

**"BANNED
IN
ABBOTSFORD"**

A ONE ACT PLAY BY

DAVE GOOSSEN

FOR THE DuMAURIER ONE ACT PLAY COMPETITION

David Goossen
PO Box 45064 RPO Dunbar
Vancouver, BC
V6S 2M8

(604) 739-7144
dave@davegoossen.com

CAST OF CHARACTERS

| | |
|---|-------------------------|
| Anne | <i>Female Actor One</i> |
| Mark | <i>Male Actor One</i> |
| Preacher Mr. Berman Mr. Masters Speaker PR Man | <i>Male Actor Two</i> |
| Principal Professor News Reporter Mark's Father | <i>Male Actor Three</i> |
| Anne's Mother Mark's Mother Girl Waitress News Anchor | <i>Female Actor Two</i> |

AUTHOR'S NOTE: Although this play is based upon a real event, all the characters, dialogue and actions are purely the creation of the author and any similarities to real persons, living or dead, are purely coincidental and not intended by the author.

A highly religious preacher readies himself behind a podium on an otherwise base stage. He gazes out at the unseen congregation then begins, building, working his flock into a religious frenzy worthy of Oral Roberts.

PREACHER

These are your children, people. Your daughters, your sons. Out there at night, in the backseats of your hard earned cars, in your basements!

You can not take your eyes away from them for one second or the devil will be into their pants.

The Lord God and His son on earth, Jesus Christ, have given you the responsibility of caring for his young souls and the purity of their bodies.

Their teachers aren't going to do it, they're too concerned with their almightly salaries, paid leaves and hallowed class sizes to spend any time on them. And the politicians?!

The politicians want to put contraceptive machines right into their classrooms!!

They want your daughters to get pregnant. You want to know why? If your daughters a poor single mother on welfare, then they've got her in the palm of their hands. They can control her, they will know where she is and what she's doing.

It is up to you people. This is a battle and you are on the front line. But the fight is not for your souls, it is for the souls of your children!

He stops suddenly and redirects the fevered pitch of the unseen crowd.

PREACHER

NOW...Let us sing from the hymnal.. Hymn 406..

¶

PRINCIPAL

I did what I could with her, you must understand this... her little play had caused quite a stir in the staffroom. The drama teacher, Berman, liked it but we all know about liberal drama teachers...

She came up to my office and I talked to her. Told her to fly right, don't make waves. She claimed that it was her right as defined in the constitution of this country to say what she wanted.

I quoted some things she wrote back to her.

BOY - "Sure I like sex...who doesn't?"

GIRL - "I think about sex all the time....I don't think that's wrong...I think that's natural."

She said it was all true.

I don't care if it's all true, I will not have smut like this masquading as schoolwork paraded out for display in front of the entire student body.

As Principal I am responsible for everything that is said or done in my school. I am the law.

He sits back in his chair smugly.

¶

Empty stage except for two portable desks facing a teachers desk.

A teenaged girl, ANNE, is sitting in a desk beside a same aged boy, MARK. A teacher, MR. BERMAN, is sitting on the front edge of the desk talking away, explaining something silently.

ANNE

(aside)

The assignment was pretty simple. Write a play for English and perform it, in front of the school, for Drama. Two credits for one project. In Grade 12, anything that gets you two for one on grades is worth doing, especially with Provincial exams coming up. We all liked the idea.

MARK

(leaning over)

I like this..it's gonna be a hoot.

MR. BERMAN

But there's a catch, people.

I want you to write about you. About your friends. I don't want plays about Terminators from the future, or fairy tales, or becoming a famous rock star, or any other Hollywood influenced garbage.

Write about what you know. Try to remember what I told you about dramatic structure... but don't get bogged down with the technical.. write what in you wants to be written.

A bell rings.

MR. BERMAN

Ok, dismissed, see you all tomorrow.

Berman walks off stage.

ANNE

My name is Anne. In the dramatic structure of this event I'm the....antagonist.

MARK

Protagonist.

ANNE

But I antagonize everyone, Mark.

MARK

No, they antagonize you.

ANNE

I never could figure this all out. Then who's the antagonist?

MARK

Anyone who gets in the way of your goal. Like, the school board officials...

ANNE

Oh.

MARK

And the principal. And the guidance counsellor....
And the parents of the other students...and the rest of the community. And most of the people you thought were your friends.

ANNE

Jesus Christ...

MARK

No, not him. Jesus loves you. This we know, cause the Bible tells us so.

Anne rolls her eyes and Mark grins.

¶

A wizened professor stands in front of a flip chart. As he speaks he randomly points to vague line drawings and sketches on the chart.

PROFESSOR

The biological imperative of the species is to reproduce. That is the primary urge that drags us through life. We have to make babies. The security of houses, food, clothing all are there to ensure that we are healthy enough to procreate.

And, because of this bottom line primal drive buried deep in our DNA's, we can't, no matter how hard we try to deny it, obliterate it. It is us and we are it. Take it away and we have no purpose on earth. We are wasting space better used by more fruitful members of other species.

To this end, the two sexes of the human species have been given specific criteria, tendencies, habits, impulses, all with the sole task of initiating sexual contact for the purpose of procreation.

The differences between humans and other mammals are minimal. Although we stand erect, humans, dogs, cats, gorillas, Thompson's gazelles and pandas are all equipped with four limbs, eyes, noses, mouths, ears, all in essentially the same places, and most importantly, sexual organs strategically situated between the rear limbs.

Imagine yourself a alien creature arriving on earth for first contact. Stepping down to the new unexplored world. You would encounter a bewildering variety of creatures all whom share a few important laws of living. They have to eat, and they have to reproduce.

Eating is caused by the consumption of products in our environment for their nutritious elements be they animal, plant, etc etc etc.

Reproduction is almost as simple. It involves impregnating an egg carried by the female of the species and protecting it until it is born and is able to go out on its own to eat and reproduce.

All the complications in between are called life.

¶

Mark is standing off to one side of the stage. Anne is on the other side.

MARK

Condoms.

Apparently, our school board believes that accessible condoms cause sex.

ANNE

And the cork in a wine bottle causes alcoholism.

MARK

If only it was that easy.

ANNE

Have they no concept of what goes on in our lives?

MARK

Have they forgotten just how difficult it is to get someone to have sex with you?

ANNE

What happened to their brains? Does it erase all memories of high school when they hit middle age?

¶

A middle aged woman in a apron stops vacuuming.

ANNE'S MOM

I support her. I suppose I have to but I think I would even if she wasn't my daughter. It's hard to say.

Now I don't have to tell you how...difficult..this whole thing has made my life...

"How could you let her?"
"Who does she think she is?"
"She'll burn in hell..."

I've heard them all. Honestly, it's like none of them even remember being a teenager.

Sex...we all thought about it... but society dictated that we didn't do anything about it. Well...do less about it...

Sex for us was Burt Lancaster in "From Here to Eternity". But the bathing suits never came off. On tv, even married couple had separate beds. Maybe Dick Van Dyke kisses Mary Tyler Moore goodnight but that was it. They had separate beds to sleep in. And somehow they had a child.

Nowdays, sex is everywhere. Sex sells. Everything.
Beer, cars, household appliances...

How can you blame kids for wondering about it.

Denying it's there won't make it go away.

We were curious about sex but we were also afraid
of it. My mother taught me about sex. She told me
what her mother told her.

"Wait until you're married. If you don't you'll get
pregnant."

And to back that up, every mother has a story about
some distant family relative, father's side, who didn't
wait and found herself 'with child'. And it worked.
We thought of sex like a sort of biological poison
gas. One whiff and you're dead.

When Anne was twelve I sat her down to tell her
about sex. To tell her just what my mother told me.
Updated for the 80's, of course, but essentially the
same story. Before I had a chance to start, she
informed me that she knew all about it. Everything.
Biological, Anatomical, Psychological, Societal.

The only question she had was, "Did I have
hemroids while I was pregnant with her?"

Of course I did, but I couldn't even talk to her father
about it...

Sex is a part of their lives. And it is our generation,
the one that wasn't supposed to think about sex, that
has made it the essential tool for selling products to
the next generation.

And, like it or not, we can't take it away now that
we've given it to them.

¶

Anne is pacing around the side of the stage, furious. Mark is sitting on a chair calmly watching her

ANNE

She wouldn't serve me!!

Can you believe it... a waitress!

Like it was the 18th Century and I had a scarlet letter

on my breast. I just don't understand it...

It's as if they brought the rights to literary oppression from the Soviet Union when it collapsed.

I really thought that we had the right to say what ever we wanted, or believed in, guaranteed in the Charter of Rights and Freedoms.

MARK

You do, but they don't have to like it. You can say whatever you want and they can deny you said it.

ANNE

Is this some sort of contagious thing?

MARK

Huh?

ANNE

Am I going to find myself, when I'm older, trying to silence the voices of the next generation? Of my kids?

MARK

I hope not..

ANNE

Maybe I will. Maybe it's something that happens to us all.

MARK

A fear of new ideas...

ANNE

Changes to the status quo.

MARK

We become the thing we hate...

ANNE

We become then what we fear now...

¶

MARK'S MOM

Now I'm not saying that I don't like Anne. I like everyone. I'm a Christian. It says in the Bible that we should love our neighbours. So I do.

She and our Mark have been friends ever since the

first day of preschool. They met at the play-doh and have played together ever since.

And then suddenly we find out that she is a harlot. And that she's writing about it!

Well, I'm not surprised, considering her family situation, if you know what I mean...

The drinking, the womanizing, the messy divorce...

She apparently never sees her father anymore...

All of this must have an effect on a young girl. I can't say that I'm surprised though, I suspected that she'd turn out to be a bad seed. A mother knows these things... you feel it in your soul.

She nods knowingly.

¶

Anne is leaning against the side of the stage, bored.

ANNE

Writing the play was a cinch. A couple of days of listening in the hallways and lunchroom and I had more than enough to write about. The main topic of conversation amongst my peers? Sex. Sex, sex, sex. What else is there to talk about?

A couple days after we handed in the assignment, I got called down to the office to talk to the student counsellor...Mr. Masters.

She walks across the stage to a man at a desk, dressed in clothes too hip and totally inappropriate for him.

MR. MASTERS

Anne! Hey, come on in. Thanks for getting here so soon!

ANNE

(aside)
He always says that.
He thinks he's funny.

MR. MASTERS

So, you working hard, or hardly working?

ANNE

We laugh. Him trying to be funny I can handle, but when he tries to be hip... It's unbearable.

Why do men in their 40's try to act like they're sixteen? Don't they realize they're being idiots?

MR. MASTERS

Hey, let's blow this crib and rap outside.

He gets up and crosses the stage. Anne rolls her eyes and follows.

MR. MASTERS

So, Anne...
are you having sex with anyone?

ANNE

I beg your pardon?

MR. MASTERS

This play you're written has caused quite a stir in the staff room, let me tell you.

ANNE

And you want to know if I'm having sex?

MR. MASTERS

There are a lot of impressionable students here, Anne, you can see our position. We can't have someone with a peer influence position controlling a one to one interaction situation who is promoting a lifestyle in... in contradiction to that of the greater community.

ANNE

(aside)
Mr. Masters goes to a lot of seminars on interpersonal communication.

I was supposed to write a short play about me and my friends.

MR. MASTERS

So your friends are having sex...

ANNE

No...I don't know..

MR. MASTERS

I wish you'd be more cooperative with us, Anne. We just want to know who of your friends are having sex.. This is really serious business.

ANNE

Why?

MR. MASTERS

Don't get smart with me..

ANNE

I'm not.

MR. MASTERS

Then who do you know who's having sex?

ANNE

I don't know anyone who's having sex.

MR. MASTERS

Then why write the play?

If no one's having sex, as you claim, then why write a play about students who are having sex? Or are you saying that you lied when you were supposed to write an honest play about life as a teenager.

ANNE

Look...it's just a bunch of different comments from a bunch of different conversations that I've heard around school. It's really no big deal.

MR. MASTERS

It may not be a big deal to you, but it is to us. We can't have the senior student's condoning this kind of thing.

ANNE

Even if it's true?

MR. MASTERS

Yes.

ANNE

But what I wrote is what is going on out there. That's exactly what we talk about. Sex, pregnancy, AIDS, masterbation, menstration...

MR. MASTERS

(exploding)
That's enough!

I don't give a shit what you talk about in the back seat of your boyfriend's car with your panties around

your ankles, it's not what we're going to have performed for the entire school!

I expect you to withdraw your 'play' from the performance schedule and write a different one.

ANNE

But...

MR. MASTERS

There isn't going to be any talk about teenage sex as long as I'm working at this school. There are the Christian standards of the community to uphold... Now get back to class.

He storms off leaving Anne standing there.

ANNE

So much for understanding from our esteemed counsellor.

Two months after graduation he was brought up on sex charges. He had been having an affair with a girl in my class and he had gotten her pregnant. She wanted to have an abortion but he didn't want her to. It just wasn't the Christian thing to do.

Now she's living on her own, expecting his baby. Her parents won't talk to her. They say they don't have a daughter.

He's back with his wife and three kids. He confessed and she forgave him. That was the Christian thing to do.

Religion is a wonderful excuse....

¶

A man reads proudly from a newspaper at the side of the stage.

REPORTER

An Abbotsford High School student, Anne Greyston, today was threatened with expulsion over a short play she had written for an English assignment. The play, 'Putting Out', was a frank and open discussion between two teenagers about sex and sexually transmitted disease, and was deemed by school board trustees offensive and inappropriate for the student body to watch.

This comes as a new study found that Fraser Valley teens reported having twice as much sexual activity as Vancouver city teens.

(aside)

Is that hypocrisy or what? This story is only going to get better... Damn, I'm glad I found it first...

¶

Anne is pacing around the stage furious. Mark wanders up to her.

MARK

Where have you been? You missed biology.

ANNE

They want to kick me out for writing about what they told me to write about!!

Can you believe it!?!?

I'm going to fail Grade 12 and not graduate because I wrote something that they don't want to think about!

I can't believe it!

Who do they think they are?!

MARK

What are you talking about?

ANNE

My play, for Berman.
The principal has ordered me to withdraw it, write a new, polite, safe play or fail the course, fail Grade 12!

Withdraw the play and write a new one.... or don't graduate....

Those are my choices...
Jesus, Mark, what am I going to do?

I like what I wrote, I think it's good. Mr. Berman thinks it's good. But he won't say that to anyone..
God, it's just a stupid English project.....

MARK

Not to them.

To them it's everything that's wrong with the education system. It's too liberal. It's too progressive. It's teaching students to think for themselves. And if we start thinking for ourselves, we're quickly going to realize that everything that they've been telling us is bullshit....

ANNE

But what do I do?

MARK

Change the play, show your allegiance to their system and graduate safely.

Don't change the play and fail.

Or you could fight.

ANNE

Yeah right, one student versus the school and the school board...

MARK

Maybe.. You seen Berman around?

ANNE

In his room.

MARK

Don't worry Anne, you never know what's going to happen.

He walks away smiling slightly to himself. Anne sighs and sits down on the front of the stage, looking out at the audience.

ANNE

Once the story hit the papers, all hell broke loose. I don't know who told the reporter, but I think it was Mr. Berman. A copy of the play and an outline of what was happening to me arrived in the newsroom two days after I talked to the principal. And it was a slow news week.

He's rebelling in his own quiet way...

¶

Mark is sitting in a chair. His parents are looming over him.

DAD

Have you had intercourse with her?

MARK

(aside)

That's how they started the conversation. "Have you had intercourse with her?"

(to dad)

What kind of a question is that?!

DAD

One that you're going to answer for us, right now.

MARK

No. No, I have not.

MOM

Are you sure, honey?

MARK

Mom... She's my friend.

MOM

Mr. Masters phoned us, dear. He told us all about Anne's project. What kind of a friend would write trash like that?

MARK

Like what?

MOM

Like...children having sexual congress.

MARK

Mom...we're teenagers...If this was the Middle Ages I'd have three kids by now....

DAD

Well it isn't the Middle Ages and you're living under our roof..

MARK/ DAD

...so you'll live by our rules.

Dad hits Mark. He drops to the floor.

DAD

Don't get smart with me!

MARK

(wincing in pain) (submissive)
I'm sorry...

DAD

Keep away from that little slut, you hear me?!

The father storms off stage.

MOM

We just want what's best for you, darling...

Now go wash up for dinner. Your father and I have a church meeting at seven.

Mom leaves the stage. Mark remains sitting on the ground, holding his head.

¶

Anne walks across the stage. Another girl sees her and calls out.

GIRL

Anne!

She runs up to Anne.

GIRL

Why did you use me and Eric? Huh? Isn't there anyone else that you could have written that stupid play about other than us?!

ANNE

It wasn't just you two...it was everyone...

GIRL

Anne, it was only us! You're not that good a creative writer! You used me and Eric, totally! Masters dragged us down and accused us of sleeping together. He phoned our fucking parents! You know my mom, she's curled up in bed with the Bible and the PTL club crying for the Lord to save me and Eric's dad almost broke his arm! We're not allowed to see each other, and they've changed around our schedules so we don't even get history together any more.....

Anne, you've fucked up my.. our life...

I love him...and now I can't see him... Because of you.

She turns and runs off. Anne stands there watching her go then walks away, depressed.

¶

A smooth, slippery public relations man oils his way around the stage, talking soothingly.

SCHOOL OFFICIAL

Let me just say, from the outset, that it is unfortunate the way that this has turned out. It was not our desire to create a forum for the views of this one student. It is our position, and has always been our position, that sex has no place in the high school curriculum.

Generalizations aside, we do not believe that the school board has anything to gain by allowing this kind of dramatic expression to foster.

Our job is to educate the children of this community.

To teach them history, science, mathematics, english, physical fitness.. Subjects with clearly defined parameters and guidelines.

We are not here to teach them about real life. That is not our responsibility.

¶

Anne stands indignantly off to one side of the stage. Mark wanders onstage as she talks.

ANNE

Then who's responsibility is it?

If no one is willing to talk about real life, how are we going to find out about it?

They tell us that we can do anything we want when we graduate....

If that's true then why are so many adults unhappy?

Obviously, the real life truth is quite different from the story they feed us in school.

MARK

What do you want? Statistics?

ANNE

Just the truth.

MARK

(yelling like Jack Nicholson in "A Few Good Men")
You want the truth?!

ANNE

Yes. I want the truth.

MARK

You can't handle the truth!!!

ANNE

Let me be the judge of that, thank you...

MARK

All right.
Ten statistically average students.

One will attempt suicide.
Two will be arrested and spend time in jail.
Seven will get married.
Five will get divorced.
Two will live below the poverty line.
Eight will be unemployed at some point in their lives.
One will be homosexual.
Six will have children.
One of these kids will die before the age of three.
One will become wealthy.
Two will own their houses.
Four of the women will be raped.
Two of the men will rape.

ANNE

Not true!

MARK

True. Statistically.

ANNE

That will not happen. We're different. We're not like that.

MARK

That's why they don't tell you the truth, Anne...

Life seems neverending when you're young.

And they've seen that it isn't and they hate you because you haven't seen the light yet. And you remind them of that fact every single day of their lives...

¶

A middle aged, diner waitress, stops suddenly while crossing the stage, with a couple dirty plates and a half full coffeepot.

WAITRESS

How could I serve her? I have let the Lord into my soul, I read the Bible and her....

She writes that...that play. Not that it could really be call that. That sacreligious garbage.

No, I haven't read it, and I don't want to.

But I know what it's all about. Children talking about sex. Having sex. It's wrong. The Bible says so. I don't know exactly where it says so, but Reverend Mitchell said it does and that's good enough for me.

I know damn well, pardon my tongue, that I didn't think about sex, much less want to have sex, when I was that age.

And she waltzes in here where her lover like nothing's happened. It's disgusting.

Segregation's the only answer. Get the girls away from the boys. Curfews, teach the BIBLE.

She can be saved, they all can but they've got to realize that they have to be saved, they have to accept the teaching of the Lord, the word of the Bible if they want to go to Heaven.

Having premarital sex and writing about it is the work of the devil.

And I am not going to serve anyone who doesn't accept the Bible.

They can fire me if they don't like it, but I know in my heart that I'm right.

COOK (O/S)

Pick up, table 6!

WAITRESS

If she comes in again, I'll do the same thing.

¶

Anne and Mark are slouching on chairs.

ANNE

And I naively thought free speech laid out in the
Charter of Rights...

MARK

Not in Abbotsford...

ANNE

I didn't write anything unique...or very original for
that matter...

MARK

But you wrote it. You're supposed to keep quiet
about it.

ANNE

What...keep secrets?

MARK

About who fondles you, no, about murder, no, but
about having sex...yes. This is Canada's Bible Belt...
God...

ANNE

God... I have real doubts there is a God.

¶

A well dressed man with a calm, mid-Atlantic accent reads from a lectern.

SPEAKER

"Despite the best efforts of theologians and
philosophers to disguise our condition, there is no
point to us, or to any species, except proliferation
and survival. This is hardly glamorous, and so to
give Meaning to Life, we have invented some of the
most bizarre religions that...alas, we have nothing to
compare ourselves to.

We are biped mammals filled with red sea water
(reminder of our oceanic origin), and we exist to
reproduce until we are eventually done in by the
planet's changing weather or a stray meteor."

Gore Vidal, from the essay, 'The Birds and the Bees'

¶

Berman is nervously pacing around, holding a thin folder. Anne is sitting at her desk watching him

BERMAN

Anne, about your play... I've just read it and...

It's good. But more than that, and even though you've forgotten everything I've taught you about play structure and dramatic conventions, it seems to me to be honest. Really honest.

ANNE

Because it is.

BERMAN

I think it's going to be a problem.

ANNE

Cause it's honest?

BERMAN

Because it's too honest.

ANNE

I don't understand.

BERMAN

What you've said is good, is honest and is something that should have been said a long time ago. But to submit it to be performed in front of the entire school....

I can't back you up publicly on it. You have my support, here, one to one, but nowhere else. Do you understand?

Anne just stares at him, confused.

BERMAN

(trying to explain)

I've got two kids. My wife is at home looking after them. I'm in enough hot water with the school board over the entire acting program.... you know I can't let you perform 'Romeo and Juliet'? The powers that be have taken some of the greatest books and plays of western civilization off the curriculum because they might, maybe, possibly offend some uptight, anal retentive, bible thumping, adulterous, holier-than-thou Christian with an axe to grind. And they do it in the name of fucking community standards.

P/A

Mr. Berman to the office. Mr. Berman.

Mr. Berman bitterly looks up at the imaginary speaker.

BERMAN

Oh oh...the pious, vindictive and humourless God beckons.

He starts to leave but turns and looks back at Anne.

BERMAN

I'm not going to fight the system for you, Anne. I'm sorry. I'm just one guy with a soft spot for the truth and a hundred and ninety thousand dollar fixed mortgage.

He leaves.

ANNE

He may not have taught me anything about dramatic structure but Mr. Berman showed me something more important. Fear of authority.

Mark walks onto stage.

MARK

Of course he fears authority. That's what you're supposed to do with authority. Fear it.

ANNE

I don't.

MARK

You will. You're young. You don't know better.

ANNE

You mean learning to fear authority is part of growing up?

Mark nods.

MARK

The definition of authority, Websters Dictionary.

"noun, the power or right to give orders and make others obey"

Sounds pretty much like something to fear, to me.

¶

A well dressed female news anchor sits behind a desk.

ANCHOR

Good evening, this is the National News.

A play about sex being banned isn't anything new, but how about one that's written by a high school student? Anne Greyston, presently attending Grade 12 in Abbotsford, British Columbia, is being shunned by her community, has been refused service in shops and is being threatened with expulsion all over an assignment in English to write a short play about being a teenager. Her play, 'Putting Out', has put her out of the frying pan and into the fire with it's talk about teens having sex and even enjoying it.

With more we go to our reporter in Vancouver.

¶

Anne and Mark sitting beside each other on a couch.

MARK

You're famous... I read the story in The Globe and Mail.

ANNE

So did the preacher down at the United Assembly of Christ the Redeemer. He phoned up to save me. That makes eight.

God, Mark....what the hell is going on?

I've had everyone yelling at me, threatening me, praying for MY soul, just because I talked about the big secret. Sex. The big secret that everyone knows. Except me.

MARK

And me.

ANNE

Designated virgins for the graduating class.

I don't understand...

I was never really interested in having sex. You know, actually having sex... but now...

MARK

Just a peek inside Pandora's box...

ANNE

(sighing)

Just a peek.

But you either do it, or you don't. No halfways.

MARK

Nope.

They sit and ponder. Mark looks over at Anne as she stares out.

MARK

Do you want to?

ANNE

Have sex?

MARK

Make love..

ANNE

Yes. I do. At some point.

MARK

What about....now?

ANNE

Now?

Mark nods, leans over and tentatively kisses her. Everything goes all right and he kisses her again.

ANNE

They pushed us to this..

Mark looks at her.

ANNE

It's their fault.

MARK

You're doing this to spite them?

ANNE

I'm doing this in spite of them.

Mark sits back.

MARK

Is that a good enough reason?

ANNE

I should know what I've written about...

MARK

I should know what I'm being accused of....

They return to kissing. She reaches out and pulls him close, holding him tight. They kiss more and more as the passion buried deep within them awakes. Lights dim.

Empty stage except for Anne and Mark on the couch in the darkness.

PHONE

We're not around to take your call so if you leave a message we'll get back to you real soon, thanks.

Beep.

MAN

You are running out of time and you have got to be saved. Fire and brimstone are your fate unless you renounce Lucifer and accept Jesus into your heart. We won't let you drag our children down the path of depravity and sin. We have nothing to loose. Our hearts are pure and our souls are given. We will do what we have to to save you in the name of Jesus Christ.

Click.

Lights come back up. Anne and Mark get up off the couch and cross to opposite sides of the stage.

MARK

We had sex.

ANNE

He wore a condom.

MARK

Confusing, exhilarating,...

ANNE

...overwhelming.. sex. Still...

MARK/ANNE

It wasn't great..

ANNE

Innocence has its drawbacks.

MARK

It's fine to know what goes where...

ANNE

Any why it's supposed to go there...

MARK

And what will happen once it's there...

ANNE

But that doesn't mean you know how to make love.

MARK

You know how to procreate.

ANNE

We thought they were the same.

MARK

Once we were finished...I didn't know if I should be excited or disappointed. Not that I regretted it...

ANNE

Regret? Yeah, a bit...

MARK

The anticipation was so much greater than the event...

ANNE

No one tells you about making love. How could they? That would involve admitting that sex is fun.

MARK

So we learn it from tv and movies.

A place where they use love to sell products.

ANNE

Men are strong.

MARK

Women are weak.

ANNE

Men are sexy.

MARK

Women are easy.

ANNE

Men are funny.

MARK

Women are bitchy.

ANNE

Men are good.

MARK

Women are bad.

ANNE

This is what we learn.

MARK

Women are thin.

ANNE

Men are tanned.

MARK

Women are suffering.

ANNE

Men are silent.

MARK

Women are oppressed.

ANNE

Men are oppressors.

MARK

Women need love.

ANNE

Men don't need love.

MARK

Women don't need sex.

ANNE

Men need sex.

MARK

Men need sex.

ANNE

And when you take all this and try adapt it to real life, you end up alone....

MARK

Alone.

¶

Anne's mother paces around the stage, in her apron, ignoring her vacuum.

ANNE'S MOTHER

I've tried to do what I feel is right for Anne, as a mother, as a friend, but with so much riding on what you do and what you say and how you act, I get scared for her.

She doesn't realize how dangerous the truth is to people how have long given up believing in it. A pure honest heart is one to be destroyed, not let free to prosper. Suffer and rejoice in heaven. I fought the law and the law won.

How do you tell your child that honesty will hurt them? Do as I say, not as I do? That the real world is built around maneuvering, control, deceit, treachery....

They have to learn for themselves...

But that doesn't make a mother's pain any less.

¶

Berman walks out onto stage and struggles with a mic on a stand. Anne and Mark are standing off to one side.

BERMAN

The last play to be performed today will be 'Putting Out' by Anne Greyston. Because of the subject matter of the play the school has decided to watch and grade the play in private. All students will return to your classes and continue with your studies.

The disgruntled shuffles of an auditorium of students getting up and leaving.

ANNE

(aside)
This was the compromise.

I heard that Josef Stalin used to have complete motion pictures made just for him to watch. No one but him and his cronies would see the film.

A none too subtle parallel can be made.

Mark and I are going to perform my play because no one was willing to act for me. Our entire audience was some teachers, the principal and a couple school board officials.

I had to promise not to distribute any copies of the script in the school...

MARK

It was the school boards idea.

Someone realized that it wouldn't be smart to fail Anne and have her around the school for another year sowing seditious thoughts into the untilled minds of another class of students. And God only knows what next year's play would be about.

ANNE

Religion. The hypocrisy of Catholicism. Sex in the church.

MARK

There you go...

The truth loses out in the end..again.

Berman walks over to Anne and Mark.

BERMAN

I'm glad you're doing this, Anne. I'm sorry I couldn't be....

ANNE

You helped. I know you did.

Berman realizes what she's talking about and smiles slightly.

BERMAN

They're ready.

Berman walks off stage past the mic, gesturing for them to follow.

MARK

They're not ready.

ANNE

No, they're not. But we have to try. I didn't write this to make some big point, to try and change things. I just wrote some stuff down that I heard my friends talking about. I'm not Galileo questioning the teachings of the church....I don't want to be crusified over the truth...this is high school, it really has nothing to do with truth. But I'm not going to be labled a heretic and take it sitting down. I won, we're performing my play.

MARK

You lost, cause we're performing it to an audience of six who don't believe it, won't believe it and have already made up their minds about you, me, your play, sex, teenagers and everything else. And they're not going to change the way they think, even if they're totally wrong.

ANNE

Then why are we doing this?

MARK

Cause we're supposed to. Youth must rebel against the dictates of their elders.

ANNE

Question authority.

MARK

You got it.

ANNE

Nobody told me high school was going to be like this....

MARK

I think life is like this....

Anne and Mark glance at each other then walk off stage after Berman.

THE END