

WELCOME TO SCENES FOR CLASSROOM STUDY!

Use this scene in your classroom for character study, scene work, substitute teachers, performance, Individual Event competitions, and any other way you can imagine.

This scene comes from a published play (the complete play can be found at theatrefolk.com) and is **FREE** for you to print, copy and distribute.

But wait there's more! This scene comes with:

- **Close Reading Questions:** Use the scene as a close reading exercise with these text-dependent questions.
- **Staging Suggestions:** If groups are self-directing, or you have student directors, these notes will help them effectively stage the scene.
- **Character Development:** This section includes character-specific questions and suggestions for your student actors. If your students perform IEs or compete with scenes, they're going to want their characters to be at their best!

Your students will not only have relevant material at their fingertips – you can help them take their work to the next level. Enjoy!

DETAILS

Play: *Flaky Lips*

Full Script is available at: theatrefolk.com

Characters: True. Legit.

Both characters are young women of different races. You decide which character is which. (e.g. Black/White, Asian/White, Latin/Asian, etc.)

CLOSE READING QUESTIONS

Read the scene through a number of times for deeper comprehension and analysis.

First Reading

1. What happens in the scene?
2. What has happened before the scene takes place?
3. Where does the scene take place? Why is the location important?
4. What is the relationship between the characters?
5. What is the tone of the piece? Cite the text to support your answer.

Second Reading

1. Why does the author name the characters "True" and "Legit?" What is the significance of their names?
2. What is the significance of the line: "Thank you for keeping me in. Thank you for keeping them out."
3. In your opinion, why does the author use unison speaking in the dialogue? What impact does it have?
4. How does the unison speaking connect to the theme of the play?
5. Is the dialogue more stylized or naturalistic? Cite the text to support your answer.
6. This scene is the first scene in the play. How does the opening stage direction set the tone for the scene?
7. How old are these characters? Cite the text to support your answer.

Third Reading

1. Based on the scene, what's going to happen next?
2. What is the author trying to say about racism?
3. In your opinion, what is the significance of the "sickness" the girls talk about? What does it represent?
4. What is the theme of this play. How did you come to that conclusion? Cite the text to support your answer.
5. How does the scene connect to the title of the play?
6. How do each of these characters feel about the world they live in? Cite the text to support your answer.
7. What is the author trying to say about perception and reality in this scene? Cite the text to support your answer.
8. In your opinion, what would be the impact of this scene on stage?

STAGING SUGGESTIONS

Things to think about as you stage the scene.

Unison is key to the success of this scene – unison in the dialogue as well as unison in the blocking. The idea is that these two characters are from communities who feel those on the other side of the wall are their exact opposites. But the structure of the scene shows that this is not the case. The more similarities you can demonstrate between the two characters the better.

And the only way to get the unison in the dialogue is practice, practice, and more practice. It has to sound as if the two characters are actually one character, thinking with the same mind. Any hiccups or missteps in the delivery will diminish that perception.

There are few details about where the girls are, who they are, and where they come from. Create these details as part of your rehearsal process. The dialogue is quite stylized, and you'll need to balance that out with in-depth character analysis.

CHARACTER DEVELOPMENT

Important questions for a three-dimensional characterization.

1. What does each character want? What tactics do they use to get what they want?
2. How does each character see themselves? Are they secure or insecure?
3. Describe the family for each character. What is the makeup of the family unit? How does each character get along with their parents.
4. What does the community look like for each character? Describe where they live and the tone of their community.
5. The names for each character are symbolic. How would you rename the characters if you could? Come up with first and last names.
6. What is the most important line for each character? Explain the reason for your choice.
7. Is the "sickness" real? Why or why not?
8. Based on the text, what is the origin story for the wall. How long has it been there? Why hasn't either character been up close to the wall before this moment?
9. Create a character profile for your character: Full name, description of family life, favourite food, least favourite food, childhood memory, pet peeve, secret.
10. Based on the scene, use the five senses to describe your character's bedroom.

FLAKY LIPS BY LINDSAY PRICE

The play takes place on a hillside. The stage is bare except for a structure which represents a wall. It runs upstage centre to downstage centre. This wall divides the stage in half. It can be solid, see-through, half-built or abstract, as long as there is something which divides the stage and is clear to the audience.

From opposite sides of the stage TRUE and LEGIT enter. They are each on their own side of the wall. They do not see or hear each other, even when they speak in unison, until specified in the text. Both girls are scrambling, out of breath, and looking behind themselves with fear. They start out breathing in syncopation but as they get their breathing under control, they breathe in unison.

They stop. They speak in unison.

BOTH: I am not going to get sick. I'm not going to die in the street so someone can step over my body.

TRUE: I don't know what...

LEGIT: I don't know, I don't know.

TRUE: It just... out of nowhere.

LEGIT: They don't look sick.

BOTH: No sneezing. No coughing. No fevers. No runny noses.

TRUE: Mom on the kitchen floor.

LEGIT: Dad with his newspaper.

BOTH: They're everywhere.

LEGIT: Mr. Merchant on the cross walk.

TRUE: Mrs. Allen on the front lawn.

BOTH: The guy who owns the corner store and hates teenagers and says they steal chocolate bars and rob him blind.

TRUE: I'm not going to get sick.

LEGIT: I'm healthy as a horse.

TRUE: If I stay up here, I'll be safe.

LEGIT: It's clean and clear.

TRUE: It's gotta be safe.

They both move to look offstage.

BOTH: Maybe they're just asleep. Maybe when I go back down everything will be normal.

TRUE: Maybe they'll be dead.

BOTH: Maybe they'll be dead be dead and I'm not and it didn't happen to me and why not and what if what if what if... what if...

They are both now quite close to the wall.

TRUE: The wall.

LEGIT: I didn't realize...

TRUE: I must be pretty far out.

BOTH: To be so close. I've never been so close.

LEGIT: My blood.

TRUE: My stones.

BOTH: The wall is for the best. We built it with our hands. We bled and sang and cried and prayed.

TRUE: Every day.

LEGIT: Every night before bed.

BOTH: *(they both touch the wall)* Thank you for keeping me in.

TRUE: Thank you for keeping them out.

LEGIT: Thank you for keeping them out.

Both girls jerk their hands off the wall. They have heard the voice of the other.

TRUE: Hello?

LEGIT: *(like an echo)* Hello?

TRUE: Hello?

LEGIT: *(like an echo)* Hello? *(pause)* Who's there?

TRUE: *(like an echo)* Who's there? *(pause)* Who's there?

LEGIT: *(like an echo)* Who's there?

TRUE: Is somebody there?

LEGIT: *(like an echo)* Is somebody there? *(pause)* It's the wind.

TRUE: It's an echo.

BOTH: It's my own voice. There's no way it could...

LEGIT: Who's there?

TRUE: *(like an echo)* Who's there?

BOTH: Is somebody there?

TRUE: Are you?

LEGIT: You are.

TRUE: Oh no.

LEGIT: Oh God.

BOTH: Somebody's there.

They race to the edge of the space.

TRUE: Help!

LEGIT: Help!

BOTH: What do I do? What do I...

TRUE: Help!

LEGIT: Help!

BOTH: Somebody help me!

TRUE: They're here!

LEGIT: They're climbing the walls!

TRUE: They're coming for me!

LEGIT: They're gonna slit my throat!

TRUE: Leave me for dead!

BOTH: Somebody help me!

LEGIT: I don't want to die!

They trip and fall. They curl up into a little ball, hiding their head from whatever is supposed to hurt them. They breathe in syncopation and then in unison. After a few seconds, the girls raise their heads and look at the wall. Nothing is coming for them. They get up and approach the wall carefully.

BOTH: Are you still there?

They both jump back and run. They trip and fall, curling up into a little ball hiding their heads and preparing for the worst. When nothing happens, they look up and again carefully approach the wall.

BOTH: Look.

TRUE: I don't have any money.

LEGIT: I'm scrawny. There's no meat on my bones.

TRUE: I don't want to die.

BOTH: There wouldn't be any point to climbing that wall.

LEGIT: Or slitting my throat.

TRUE: No point at all.

LEGIT: I run really fast. You won't be able to catch me.

TRUE: You won't be able to catch me.

LEGIT: Why would I catch you? I'm running from you.

TRUE: I'm running from you.

BOTH: You're trying to trick me.

LEGIT: You're the devil. My mother told me so.

TRUE: You're evil.

LEGIT: You're on the other side of the wall.

TRUE: You're just trying to trick me.

LEGIT: I know all about you.

TRUE: You're the devil. My mother told me so.

LEGIT: You are.

TRUE: Ever since I was born...

LEGIT: If I was the devil, why would I call for help?

TRUE: To trick me.

BOTH: In my dreams you're full of tricks. Full of praise and truth that flakes from lips and rolls from eyes like crocodile tears.

LEGIT: You're not to be trusted.

TRUE: You're not to be believed.

BOTH: You're not to, not to, not to...

Both girls have backed away from the wall. And yet, still nothing comes for them. Curiosity gets the better of them. They again approach the wall.

LEGIT: Would you just get it over with!

TRUE: What?

LEGIT: Aren't you coming over here?

TRUE: Why?

LEGIT: To attack. To slaughter. To maim. To kill. That's what you're supposed to do.

TRUE: No. You're supposed to attack me. Attack maim slaughter kill me.

BOTH: This is the moment they've been telling us about for years to make us go to bed early and eat Brussels sprouts.

LEGIT: You're supposed to thirst for the blood of the innocent.

TRUE: You're supposed to hide under our beds and kill us while we sleep. Why would you call for help?

LEGIT: Why would you?

TRUE: I'm afraid.

LEGIT: You? You're on the other side of the wall.

TRUE: You're on the other side of the wall.

BOTH: It's for your own good. You're the enemy. (*in frustration*) You are!

LEGIT: Ever since I was born.

TRUE: My father told me so.

BOTH: You were sent away.

LEGIT: You're not one of us.

TRUE: No, no! Don't say that! You were sent away.

LEGIT: We stayed.

TRUE: We stayed. You left.

LEGIT: We watched you go.

TRUE: Ever since I was born.

BOTH: Every day of my life.

TRUE: It's for the best we stayed.

LEGIT: It's for the best you left.

BOTH: Everything is for the best.

LEGIT: Stop it!

TRUE: Stop sounding like me.

LEGIT: You've changed your voice but I know what you look like.

TRUE: You're the monster hiding under my bed.

LEGIT: You have three eyes and scraggly hair and four arms and scales.

BOTH: My sister told me so. I never believed her but now I know.

TRUE: Stop it! You're the one with scales and a foot long tongue and claws.

LEGIT: You're the one with claws.

BOTH: Ever since I was born my mother told me so.

TRUE: Are you going to attack me or not?

LEGIT: Don't be stupid.

TRUE: Why don't you leave me alone then? Go away.

LEGIT: Why don't you go away. Go back where you came from.

TRUE: You go back where you came from. Leave me alone.

LEGIT: I got here first.

TRUE: You better leave me alone.

LEGIT: Or what?

TRUE: Or else. Or else I'll get the whole town up here like that. Then you'll be sorry.

LEGIT: Oh yeah? I can get twice as many up here to make you even sorrier.

TRUE: Not if I get back here first. You'll be really really sorry.

LEGIT: You'll be too slow by half!

Both girls run to the edge of the space as if they are going to get help. They look offstage and know they can't go back to town.

BOTH: I don't want to get sick. I don't want to die in the street so someone can step over my body.

They both come back to the wall and sit. They both sigh and hear the other.

TRUE: Are you still there?

LEGIT: You're still there.

TRUE: I can hear you.

LEGIT: I told you to go away.

TRUE: Why didn't you go? I told you to go.

BOTH: So go. Go. You go!

LEGIT: I...

TRUE: What?

LEGIT: Nothing. Go away.

TRUE: I...

LEGIT: What?

TRUE: You wouldn't understand. Go away.

LEGIT: I have to stay here. Get lost.

TRUE: I can't go back.

BOTH: Why?

LEGIT: You wouldn't understand.

TRUE: Why do you have to stay?

LEGIT: What do you care?

TRUE: I don't.

LEGIT: Why can't you go back?

TRUE: I have a reason.

LEGIT: What's your reason?

TRUE: What do you care?

LEGIT: I don't.

TRUE: So leave me alone.

There is a pause. Curiosity nags at both of them.

BOTH: *(in a burst)* I don't care. It's just that if you had a reason. I wondered if there was a reason and you could tell me because...

LEGIT: What do you care?

TRUE: I don't. I just wondered. Is there... not that there would be...

LEGIT: Is there... Is anyone on your side... not that I care...

BOTH: Is anybody sick?

LEGIT: What do you mean sick?

TRUE: I mean sick. Don't you know what sick means?

LEGIT: How sick? Like lying in the street sick?

TRUE: Lying in the street. And everyone is...

LEGIT: Like they were stopped in the middle of ordinary things?

TRUE: And they look like they're asleep.

LEGIT: And it happened to everyone?

TRUE: And why didn't it happen to me?

LEGIT: On your side?

TRUE: All over my side. You too?

LEGIT: What's going on?

BOTH: I'm so alone. I'm so scared. There's no one to talk to. They don't listen. There's no one to look out for me. There's no one on my side. I've been in a panic. There's echoes of silence I can't breathe for the echoes I can't take I can't take... What happened to everyone? Why didn't it happen to me? I'm so glad I...

Realizing they were about to say "I'm so glad I found you" they both back away.