

JENS HAVEN MEMORIAL SCHOOL, NAIN

presents

THEY DIDN'T WANT TO LEAVE  
(A Radio Play for Stage)

CAST:

The Father - Elias Obed  
The Mother - Lucy Jararuse  
Daughter #1 - Debbie Webb  
Daughter #2 - Judy Igloliorte  
The Narrator - Twiggy Pamak  
The Friend - Karen Dicker

INTRODUCTION:

This play is presented in the context of a radio play, in that characters remain stationary in front of microphones throughout much of the play. However, gesture and facial expressions are used in addition to sound effects.

SETTING:

The stage is bare except for four microphones on stands. Enter the 6 participants in black and white. They shuffle up to microphones, test them out, etc. At a signal from the narrator, the play begins. Characters can perform some activity, e.g. shuffling cards or studying, to show activity between narrator and friend in the present. Everyone mimes movements to door, etc. without leaving position.

FRIEND: Gee, I don't want to go home.

NARRATOR: Why?

FRIEND: My parents are drinking, and I don't want to be home. Do you mind if I stay the night?

NARRATOR: Yeah, sure boy.

FRIEND: Gee, you're some lucky, you know.

NARRATOR: Why?

FRIEND: Because your father is real nice adn does all sorts of neat things with yous.

NARRATOR: It wasn't always like that.

FRIEND: What do you mean?

NARRATOR: I remember once when...

(Father is reading newspaper. Mother enters with phone bill, presents it to Father.)

MOTHER: Darn phone bill - here again.

(Father yawns, ignores her.)

MOTHER: Not going to look at it or what? Look at it! There's a notice saying the phone's going to be cut off soon if we don't pay!

FATHER (CONTINUING TO LOOK AT PAPER): Did my cheque come?

MOTHER: No, but the mail's not all sorted out yet.

FATHER: Then I guess we'll just have to get the phone cut off.

MOTHER (GETTING ANGRY): We never have any money anyway. You can't even find a job.

FATHER: You find a job if you think it's so easy. They're probably your calls anyway.

MOTHER: It must be you - the kids and me never use the phone. If they were my calls, I wouldn't be showing you this.

(Second daughter crouches down, listening.)

FATHER: Why are you always blaming me?

MOTHER: Because you're a useless son of a gun! You'll never have any money as long as you sit there looking at that paper. So why don't you just look for a job?

(Father remains silent.)

MOTHER (LONGINGLY): Gee, I wish I had a job. (Pauses.) You don't care about anything - not even your kids!

(Father throws down paper in disgust, moves for door. Sees daughter.)

FATHER: What are you doing there?

2nd DAUGHTER (RISING HESITANTLY): Ammm...there's a little crack and I'm trying to cover it.

FATHER: Ahh, get in the house.

(She crouches again.)

MOTHER: Stop being rude to her, you idiot.

FATHER: I'm no idiot!

MOTHER: You sure looks like one!

FATHER: Ahh, why don't you just shut up?

MOTHER: Not shutting up for you.

FATHER: Well, smart woman, if you're not shutting up, I'm going out.

MOTHER: If you're going, I'm going.

(Footsteps and slamming doors. Daughter stands.)

2nd D: Gee, some messy, eh? (She puts wood in the stove. Her sister mimes entry, touches her on shoulder.) I overheard Mom and Dad arguing just now.

1st D: About what?

2nd D: About phone bills and stuff like that.

1st D: Gee, if they talks about phone bills and such stuff, they should work for a living.

2nd D: Gees, I know. Like married people does, eh?

1st D: Hey, I got a brilliant idea!

2nd D: What?

1st D: We can find a job!

2nd D: Are you crazy?

1st D: No. And what's so crazy about it?

2nd D: We're too young to quit school. Mom and Dad will find out.

1st D: No they won't. Not if we keep our mouths shut.

2nd D: Even if we keep our mouths shut, they're going to find out.

1st D: How?

2nd D: The principal, you know. He's a real teller.

1st D: You're right.

2nd D: So let's just drop the subject. (Phone rings, and the 2nd daughter answers it.) Hello. (Pause.) No, they're not in. Tell them to call who? Yeah. O.K. Bye.

(The kids begin to mime washing dishes. Footsteps and door as mother and father return.)

FATHER: At last, my cheque came. Go hotel tonight, I suppose.

MOTHER: No, you're not.

FATHER: Yes, I am.

MOTHER: You pay for the phone bill first.

FATHER: Nah, I never made those calls.

MOTHER: Yes, you did - when you were drunk.

FATHER (ANGRY): Ahh, I suppose, eh!

MOTHER: And after that, buy some food, and not just booze.

FATHER: Shouldn't have married you, you know.

MOTHER: Ahhh, don't talk like that in front of the kids.

2nd D (INTERRUPTS): Amm, Huey called for you - one of you, anyway. He told me to tell you you gotta call him.

(Parents both grab for phone.)

MOTHER: I'll call and see what he wants.

FATHER: No, I will. (Makes call.)

1st D: Mom, we cleaned up for you.

MOTHER: Thank-you.

(Father looks very pleased as he hangs up the phone.)

MOTHER: What did Huey want?

FATHER: Nothing much. (Pause, then lovingly.) Should take a nap, I suppose. Coming or what, Hon?

MOTHER: Holy! This is the first time he called me Hon since a long time.

FATHER: Ahh, come on.

MOTHER: Yes, Sir!

(Activity in the present.)

FRIEND: Was that it? That doesn't sound so bad.

NARRATOR: I'm not finished yet, dummy!

(Next morning, Father reads paper. Mother goes through mime of preparing breakfast.)

FATHER: Do we have any food for the kids' dinner today?

MOTHER: No, this is the last of it.

FATHER (HANDING WELFARE CHEQUE): Here, pay off the phone bill and buy some food with what's left of the money.

(Mother smiles, looks lovingly as she accepts it.)

MOTHER: I'm glad I'm married to such a wonderful, loving man.

(Flurry of footsteps as girls rush in for breakfast. They eat, but don't speak.)

FATHER: Why is everyone so quiet? This is your home, not a prison camp.

(They look down.)

MOTHER: O.K. kids. What do you want for the next couple of days because I'm going to the store this morning.

(They perk up.)

1st D: I want pizza and onion rings!

2nd D: I want french fries and corned beef hash!

FATHER: I can see your mother will have alot of shopping to do this morning.

MOTHER: O.K. Hurry up and finish your breakfast and go to school. It's almost 9 o'clock.

(Father and Mother wave, sounds of departure.)

FATHER: I'll go to the store this morning. You stay here and take it easy.

MOTHER (HANDING CHEQUE): O.K. See you in a little while. Don't forget the corned beef hash.

(Father smiles as he prepares to leave. Mother turns around. Pause, then tapping the feet to indicate passing of time. Mother slowly turns. Does housework, smokes, looks out window, worries out loud. Father can be seen drinking.)

MOTHER: What's keeping him so long? Must be a long line again at the store. (Pause.) Gee, the kids are going to be home soon, and he's not home yet with the food. (More activity.) The last time he was gone this long, he went and spent the cheque drinking, but he promised me he wouldn't do it anymore.

(Footsteps as kids come home.)

1st D: What's for dinner, ma?

2nd D: I don't smell my corned beef hash.

MOTHER: Your father didn't come home from the store yet. We'll eat when...

1st D: IF he gets home!

MOTHER: Don't talk about your father like that!

(With an angry look at her mother, first daughter storms out of house.)

MOTHER (DIALS NUMBER, PAUSE): Hello, Mom? Is is O.K. if I send the kids over for dinner? (Pause.) Oh? Thanks, Mom. (Hangs up.)

2nd D: Gee, I don't want to go over there.

MOTHER: You're going whether you want to or not.

2nd D: I suppose, nothing to eat here anyway.

(Mother starts calling around, looking for husband. Father returns, obviously

drunk, opens door.)

FATHER: What's for dinner, Hon?

MOTHER: What!? You were the one who was supposed to buy the food! (Looking at him, not wanting to believe it.) Don't tell me you spent all our money drinking.

FATHER (PROUDLY): No, I got \$10 left.

MOTHER: What!? You spent all the money again? But you promised...

FATHER: I'm not staying here to listen to this crap! I'm going over to Huey's.

MOTHER: Give me the \$10 first.

(Father throws money at her, stumbles out. Mother, crying softly, picks up money.)

MOTHER: Why? Why did I trust him? Why? (Cries herself to sleep.)

1st D (RETURNING): Hey, sis, where are you? Is anybody home?

MOTHER: I sent her over to your grandmother's for dinner and the rest of the night.

1st D: Mom, I'm sorry about earlier on today. I didn't know where Dad was. For all we knew, he could be hurt in the hospital.

MOTHER: I should have listened to you. This afternoon your father came home loaded drunk with only \$10 left.

1st D: Oh, Mom.

MOTHER: I'm alright, but the state your father is in, he could really get hurt. r

1st D: Let's both go over to Gran's for the night. You look like you could use a break.

MOTHER: O.K.

(They get ready, sounds of feet and doors.)

FRIEND: So what happened next?

NARRATOR: Well, the next morning...

(Mother enters house, wanders about.)

MOTHER: I wonder where Dave is. I hope he is sober and alright. I can't understand why he broke his promise and spent almost all our cheque on beer. He makes me so mad! I hope he's in jail, picked up for being drunk!

(Father comes in, still a bit drunk.)

MOTHER: Aren't you ashamed to be seen loaded drunk?

FATHER: If you're ashamed of me, then why did you marry me?

MOTHER: I wasn't ashamed of you when I married you, but alot of things have changed since then. You're unemployed and on welfare, and you've turned into an alcoholic.

(Enter 1st daughter.)

1st D: Mom, you home yet?

FATHER (TO HER): What are you doing out of school already? (To wife.) I'm not an alcoholic and it's not my fault we're on welfare.

1st D: You're wrong! It's all your fault! It was you who showed up drunk for work too many times and got fired for it! I hate you - you stupid alcoholic!

(Father swings fist at her.)

MOTHER: Dave, I'm leaving you. I've had enough of your drinking, and don't you ever touch one of my kids or I'll charge you with child abuse!

1st D: We have to pack yet, Mom. I'm not packing with him here.

MOTHER: Me neither. Let's leave now, right now!

(They freeze in pose of departure.)

NARRATOR: They didn't want to leave, but they had to. They had been together for a long time. There had been good times - fishing, going to dances, movies - but these were long ago. Lately, things had been rough - no money, hardly any food, always fighting. Things had to change.

(Father wakes up, hung over. Begins to look for food.)

FATHER: Great! Just great! Not a thing to eat in the house, and no money to buy some more food. (Slams cupboard, clutches head.) Oh, man, what a hangover! (Looks around, realizing.) They left me, they really left me this time. Oh, what have I done? What will I do without them?

(Hangs his head as music, "Everything Must Change" plays. The characters gradually leave microphone format. Father wanders freely among the others, as necessary. Characters act out the scene with appropriate movements as the narrator recalls events. Friend listens to her, and watches scene unfold with interest.)

NARRATOR: December came. He'd been trying to slow down his drinking since they left. He felt sorry for what he had done for his family. On his sober days, he was trying to find employment, but without much luck. All the days seemed to be the same since his family had left him. This time was especially hard since it was Christmas and he had no family to celebrate it with. He remembered all the good times they used to have at Christmas.

In mid-February, he found a part-time job at the local store, which

had possibilities for a full-time job. Slowly, he began paying off the bills which he had been ignoring during his drinking periods. About mid-February, he began to wonder how his kids were doing in school, and whether they had passed their first term.

By mid-April, he had all his bills paid, and had even made a down payment on some new furniture. He joined A.A. and began learning how to cope with his drinking problem. He got a full-time job. He was seriously thinking about asking his family back.

In May, he received an invitation to his daughter's graduation, and wondered whether he should go or not - and whether he should ask his family back.

June came. He had one more payment before he could get the new furniture. He decided that the new furniture would be a present to his family for all the trouble he had caused them. At the last moment, he decided to go to his daughter's graduation. And...at the graduation...

(Reaching out to each other. Freeze.)

THE END