



SAMPLE SCRIPT

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SUMMARY

Meet Peter. He's 17 and he's autistic. His family struggles with how to deal with him now that he is going to be a man. He has a mother who feels like she has wasted her life, a father who always working and a sister who is perfect. Peter loves them dearly. A touching story that will melt your heart. Contains mature situations and language that may not be suited to all audiences.



CHARACTER LIST

- Ed the father, making everything better [M]
- Ann the mother, at the end of her rope [F]
- Peter the son, special in many ways [M]
- Jamie the daughter, everything a parent could ask for [F]
- Doctor Brench head of the Sunshine Institute [F/E]
- Sharon a neighbor [F]
- Aunt Bee Ann's sister [F]

(one actress can play the doctor, neighbor and aunt)



SCRIPT

ACT ONE

Scene One

Lights up on the house, we find Peter sitting in the living room chair tossing a baseball up in the air and catching it. Ann walks in from the kitchen, sees Peter. For more of an affect, the actor playing Peter can come out onto the set about 7 minutes before the play begins and start tossing the ball.

ANN: Stop throwing that ball in the house. How many times do I have to tell you that?

PETER: (thinks for just a moment) Thirty five.

ANN: What?

PETER: You have told me that thirty five ... thirty five times.

ANN: Take your ball to the backyard. (Peter continues to throw the ball) Now!

PETER: Yes, mom. (Peter exits to the backyard, Ann sets the table)

ED: (enters from front door of house, he is dressed in a shirt and tie, carries a messenger bag) Hello?

ANN: Yes, hello. Where have you been?

ED: Good to see you too, honey. (he crosses to the dining room)

ANN: He has been waiting for an hour for you. Throwing that ball around. I finally just sent him to the yard.

ED: Yes, sorry, I got caught in another meeting. (puts down his bag on the stairs)

ANN: Yes, everyday. I know the story.

ED: Alright, Ann, please don't start with me. I just want to get changed and take a shower.

ANN: No, you need to go outside and play ball with your son.

ED: Yes, alright, let me change at least.

ANN: Hurry, before he hurts himself.

Ed, exits up the stairs to change, he takes his bag with him, and places his car keys on the book case. Ann continues to set the table, as she walks into the kitchen Jamie enters from front door, she puts her book bag on the sofa, sits on the chair and takes out a book and begins to read.

ED: (coming down the stairs) Oh, Jamie, I didn't hear you come in. How was school?

JAMIE: It was great. Mrs. Fellers said that my essay was one of the best she has ever read.

ED: That is great. And what are you reading?

JAMIE: Shakespeare. He is fascinating.

ED: Jamie, you should come outside with me and play with your brother.

ANN: (enters from the kitchen) Ed, let's go, he is waiting, he just stepped on my roses! (exits back to the kitchen)

ED: Yes, on my way. (to Jamie) So, are you coming?

JAMIE: No, I'm just going to grab a soda from the kitchen. I don't feel like playing ball. (she stands and exits to the kitchen – leaving her bag on the sofa)

ED: Ok, honey.

ANN: (enters and goes to the back door – yells) Be careful of the roses! Ed, go outside please.

ED: Yes, yes. (he exits to the backyard)

A phone rings, Ann walks into the living room, answers the phone.

ANN: Hello? (a beat, she talks in a lower tone) Yes, well, it's for my son. He has been getting to be too much to handle. So my husband and I were looking to send him to your institution. Sure, Tomorrow? Yes, we will be here. Thank you.

Ann notices Jamie's bag. She begins to look through it and pulls out a notebook. It is obvious that this notebook is not just simply a school book but something that Jamie uses for personal use. Jamie enters from the kitchen with her drink.

JAMIE: Was that call for me?

ANN: No it was the wrong number. Jamie come over here, I want to talk to you.

JAMIE: Yea?

ANN: Come and sit on the sofa. (she sits on the sofa) I'm concerned about you. You're never home anymore. (a beat) Are you doing drugs?

JAMIE: No. At least not right now.

ANN: I'm serious.

JAMIE: So am I. (she stands) Mother, I am not on any drugs. To be honest, I probably wouldn't tell you if I was anyway. (she walks toward the front door)

ANN: Jamie. We don't keep secrets around this house.

JAMIE: We don't? I'm pretty sure we all keep secrets around here.

ANN: Jamie, what is it then? (stands and crosses to Jamie)

JAMIE: It's nothing.

ANN: Is it school?

JAMIE: No, school is great.

ANN: Boyfriend problems?

JAMIE: I don't have a boyfriend and that's not a problem.

ANN: Well, I know something is wrong.

JAMIE: Mother, why would you assume that something is wrong just because I am not home that often?

ANN: You use to stay home all the time. (she crosses and sits on the sofa)

JAMIE: I'm sixteen years old now. I would like to go out with my friends.

ANN: I understand. I miss our girl time.

JAMIE: Girl time? (crosses and joins Ann on the sofa)

ANN: You know when we would sit and talk about things.

JAMIE: I don't remember us ever doing that.

ANN: I know things can get crazy around here with your brother. He is a lot to deal with.

JAMIE: Okay.

ANN: I feel like all I ever do is chase around after him. Do you know what he did today? He was sitting there in that chair throwing the darn ball around, next thing I know he knocked my favorite glass bell on the floor and it shattered to a million pieces. I don't know why he can't just listen to me the first time like you always did. You were such a great kid. Even when you would do something wrong I knew I could just sit you down and explain why what you did was wrong and you never repeated it again. That's not the same with him. (starts toward the yard)

JAMIE: Well, that's because Peter has a disability.

ANN: Yes, well, be that as it may, you were still the perfect child.

JAMIE: If you say so.

ANN: Are you sure that you're not on drugs.

JAMIE: Mother, please. (she stands and crosses toward the stairs) I'm still a perfect child. I don't use drugs. (to herself) Although I think you should.

ANN: Huh?

JAMIE: Nothing.

ANN: Just make good choices.

JAMIE: Always do.

ANN: So, I noticed that you started writing?

JAMIE: Noticed? Did you go through my bag?

ANN: Well, not really. (Jamie stares at her) Yes I did. I was just looking for clues because I'm concerned about you.

JAMIE: Clues? What is this C.S.I.? Mom, nothing is wrong with me. If you can't trust me ...

ANN: I trust you. I'm sorry. I didn't mean to invade your privacy. (phone rings)

JAMIE: I'll get it. (crosses to the phone) Hello. Hey Marcy. I know. Let me take this upstairs. (to Ann) Can you hang this up when I get upstairs.

ANN: Sure.

Jamie heads up the stairs. Ann listens on the phone.

JAMIE: (calling from upstairs) I got it.

Ann doesn't hang up, instead she listens to the conversation on the phone for a few seconds. Ed and Peter enter from the back yard.

ED: Wow, you did a great job. Don't worry about the ball; I will get us another one on the way home from work tomorrow. Why don't you go upstairs and get washed up.

Ann hangs up the phone.

PETER: OKAY dad, boy dinner smells good. (to Ann) Mommy, dinner smells good.

ANN: We have talked about this, call me 'mom', you are too old to use the word 'Mommy'. Now, go wash your face and hands.

ED: Yeah, head up stairs sonny boy. (Peter runs up the stairs, waits until Peter is out of site) What is your problem?

ANN: What do you mean?

Throughout this conversation, Ann continues setting the table.

ED: Why are you always so mean to him?

ANN: Mean? It's called parenting. You should try it sometime.

ED: What does that mean?

ANN: It means that you are at work all day while I am stuck here with him.

ED: We have been through this. You can go to work; I will stay home with Peter.

ANN: Yea, nice. Now you say that.

ED: I have said it for years.

ANN: Why don't we both just work?

ED: You know that one of us has to stay home with Peter.

ANN: Maybe not. You know there are places where he can go and ...

ED: Don't.

ANN: Dr. Brench is coming by tomorrow to meet us and let us know if he can attend the Sunshine Institute.

ED: Are you kidding me? I am not sending my son to an institution.

ANN: It's the only way for me to have a normal life.

ED: What's a 'normal' life huh? You sit and watch TV all day?

ANN: Yeah, that's exactly what I would do. Just sit there and watch Oprah give away car after car...

ED: Ann, we decided to have children.

ANN: Decided? No, it's more like, I got pregnant. And, had I know how he would turn out – I would have gotten...

ED: Don't even say it! I can't believe you sometimes.

ANN: Well, believe it buddy. My whole day is spent watching him. Making sure he eats, showers, and doesn't kill himself.

ED: You know, I'm sick of this conversation. (beat) I'm going to wash up for dinner.

ANN: Sure just leave like you always do.

ED: Leave? Really Ann? I'm not leaving. I'm going to get ready for dinner. You've obviously had a bad day.

ANN: A bad couple of years.

ED: Let's just have dinner like a normal family.

Just as Ed heads for the stairs Jamie is coming down them, Ann exits to the kitchen.

JAMIE: You know, you two fight a lot.

ED: Sorry honey, are we bothering you?

JAMIE: Nope, I just need my bag. (crosses to the chair to retrieve her bag)

ED: Alright.

JAMIE: What's wrong now?

ED: Your mother wants to send Peter to an institution.

JAMIE: Huh? What do you want, dad?

ED: I want your mother to be happy. I want Peter to be happy. I want you to be happy.

JAMIE: And ... when are you going to be happy, Dad?

ED: I will worry about me later.

JAMIE: You need to find something that will make you happy. Put your mind at ease.

ED: There is no time for that now. I have to call that institution and tell them we are no longer interested.

Peter enters down the stairs as Ed exits to the kitchen. Jamie goes through her bag, she takes out a prescription medication container. Opens the container and takes what appears to be the last one.

PETER: Hi Jamie.

JAMIE: (surprised by him) Oh, Petey, hey. (she quickly puts the container away). I didn't see you there.

PETER: Are you sick?

JAMIE: Huh? No.

PETER: Why are you taking pills?

JAMIE: Oh, just a headache. How are you today?

PETER: Fine. I'm fine. Fine and dandy.

JAMIE: Fine and dandy? Huh, you crack me up sometimes.

PETER: I always make you laugh.

JAMIE: Yes you do.

PETER: Can I tell you a joke?

JAMIE: What joke? Not the tissue one again.

PETER: That always makes you laugh. Like the time you shot milk out of your nose.

JAMIE: Oh yes, I remember.

PETER: I want to tell it, I want to.

JAMIE: Alright. Tell it.

PETER: How do you make a tissue dance?

JAMIE: I don't know, Petey. How?

PETER: You put a little boogie in it!

Peter laughs and Jamie joins in, laughing more at him than with him. To Jamie, Peter's laugh is contagious.

JAMIE: You crack me up, kid.

PETER: I'm not a kid! I'm seventeen which means I'm almost a man.

JAMIE: Oh, that's just an expression.

PETER: What's an expression?

JAMIE: Calling someone kid. It doesn't mean that you are a kid, it's just something cute to say to someone.

PETER: Something you say to someone you love?

JAMIE: Yes, someone you love or even just a friend.

PETER: Well, I don't like it.

JAMIE: I won't call you that anymore.

PETER: What did you do in school today?

JAMIE: Oh, nothing. It was boring.

PETER: I wish I could go to school. I get very bored at home all day long. Is school always boring too?

JAMIE: No, I guess not.

PETER: Can we go to the park later?

JAMIE: We can go tomorrow. I have to go to Marcy's house tonight.

PETER: Can I go?

JAMIE: Not this time. We have some stuff to do.

PETER: What stuff?

JAMIE: Girl stuff.

PETER: What does that mean? What girl stuff? Does it have to do with your girl parts?

JAMIE: No Petey. It just means silly stuff that girls do.

PETER: Like what?

JAMIE: I don't know.

PETER: If you don't know then how will you do it?

JAMIE: It's just something you say when two girls get together and do stuff.

PETER: Is there boy stuff when two boys get together?

JAMIE: Sure, although it's usually called 'stupid stuff' when boys get together.

Ann and Ed enter from the kitchen.

ED: This institution thing is crazy.

ANN: It is the only way to get back to normal.

ED: Enough. Not in front of ...

ANN: He has no idea what we are talking about.

ED: (to Peter) Oh, hey buddy. All washed up for dinner?

PETER: Yup. I used that nice strawberry soap.

ANN: The one in our bathroom? Why were you in our bathroom? You are only supposed to use the hallway one.

PETER: Oh, I'm sorry mommy ... mom. I wanted my hands to smell like yours do.

ANN: Great. Just great. You stay out of our bathroom. How many times do I have to tell you?

PETER: That was the first time today.

ED: Ok, enough. Let's just eat.

PETER: Yes, dad.

Peter goes to table and sits to eat, Ann exits into the kitchen.

ED: (to Jamie) Come on, hon, it's time to eat.

JAMIE: No, I'm heading to Marcy's.

ED: You have to eat.

JAMIE: Marcy's mom said I could eat there. Is it alright?

ED: Alright. Peter, Are you hungry?

PETER: Yes, Dad, very.

JAMIE: I will be home later.

ED: What's later? Ten? Eleven?

JAMIE: Ten.

ED: Alright. I love you.

JAMIE: I love you too. See you later Petey!

PETER: Good bye Jamie. Have fun doing girl stuff.

JAMIE: I will.

Jamie exits through the front door as Ann enters from the kitchen with dinner. She places it on the table and Peter and Ed take their seats.

ANN: It's a new recipe from the Food Network.

ED: (taking some) It smells ... umm ... it smells...

PETER: (Ann puts food on his plate) Terrible.

ANN: Excuse me?

PETER: It doesn't smell very good. It smelled better before when it was still cooking.

ANN: How ungrateful ... you know I worked all day on this so you two could eat and look at what you do to me. You are both ungrateful. I can't believe you two.

ED: I'm sure it's not your fault hon, it was probably wasn't a great recipe. Maybe it tastes better.

PETER: (taking a spoonful) nope.

ANN: Forget it ... enough of this, no body eats.

Ann begins to clean up taking both Peter and Ed's plates and putting them onto the tray.

ED: Hon, it's ok. Calm down, I will order a pizza.

ANN: A pizza? A pizza?

Ann takes the platter and throws it against the kitchen wall – the family sits in silence for a few seconds.

PETER: Now the wall is going to smell like that.

ANN: You think you're funny?

Ann strikes Peter, almost as soon as she does it she realizes she has broken.

ED: Ann, calm down.

PETER: It's ok dad. It doesn't hurt. It never does.

ED: 'It never does' ... what do you mean?

PETER: When mom hits me, it doesn't hurt anymore.

ED: You hit him? (a beat) Ann, do you hit him?

ANN: Yes, I hit him, I hit him ... so what? He's my son, a mother can hit her son!

ED: No, no you can't. You know that we don't do that.

ANN: We might not but I do.

ED: I don't think I even know you anymore.

ANN: You don't know me? What the heck does that even mean? Maybe I don't know you anymore. Who's Diane?

ED: What do you mean?

ANN: I see your text messages, who is Diane?

ED: Can we talk about this later? When we are alone.

ANN: Well, starting tomorrow, we will be a lot closer to alone.

ED: Enough.

PETER: What do you mean?

ANN: You're going away.

ED: Shut up, Ann.

PETER: Where am I going?

ED: No where.

ANN: To a nice place with other people like you.

PETER: Like me? You mean, boys?

ED: Ann, no. You're not going anywhere sonny boy.

ANN: Oh yes, he is.

PETER: Where I can do boy stuff?

ED: We haven't discussed this.

ANN: There is nothing to discuss. You stay home with him from now on.

ED: I can't believe you. You know he does the best that he can.

Peter has wandered over to the wall and begins to attempt to clean the mess.

ANN: The best he can. He can't do anything. Don't you get it. I have to do everything for him.

ED: Oh come on. He can do stuff, he is not completely helpless you know?

ANN: You could've surprised me.

ED: I am really getting tired of this, really.

ANN: You're sick of it? What about me? I'm sick of it. (she notices Peter, who is making a mess) Stop that. (goes to Peter) Look at what you are doing, you're making it worse (Peter continues to clean) I said stop. Stop. Stop. Stop.

On each 'stop' Ann hits Peter, who crouches to the floor, Ed runs over and pulls her off of him.

ED: Ann. Ann.

BLACKOUT

Scene Two

A few hours later, Ed is on the sofa reading the newspaper. Jamie enters through the front door.

ED: Look who is finally home. You were out pretty late.

JAMIE: Well Marcy and I had a lot to talk about.

ED: It's after 10 o'clock.

JAMIE: Yeah, I know. I learned to tell time in second grade.

ED: You know what I mean. It's late.

JAMIE: Well, you know how it is when girls start talking.

ED: I'm concerned about you. You never spend time at home anymore.

JAMIE: Not you too. (crosses to the sofa and sits) Dad, I love you. But, who would want to spend time here. It's only a matter of days before you and mom explode.

ED: I think we already did.

JAMIE: Exactly.

ED: Things aren't that bad. What can I do to make things better for you?

JAMIE: I don't know. Being here isn't always the best part of my day. I feel like mom is always upset about something.

ED: Does she yell at you too?

JAMIE: No, actually she is usually very patient with me, which is not true of the way she treats Peter.

ED: What do you mean?

JAMIE: You know what I mean. Sometimes I think she is just plain mean to him. I mean, what did Peter ever do to anyone?

ED: I know.

JAMIE: Well, I am heading up to bed.

ED: Good night, angel.

JAMIE: Good night daddy

Jamie gives Ed a quick pack on the cheek and heads upstairs as Ann enters from the kitchen. She is wearing a robe and carries a cup of tea.

ANN: Are you planning to go to bed any time soon?

ED: Reading the paper. It makes me feel better to know that some people out there have it worse than I do.

ANN: Funny. We need to talk about the Sunshine Institute.

ED: As far as I am concerned, there is nothing to talk about. I don't want my son in one of those places.

ANN: It's not a terrible place. They have activities and classes (she takes a brochure out of a pocket in her robe). You can visit him whenever you want ...

ED: We, we can visit him.

ANN: Yes, and he is free to leave whenever you ... we, want to take him. So vacations, day trips, whatever.

ED: Ann, I know you are frustrated about this, but, I am serious – I don't want to put my son in an institution.

ANN: Then, you need to come to a decision what you want to do with him.

ED: Nothing. This is his home. This is where he is happy.

ANN: I am not happy. Don't you care about me anymore? Or is he the only one you care about? (a beat) And Diane?

ED: Here we go again.

ANN: Again? Tell me straight. Who is Diane?

ED: She works at my office. She is one of my new assistants. She is having some trouble with the job.

ANN: Trouble with the job? It's a marketing firm not N.A.S.A. And she texts you all the time? Come on.

ED: It's the truth ... Tim texts me all the time, do you think I am having a love affair with him also?

ANN: Who knows anymore.

ED: Fine, think what you want.

Silence, but only for a moment.

ANN: Your eyes.

ED: What?

ANN: Your eyes. The always look like they're telling a joke.

ED: Huh?

ANN: When I look at you. No matter how mad I get, your eyes have a way of calming me down. It's like they're telling me a joke. What do you see when you look into my eyes?

ED: I don't know.

ANN: Come on Ed.

ED: Ann, I see you. I see more than just your eyes. I see the woman that I married, the woman I love. Lately I feel like I see her less and less.

ANN: I know. How is it that you never change? Your eyes are always the same. Always telling a joke.



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