

EXTRACT

Whirlpools

a short play

by

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Cast

JODIE

GERARD

Setting

A visiting room in a Correctional Centre.

Time

Morning.

LIGHTS UP.

GERARD and JODIE face each other across a table.
There is silence for some time, then:

JODIE

We used to make whirlpools. (BEAT) In the backyard. She had a swimming pool. And in her bedroom we'd make a cubby house, above her wardrobe. We used to play with dolls and teddy bears, pretending to be mums and dads. Pretending we had children. Then one day - we did.

BEAT.

GERARD

How are the girls?

JODIE

Surprised you care.

GERARD

Whatever may or may not have happened - I am still their father.

JODIE

Unfortunately.

BEAT. GERARD smiles.

GERARD

This irks you, doesn't it?

JODIE

Irks?

GERARD

Your job. Your profession. She was your cousin.

JODIE

And?

GERARD

What happened. Oops. How embarrassing.

JODIE

You know what happened.

GERARD

I do. No one else does but I do. Everyone else seems to have forgotten that. I was the only person who was actually there.

JODIE

Yes. You were.

BEAT.

GERARD

I'm not sure why you've come.

JODIE

I still have questions.

GERARD

I would've thought you liked the court's answers. Such as they were.

JODIE

I want to ... Need to ...

GERARD

What?

JODIE

Understand. If I can understand what happened then maybe I can stop it happening again.

GERARD

Nothing happened.

JODIE

How can you still say that?

GERARD

I went to bed. Allison was watching television. In the morning - she wasn't.

JODIE

Because you -

GERARD

Don't believe everything you read. (BEAT) If anybody should have been on trial it was her.

JODIE

For what?

GERARD

For what she put me through. And the girls.

JODIE

She was their mother.

GERARD

The mood swings, the panic attacks. Swerving off the road while the children were in the car. It's a miracle she didn't kill any of them as well. I don't know how I lasted as long as I did.

JODIE

You had your distractions.

GERARD

Any man would have done the same. I deserved it - for having to put up with her.

JODIE

I told her "Play nice".

GERARD

"Play nice"?

JODIE

For as long as you can, plan your exit strategy and then, go hard. But until you've got a clear line of sight, say, "Yes sir, no sir." Wait for your moment and go. If you're getting stronger, don't let him know that. Play humble, play dumb, play stupid.' But she didn't do that did she? She stood up to you. That's why you did it. She was finally becoming independent. Breaking free. You couldn't stand the thought of that.

GERARD

Breaking free.

JODIE

She was starting to try and get her own money. The ballet school. She was starting a business that she didn't want you to know about.

GERARD

Ballet school? (LAUGHS) Allison couldn't have run the proverbial piss-up at the proverbial brewery.

JODIE

She never said it but she was getting strong and the strong Allison wouldn't have put up with you. She was going to leave you and take the girls and you couldn't bear that. Someone was going to say 'No' to the great Gerard.

GERARD

This is a delightful fantasy.

JODIE

It's the truth! You lied. You lied every day in that court for months. Now tell the truth. So we can all understand. So we can stop this happening again.

GERARD

Which truth? The truth you want to hear, or the truth you can't accept. (BEAT) Allison was weak, pathetic, she couldn't do anything without me.

JODIE

No. She was beautiful, strong, proud.

GERARD

When we met. That's what attracted me to her. That's why I married her. But as we got older the paranoia and the depression ate away at her. If I even looked at another woman she went into a psychotic fit.

JODIE

You were having an affair.

GERARD

Can you blame me? I needed some kind of release from the never-ending torment of "life with Allison". I couldn't even relax at family functions. I'd try to have a conversation and she'd -

JODIE

That was you. I tried to talk to Allison. We all did. But you wouldn't let us. The moment you saw us talking to her you would be on us. That's why the only times we spoke was at the shopping centre or the supermarket when you weren't around.

GERARD

And those conversations clearly did a lot of good.

BEAT.

JODIE

Just admit what you did!

GERARD

My only crime was suffering in silence. If I'd told everybody what I was going through, what a nutjob she was, they would realise that every word I have said is true. She finally put herself out of her own misery, out of the girl's misery, my misery. The misery *she* made our lives.