

Writing Sample

PRISONERS IN PARADISE

A Play in Two Acts

by

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CHARACTERS

PUNK

Thirties to Forties. A man who appears to be a rough and dangerous criminal, but was once a family man and decent in all respects.

JOHNNY

A few years younger than Punk, his brother via adoption and his closest life-long friend. Johnny is very sensitive and compassionate, but extremely emotionally unstable, large and physically powerful.

EVE

Thirties to Forties, Johnny's cousin and Punk's ex-girlfriend and at one point his mistress. She is an ex-prostitute, now a porn actress and junkie seeking the American Dream.

CHRIS

Thirties to Forties. A Harvard Graduate and priest, and also the son of the wealthy and powerful Governor. He is an intellectual and true biblical scholar, compassionate, with deep empathy, but also somewhat naive.

The Time

The Present.

The Scene

The entire play takes place in an abandoned warehouse on the outskirts of a city. It has been turned into a temporary bare living environment from junk found on the street. There are a few very old hand me downs that Punk and Johnny could never part with, left to them from their parents.

Something happened here that cannot be reversed, but needs to be reversed, like the pain that is felt when one is promised love, then abused and abandoned instead. They are left with a deep feeling of betrayal by the only people they ever trusted, in a state of disbelief, and stunned like a deer caught in the headlights of an oncoming Mack Truck.

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OPENING OF THE PLAY

AT RISE

Morning. Lights up very slowly, revealing at first, shadows of Punk and Johnny, then after a moment they rise into full light. Johnny, is drawing with his crayons at the kitchen table facing the audience. Punk, burnt out and desperate, is on the phone pacing by his large stuffed chair, impatiently waiting for someone to answer. Punk and Johnny are in the middle of a conversation.

PUNK

...it was a perfect little house.

JOHNNY

Perfect?

PUNK

Perfect red roof, perfect little flower garden, green green lawn, white picket fence...

JOHNNY

...Swings?

PUNK

Swings, slide, monkey bars, little windows wit' perfect lace curtains...

JOHNNY

...Nice inside?

PUNK

Perfect!

JOHNNY

I had the same dream.

PUNK

Jus' sittin' in a green prairie, nothin' surroundin' it for miles an' miles, an' this family?

JOHNNY

Except it was on a desert.

PUNK

Desert?

JOHNNY

Nothin' surroundin' it but a dry, disgusting desert.

PUNK

No, Johnny.

JOHNNY

Vultures flyin' over death. Lizards walkin' across rocks. Blazin' sun...

PUNK

...This asshole ain't answerin' his phone. PICK THE DAMN THING UP I KNOW YA THERE YA RUDE SON OF A BITCH...

JOHNNY

...sun's meltin' down over sandy white desert mountains. Lone cactus on a grassless hill. Tumbleweeds crossin' salt flats pushed by ancient winds...

PUNK

...No...

JOHNNY

...lizards walkin' across rocks...

PUNK

...Wrong...

JOHNNY

...A snake hissin' in a tree...

PUNK

...No snakes...

JOHNNY

...Impending doom or death everywhere...

PUNK

...That ain't it I'm tellin' ya...

JOHNNY

...That's it. I lived it...

PUNK

(to phone)

...Maybe he's in the bathroom..!

JOHNNY
(growing frustration)
...nothin' surroundin' it for miles an' miles. An'
this family...

PUNK
(to phone)
...SON-OF-A-GODAMNED-BITCH..!

JOHNNY
...an' sittin' high up on a cliff, lookin' down, there's
an Eagle. Below, red rock 'n' sand stretched out for miles
in every direction. Eagle sees a mouse tryin' to escape
the heat, swoops down, grabs the mouse by the back of its
neck an' pulls it up into the vast, open sky. Mouse screams
for it's life, as it disappears outta sight.

PUNK
Except it was on a prairie.
(screams to Chris offstage)
WHY AIN'T HE ANSWERIN' HIS FUCKIN' PHONE THIS TIME
PRIEST?!

Punk runs offstage steaming mad.

JOHNNY
Fuckin' Desert.

PUNK
(screaming from offstage)
Grasslands, mountains, the sunset an' the sea behind it.

JOHNNY
DON'T TAKE MY DREAMS FROM ME TOO YA ASSHOLE.

*Punk enters holding Chris by the
back of his neck. Chris is
blindfolded and his hands are tied
in front of him. Punk violently
throws him center stage. Chris
lands on the floor face down.*

PUNK
Here ya go, Mice for the eagle.

EVE WANTS HER DRUGS

PUNK

(to Johnny)

Keep Lilith offa him willya, like ya agreed.

(to Eve)

Fuckin' ridiculous on-screen name. Lilith. What the fuck's that mean?

EVE

They gave it to me, I don't care. Scripts don't even have my name in it - just he, she or he 1, she 1, if there's more than 1... all it is says is: suck, fuck, doggy style, missionary, over a chair, in a tub, gorilla suit, anal, cumshot, cumswap, MILF, totally destroyed, lesbian seduction, blacked, double penetration, triple penetration, quadruple penetration, whatever - who gives a fuck what my name is. I'm an actress I gotta follow the script and reach "my audience".

PUNK

"Cause ya fans gotta remember who the fuck you are if you wanna make money. Gotta have some slut-name ya wanna be successful. Somethin' all the horny 'burbies can remember. Like, "STARRING": Pussy-Cat, Super-Twat, Love-Tunnel, Cum-Ing, Org-Asm, Penny Penetration, some shit like that. Lilith..?

(laughs mockingly)

EVE

...It's cute. Like lilies in a field.

PUNK

Den call yaself Rose-ith, or Chrysanthemum-ith.

(laughs mockingly)

Daffo-Dildo-ith! Hey, that's a good one!

EVE

(hurt)

I don't care.

(putting groceries away)

I'm feelin' it already, Punky. I know ya stashed my fix so I quit drugs but not today OK Hun? I'll need my mommy in my arm soon. So don't go playin' games. I had a rough day. Guys cum tasted funky like foul-smelling Chlorox...

PUNK

...EVE DON'T START THAT SH...

EVE

...His cock was so big I was gaggin' on it almost died, an' had the worst breath and body odor...

PUNK

...EVE...

EVE

...Still got a bad taste in my mouth ya know...

PUNK

...EVE...

EVE

...An' I had to pretend I was turned on when he was doin' my ass...

PUNK

...EVE...

EVE

...Didn't need Triple Pen, he almost split me in two wit his one huge banana splitter...

PUNK

...EVE...

EVE

...Don't know where he got a cock that big it's a mutation or somethin'...

PUNK

...EVE...

EVE

...The filmer guy was jackin' off while filmin' he said loved my moan so it might be a hit film I'm hopin'...

PUNK

...EVE...

EVE

I practice moans...

(fakes a moan)

...an' orgasms I got like twenty different ones...

(fakes an orgasm)

...an' It's payin' off. But he was abusive almost... I don't care...

PUNK

...ENOUGH GODAMNIT..!

EVE

...I bought you food with the money I earned so don't "ENOUGH GODAMNIT" me... I don't live in a delusion like you. I'm livin' in reality Punk...

(MORE)

EVE (CONT'D)

(spells it)

R.E.A.L.T.I.T.T.Y.

(takes an Oreo Cookie,
twists it open and licks
the cream inside)

So grow the fuck up. Even this shit don't get the taste
outta my mouth. What should I make for dinner, Hun?
Pizza or pizza?

PUNK REVEALS HE IS CHRIS'S BROTHER

Punk, violently angry but trying to suppress it, slowly brings the gun up pointing it right at Chris, who gasps in utter terror.

JOHNNY

(terrified)

Don't even think it.

CHRIS

(to himself, terrified)

"bless them which persecute you; bless, and curse not.

(begins weeping)

"Blessed are the meek. Blessed are the pure in heart."

EVE

(referring to her drugs)

Please, Punky, I gotta feel my mommy again?

Eve lays down in fetal position, facing toward the audience. Punk puts the gun against Chris's head.

JOHNNY

Hey, Bro!

CHRIS

(terrified, to himself)

"And in thine hand is power and might..."

PUNK

Tell me what he did - tell me the truth about the invisible...

CHRIS

..."And in thine hand it is to make great..."

PUNK

...Stop recitin' that bullshit it won't get you outta this answer my questions or I pull the trigger.

Pause. Chris is terrified, frozen and trembling.

PUNK

There was another son.

CHRIS

(terrified)

There... was a son...

PUNK

...The son of the father. What happened to him?

CHRIS

He is still alive, as far as I know.

PUNK

Why don't you know?

Pause.

PUNK

Why don't you know?!

CHRIS

It was a cover-up.

PUNK

AND?

CHRIS

He was adopted when he was a baby. He was the child of my father's mistress. The woman...

PUNK

...The woman?! She didn't have a name?

CHRIS

He covered it up to protect my mother, and his career. Please. I'll tell you anything you want to know. Just please take the gun away. I can hardly breathe.

JOHNNY

Bro' put it down ya scarin' me.

Punk remains frozen with the gun to Chris's head.

PUNK

What happened to the woman?

CHRIS

She...

PUNK

...Was cast out of paradise?

CHRIS

I don't know.

PUNK

Into poverty with her little child in her arms? What was her story?

(MORE)

PUNK (CONT'D)

What did she do, this invisible woman your father fucked,
who's holy cum made a child in his image?

CHRIS

She asked for money. And she was denied.

PUNK

Denied?! Denied what? Love? Banished from all
responsibility to protect a career, a name? An image?
What else was she denied..?

CHRIS

She was...

PUNK

...Pick: A Prostitute? A Whore? A Slut? A Human
Being in trouble? WHAT WAS SHE CHRIS? Pick one before
I get tense and my finger slips sending that
bullshitter's brain of yours to hell where it belongs.

CHRIS

I had nothing to do with it I wasn't even born yet.

*Eve sits up with the blanket wrapped
around her. She looks like a
teenager on the streets, shaking in
fear.*

PUNK

WHICH ONE WAS SHE GODDAMNIT!

CHRIS

A human being in trouble? She was the victim of a crime.
A terrible crime.

Long silence.

PUNK

Yeah, that's right.

CHRIS

How did you know?

PUNK

God spoke to me.

CHRIS

How did you know?

PUNK

I'm Psy-sick. Let's see... She was a beautiful woman.
Beautiful eyes. The soul of a saint.

(MORE)

PUNK (CONT'D)

I'm hearin' her voice - so gentle. This... Human being in trouble. In need of help. This miracle who was once a baby inside someone, now grown up, and abandoned, alone, frightened, confused, hurting... And physically beautiful. Did your father see anything but her looks? Did he help her when she was... "In trouble" this "good man" the father of a fucking priest?

EVE

(very gentle voice)

I'm so tired baby. Please? I need your help.

Eve sits on the floor in front of the sofa and almost as if drunken with withdrawal, looks at her hands, crying softly, tired, disoriented.

PUNK

Her touch was so loving and tender. Filled with love.

(pause)

She had a little boy. When she held him, he knew he was loved an' nothin' could hurt him. Am I getting the story straight?

CHRIS

Yes.

PUNK

He needed her love, like he needed to breathe. Connected to all of her humanity, and she his. This baby that came out of her and into her arms staring up at her eyes in the light.

(pause)

One day she didn't come home. Her friends came to see her and found the little boy sittin' in his own shit; dehydrated, an' hungry, an' cryin' for his mommy.

EVE

(very gentle voice)

Pleaseeeeeeeeee help me... Pleaseeeeeeeeeeeeee...

Eve lays on the floor in a fetal position facing the audience, drained. She reaches out for something.

PUNK

He'd been like that for two days. An' he remembered it. Funny thing, gettin' psy-sick, huh? What happened to her, Chris?

CHRIS

She requested money, was denied, and she threatened to make trouble.

PUNK
Trouble for the almighty powerful Cum-Lord? What
happened to her Chris?

CHRIS
She... disappeared.

PUNK
"Disappeared"?
(pause)
No. Her remains were found five years later, in a ditch.

CHRIS
(pause)
That's right. How did...

PUNK
...Bullet in her head. It's comin' in so strong these
pictures. What happened to her little, sweet, miracle
of a child. The son of the father, and your half-
brother?

CHRIS
He was adopted we heard.

PUNK
And he grew up to become?

*Pause. Punk's hand holding the gun
slightly shaking.*

CHRIS
I don't know.

Punk, takes the gun away.

PUNK
Me.

Very long pause.

PUNK
See what sins do?

EVE'S CHILDHOOD MEMORY

EVE'S MONOLOGUE REVEALS WHAT A LIE FEELS LIKE
TO A CHILD, AND HOW IT AFFECTS AN ENTIRE LIFE.

Her life, and all of the characters in this play feel abandoned, lied to, abused, ruined, and are confused by the lack of foundation they experienced. Too many abandoned their true responsibility towards them as children and adults. Things break. Fracture. Disintegrate. The resulting chaos rises as they each attempt to find unity, salvation, peace, and a stable family life together. This monologue defines what it feels like to realize you've been betrayed, abandoned, and lied to, through the memory of a Prostitute and Porn Actress, when she was an innocent child.

EVE

Before he went nuts, my daddy used to tell me God was watchin' over us, ya know? There were guardian angels, and a place called heaven. I remember seein' everything like heaven, an' everything was like a gift. But as I got older, everyone started treatin' me different. He didn't see me the same way no more. Somethin' else happened. To him. Then to me. And there I was, in the middle of all this, growin' up, tryin' to be an angel searchin' for the God that raped me of my childhood dreams because he lied to me. A lie is like a rape. It's violent. Violates our trust. An' trust is safety. Solid ground we can walk on together. Don't matter if you're bein' lied to by someone you need the truth from, or, if you're lying to yourself because you're too afraid of the truth. A lie hurts us deep. In here. Maybe he lied to me because he couldn't stand the thought of his baby knowing ugliness. The ugliness outside, and the ugliness inside of him. But he lied to me. And he violated me. But I needed the softness of the truth. I needed to be touched. Held. Comforted. I grew up, but I was still a child in a woman's body searching for somethin' I couldn't have. I needed to feel free again. But everyone ran away, and heaven, it slipped out of sight. Jus' went... away... Even the fantasy didn't hold no water no more. Just disappeared like my daddy. One night he was with us, one night he was gone - and no one knew where he went. My mother cried for months. Then she stopped cryin'. Stopped feeling anything. Her face grew cold as stone. Heaven disappeared from her smile. She died, before she died. I wish it had been different, ya know? But the way I thought it was gonna be, jus' wasn't the way it turned out. What do ya do with them two things?

END OF WRITING SAMPLE