

DETOUR

THE ORIGINAL STAGEPLAY



CHRISTIAN PLAYWRIGHT

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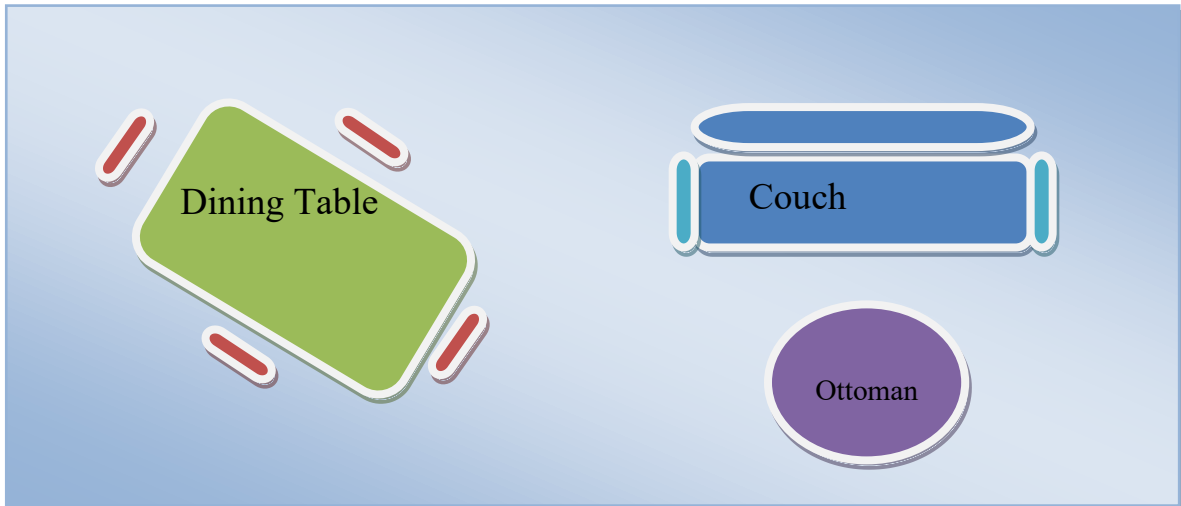
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Sample Script



SCENE 1

SETTING: Living Room



LIGHTS UP

Pastor Rudolph James sits to have dinner with his family. Wife, Janet, and two sons, Caleb, the youngest, and John, his older brother.

They take turns to share their dinner from the main plates in silence.

This family is organized and disciplined in all they do including having their Sunday dinner together with knife and fork.

MALE VOICE: In this life, good people are often treated as though they were wicked, and wicked people are often treated as though they were good. This is meaningless. So I recommend having fun, because there is nothing better for people to do in this world than eat, drink and enjoy life. That way they will experience some happiness along with all the hard work God gives them.

JANET: Today was lovely.

RUDOLPH: Uhm.

Pause.

JANET: I think the message was relevant.

CALEB: No, it wasn't. Dad was preaching about guineps and tofu. Why do all his messages have to have some reference to food?

JANET: Caleb, please. Not today.

JOHN: I think it was a good message.

CALEB: You would think so you little puppet! How about developing a mind of your own big brother instead of sopping up what everybody else thinks.

JANET: Caleb! You are way out of line.

Uncomfortable pause.

RUDOLPH: I preach so people can understand and relate to what I'm saying. The message was good....but did it accomplish anything.

JANET: I'm sure it did, honey. There were many who came to the altar.

RUDOLPH: Yes, but not my son.

CALEB: I'm gonna assume you are talking about me so I will ask why I would need to go to the altar today. You preached about people being like guineps. Some can be stripped from the seed easily, while others take a little greater effort. How is that relevant to me?

RUDOLPH: Your attitude, for one.

CALEB: What's wrong with my attitude?

RUDOLPH: It's not Christ-like.

JANET: Are you two really gonna do this again today?

RUDOLPH: I'm just trying to have my dinner.

JANET: I dream of the day the two of you get along. I don't even know what the problem is between you two.

RUDOLPH: Conflict of interest maybe.

CALEB: How so, Pops?

RUDOLPH: I am interested in church, and you are not.

CALEB: Do you have any idea what it's like being a pastor's son?

RUDOLPH: Nope. My father was a farmer. He went to church twice. His wedding and his funeral.

CALEB: Well then, let me tell you what it is like being your son, Pops. It feels like my own personal prison. No freedom. No space.

RUDOLPH: Where the presence of God is, there is liberty.

CALEB: There is no liberty in being your son. There are just rules, chains, curfews, and padlocks. No fun. No freedom.

RUDOLPH: Freedom to do what?

CALEB: Whatever I like.

RUDOLPH: Then maybe you have outgrown this roof.

CALEB: Maybe I have.

RUDOLPH: You are nothing but an ungrateful dupe.

Caleb slams his fist on the table.

RUDOLPH: Did you just slam your fist on my table? The table that I bought?

CALEB: I apologize.

RUDOLPH: This house is mine. All these furniture are mine. I am the one who took them out on hire purchase, and I am still paying for them. In this house, you own nothing so curtail that attitude young man.

Caleb gets up from the table.

RUDOLPH: I don't see why you can't be more like your brother.

JANET: Caleb, please sit down and finish your dinner.

CALEB: I've lost my appetite, Mom. Excuse me.

Caleb leaves.

JANET: I can't remember the last time Caleb finished eating his Sunday dinner.

Pause.

JANET: And you have to stop comparing him to John. You know he hates it.

RUDOLPH: I can't help it. The boy gets under my skin.

JANET: You can't fight fire with fire, my love.

RUDOLPH: You shouldn't be taking his side. You saw what he did.

JANET: I'm sure there was a reason.

RUDOLPH: He walked out five minutes into my message and didn't come back till after I finished preaching. I think the reason is clear enough.

Pause.

Janet gets up from the table.

JANET: I will go see if Caleb is okay. Excuse me.

Janet leaves.

Rudolph finishes his meal and taps his mouth with a napkin. He looks over at John.

RUDOLPH: You okay, son?

JOHN: Yes sir.

RUDOLPH: You should go feed the pigs and get some rest. You have school tomorrow.

JOHN: Yes sir.

RUDOLPH: And don't worry, John. We will be hiring someone to take care of the farm, so you won't be so pressured.

JOHN: I appreciate it, sir.

RUDOLPH: Good.

JOHN: Excuse me.

John gets up to leave.

RUDOLPH: John...thank you for not being like your brother.

John is not sure how to respond. He nods and exits.

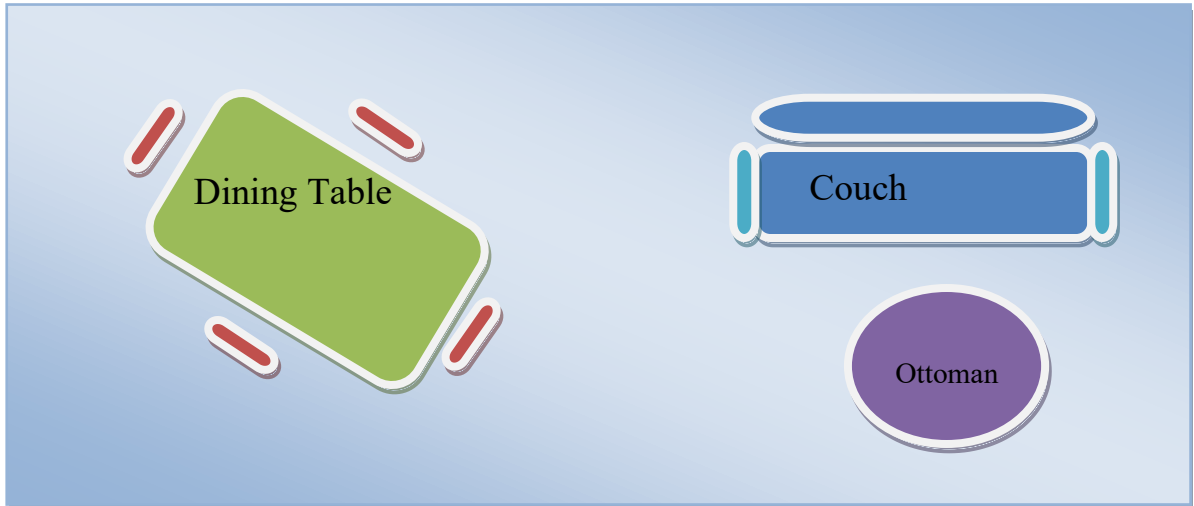
Rudolph is lost in thought for a beat. He gets up and starts to clear the table.

MALE VOICE: He has buried me in a dark place, like a person long dead. He has walled me in, and I cannot escape. He has bound me in heavy chains. And though I cry and shout, he shuts out my prayers. He has blocked my path with a high stone wall. He has twisted the road before me with many Detours. I must break free!

LIGHTS FADE

SCENE 2

SETTING: Living Room



LIGHTS UP

Pastor Rudolph is seated on the couch reading the Sunday paper.

Caleb enters.

CALEB: We need to talk, sir.

Rudolph looks over his glasses at Caleb...then at his watch.

RUDOLPH: Talk time is at five thirty, son. I'm having a moment here.

CALEB: You're having a moment....? Your son wants to talk to you...but you are busy having a moment. A moment! What, Pops, do I need to make an appointment?

RUDOLPH: That's how it usually works, son.

CALEB: Everything for you is a schedule; an appointment. I am your son. I think I should be able to talk to my father when I feel like it.

RUDOLPH: There has to be some order or moreso a structure to how we do things.

CALEB: Is there a book for that?

RUDOLPH: Parenting for Dummies.

Pause. Caleb raises an eyebrow.

CALEB: You're taking advice from a book called Parenting for Dummies?

RUDOLPH: It's a good read and besides, it's just the way I....

CALEB: ...like to run my house. I know that part.

Pause.

RUDOLPH: So, I will see you at five thirty.

Caleb doesn't reply or leave.

RUDOLPH: Can you go find your own moment?

CALEB: We need to talk.

RUDOLPH: Talk about what?

CALEB: This is the routine. On Sunday morning, you get up at five thirty and go to the bathroom. You do a number one at twenty-five to six, brush your teeth at twenty-three to six, do a number two at quarter to six then take a shower at six thirty. Everybody in this house knows that at exactly a quarter to seven and not a second sooner the door to the bathroom will open and you will

step out saying “Thank God for soap.” You will take a deep breath and disappear into your room to re-surface at seven thirty ready to leave for church.

RUDOLPH: Yeah, so what’s your point?

CALEB: Then you and somebody will get into some argument because what you took one hour and fifteen minutes to do you expect three grown people to do in half an hour.

RUDOLPH: I plan to put in an extra bathroom. You know that.

CALEB: The routine will still be the same.

RUDOLPH: Why are you having an issue with what and how I do my thing?

CALEB: In exactly three minutes you are going to look at your watch and say “My God. Look at the time.” You will fold your newspaper neatly and tuck it under your arm as you rise out of that couch and head to your room saying, “Time for a nap.”

RUDOLPH: You think you have me all figured out, don’t you.

CALEB: It don’t have to be like that, sir. You spoke about liberty, but true freedom is the ability to do what you want. I want to wake up at 5:30 Sunday morning and feel like I want to sleep a little late and just do it.

RUDOLPH: The Bible says in the book of Proverbs...

CALEB: Can we leave the Bible out of this...for once. I am sick and tired of hearing you quote scriptures that have absolutely no relevance to our line of argument.

RUDOLPH: Excuse me!

CALEB: I am sick and tired of a lot of things. I want out.

RUDOLPH: Out of what?

CALEB: I want out of this family.

RUDOLPH: How do you get out of a family? I know you can have a sex-change, but you can't possibly have a blood change (*laughs at his own joke*).

CALEB: I can start by getting out of this house.

Pause.

RUDOLPH: Son, normally when children decide to run away, they don't really inform their parents.

CALEB: I'm not running away. I'm moving on. I need to live my own life.

RUDOLPH: You should probably get a job first.

CALEB: Look, Pops...I know you have some money saved up that you intend to split between me and John when you expire. I am asking you for mine now.

Pause.

RUDOLPH: Nope.

CALEB: You don't really love me, do you?

RUDOLPH: Of course, I do.

CALEB: Then say it.

Pause. Rudolph tries but it's not in his vocabulary.

CALEB: Just give me what you promised so I can leave.

RUDOLPH: Why are you doing this, son?

CALEB: How can you call me your son...and you can't even tell me you love me?

Pause.

RUDOLPH: So, you want me to just write you a check and let you go wander around in the wilderness...the same wilderness I spent all your life trying to make you avoid.

Pause.

RUDOLPH: Son, God has a plan for your life. All you are doing right now is planning to take a detour.

CALEB: It's mine to take, Pops. My decision.

RUDOLPH: I guess you have made up your mind then?

CALEB: Yes.

RUDOLPH: Will we ever see you again?

CALEB: Highly unlikely.

Pause.

RUDOLPH: Never you forget where you're coming from, son.

CALEB: Right now, I am just concerned about where I'm going.

RUDOLPH: Where is that?

CALEB: Anywhere but here.

Caleb exits.

Rudolph looks at his watch.

RUDOLPH: My God. Look at the time.

He folds the newspaper and tucks it under his arm as he rises from the love seat.

RUDOLPH: Time to take a nap.

Rudolph stops to consider....he exits.

LIGHST FADE

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