

B.L. Morrison School, Postville

presents

"BEHIND CLOSED DOORS"

CAST

Larry, the abusive father
Tracy, Jimmy's friend
Rachel, mother of Tracy
Jimmy, the abused child
Ricky, kid from school
Kathy, the wife
Julie, kid from school
Miss Sheppard, teacher

Alaster Sheppard
Geri Edmunds
Wendy
Jimmy Goudie
Johnathan Boone
Sharon Edmunds
Sharon Lane
Samantha

TEACHER ADVISOR

Pastor R. Boone

LIAISON OFFICER

Samuel Jacque

A play on child abuse.



Jennifer Faulkner
Eric G. Lambert School
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"BEHIND CLOSED DOORS"
Scene One

Setting: The scene takes place at breakfast, Kathy and Larry are seated at the kitchen table talking.

Kathy: Larry, Jimmy needs a new pair sneakers for school.

Larry: What's wrong with his old ones?

Kathy: Larry, he is a growing boy.

Larry: So, how much is that going to cost me?

Kathy: Ah...probably about forty dollars.

Larry: Your forever asking me for money for this and that and something else. Do you think I'm made of money?

Kathy: I'm sorry, but Jimmy's got to have new sneakers.

Larry: Fine I'll gi2ve you the money.(short pause) Shouldn't he be up for school by now?

Kathy: Jimmy! Get up, its time for school.

Jimmy: Five more minutes ,Ma!

Kathy: No!

Jimmy: Two more!

Larry: Jimmy either you get up now, or I drag you out.

Jimmy: But, Dad...

Larry: (He looks at Kathy and says...) I'm not in the mood for this this morning.

(Father jumps up gets Jimmy and drags him into the kitchen)

Larry: Why don't you get up when your told?!!

Jimmy: Please don't hurt me Dad! I'm sorry.

(Larry hits Jimmy causing him to fall against the table, all the while Jimmy whimpers.)

Kathy: Larry! Don't!

(Larry gives Kathy a hard cold stare, in fear she stops protesting. He then leaves the room throwing things out of his way as he goes.)

(Kathy goes over to Jimmy and cradles him in her arms.)

Kathy: Its okay baby, everything will be alright.(She holds him for a little while, then says...) Now you better get ready for school.

(Jimmy hangs his head as he leaves the stage area, blood is visible by nose. As Kathy tidies things up she breaks down. She voices her thoughts aloud and the strain of the abuse is visible on her face.)

Kathy: I can't take it any more! Why does this keep happening? I feel as though I'm living in a nightmare. Larry always says it won't happen again but it do. (She looks up as she say's...) Oh dear Lord! Please don't let him hurt my baby any more! I wish we could be a normal family.(She is still crying as Jimmy appears.)

Jimmy: Mommy?

(Kathy is taken by surprise and she begins to wipe her tears away.)

Kathy: Are you all ready for school?

Jimmy: Yes Mom.

Jimmy: Mommy, why does Daddy hate us?

(She kneels down beside him, a few tears fall from her eyes as she wipes the blood off of the corner of his mouth with the edge of her apron.)

Kathy: Oh no honey Daddy doesn't hate us. He's just got a lot on his mind right now. Jimmy, you've got to believe that he loves you no matter what. Daddy's got a problem, he doesn't know how to control his anger. (She hugs him then says...) Now, lets get you off to school. (Jimmy nods his head and leaves. Larry enters as Kathy finishes straightening up.)

Larry: Is Jimmy gone to school?

Kathy: Yes, he left a few minutes ago.

Larry: Honey I'm sorry (Kathy turns away). Please don't be mad at me, I don't know what came over me. I won't do it again.

Kathy: Do you mean it Larry? Do you promise?

Larry: Of course I do. I love you Kathy.

(When the bell rings all students enter the class room, then Jimmy enters.)

Julie: Hey, look who's here! Clutzy Jimmy, bang into any walls lately.

Ricky: Hey, Jimmy! (He sticks his tongue out at him and makes a rude noise.)

(Julie runs by and grabs Jimmy's lunch bag, she then throws it to Ricky)

Julie: Ricky, look what I've got! Catch!

Tracy: Cut it out guys! Give him back his lunch box before I...

Ricky: Before you what? Go tell Mommy!

Tracy: Why you little creep! (She goes to grab him just as teacher walks in.)

Miss Sheppard: Okay you guys! Settle down! One more word out of you two and you'll be serving a detention after school. Everyone take your math books out and turn to page eight.

(Lights dim and then come back on, the bell rings and the students start getting ready to leave class.)

Miss Sheppard: Don't forget that math homework I assigned you, its due tomorrow. Jimmy, can you stay behind a few minutes please.

(Jimmy sits in his seat and waits to talk to his teacher.)

Miss Sheppard: Jimmy, that's a nasty bruise, what happened?
(Jimmy hangs his head not saying a word.) Is everything okay at home?

Jimmy (stuttering): Its, its...nothing Miss. I just fell.

Miss Sheppard: Are you sure that's all that happened. You fell?

Jimmy (impatiently): Miss everything is fine at home, can I go
now?

Miss Sheppard: Yes, you can go. Just remember that I'm always here for you to talk to.

Jimmy: Okay. (He turns and leaves meeting Tracy at the door.)

Tracy: Hurry up! Let's go!

Scene Two

(Both Parents are at home. Larry is resting on the sofa while Kathy is quietly preparing supper. Jimmy and Tracy enter carrying on.)

Kathy: Kid's keep it down your Dad is trying to get some sleep.

Jimmy: (He gives her a nod as if though he is trying to say he understands.) Okay Mom. Come on Tracy lets go play with my G.I. Joes.

Tracy: Okay, sure.

(While they are playing on the floor Tracy takes one of the G.I. Joes and teases Jimmy. They start to run around and make a lot of noise eventually something is knocked over and they wake Larry from his slumber.)

Jimmy: Oh no.

Tracy: What? It's not broken.

(Tracy then continues to play, not really knowing the amount of danger Kathy and Jimmy are in.)

Kathy (in a worried voice): Jimmy, I think that you and Tracy should go play in your room.

(Jimmy sensing that something is wrong begins to tug on Tracy's arm trying to make her get up.)

Jimmy: Okay Mom, come on Tracy hurry up.

Tracy: What? Where are we going? Stop pulling on my arm, your hurting me.

(Jimmy and Tracy leave the room all the while Larry stares at Kathy with a look that could only be described as fury.)

Larry: (He yells at Kathy in a loud voice.) What's wrong with you anyway! You should have better sense than to let those two kids run around the house while I'm trying to sleep!

Kathy: I'm sorry, I won't let it happen again. The kids will be quiet from now on.

Larry: Your right it won't happen again! It's about time I teach you a lesson.(He advances towards Kathy with his fist raised high in the air.)

Kathy: No don't! Please Larry, I'm sorry.

(Larry hits Kathy with the back of his hand, he then grabs her by the hair and yells in loud voice...)

Larry: Admit it Kathy! You deserved it! Admit it!

Kathy: Okay, okay...I admit it, I deserved it.

(Jimmy and Tracy enter, Jimmy says...)

Jimmy: Go home Tracy(He says this in an urgent voice).

(Tracy stands paralysed with fear as she watches Jimmy run towards his Father. Jimmy is angered he yells and hits his Father.)

Jimmy: Stop it! Leave Mommy alone! Leave Mommy alone! (Tracy watches in horror as Larry pushes Jimmy to the floor. Tracy runs out the door.)

Larry: Get up!(He yells to Jimmy.)Kathy! Look at this place its a mess! Can't you keep this house clean?

(Larry exits the house setting, he walks towards the edge of the stage. Lights dim on house setting, you can see Kathy rocking Jimmy in her arms, lights are focused on Larry.)

Flashback: (Voices echo through the auditorium, a flashback resounds through the theatre, voices of a boy and his Father arguing.)

Father: You worthless little brat, I told you never to do that again!

Child: No Daddy, don't! I'm sorry! (The words I'm sorry echoes through Larry's mind. He holds his head in anguish.)

Larry: (He screams out...) No!!!!!!!

(Lights go out and switch to Rachels house.)

(Tracy enters house looking very upset. Rachel notices the preoccupied look on her daughters face.)

Rachel: Home from Jimmys already Tracy?

Tracy: Mom? How come Jimmy's Father hits him and his Mother?

Rachel: Tracy what are you talking about? What happened over at Jimmy's house today?

Tracy: This afternoon when we were playing together we knocked something over, we woke up Jimmy's Dad and he was really angry. His Mom made us go in the room and then, we heard bawling so we came out. Jimmy's Mom was on the floor and his Dad was hitting her and she was crying. Jimmy tried to make him stop, but his Dad pushed him down, I was really scared so I left.

Rachel: Oh Tracy(She holds in her arms and comforts her. Then she kneels down and looks Tracy in the eye.) Tracy, listen to me sometimes people have problems and the only way they know how to let their anger out is by hurting someone that they love even if they don't mean to. Jimmy's Dad needs some help. You know as well as I do that Jimmy doesn't have many friends so, right now he needs you more then ever.

Tracy: I know Mom, I just wish that Jimmy didn't have to be hurt.

Rachel: (She hugs Tracy and says...) Everything is going to be okay honey!

Scene Three

Setting: Jimmy is leaving the house for school, Larry is already gone. While Kathy is cleaning the morning dishes there is knock at the door. She is surprised to see Rachel standing in the doorway.

Kathy: Rachel! How are you this morning? Come on in, sit down.

(Rachel looks at Kathy solemnly and Kathy soon realizes that there is no use in pretending that nothing is wrong. Kathy sighs and says...)

Kathy: How is Tracy?

Rachel: She's fine now, but yesterday she was a bit shook up she told me what happened.

Kathy: Oh that, it was nothing really. You know how it is, just a little argument.

Rachel: Kathy, Tracy told me that she saw Larry hitting you.

(Kathy starts to cry.)

Kathy: Don't be ridiculous.

Rachel: Kathy look, I don't want to come across as someone who butts into other peoples business.

Kathy: Then please don't interfere, just leave us alone.

Rachel: But, Kathy your my friend I can't help but be concerned about you. Tracy told me that Jimmy often comes to school with cuts and bruises.

(Kathy no longer has control of her emotions.)

Kathy: But Larry's a good husband, I know he doesn't mean to hurt us(Rachel puts her arms around Kathy and they both begin to cry).

Rachel: I know I can't tell you what do with your life but you can't let this go on. If not for yourself then for Jimmy's sake.

Kathy: What am I supposed to do. I don't understand him! I don't know where his anger comes from! When we first got married everything was perfect, he was so loving and kind! But when Jimmy was born everything changed, he became so unhappy and he started having bad dreams, he followed in his Fathers footsteps.

Rachel: What do you mean?

Kathy: Larry's Father abused him and his Mother. Just like Larry's doing to us. I feel so helpless, I'm just so sick and tired of living in fear. Jimmy's so innocent he doesn't deserve this I don't want him to grow up and be like his Father. It's got to stop somewhere!

Rachel: But Kathy you don't understand, it can stop, it can stop here. It's up to you whether you want to change your life or not! I'll do whatever I can to help you but its up to you to make that decision.

Kathy: There isn't only an angry side to Larry there's a loving side too. If only he would realize what he's putting us through and that he needs help. Maybe then with therapy he could deal with his past and go on with his future.

Rachel: Kathy if you don't want to live with the abuse maybe you should consider leaving Larry until he gets some help.

Kathy: But where could we go? I have no relatives, no money I'm totally dependent on Larry. It would be to hard, I just don't have the strength.

Rachel: You've got to find the strength, for Jimmy's sake. Look, I've got plenty of space at my house you and Jimmy are welcome to come stay with me as long as you need too.

Kathy: Oh Rachel, I don't know...I just don't know! I feel like I'm trapped and I just don't know where to turn.

Rachel: But Kathy, that's what I'm here for, I want to help you! Listen, do what's best for you and Jimmy. Come and stay with me for awhile it will at least give you some time to think about what you have to do.

Kathy: I guess your right, I have to what's best for Jimmy.

Rachel: You get your things together and I'll be back for you in a couple of hours.

Kathy: Okay, I'll be ready.

(Rachel leaves, Kathy is alone in the house and she begins to pack her suitcase in the living room. As she is packing Larry enters through the kitchen door, Kathy goes over to meet him.)

Kathy: Larry what are you doing home so early?

Larry: I just thought I'd come home early and spend some time with my beautiful wife(He puts his arm around her and gives her a hug and a kiss on the cheek and starts walking towards the living room, Kathy watches in horror).

Kathy: Larry... I think you should know something.

Larry: What's going on Kathy? What's with the suitcase(Larry starts hauling cloths out of the suitcase and throws them on floor)?

Kathy: I'm leaving and I'm taking Jimmy with me!

Larry: You think you can just walk out on me(he starts walking towards her)? After everything I've done for you this is the thanks I get! And my son! You think I'd just let you take him away from me! You can't do this Kathy! You won't get away with it!

Kathy: I can do this Larry, and I will! Jimmy and I have taken to much from you for to long! I'll never let you hurt my son again.

Larry: You can't leave me! Where are you going to go? I'm the only family you've got!

Kathy: Family? We've never had a family. Family to you is someone to take your anger out on! How can you hit your own son and not feel something? And Larry how can you hit me? Don't you love me anymore?

Larry: You don't understand Kathy, you never did! You don't know what I go through, you don't know the pain I feel!

Kathy: What! The pain you feel! What about a little boy who goes to school with cuts and bruises, thinking that his Father doesn't love him? I can't let this go on anymore, we're leaving until you realize that you need help.

Larry: I know that I need help. Please don't leave me, I need you to help me through this(he puts his head in his hands). I want this to stop.

Kathy: I can't help you stop, you need professional help. Someone who can help you deal with your past.

Larry: Kathy, you and Jimmy are all I have, you mean the world to me. I'll do whatever it takes to keep you, even if it means getting professional help.

(Jimmy enters house, he has just arrived from school, his Father calls him over to him. Larry puts Jimmy on his knee.)

Larry: Jimmy, you and your Mother are going away for awhile.

Jimmy: Why?(He looks at his Mother and says...) Where are we going?

Kathy: Jimmy, your Daddy has some problems that he needs to sort out. So, we're going to stay at Tracy's house for a little while.

Jimmy: Do we have to Mommy?

Kathy: Yes sweetheart, we have to.

Larry: Jimmy, I want you to know that I love you and when you and your Mother come back things are going to be better. Daddy will never hurt you or your Mother again.

(As he hugs Jimmy and Kathy he says...)

Larry: I promise...I promise I'll never hurt you again.

Samantha gives closing statement:

Although our play is fictional there are many families that are faced with similar situation's everyday and never receive any help. In North America today there is an estimated one million children being abused and maltreated each year. Two thousand of those die as a direct result! Many children being abused never speak up because they feel that they are the cause of the problem in the family and deserve to be punished. Some children suffer the abuse in silence hoping that they will win their parents love. How many of these children live next door to you? If you are or you know of a child being abused there is someone to turn to.