girl who was knocked up?

HELEN
You’re the one who got me pregnant -

TOM
You think I wanted that? You think I wanted a ready-made family?

HELEN
No one asked you to get me drunk and screw me Tom. You did-
Tom reaches out and smacks her across the face, knocking her down.

TOM
You think I wanted this? Staying in this piece of shit small town? Working all the time just to make ends meet? Putting everything I earn toward bills? Not having a life of my own or being able to do what I want?

HELEN
(On the floor)
If you don’t like it so much, why don’t you just go?

TOM
Tom is leaning on the table, his back to her.

You’re the worst mistake I ever made. I should never have come back here. But noooooooo! I come back, walk into a shitty bar with my uniform on and I end up with a whore who was looking for a baby and a husband.

HELEN
Is that what you think of me? That I was with you because I wanted a baby!

Patrick as an adult watches the argument for the side.

HELEN
Standing up
Go back to bed Patrick. Mommy just fell down.

PATRICK
Are you okay mommy?

Walking over to Patrick to talk to him

HELEN
I’m okay. Just go back to bed, okay?

Patrick turns around and walks away.
HELEN
See what you did? I told you to be quiet.

TOM
Who cares? He probably wasn’t sleeping.

HELEN
I don’t know what I ever saw in you.

TOM
You wanna know what you saw in me? You saw a meal ticket. You saw some guy, fresh out of the Army who could knock you up and take care of you.

HELEN
Is that what you really think?

TOM
Isn’t that the truth?

HELEN
Why would you ever –

TOM
Don’t play dumb Helen. Two days after you told me that you were pregnant you were looking at wedding dresses. You ignored me when I begged you to get an abortion –

HELEN
- Stop it!

TOM
Stop what? Telling the truth? Do you think I wanted this? Do you honestly think I wanted this? I just wanted to come home, have a beer, fuck someone and forget about the war. What do I end up with? A kid, a God Damn mortgage and wife who can’t even turn off the damn water!

Waving his hands around

I hit the Damn jackpot!

PATRICK OFF STAGE
Mommy?

HELEN
Go back to bed baby.

Patrick walks back to the kitchen

PATRICK
Why are you and daddy yelling?

TOM
She said go back to bed-

Turning toward Patrick and in a loud tone

HELEN
Grabbing Tom and turning him around

Don’t talk to him like that!

TOM
Grabbing her wrist, then turning back to Patrick

I said get the hell back in your room!

Patrick runs away. After Patrick begins to leave, Tom turns back to Helen and throws her against the counter.

TOM
You don’t do a thing I say. You can’t even get me a damn beer or turn off the God damn water!

HELEN
Get out!

TOM
(Yelling)

Or what?

(Pause)

OR WHAT!

Helen grabs a glass from the counter and throws it at Tom
HELEN
Get the hell out of my house!

TOM
Grabbing her and shaking her
Your house?
He throws her down on the floor and begins to take off his belt
What makes you think this is your house?
(Yelling)
This is my damn house!

Helen is moving on the floor, trying to stand up and get away as Tom stands over her with his belt in his hand.

HELEN
(Scared)
What’s wrong with you? Stop it!

TOM
Kicking her back down to the floor and beginning to whip her
You never do a damn thing I ask. You ruined my life!

Patrick stands in horror as he watches Helen beg and plead for Tom to stop. After a few moments she stops begging. Patrick slowly begins to enter the kitchen.

PATRICK
Mommy?

Tom is standing over Helen with the belt in his hand. He is breathing heavily.
I told you to go to bed!

Patrick runs offstage and Tom follows.

The lights in the kitchen go dark as we see Patrick run into his room and hide in the corner. Tom kicks open the door and begins to beat young Patrick.

SCENE NINE

PATRICK
Stop! Stop God damn it! Just fucking stop!
(Patrick begins to cry)
I’m just a little kid…just stop.

Tom stops beating Patrick and walks away. He stops in the doorway to the bedroom. The room begins to go dark.

TOM
Now, go to bed.

Suddenly the door to the bedroom is kicked open and an older Tom is standing in the doorway.

TOM
(Yelling)
You had to open your God Damn mouth, you son of a bitch!

Tom takes off his belt and charges toward Patrick. Patrick continues to hide in the corner. Tom lunges toward Patrick and swings his belt. Patrick screams as Tom begins to beat him.

TOM
As he whips Patrick

You couldn’t leave well enough alone! You had to interfere with me and Sharon!

Tom stops whipping Patrick and kicks Patrick.

TOM

Putting his belt back on and walking out of the room

You always were a mistake!

PATRICK

Slowly standing up and holding his abdomen

Fuck you asshole!

TOM

Turning around

Get the hell out of my house!

PATRICK

Or what? You’re gonna beat me dead like you beat mom?

TOM

Charging toward Patrick

You son of a bitch –

PATRICK

Stepping out of the way as Tom runs into the wall

I’m not a little kid anymore.

Hitting Tom in the back
You can’t come in here anymore and beat me and leave!

Patrick and Tom both grab each other and begin to wrestle and fight. Tom eventually pins Patrick to the floor and has his hands around Patrick’s throat.

PATRICK
(Crying and hysterical)
Go Ahead!
(Pause)
Do it!

TOM
Shut up!

PATRICK
Do it!

Tom takes his hands off Patrick’s throat and punches Patrick in the face. Tom stands up slowly and sits on the bed. Patrick is lying on the floor.

PATRICK
(Crying and laughing)
Why couldn’t you do it!

TOM
Get the hell out of my house!

PATRICK
(Angry)
Why couldn’t you do it, why couldn’t you squeeze a little tighter?

TOM
Getting up and walking toward the door

You disgust me.
PATRICK
Not man enough to get rid of your mistake?

TOM
Is that what you want? Do you want to die? So help me God if that is what you want...you know where my service revolver is. Do it your self!

PATRICK
Standing up and wiping blood from his mouth and face

That’s what you want?

TOM
(Yelling)
I want you gone! I want you out of here and out of my life! It was a mistake to send you that letter. It was a mistake for you to come back here. You’ve been dead to me for a long time.

(Pause)
Just leave and don’t come back. Just get the hell out of my house. Don’t call, don’t write, don’t come back. Just walk out the door like you did 2 years ago.

PATRICK
You’re not a man! A man would have been able to squeeze a little tighter.

TOM
What the hell do you know about being a man?

PATRICK
(To himself)
I know how to kill someone!

TOM
- What the hell are you talking about?

PATRICK
Why couldn’t you just squeeze tighter?

TOM
You’re sick! Don’t wait until morning. Get the hell out of my house now!

PATRICK
As Tom is leaving the room

I killed a guy last week.

TOM

Stopping in the doorway with his back to Patrick.

No you didn’t.

PATRICK

How the hell do you know, you weren’t there!

TOM

Turning around and walking back over to Patrick. Tom grabs Patrick by the arms

Listen, you didn’t kill anyone last week. This is just one of your pathetic stories. This is you trying to get me to hit you again.

Shaking Patrick

Isn’t it? ISN’T IT?

PATRICK

Pushing Tom Away

No!

(Nervous and rambling)

I hit him and hit him and hit him until he didn’t move anymore. I met him at the bar and he came back to my room so I could suck him off and he could fuck me. He gave me $15 bucks and then tried to take it back after he was finished. He tried to take the money and I wouldn’t let him. He pushed me. He called me names and so I hit him. He yelled at me like you yell at me so I hit him some more. I hit him and hit him and hit him. Then I rammed his head into the floor over and over until he didn’t move or make a noise.

TOM

You had sex with a man?
PATRICK
No, I let him fuck me for $15.

TOM
You killed a man after he paid you for sex?

PATRICK
Then I came here -

Charging Patrick and hitting him backhanded, while Patrick sits on the bed

TOM
Begins to choke Patrick

You FAGGOT! You FUCKING, STUPID, GOD DAMN, FAGGOT!

PATRICK
(Crying)

Tighter...

TOM
In Rage and choking Patrick

...worthless, piece of shit, FAGGOT!
(Long Pause while Tom makes grunting sounds)
...such a God Damn stupid...you’re a waste!

Patrick just lies on the bed crying as Tom chokes him. Patrick stops moving and Tom begins to move away from Patrick and walks backward from the bed. Tom wipes spit and snot from his face and looks at Patrick motionless on the bed. Tom walks out the door. Patrick lies on the bed and is silent and motionless for several minutes. Patrick slowly begins to move and then starts to cry. He lies on the bed.
PATRICK
(Screaming and hysterical)
Why couldn’t you just FUCKING kill me!

Patrick lies on the bed for a few moments, then gets up and puts on his jacket and shoes. He walks to the dresser in his room and wipes the blood from his face with the sleeve of his jacket. He looks at the mirror, then punches it and falls to the floor with a bloody and hurt hand. Patrick leans against the dresser and continues to cry. Tom walks back into the room. He stands over Patrick and watches him cry. He points a gun at Patrick and fires a shot into Patrick’s face. Patrick falls lifeless on the floor and Tom walks out of the room.

The Ghost of Patrick’s mother comes from the far corner of the bedroom and walks toward Patrick. She abruptly stops in the middle of the room, falls to her knees and begins to cry. Patrick looks at his mother.

PATRICK
What’s wrong mommy?

Helen stops crying and holds out her arms.

HELEN
Nothing Patty. Come here...come to mommy. Everything’s gonna be fine.
Singing softly as the lights go down

Hush little baby mama's near,
To wipe your brow and calm your fears.
To kiss your cheek and hold your hand

END.