

87-99

By Jason Hall

Contact:

www.halljas.com

CHARACTERS:

Aaron 'Milks' Paek.....	Korean-Canadian, born 1971.
Morgan Keyes.....	Aaron's best friend, later a police officer, born 1971.
Devlin Rose.....	A journalist, born 1963.
Ellie Wilder.....	A classmate of Aaron and Morgan, born 1973.
Eva Wilder.....	Ellie's mother, 40s.
Sally Keyes.....	Morgan's wife, 30s.
Sheila.....	Devlin's editor at the Scarborough Mirror.
Woman A.....	17 years old.
Woman B.....	18 years old.
Woman C.....	20 years old.
Woman D.....	18 years old.
Woman E.....	23 years old.
Father	
Policewoman	
Man	
Woman	

The setting and time:

The action of the play takes place in Toronto, Canada between 1987 and 1999 (with the exception of Act II, scene 7 which occurs in the present day.)

Note on punctuation:

A slash - / - in the dialogue indicates the actor with the next line should begin speaking. A dash at the end of a line indicates the speaker is cut off, while ellipses indicate a trailing off of thought.

Note on the set:

The good news is that there really is only one piece of set required to stage this play. The bad news is that it's a minivan – preferably a mid-1980s Dodge Caravan or similar. It doesn't need to start up or drive, but the sliding side door should open.

Note on the 'projections':

Indicated at the beginning of each scene (with the exception of the Prologue) is a 'projection' of a year – this needn't necessarily be a projection (i.e. using light to project an image onto a screen) but is rather a reminder that the audience will need to be aware, somehow, of the year in which the scene is occurring.

Acts and scenes breakdown:

ACT I	Location	Time
Scene 1.....	Bluffer's Park.....	Late night – 1987
Scene 2.....	Funeral home parking lot.....	Mid-day – 1999
Scene 3.....	Clearing atop the bluffs.....	Night – 1989
Scene 4.....	Eva's apartment.....	Day – 1995
Scene 5.....	Morgan's driveway.....	Late morning – 1990
Scene 6.....	N/A.....	1994
Scene 7.....	Morningside Park.....	Late night – 1996
Scene 8.....	Coffee shop.....	Afternoon – 1997
Scene 9.....	N/A.....	1988
ACT II		
Scene 1.....	Bluffer's Park.....	An hour before I,i
Scene 2.....	N/A.....	1993
Scene 3.....	Clearing atop the bluffs.....	Night – 1992
Scene 4.....	Office parking lot.....	Afternoon – 1991
Scene 5.....	Devlin's driveway.....	Afternoon – 1998
Scene 6.....	Clearing atop the bluffs.....	Immediately after I,iii
Scene 7.....	Book store.....	Evening – present day
Scene 8.....	Bluffer's park.....	Immediately after I,i

PROLOGUE

As the audience enters, an empty lectern stands centre stage.

House lights fade. A spot on the lectern.

Enter DEVLIN holding a book. He goes to the lectern. Gives a few polite nods.

Note: There is no projection.

DEVLIN I don't know what everyone's geography is like so let's start somewhere you know: New York City. The Big Apple. Let's say we're there. Now, jump in your car and head north and soon you're going to hit a beautiful little, out-of-the-way place called...Canada. Keep going across the border and you'll eventually find yourself in some town called Toronto. Head to the east of Toronto and soon you'll be in one of its largest suburbs, place called Scarborough. Maybe you've heard of it, maybe not. If you haven't, you're forgiven. Scarborough's not famous for much. There's a lot of houses, a lot of parks and a beautiful stretch of cliff-lined coast along Lake Ontario known as the Scarborough Bluffs.

But if you *have* heard of Scarborough, if you've heard of it at all, well, it may have something to do with our most infamous son. He's been known as 'The Scarborough Rapist,' 'The Schoolgirl Killer' and one half of the 'Ken and Barbie Killers.' His name is Paul Bernardo.

There's a book that tells us, "He that toucheth pitch, shall be defiled therewith."

More than just good advice for keeping your hands clean, I think what's being suggested in this passage is that we should steer clear of dubious persons, give a wide berth to questionable situations, and turn right around when evil blocks our path. Because if you touch the darkness, it contaminates you, becomes a part of you.

"He that toucheth pitch, shall be defiled therewith."

That's from Ecclesiasticus 13:1, by the way. And yes you heard that right: *Ecclesiasticus* not *Ecclesiastes*. And if you've never even heard of Ecclesiasticus then don't worry, there's good reason for that. The book was excluded from the Torah, it doesn't show up in the Bible and isn't even recognised by the Protestants.

In short it's a story that exists, one that we know about but one that history has largely chosen to overlook, ignore, forget.

Tonight we're going to look at some other stories that seem to have been overlooked, ignored, and forgotten. But these stories are too

important for them to suffer the same fate as the book of Ecclesiasticus. These are the stories of four women – four women who, were it not for Paul Bernardo, would still be with us today.

But before we go any further I think it's only fair to give you one last chance to step away from all this, to step back into the light of good things and good people. Because there are shadows where we're headed. It is dark. And as the book tells us: "He that toucheth pitch shall be defiled therewith."

ACT ONE

SCENE ONE

Projection: 1987.

Night. Bluffer's park, by the shore of Lake Ontario. AARON and MORGAN, both 16 years old, are looking out at the sheer cliff face of the Scarborough Bluffs in the moonlight. AARON is nervous, jittery.

AARON They're eroding.

MORGAN They're...?

AARON Eroding, yes.

MORGAN The Bluffs are eroding?

AARON You know that, remember that project we did –

MORGAN I know I know that.

AARON Was gonna say –

MORGAN But I didn't ask you if the Bluffs are eroding – I asked you what you're doing down here.

Beat.

AARON You know the houses up there are eventually going to fall in the lake, right?

MORGAN It's Scarborough – who's gonna miss them?

AARON I wonder how long it'll take?

MORGAN Who knows, man.

AARON Ten years? Fifteen?

MORGAN Look, Milks –

AARON I wonder if the houses will still be there at the Millennium?

MORGAN What's going on?

Beat.

AARON I can't wait 'til the Millennium, you know? I'll be the best. The biggest party. We'll be so old! We'll be...twenty-seven! Imagine that!

Until the next 'beat' the following is largely overlapped:

MORGAN Are you okay?

AARON We'll have jobs, our own cars, maybe even houses.

MORGAN I mean, you call me up...

AARON Maybe we'll have one of those houses!

MORGAN It's really late...

AARON If they're not in the lake by then.

MORGAN You're in the this panic...

AARON You know, when we're twenty-seven...

MORGAN Saying to come get you.

AARON When we're twenty-seven we can do what we want.

MORGAN What are you talking about?

AARON Nothing. *(Beat.)* Just saying imagine if your dad or someone wasn't telling you what to do?

MORGAN Yea. Well.

AARON You could do what you want, join the force maybe.

MORGAN You know what he thinks about that.

AARON The Bluffs don't look like they're 220 feet high, do they? That's like seventeen stories, taller than my building!

MORGAN Shit man how do you remember all that?

AARON Thank you for coming.

MORGAN It's cool but I gotta get the van back 'cause if my Dad finds out...

AARON Okay.

MORGAN But you gotta tell me what's going on.

AARON I was downtown for piano.

MORGAN Right...?

AARON And then I told my parents I was seeing you.

MORGAN Yea I get that but what were you, like, *actually* doing?

AARON You'll say I was with you, right?

MORGAN For sure.

Beat.

AARON I'd like to be here when those houses fall in. I'd like to see it.

MORGAN Aaron...

AARON I wasn't doing anything.

MORGAN (*Looking down.*) Are these...why are there coins everywhere?

SCENE TWO

Projection: 1999.

The parking lot of a funeral home. A cold December day. Enter SALLY, heavily pregnant, wearing black. She fans herself with an order of service. She reaches the van, rubs her stomach as if in some discomfort, and leans against the vehicle.

After some time DEVLIN enters wearing a black suit, keys in hand, approaching the van.

SALLY Oh, I'm sorry –

DEVLIN Oh / please, it's fine.

SALLY Would you like me to move?

DEVLIN No!

SALLY I'll move.

DEVLIN You just sit there. It's about the only thing that piece of crap is good for these days. (*Extending a hand.*) Devlin.

SALLY (*Shaking his hand.*) Hi. Sally.

DEVLIN Yes, I saw you with Officer Keyes.

SALLY Oh please, just call him Morgan. All that police stuff makes his ego like (*makes a gesture indicating 'big'*).

DEVLIN (*Light laugh.*) Does it now?

SALLY You have no idea.

DEVLIN What did you think of the...?

SALLY The service was lovely.

DEVLIN It was.

SALLY Simple.

DEVLIN Yes.

SALLY Of course, I didn't really know him.

DEVLIN Ah.

SALLY Him and Morgan were high school buddies.

DEVLIN Right.

SALLY Are you family or – ohmyGod, what am I talking about you're not (*About to pull her eyes back, like a child pretending to be 'Asian' – then catches herself.*) OhmyGod, as if I just did that!

DEVLIN I'm not family, no.

SALLY 'Cause you're not...

DEVLIN Korean-Canadian?

SALLY Korean, right.

DEVLIN No. I'm just a friend.

SALLY A friend. Okay. That's good, seems like he didn't have many did he?

DEVLIN Well –

SALLY OhmyGod, speak ill of the dead, why don't I...

DEVLIN No, you're right. Troubled soul.

SALLY Well you'd have to be to... *(Draws a line across her throat – instant regret.)* I'll just stop talking now.

DEVLIN So when are you due?

SALLY Three weeks, three days.

DEVLIN But who's counting?

Enter MORGAN in a black suit.

SALLY Me, believe me. *(To stomach.)* Get out!

DEVLIN Boy? Girl?

SALLY Boy.

DEVLIN Well / congratulations.

MORGAN Sally!

SALLY Hi there!

MORGAN Ready?

SALLY *(Gesturing to DEVLIN.)* This is, um, I'm sorry –

DEVLIN extends a hand.

MORGAN *(Ignoring him.)* We've met. Let's go.

SALLY Morgan!

MORGAN Come on, you'll get a chill out here.

SALLY I'm fine and you're being rude!

DEVLIN Morgan, do you think –

MORGAN That's Sergeant, okay?

DEVLIN Er, yes, well could I have a minute?

MORGAN Don't you have a fucking book to write?

SALLY Morgan! (*To DEVLIN.*) I'm sorry, I think he's just a little upset about all *this*.

MORGAN (*To SALLY.*) Don't apologise Sal and stop / sticking your nose into everything!

SALLY (*Angry.*) You're acting like a child and you're not the only one who lost a friend here today! (*Beat.*) Now give me the car keys and spare this man a minute of your time! God! (*To DEVLIN.*) I'm sorry.

DEVLIN It's fine.

SALLY With parents like us this child isn't going have a clue when to shut up.

SALLY exits, still annoyed at her husband.

DEVLIN Well, she's quite the character / isn't she?

MORGAN What do you want?

DEVLIN Well. There's a rumour going round that –

MORGAN No.

DEVLIN Sorry?

MORGAN We're at a funeral, *his* funeral for godssake, have you no...

DEVLIN What? Decency?

MORGAN Yes!

DEVLIN That's a bit rich, isn't it?

MORGAN This? This whole thing? It ends now.

DEVLIN Oh?

MORGAN It's over.

DEVLIN You know what'll happen.

MORGAN I can handle it.

DEVLIN And Sally?

MORGAN Her too.

DEVLIN What about your son? (*Beat.*) Bit unfair, really, bringing him into the middle of all that... nastiness.

MORGAN What are you?

DEVLIN Do you realise it's two weeks 'til the new year?

MORGAN Because you're not a person.

DEVLIN The year 2000.

MORGAN You're a disgrace to his memory.

DEVLIN What a time to be born, eh?

MORGAN Aaron would never...

DEVLIN A new Millennium...

MORGAN He'd *never*...

DEVLIN All out ahead of him...

MORGAN *Ever* do something like this.

DEVLIN Wide and clear like a lake of fresh water. (*Beat.*) Rumour going round is heads'll roll if Baltovich gets that re-trial. I need to know who.

MORGAN You're a...you're a...I don't even know what.

Beat.

DEVLIN Your wife? Sally?

MORGAN What about her?

DEVLIN She's something, eh?