

Discrete Scenes From a Murder
by
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SCENE ONE (PROLOGUE):

The three actors sit in chairs evenly spaced across the stage with WOMAN in the middle, MAN 1 stage right, and MAN 2 stage left. During scene one, they should hold vacant expressions, show no emotion as they sing. Their roles are that of narrators, neither commenting on the action nor making moral judgements. Instead, they establish the scene and offer the ideas for the audience to consider.

ALL: Late one night
 On a dark street
 Three people met
 As three people meet
 In a city of millions
 Where no one's discrete.

 In the censorious sight
 Of the Catholic church dome
 One person strides
 And two people roam:
 Trudging toward hell
 Or wandering home.

SCENE TWO:

All actors stand. In this scene the WOMAN portrays the FEMALE CULPRIT. She should plead to the JUDGE as if he were in front of her. The MEN take on the role of the JUDGE, acting as one. They should be turned inward, facing each other with the FEMALE CULPRIT in between. They should not have the vacant look as before, but should also not directly interact with each other or the FEMALE CULPRIT.

JUDGE: Hereby charged with...

FEMALE
CULPRIT: Y'honor, y'honor...

JUDGE: The trial over
Your fate decided

F. CULPRIT: Y'honor, y'honor...

JUDGE: No more pleading
Hereby sentenced to

F. CULPRIT: Y'honor,
I recognize my...my culpability -
In the death of this young man.

Y'honor,
I take responsibility -
However,
Wasn't I -
Wasn't I who slaughtered this young man.

I couldn't get warm -
The nights were so cold
In that hovel above the liquor store
No blanket no fire
No love

SCENE THREE:

MAN 1 comes alive as the MALE CULPRIT, arguing with the FEMALE CULPRIT. She should continue to address the judge in front of her unless indicated, as if the MALE CULPRIT does not exist in the courtroom. As the scene progresses, his spirit draws her unwillingly into his world, as if she exists both in the courtroom and in a sort of timeless limbo with the MALE CULPRIT. Or is he in her head? MAN 2 adopts the role of the VICTIM, singing over the other two but not aware of them. He also exists in his own nebulous world, as if he is already dead.

MALE
CULPRIT: No love? No love?

F. CULPRIT: Y'honor, y'honor...
He made me do it.
He did it.
Not I, not I.

VICTIM: Walking alone from the train station.
Trudging toward home.

M. CULPRIT: Liar!
No love?
She's always been a vile liar -
No good, no good.

F. CULPRIT: No good, no good
He's always been a lousy...

VICTIM: Frivolous argument over the phone
With my mother.

M. CULPRIT: No love! Liar!

VICTIM: I should have heard them
Approaching.
I've always been careful.

F. CULPRIT: (*addressing MALE CULPRIT directly*)
Shut up!
You can't boss me no more!
You did this - and everyone knows it!

M. CULPRIT: You did this - and everyone knows
You lie!

VICTIM: On my way home from the -
On my way home.

F. CULPRIT: On my way home -
You made me help you
But you did this!
I just wanted to go home.

VICTIM: I just wanted to go home.

SCENE FOUR:

The FEMALE CULPRIT is propelled to stage right. She and the MALE CULPRIT reenact the night of the robbery.

M. CULPRIT: I just want to go home.

F. CULPRIT: No one is going home -
It's freezing.
It's boring.
It's empty.

M. CULPRIT: I'm tired -
Tired of walking.
Tired of waiting.

F. CULPRIT: You gotta find someone.
Somebody's got to come along.

M. CULPRIT: No!
I'm done -
Done with this life,
This street, this shit -
You - done with you!

F. CULPRIT: You don't mean it -
Can't mean it - no, no.
You're just tired -
So, so tired
So am I -
Tired.

M. CULPRIT: No!
I ain't gonna wait

F. CULPRIT: Yes, you are!
You got to!

M. CULPRIT: I ain't gonna listen
To you run your mouth
And run me!

F. CULPRIT: Just one more time -
Love!

M. CULPRIT: I ain't, I tell you
No more -
No never -
I'm done!

F. CULPRIT: Think of our bed -
Think of what I can do for you
If you wait -

M. CULPRIT: No!

F. CULPRIT: You know you're gonna wait
You know you love me
Want me.

M. CULPRIT: I said no more.

F. CULPRIT: Just one.

M. CULPRIT: Same shit every time
Every day

F. CULPRIT: Just one.

M. CULPRIT: No.

F. CULPRIT: Quiet - quiet
Do you see him?
He's the one.

M. CULPRIT: No -

F. CULPRIT: He's the one.

SCENE FIVE:

The VICTIM, faces out, addressing his mother as if on the phone but without the object. He exists in the night of the robbery. As the scene begins, WOMAN becomes aware of the VICTIM and is draw toward him as if by forces beyond her control. She moves stage left, becoming the VICTIM'S MOTHER.

She stands behind him throughout the scene. She is living in the future and telling him what she wished she had said to him that night. She desperately wants to hold him, but is unable. The VICTIM is not aware of her presence.

VICTIM: No, mother
 I don't need to wait for the bus
 It's a beautiful night for a walk.

MOTHER: A walk? This late? Why?

VICTIM: The streets aren't as bad as you think
 In the city.

MOTHER: You should have been careful.

VICTIM: I'm no longer a child.

MOTHER: You'll always be my child.

VICTIM: No lectures.
 I realize you worry.

MOTHER: I worried.
 I did.

VICTIM: But really the moonlight is wonderful
 On a clear night like this.

MOTHER: I should have told you I love you.
 I miss you.
 I love you.

VICTIM: You bother too much
 Over trivial things
 Like walking alone on a beautiful night.
 No one's around.

MOTHER: I'm here.

VICTIM: And no one's as evil
 As what you imagine -
 No killers.

MOTHER: No killers.

VICTIM: No druggies
Lurking behind every turn.
Don't worry.

MOTHER: You were always so careful.

VICTIM: I'm always careful.
You never know who you're going to meet.

MOTHER: You didn't know who you were going to meet.
I should have told you I love you.
I miss you.
I love you.

SCENE SIX:

WOMAN returns to stage left. Over music, the actors mime the robbery and the murder.

SCENE SEVEN (EPILOGUE):

The actors return to their opening positions and resume their roles as narrators.

ALL: Late one night
On a dark street
Three people met
As three people meet
In a city of millions
Where no one's discrete.

Late one night
As the wind blew
Nobody cried
Because nobody knew
The hour of mourning
Was long overdue.