



**Sample Pages from
Floating on a Don't Care Cloud**

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FLOATING ON A DON'T CARE CLOUD

A DRAMA IN ONE ACT BY
Lindsay Price



Floating on a Don't Care Cloud

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Characters

3M/5W+7 Either

Jamie: 17. The pothead.

TJ: 14. Jamie's younger sister. Observant.

Allison: 17. Used to be Jamie's best friend.

Mya: 17. Overachiever. Head of yearbook.

Shane: 16. Drug dealer.

Ms. Hogarth: 22. First year teacher.

Mrs. Peel: 40. Jamie and TJ's mother.

Mr. Fuller: 45. Math teacher. Extremely bitter.

The Cloud: Weed, Mary Jane, Skunk, Zoot, Dank, Doobie, Roach.
The Cloud characters are gender-neutral.

Set

A bench (or a number of cubes) stage left — large enough for two people to sit on.

A cube stage right. Jamie's home base. Consider placing smaller cubes around the larger one so the Cloud can surround Jamie on all four sides.

A row of chairs upstage centre. Where the ensemble sits when not in a scene.

Risers or steps behind the chairs. This is where The Cloud lounges at the start of the play.

Time

Early Spring, the present day.

Author Notes

"Flick, Flick, Ahhhhh." This is repeated throughout the play. The 'flick' refers to the 'flicking' noise a lighter makes. The 'Ahhhhh' is a breathy exhale. There is no note attached, it's a loud satisfied exhale.

There are many, many times when the whole cast stamps on the floor. It signifies a door slam, knocking on a door, the passing of time, frustration. It's important these stamps are clear, sharp and in unison.

The Cloud is made up of seven characters. They are the 'cloud' that Jamie is living in when he's high. The names are all slang words for marijuana. Dress The Cloud similarly in varying shades of green.

Watch that The Cloud doesn't fall in the trap of all moving and talking very slowly. This will wreck the pace of the entire play. They each need individual tones and paces. Each character needs to be specific. Pot does different things to different people: makes them slow, happy, giggly, paranoid, and so on; play up the different aspects.

Special Thanks

The author would like to thank Ajax High School's 2008 Grade 12 Drama class for their work on the play.

The entire cast is on stage. They stare at the audience. THE CLOUD lounges on risers far upstage. NOTE: THE CLOUD does not surround JAMIE till mentioned in the script.

In front of the risers there is a row of chairs. MYA, MS. HOGARTH, MRS. PEEL and MR. FULLER stand in front of the chairs.

Stage left there is a bench, or two cubes. ALLISON and SHANE sit here.

JAMIE sits on a cube Stage right. He pays no attention to any of the dialogue or action around him. He weaves gently back and forth with a distant ghost of a smile on his face.

TJ stands near JAMIE and stares at him.

WEED: Flick.

MARY JANE: Flick.

SKUNK: (*exhaling*) Ahhhhh.

WEED: Flick.

MARY JANE: Flick.

SKUNK: (*exhaling*) Ahhhhh.

ALLISON: Is it my fault?

MRS. PEEL: I didn't notice.

MYA: Am I supposed to care?

Everyone stamps sharply on the floor three times, as if knocking on a door.

TJ: Jamie? Jamie. I know you're in there.

ZOOT: Flick.

DANK: Flick.

DOOBIE: (*exhaling*) Ahhhhh.

MR. FULLER: (*crossing his arms*) What am I supposed to do? Save him?

ZOOT: Flick.

DANK: Flick.

DOOBIE: (*exhaling*) Ahhhhh.

SHANE: I make people happy.

ROACH: Flick.

MARY JANE: Flick.

SKUNK: (*exhaling*) Ahhhhh.

ALLISON: I haven't heard from him in months.

WEED: Flick.

DANK: Flick.

SKUNK & DOOBIE: (*exhaling*) Ahhhhh.

MS. HOGARTH: Yes I did.

MRS. PEEL: (*quickly*) No. Never did.

ZOOT & ROACH: Flick.

MARY JANE & DOOBIE: Flick.

THE CLOUD: (*exhaling*) Ahhhhh.

MYA: (*scornfully, sitting*) Open your eyes.

ZOOT, WEED, ROACH: Flick.

DANK, MARY JANE, DOOBIE, SKUNK: Flick.

THE CLOUD: (*exhaling*) Ahhhhh.

ALLISON: (*standing*) TJ what are you doing here?

SHANE: (*standing*) This is stronger than you.

MS. HOGARTH: (*sitting*) Talk to him.

SHANE crosses back to the row of chairs and sits. MR. FULLER crosses to the bench and stands behind it.

ZOOT, WEED, ROACH: Flick.

DANK, MARY JANE, DOOBIE, SKUNK: Flick.

THE CLOUD: (*exhaling*) Ahhhhh.

Everyone stamps their feet on the floor sharply three times, as if knocking on a door.

JAMIE stands and faces TJ.

JAMIE: What?

TJ: I made the paper. They said I was too young and I got it.

JAMIE: Oh. *(pause)* Great.

Everyone stomps their feet once, to signify JAMIE slamming his door. TJ turns to the audience. JAMIE sits.

TJ: The door stays shut. I sit on the floor outside his room and I time how long the door stays shut. I started writing the times down in my journal. After the dad debacle...

JAMIE leaps up, MRS. PEEL steps forward.

JAMIE: It's unfair! It's totally unfair!

MRS. PEEL: Jamie, he got a new job, he can't take you to Germany.

JAMIE: Why not? He said I could live with him. He promised!

MRS. PEEL: You're being unreasonable. Jamie!

Everyone stomps their feet once on the floor to signify JAMIE slamming his door. MRS. PEEL steps back to the row of chairs and sits.

TJ: After Allison moved away...

ALLISON steps forward.

JAMIE: *(turning away)* Unfair. Totally unfair.

ALLISON: It's not far.

JAMIE: An hour.

ALLISON: Fifty-six minutes. I timed it. My mom says I can borrow the car. It won't be that bad.

JAMIE: *(turning back)* It's not the same as being right next door. You're here all the time. It takes one minute to get from my house to your house.

ALLISON: Fifty-six seconds. I timed it.

JAMIE: Yeah.

ALLISON: That was a joke. You were supposed to laugh.

JAMIE: I know.

Everyone stamps their feet once. ALLISON crosses back to the row of chairs and sits.

TJ: The door stays shut.

SHANE: *(with a dramatic sigh)* You are such a freak.

ALLISON: Shut up, Shane.

SHANE: *(stands, strolls over to TJ)* You're looking for reasons, excuses, someone to blame. What if there is no reason? Maybe he just likes to get high. *(pokes TJ on the shoulder)* Imagine that.

TJ: I watch you. I see you in the halls.

SHANE: *(smiles)* What do you want me to say kid? I provide a service. I make people happy. Nothing more. Nothing less. *(strolls back to the row of chairs)*

Everyone stamps their feet on the floor three times. TJ moves stage left. MR. FULLER steps forward. He's very impatient.

MR. FULLER: What?

TJ: I need help.

MR. FULLER: With what?

TJ: You're my brother's homeroom teacher? Jamie Peel?

MR. FULLER: *(snorts)* Uh huh? What do you want, I got ten seconds.

TJ: I wanted to talk to you about –

MR. FULLER: *(calling out behind him)* No, no I need that call, tell her I'll be right there! *(to TJ)* Tell Jamie if he wants to discuss his mark to come himself and not send his little sister.

Everyone stamps their feet on the floor once. MR. FULLER circles back to the row of chairs. TJ turns to the audience.

TJ: I sit at his door. I write. I've always had a journal. "No one touches my sister." *(she looks at JAMIE)* I'm ten years old. Knees bloody. Tears mixing with the dirt on my face. Snot everywhere. And – I'm *(hitch voice as if trying to breathe while crying)* trying – not – to – cry – I'm – trying – to – stand – up – to – him. But he's bigger. And he scares me. He says he's going to beat me up every day

after school. (*JAMIE stands and crosses to TJ*) Jamie takes one look at me and grabs me by the shoulders.

JAMIE: (*clear eyed and focused, grabbing TJ by the shoulders*) Where is he?

TJ: He doesn't even know who 'he' is. (*to JAMIE*) By the skate park. (*JAMIE turns. He crosses right and freezes.*) Wait! Jamie! It won't do any good! (*to audience*) Jamie never looks back. Never stops till he's face-to-face with Ronald Vandermyer, pushing Ronald Vandermyer to the ground, grabbing him. My brother nose-to-nose with my nightmare.

JAMIE: No one touches my sister.

JAMIE sits and returns to his vacant stare. TJ moves toward him.

TJ: I know there are no fairy tales. But there he was. My knight in shining armour. My brother.

Everyone stamps their feet on the floor three times.

JAMIE: (*standing to face TJ*) What?

TJ: I need help. I can't narrow it down to three.

JAMIE: What?

TJ: The movies for Halloween Horror Phantasmagoria Scream Fest. There's too many good ones.

JAMIE: Oh. I made plans.

TJ: What?

JAMIE: Yeah. I forgot. Sorry. I'll make it up to you. Next week?

Everyone stamps their feet once, signifying JAMIE slamming his door. JAMIE sits.

TJ: That was six months ago. (*she sighs and crosses left*) Am I reading too much into this because he forgot a stupid tradition? Is it my imagination? My problem? (*she turns and looks at JAMIE*) Sometimes I listen, hold my head so still against his door...

THE CLOUD sits up from where they've been lounging. They leisurely reach out to JAMIE.

THE CLOUD: (*singsong*) Jamie...

ALLISON: TJ what are you doing here?

MYA: Never mind. Give them back.

TJ: Sometimes I think I can hear voices. In his room.

THE CLOUD: (*singsong*) Jamie...

TJ: Who's talking to him?

SHANE: Yeah, that's not crazy at all.

ALLISON: Shut up Shane.

TJ: And the door stays shut.

From here until TJ's line, THE CLOUD slowly makes their way over to JAMIE.

NOTE: It is vital that there be a variety of pace and tone in THE CLOUD. If everyone moves and talks the same it will be boring! Variety is the key, even when they're talking about moving slowly.

WEED: Flick.

DANK: Flick.

SKUNK: (*exhaling*) Ahhhhhh.

MARY JANE: Everything feels...

DOOBIE: (*giggling*) So wonderful.

SKUNK: Wonderful and slow.

DANK: So slow.

ZOOT: See the world in slow motion...

WEED: Hear the world in slow motion...

ROACH: Feel the world!

MARY JANE: (*twirling around*) Don't think about anything else.

DOOBIE: Anyone else.

THE CLOUD surrounds JAMIE on all sides: above, below, left and right.

TJ: He's in a bubble. On another planet. The door stays shut. He stuffs a towel against the crack at the bottom of the door. I don't know what to do.

MRS. PEEL stands with a loaded briefcase in one hand and a cellphone in the other. She circles left and then crosses right, walking swiftly by TJ.

TJ: Mom, mom!

MRS. PEEL: *(on phone)* Hold on, hold on. *(to TJ)* Sorry sweetie, this is important. Tonight, OK? We'll get Chinese!

MRS. PEEL continues moving and returns to the row of chairs. MYA steps forward. TJ sits on the stage left bench.

TJ: I don't know what to do.

MYA: What's the matter?

TJ: *(turning to face MYA)* Huh?

MYA: *(sitting beside TJ)* You look totally spaced out.

TJ: Oh. Nothing. I finished the layout for senior pages.

MYA: Already? TJ, I can't keep up with you.

TJ: Sorry.

MYA: It's a compliment. I'm glad you're not in my year or there'd be some serious competition.

TJ: For what?

MYA: *(with a sigh)* So young, so naive. Hey, I read what you wrote about the Food Bank drive. Real good.

TJ: *(muted)* Thanks.

MYA: You're making me proud girl! I'm glad I went to bat and made Josie take you on. *(pause)* Are you sure there's nothing wrong?

TJ: Nothing. I'm just really tired. Busy. You know?

MYA: Well slow down! You have four years. If you burn out now what good are you?

MYA heads back to the row of chairs. Everyone stamps their feet three times. TJ crosses to JAMIE.

TJ: Jamie, Jamie! *(there's a pause)* Jamie I know you're in there.

JAMIE: *(standing)* What? *(TJ doesn't say anything)* What?

TJ: Are you... are you OK?

JAMIE: (*irritated*) Sure.

TJ: Do you, do you want to watch a movie? I'm making popcorn.

JAMIE: I'm busy.

TJ: Jamie!

JAMIE: What?

TJ: Are you... on... something?

JAMIE: On something? (*he snorts sarcastically*) Like a horse? No I'm not on a horse.

TJ: You know what I mean.

JAMIE: Nope, don't got a clue. You mean like 'on' a cruise ship?

TJ: Jamie you're –

JAMIE: It's a stupid question TJ. Of course I'm not on anything.

Everyone stamps their feet once to signify JAMIE slamming his door. JAMIE sits. TJ moves centre.

TJ: Why shouldn't I believe him?

ZOOT: Flick.

MARY JANE: Flick.

THE CLOUD: (*exhaling*) Ahhhhh.

SHANE: (*rolling his eyes*) I don't know what you're so uptight about. It's just pot.

TJ: Right. Just. (*she closes her eyes and hugs herself close*) OK. Let's go.

Everyone stamps their feet three times. ALLISON steps forward.

ALLISON: TJ? What are you doing here?

TJ doesn't say anything. She remains standing with her eyes closes.

ALLISON: (*trying again*) TJ? What are you doing here?

SHANE: (*muttering from his seat*) Oh great.

ALLISON: (*looking back*) Shut up Shane.

MS. HOGARTH: (*stepping forward*) TJ? Are you OK?

TJ: No.

MS. HOGARTH: (*holding TJ by the shoulders*) You don't have to do this.

TJ: Yes I do. (*to ALLISON*) Go again.

Everyone stamps their feet once.

THE CLOUD: (*briskly stating a fact*) Sunday.

TJ bursts toward ALLISON.

ALLISON: TJ? What are you doing here? How did you get here?

TJ: Did he buy you a present?

ALLISON: What are you talking about? What's wrong? Sit down, you look –

TJ: Did he buy you a present?

ALLISON: Who?

TJ: Did Jamie buy you a birthday present?

ALLISON: My birthday's not until September.

TJ: I knew it! I knew it.

ALLISON: Come here, sit down.

TJ: (*pacing frantically*) I knew I shouldn't have given him money. Damn it!

ALLISON: Would you sit down! (*TJ sits on the bench*) What's going on?

TJ: It's been... Things aren't good.

ALLISON: What things?

TJ: Jamie. He's not the same. He doesn't...

Everyone stamps their feet once.

TJ: And he told me...

Everyone stamps their feet once.

TJ: (*leaps up and moves centre*) And I believed him.

ALLISON: You gotta slow down. What are you talking about?

TJ: (*turning back to ALLISON*) He cornered me last month.

*JAMIE leaps up from his seat and crosses to TJ.
ALLISON watches the scene.*

JAMIE: TJ, TJ!

TJ: *(turning)* What?

JAMIE: I need twenty dollars.

TJ: Why?

JAMIE: Because. Can I get it from you?

TJ: No.

She turns away and JAMIE catches her arm.

JAMIE: Come on Teeg. Allison's birthday's coming up. I want to get her something nice.

TJ: *(she stares at him for a moment before speaking)* So save up.

She turns and JAMIE leaps in front of her.

JAMIE: I can't, need it now.

TJ: Sorry.

JAMIE: Why are you being so mean?

TJ: Jamie you... *(she opens her mouth to say something and chickens out)*

JAMIE: What?

TJ: You... don't really talk to me anymore.

JAMIE: You want to talk? Fine, we'll talk. *(he pulls TJ to his cube and forces her to sit)* Come on in, pull up a chair. What's new? Seen any good movies lately? Did you cut your hair? *(TJ looks at him in silence)* What? We're talking!

TJ: How do I know it's for Allison?

JAMIE: 'Cause I said so. You don't trust me?

TJ: I... I don't have any reason not to trust you. I guess. Right?

JAMIE: Right! Have I ever steered you wrong? *(he looks at TJ)* Why are you looking at me like that?

TJ: And it's for Allison?

JAMIE: *(irritated)* I just said it was. *(TJ continues to look at him)* What?

TJ: (*trying again*) You don't talk to me anymore.

THE CLOUD: (*singsong, reaching out for JAMIE*) Jamie...

JAMIE: (*crossing away*) You're busy! It's not me you know. I'm not the one who's never around to talk. You're always out with your friends. You got yearbook, you're on the paper. You're the one who never talks to me TJ. You're the one who's never around.

TJ: (*stands, crossing to JAMIE*) If I give you the money, you have to pay it back. I'm saving for a laptop.

JAMIE: Oh yeah? You doing some writing?

TJ: Maybe.

JAMIE: What kind? Can I see it? I want to see it.

TJ: (*heartbreakingly hopeful*) Really?

JAMIE: Sure.

TJ: Will you? Pay me back.

THE CLOUD: (*singsong*) Jamie...

TJ: Did you hear that?

JAMIE: What? Thanks Teeg. You're a lifesaver.

TJ takes twenty dollars out of her pocket.

TJ: Here you –

JAMIE snatches it out of her hands.

JAMIE: Thanks. We'll talk soon. Just like old times. (*he crosses away*)

TJ: Where are you going?

JAMIE: Gotta get that present!

JAMIE sits on his cube. He goes back to looking blank and distant. THE CLOUD gather around him, almost protecting him. TJ turns to ALLISON.

TJ: I believed him. Just like old times. Then last Friday I saw him in the back field.

WEED: Flick.

ROACH: Flick.

JAMIE puts his fingers to his lips as if he is taking a deep toke on a joint. TJ approaches him.

THE CLOUD: *(exhaling)* Ahhhhhhhh.

TJ: Jamie? What are you doing here?

TJ continues to talk silently. JAMIE stares at her blankly. THE CLOUD recoils.

DANK: Who is she?

DOOBIE: Who is that?

WEED: Is she talking to us?

SKUNK: I don't know.

MARY JANE: Her mouth is moving but I don't hear anything.

ZOOT: That's because we're in a different space.

ROACH: We're in a different world altogether.

TJ: Are you listening to me?

THE CLOUD recoils back, in slow motion. TJ keeps talking silently.

THE CLOUD: Whoooooooooa.

ROACH: She is pissed.

MARY JANE: Yeah. I don't like her.

DOOBIE: Me either.

ZOOT: You don't like her, do you Jamie?

DANK: Do you Jamie?

TJ breathes out noisily in frustration. She takes the joint from JAMIE's fingers and throws it to the ground. THE CLOUD reacts violently, falling back on the ground. They stay there throughout the scene.

THE CLOUD: Ahhhhh!

TJ: That's better. Now you can hear me.

JAMIE: I wasn't done with that.

TJ: I don't know. You look pretty done to me.

JAMIE: (*leans over and picks up the joint from the ground*) Still good.

TJ: You were supposed to drive me to school this morning.

JAMIE: Oh yeah? (*he shrugs*) Sorry. Forgot. Had something to do.

TJ: (*gesturing around*) Is this what you've been doing?

JAMIE: (*looking around*) Yeah. This is very, very important.

TJ: You said you weren't on anything. You said.

JAMIE: Who?

TJ: You told me -

JAMIE: What did I say?

TJ: Jamie.

JAMIE: Who? Me? (*holding up the joint*) Oh this? This is not pot. (*he snorts*) I just rhymed. I'm so freaking creative.

TJ: It's eight thirty in the morning.

JAMIE: Oh yeah?

TJ: How are you going to get through English?

JAMIE: I'll float through it. (*he waves his hands in front of his face*) Bye, bye, bye. (*fascinated by his hands*) Cool.

TJ grabs his hands to get him to focus on her.

TJ: It's not funny. It's eight thirty.

JAMIE: You should be my walking, talking alarm clock.

TJ: I've never seen you like this.

JAMIE: You can announce the time wherever I go.

TJ: (*more to herself*) What do I do? What am I supposed to do?

JAMIE: I'm starving. Wanna go to the caf?

TJ: We have class.

JAMIE: Right. Class. You go to class. Jamie will not tolerate TJ taking time from teacher. (*he giggles*) All those words begin with T.

JAMIE stands and stumbles.

TJ: You can't even walk.

JAMIE: I know. Isn't that the best?

MS. HOGARTH steps forward.

JAMIE: (*giggling*) Oh oh.

MS. HOGARTH: Tj what are you doing out here?

Tj: Talking to my brother.

MS. HOGARTH: You know the field is off limits before school.

JAMIE: Off limits is a very limiting term. You need to expand your mind.
(*he stumbles again*)

Tj: (*hissing*) Jamie!

MS. HOGARTH holds JAMIE by the chin and looks him in the eye. He tries to squint back at her.

MS. HOGARTH: You can barely keep your eyes open.

Tj: We're not doing anything. He's not doing anything.

MS. HOGARTH: Let's go Jamie.

JAMIE: Where we goin'?

MS. HOGARTH: To the office to call your parents.

Tj: What? Why?

JAMIE: Awesome. You speak German?

MS. HOGARTH: And then you're going home.

JAMIE: Oh goodie.

Tj: Ms. Hogarth...

MS. HOGARTH: You're going to be late for class Tj.

MS. HOGARTH and JAMIE move left. They circle upstage round the set. MS. HOGARTH sits in the row of chairs, JAMIE continues round till he gets to his cube and sits. Tj watches them go.

THE CLOUD: (*singsong, reaching out for JAMIE*) Jamie...

Tj: (*to the CLOUD*) You shut up.

ALLISON: Tj?

Tj: (*to the CLOUD*) This is all your fault!

ALLISON: TJ!

Tj turns back to ALLISON.

ALLISON: He got suspended?

TJ: Three days. He's mad at me. I didn't say anything, it wasn't my fault.

ALLISON sits. She looks at TJ in bewilderment.

ALLISON: I don't know what to say. TJ... I... How did you get here?

TJ: On the bus.

ALLISON: What's your mom gonna say? *(standing)* I should at least call her.

TJ: She's working.

ALLISON: On a Sunday?

TJ: It doesn't matter. I'll still be home before her.

ALLISON: I... I haven't heard from Jamie in months. He... he stopped calling and I stopped waiting.

TJ: You have to do something.

ALLISON: What am I supposed to do?

TJ: Promise me you'll talk to him.

ALLISON: That's not the Jamie I grew up with. Everything's changed. *(she looks at JAMIE and then quickly turns back)* It's not my fault.

TJ: Will you talk to him? Please.

ALLISON: I can't get the car.

TJ: He quit the swim team.

ALLISON: My mom won't let me.

TJ: He's disappearing.

ALLISON: I'll think about it.

Everyone stamps their feet three times. ALLISON crosses back to the row of chairs. TJ faces JAMIE. THE CLOUD rises.

MARY JANE: Flick.

ROACH: Flick.

SKUNK: (*exhaling*) Ahhhhh.

Everyone stamps their feet once.

THE CLOUD: (*briskly*) Monday.

THE CLOUD settles in again around JAMIE.

TJ: (*to JAMIE*) Hey.

JAMIE says nothing, staring stonily away from her.

TJ: I don't know why you're so mad at me. I didn't get you into trouble.

MRS. PEEL steps forward walking swiftly with a loaded briefcase and a cell phone. She stops when she sees JAMIE. She puts down the briefcase and shuts her phone. TJ watches.

MRS. PEEL: I want the house cleaned top to bottom. Understood? I want this place spotless when I get home. You're responsible for dinner too.

JAMIE: OK.

MRS. PEEL: And I'll be calling during the day. If you don't answer the phone, just once, your grandmother will be thrilled to babysit you.

JAMIE: Got it.

MRS. PEEL: TJ, I'd like to speak to your brother alone.

TJ: But -

MRS. PEEL: Now Theresa Jane.

TJ moves away but eavesdrops on the conversation.

MRS. PEEL: This has really thrown me for a loop.

JAMIE: I told you. I'm sorry. Really really. It was – uh – the first time I ever did something like that.

MRS. PEEL: Really?

JAMIE: It was a stupid thing to do. I've never done it before... and I just... wanted... to try it.

MRS. PEEL: But at school Jamie?

JAMIE: Really dumb. I know. (*he hangs his head in a sad way*)

MRS. PEEL: Isn't it lucky TJ came along when she did. If Ms. Hogarth hadn't seen TJ leaving school, she never would have caught you.

JAMIE: (*darkly*) Yeah. Aren't I lucky.

MRS. PEEL: Is this about your dad?

JAMIE: No!

MRS. PEEL: I thought we've been through that.

JAMIE: Mom, come on. That's stupid.

MRS. PEEL: Maybe I've been working too much. Is that it? Am I too busy?

JAMIE: (*standing*) No! No. Mom.

MRS. PEEL: I trust you two a lot. I trust you to know how to behave.

JAMIE: It was the first time. I swear.

MRS. PEEL: The only time?

JAMIE: Sure.

MRS. PEEL: All right.

MRS. PEEL picks up her briefcase and TJ steps forward. JAMIE sits.

TJ: Mom? Is Jamie in a lot of trouble?

MRS. PEEL: He's in some trouble. But I think we can work it out. I'll see you tonight.

MRS. PEEL turns to exit.

TJ: Mom? Have you ever done pot?

This stops MRS. PEEL in her tracks. She makes a face, which the audience can see but TJ can't. She turns slowly.

MRS. PEEL: Hmm?

TJ: Did you ever do pot?

MRS. PEEL: Ah... (*clearly lying*) No. Never did. Stayed far away from it. Far, far away.

TJ: OK.

MRS. PEEL: *(almost a squeak)* It's illegal. *(alt: "When I was a teenager it was illegal." if you are in a jurisdiction where pot has been legalized)* *(she clears her throat)* Why would I do something illegal?

MRS. PEEL moves right quickly. She circles back to the row of chairs. Everyone stomps on the floor three times. TJ crosses to the bench. MYA steps forward. She is carrying a purse.

MYA: Awesome news! My dad's store is going to buy a full page ad in the yearbook. It only took four years of - TJ are you listening? Hey TJ!

TJ: *(starting)* Sorry. What?

MYA: *(sitting)* My dad's store is going to buy an ad.

TJ: That's great. Great.

MYA: I'm sorry about your brother.

TJ: I guess everyone knows.

MYA: Bad news spreads like wildfire 'round here. *(a little sneakily)* Someone told me you were smoking up too.

TJ: I wasn't.

MYA: Really? Tell the truth.

TJ: I was trying to talk to him.

MYA: Good. I don't keep potheads on my team. Everyone's at their peak, no slacking off in the backfield. No offence. *(she looks at TJ)* What else is going on; are you sick?

TJ: No.

MYA: Are you sleeping?

TJ: Sort of.

MYA: So what is it? You can talk to me.

TJ: I can't... I can't focus right now. *(ready to spill)* I'm, you know, I'm feeling, I don't know who to talk to. I have, I mean I have friends but this seems bigger... and my mom's too busy and my brother is...

MYA: You're overwhelmed.

TJ: *(as if finding someone who understands)* Yes.

MYA: I get it, I totally understand.

TJ: Really?

MYA: High school is a whole different ballgame. You're just like me, I can tell. I think that's why I like you. TJ, you can't do it alone, you need help. We all do. Do you know how hard a normal day is? Do you know how much I have to get done? What's expected of me? I got family expectations out the wazoo. No Savakis has gone past high school. No Savakis ever even dreamed of becoming a lawyer. *(she pauses and looks at TJ)* I can't believe I'm doing this. If you were in my year I'd never do this. *(leaning in)* Can you keep a secret?

TJ: *(confused)* OK.

MYA: I want you at the top of your game. There's no shame in asking for help, you know. *(She reaches into her bag and pulls out a bottle of pills. She shakes the bottle.)* Ta da! Instant help.

MYA hands the bottle to TJ.

TJ: What is it?

MYA: A miracle in a bottle.

TJ: *(not entirely comfortable)* What do they do?

MYA: Think of them as the perfect pick-me-up. What's with the face?

TJ: Pick you up how?

MYA: TJ. It's not cat pee. It's a pill.

TJ: What's in the pill?

MYA: Never mind, give them back. *(taking the bottle back)* Obviously you're not ready.

TJ: I was just asking.

MYA: It's nothing. *(very quickly)* Methamphetamine.

TJ: What?

MYA: But it's a pill. It's not bad.

TJ: It's meth. It's not good.

MYA: Come on, don't be a child.

TJ: I'm not a child and it's not childish to be freaked out over –

MYA: *(interrupting loudly)* It's not heroin. It's not crack. *(she rolls her eyes)*
I can't believe I'm explaining myself.

TJ: Where did you get this?

MYA: You don't know? I thought you weren't a child.

TJ: Don't make fun of me.

MYA: *(she puts the pills away)* We never had this conversation. If you tell anyone I'll deny it. I'm a top student. You're just the brother of a drug addict. *(she sighs)* Maybe you were out there smoking up. Maybe you're not the type of person I want on my team.

Everyone stamps their feet three times. MYA steps back to the row of chairs. SHANE strolls forward. TJ moves centre.

THE CLOUD: *(briskly)* Wednesday.

Everyone stamps their feet once. TJ and SHANE are face to face.

SHANE: Hey kid. You gonna let me in?

TJ stares at SHANE. She doesn't say anything.

SHANE: You deaf? *(loudly in TJ's face)* Move aside kid!

TJ: I'm not deaf.

SHANE: Swell. *(he smiles)* I need to talk to your brother. *(TJ doesn't move)* What?

TJ: I don't know you.

SHANE: So?

TJ: So, I can't let you in.

SHANE: *(he smiles)* So obedient. Good for you. *(holding out his hand)* I'm Shane. Now you know me.

TJ: He's not supposed to have visitors.

SHANE: Yeah. Cute. You don't need to look so sour, kid. I'm a man of principle. Why don't you tell Jamie Shane's out on the front porch, OK? And tell him I don't like to wait.

Everyone stomps on the floor three times. TJ crosses to JAMIE.

TJ: Jamie!

THE CLOUD: (*singsong*) Jamie...

TJ: I know you're in there. There's a guy named Shane at the door.

JAMIE: (*standing*) What?

TJ: Shane. At the door.

THE CLOUD breathes in with excitement.

JAMIE: Here?

MARY JANE: (*clapping her hands*) Shane's here! Shane's here!

ZOOT: What are you waiting for?

DANK: It's about time.

DOOBIE: We had to wait all day.

SKUNK: Let's go!

WEED: Don't you want a smoke?

JAMIE: Of course I do.

TJ: Jamie?

ROACH: Hold it! What about her?

They all turn and stare at TJ.

TJ: Are you still mad at me?

JAMIE: Uh. No. Course not. (*he sighs to the CLOUD*) I so don't want to deal with her.

MARY JANE: She's gonna snitch on you.

ZOOT: She thinks you got a habit.

DANK: Thinks you're a druggie.

DOOBIE: What does she know?

WEED: She knows...

JAMIE: I don't do it that much.

SKUNK: Of course you don't.

DOOBIE: We never said you did.

ROACH: But you want some now...

ZOOT: Don't you?

MARY JANE: Don't you Jamie?

WEED: I bet you do.

JAMIE: Oh man.

ZOOT: So get rid of her.

MARY JANE: And we'll fly so high.

THE CLOUD: (*chanting, egging him on, clapping*) Jamie! Jamie! Jamie!

TJ: (*interrupting*) Jamie...

JAMIE: (*to TJ*) What?

TJ: What?

JAMIE: You're looking at me funny.

THE CLOUD giggles amongst themselves. TJ tilts her head to the side.

TJ: Did you hear that?

JAMIE: Hear what?

TJ: Aren't you gonna go to the door?

JAMIE: It's just a guy in my class. Bringing me some assignments.

TJ: I didn't ask.

JAMIE: Yeah. (*starts to cross toward SHANE*) But you're looking at me funny.

TJ: So I won't look at you.

JAMIE: And don't follow me either.

TJ: Why would I do that?

JAMIE: Just don't.

Everyone stamps their foot once. JAMIE and SHANE sit on the bench. During the following, TJ eavesdrops.

SHANE: Dude. Why the long face? You look worse than your sister. (*looking around*) Where is she? She seems like the snoopy type.

JAMIE: It's about time you showed up.

SHANE: So touchy. And for no reason. You barely got a slap on the wrist. Not a cop in sight. You can do three days in your sleep.

JAMIE: Principal took my last joint.

SHANE: Which is why you kept some in your home stash right?

JAMIE: I got nothing.

THE CLOUD: (*singsong, reaching out to JAMIE*) Jamie...

SHANE: Shame, shame. No wonder you're grouchy. What's a poor boy to do with no weed?

JAMIE: It's not funny.

SHANE: (*cooing*) I know. Same as always?

JAMIE: Ah, I'm short.

There is a pause as SHANE stares at JAMIE. JAMIE turns away.

SHANE: Jamie. You chastise me for taking the long and winding road, and you can't pay? What am I gonna do with you?

JAMIE: I've never been short before. Have I? You'll spot me this once, just this once?

SHANE: Sure, sure. (*smiling, he pokes JAMIE hard on the shoulder*) I know where you live.

Everyone stamps their feet three times. SHANE strolls back to the row of chairs. JAMIE moves back to his seat and is surrounded by THE CLOUD.

THE CLOUD: (*briskly*) Thursday.

Everyone stamps their feet once. MRS. PEEL steps forward walking swiftly, loaded briefcase in one hand, cellphone in the other.

TJ: Mom, mom!

MRS. PEEL: (*on phone*) Hold on, hold on. (*to TJ*) Sorry Sweetie, this is important.

TJ: (*getting in front of MRS. PEEL*) THIS is important.

MRS. PEEL: (*moving around TJ*) I'll be back on Saturday and we'll spend the day together. All right? Be good!

MRS. PEEL circles back to the row of chairs. TJ screams and stamps the floor in frustration. MR. FULLER steps forward. MS. HOGARTH calls from behind.

MS. HOGARTH: Mike, Mike!

MR. FULLER turns to MS. HOGARTH. TJ watches their conversation.

MR. FULLER: Hello Liz, I don't see you often in the math hall. How's the first year going? Still got the new teacher buzz?

MS. HOGARTH: It's fine.

MR. FULLER: Don't worry. It'll get steadily worse. In no time you'll spend your days praying for summer.

MS. HOGARTH: I, ah, really wanted to talk to you about Jamie Peel.

MR. FULLER: Pothead Peel? (*he snorts*) I heard how you dragged the little bugger to McNeil's office.

MS. HOGARTH: Yes, ah, you're his homeroom teacher, right?

MR. FULLER: Barely.

MS. HOGARTH: I wondered, since you see him all the time, and this is his first day back from suspension...

MR. FULLER: What?

MS. HOGARTH: I just wondered if you could...

MR. FULLER: If I could what? What am I supposed to do? (*he laughs*) Save him?

MS. HOGARTH: Talk to him.

MR. FULLER: (*mocking*) 'Just say no?' 'Hugs not drugs?' First year teachers are so full of spunk.

MS. HOGARTH: What if I am?

MR. FULLER: That'll change.

MS. HOGARTH: Do you think you could stop telling me how horrible teaching is for one second? (*she takes a breath*) If we both talk to him, maybe something will get through.

MR. FULLER: Sorry. Can't. Won't, actually.

MS. HOGARTH: Why not?

MR. FULLER: I am a teacher. I'm not a cop. If I turn my head the right way, I don't see anything. And if I don't see something, I don't think about it. It's a can of worms I'm not willing to open. I've got enough problems of my own. I should take on theirs too? Liz, they don't want our help. They're quite happy frying their brains into charcoal. You can't stop this. It's everywhere and it's stronger than you. So why bother? I did pot when I was his age. I drank. Didn't hurt me any. And if they want to spend the year stoned so be it. It's one less kid in my class and one less essay to mark.

MS. HOGARTH: I think you're wrong.

MR. FULLER: I don't care what you think.

MR. FULLER moves back to the chairs. TJ steps forward.

TJ: Ms. Hogarth!

MS. HOGARTH: Did Jamie come back to school today?

TJ: I have to talk you. Someone. (*she gulps in air*) I need help.

MS. HOGARTH: It's OK TJ, calm down.

TJ: He's in trouble. I don't know what to do. Mom's out of town.

MS. HOGARTH: Easy, easy.

TJ: I tried talking to his dealer yesterday.

MS. HOGARTH: You did what?

Everyone stamps three times. SHANE steps forward.

TJ: Shane? Are you selling pot to Jamie?

SHANE: I don't know what you're talking about kid. I just dropped some school assignments by.

TJ: I want you to stop. I'm asking you to stop. Would you –

SHANE: Stop dropping off assignments? Bet your mom be real pleased bout that.

TJ: I know what you're talking about!!!

SHANE: All right. (*He leans in, no longer friendly.*) This is not your world little girl. Back off. (*He pokes her in the shoulder. Hard.*) Understand?

Everyone stamps their feet once. SHANE returns to the row of chairs.

MS. HOGARTH: You shouldn't have done that.

TJ: And I saw Jamie coming out of my mom's room.

Everyone stamps their feet three times. JAMIE stands holding something under his shirt.

TJ: Jamie. What were you doing in there? What are you doing?

JAMIE: What are you doing!? Spying on me now? Is that your thing? (*moving past TJ*) You want to make my life completely miserable?

TJ: (*trying to grab his arm*) What are you doing?

JAMIE: (*jerking away*) None of your business.

TJ: (*getting in his way*) What did you take?

JAMIE: (*pushing past*) Get out of my way TJ.

TJ: No.

JAMIE: (*yelling back*) Stay out of my life!

Everyone stamps their feet once. JAMIE runs onstage and stands with his back to the audience.

TJ: I don't know what to do. Why won't anyone help me?

MS. HOGARTH: All right, all right. You think it's serious?

The two move to the stage right bench.

TJ: Yes.

MS. HOGARTH: Does Jamie always smoke before school?

TJ: Yes.

MS. HOGARTH: Is he dealing?

TJ: I don't know. Do you think pot is bad Ms. Hogarth?

MS. HOGARTH: It doesn't matter what I think.

TJ: Have you ever done it?

MS. HOGARTH: (*a second pause then*) Yes. I have.

TJ: You have?

MS. HOGARTH: I'm not going to lie and tell you I didn't.

Cut the following two lines if you are in a jurisdiction where pot has been legalized.

TJ: (*scorn*) But it's illegal.

MS. HOGARTH: It is. A lot of people think it shouldn't be. A lot of people use it anyway.

TJ: So you think I'm over-exaggerating? That Jamie's all right?

MS. HOGARTH: No. I've never done pot at 8:30 in the morning. I never did it at school, period. I never failed my classes because of it, I never stole because of it and I never ditched my family or friends because of it. If Jamie does even one of those things... he's not all right.

TJ: Mom doesn't know. Why doesn't she know?

MS. HOGARTH: What are you going to do?

TJ: He won't listen to me.

MS. HOGARTH: You'll just give up?

TJ: Shouldn't I? I spend all day, every day worrying about him. When do I get to worry about me?

DANK: Flick.

ROACH: Flick.

MARY JANE: (*exhaling*) Ahhhhh.

Everyone stamps three times. TJ crosses to JAMIE's cube. THE CLOUD stare at her.

TJ: Jamie? Jamie?

Everyone stamps three times. THE CLOUD giggles. TJ turns her head to the side as if listening.

TJ: Jamie?

Everyone stamps once. TJ moves centre stage.

TJ: I could call mom. I could call the cops. How long do I put my memories ahead of what's happening here, now. He'll never speak



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