Beginning of the End

The scene opens in a ranch brick house on the edge of a small town. Inside the house, Rose is pacing in the kitchen, waiting for her husband, Brian, to arrive home. Rose is very angry and you can see this in her frantic pacing and clenched jaw. Brian is over an hour late coming home from work and Rose has been unable to reach him on the phone. A few moments after the scene begins, a car door slams. Seconds later, the back door opens.

*Brian enters.*

Rose: (stops pacing and faces Brian) Where have you been? I’ve been worried to death! You are over an hour late. Why didn’t you answer your phone?

*Brian turns away and walks out the back door. Rose follows him and waits for a response as he pulls out and lights a cigarette.*

Rose: (impatiently) Where the fuck have you been?

Brian: (looking away from Rose) I got off work and went to hang out with a friend. We had a few drinks and smoked a joint. (Turns and looks at her with a blank face.) Yeah, that’s right. I’m high.

Rose: (voice raised, becoming increasingly angry) What the fuck are you talking about? You just got out of rehab, you stupid fucking asshole! Why didn’t you call and tell me you were going to be late?

Brian: (no longer looking at Rose) I didn’t want to. It was just a few beers and some pot.

Rose: (voice raised) We just spent nine thousand dollars for you to have a month-long vacation in rehab. You’re such a fucking loser. And a liar! I can’t stand the sight of your face. You do this to me after I found out you were cheating on me. You can’t stop lying! Fuck you! I hate you!

Brian: (turns and glances at Rose) Fuck me? Fuck you! Just leave me alone.

*Rose turns and storms back inside, slamming the door behind her. Brian follows, leaving his cigarette outside. Rose turns at the sound of his entrance and watches him walk to the refrigerator where he pulls out a cold beer. Rose is noticeably angered by his nonchalance. Brian closes the refrigerator and turns to look at Rose, a slight grin on his face.*

Brian: What?

Rose: I am so fucking mad at you right now. Before you got home, I was laying out my medication for next week. I am missing some of my medicine. How long have you been taking it?

Brian: What are you talking about? I took the one you knew about.

Rose: You’re lying. I looked today and counted them. I am over a week short. I can’t even make it til my next prescription. You are the only one who could have taken them. You are an addict!

Brian: (nonchalantly) I only took a couple more. I see why you like them. You’re the addict.

Rose: These are prescribed to me. I have to take them to get through the damn day! I’m not the addict! You are! You are stealing my prescriptions! You are a thief and a liar!

Brian: (nonchalantly) Whatever.

Rose: No, it’s not whatever! There’s also money missing from our checking account! I want you up at 8:00 tomorrow morning and ready to be at the bank when it opens. I’ll meet you there. We are closing our account and I am opening up my own.

Brian: No. I’m not getting up that early tomorrow. It’s already late. We can do it another day.

Rose: (becoming increasingly angry) Hell no! You get your fucking lazy, lying ass up out of that bed and be at that bank!

Brian: I told you. I am not doing it tomorrow.

Rose: Then I’ll go down there and do it myself. And on my way, I’ll stop at the police station and file charges on you for theft by unlawful taking.

Brian: Whatever, I am not going to the bank. Why do you always have to get your way?

Rose: What the fuck are you talking about? My way? My way? It wasn’t my way when you got addicted to Oxycontin! It wasn’t my way when you pawned every damn thing you could get your hands on! It wasn’t my way when you went to rehab! It wasn’t my way when I spent 30 days home alone with our son while you were off attending meetings and sitting around playing pool in a nice house in the country! None of this is my way!

Brian: I said I’ll do it later. I’m not doing it tomorrow.

Rose: The hell you aren’t!

Brian: Nah, I’ll do it later.

Rose: (beginning to lose all restraint, visibly shaken) Dannit, you will do it tomorrow! I hate you! I can’t even stand to look at you any more. All you are is a drug addict! A loser! A thief! You are such a fucking piece of shit. You don’t deserve to have me as a wife and you don’t deserve to have a child! You’re not a husband or a father! You haven’t been there for either of us in three years. I hate you!

Brian: Go back to bed.

Rose: (unable to contain her anger) I’m not going back to bed. This is my house. You can’t tell me what to do! You don’t make the rules. You are nothing but a fucking loser! You are nothing but a drug addict. I hate you!

Brian: Get your fucking ass back in bed.

Rose: What in the hell did you just say to me?

Brian: (becoming visibly agitated, begins to raise his voice) Bitch, I said get your fucking ass back in bed or I’m gonna punch you in your fucking face!

Reflecting on this piece:

I am exhausted. The script writing today brought up some emotions that must have been buried. I have written many times and in many forms. I always avoided this situation because of the painful dialogue that occurred. I didn’t realize that until reflecting on the piece, but here I sit, thinking of how this may never have come out had I not been opened up to a new way of writing about things. Sitting down and actually thinking about the dialogue and actions that occurred that night up to this point (and it’s not even close to finished) make me think about the power of writing the spoken word.

I wonder if this is what my kids feel like every morning when they walk into school. Do they carry similar baggage, if not worse? Have they been the victim of a verbal or physical assault the night before or over the weekend? I harbor so much hatred and anger over this one small moment in time. How many of my kids walk into my classroom and have experienced this on a regular, recurring basis? I believe this is so powerful, it might just open up some of my kids and break down some of the barriers they have with writing and sharing. I’m good at pushing things down and ignoring how I really feel. I mastered that long ago. But these precious students of mine? They shouldn’t have had to master that skill. They shouldn’t have to push down their emotions and feel like it is not right to share them.

My experience with this type of writing is limited, but I see the extremely powerful potential it has to open up a world of writing and conversation we have yet to experience together in the classroom. I will definitely be incorporating this as a piece in my social skills class. Not only will the different type of writing benefit them academically, but hopefully will also impact them socially, giving them an acceptable outlet for their emotions.