

Broken Paths

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unproduced

Sample Script

Belligerent mother of two and daughter-in-law to the family matriarch
murders her cancer-ridden and dementia suffering mother-in-law
whilst her husband and brother-in-law discuss their mother's
nursing and care home arrangements.

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Synopsis

Meet the Morris family. Virginia Morris, bitter elderly mother of Chad and Michael, secretive and reluctant to give up her helm as the matriarch. Confused, forgetful and sometimes sharp of tongue, her aggressive cancer overtakes her life. Her eldest son, Chad, a banal petty thief and frightful angry man in his early forties pathetically provides for his wife, Tracey and their two children as a local Builder and handyman. Fifteen years Chad's junior, shallow, cheap, a lost and scared wife, Tracey tries to be the woman Chad wants her to be, yet flailing in front of Virginia. Although somewhat despondent and removed, chilled and a little sensible, Michael fights for his right to stand as a member of his family, his homosexuality holding him back as far as Chad is concerned. Virginia is proud Michael is a member of the Police, yet doesn't fully understand the role he plays as a Police Constable in the Westminster LGBT Borough Liaison Metropolitan Police.

Tracey and Chad hold a small and uninspired tenth birthday party for their son, Charlie, without the fuss of Charlie's friends and mess. Tracey and Chad discuss how best to approach Virginia about moving her into a Care Home, whilst Virginia bullies Tracey into being a better mother. Tracey keeps her thoughts to herself, keeping her true feelings unknown to anyone until Virginia announces she has split her Final Will and Testament equally between her sons, excluding Tracey, out of the Will.

Tracey and Chad decide to send Virginia on a weekend holiday to Hove; whilst away they can downsize the family home, take what they want and sell off the rest that won't fit into the Care Home, under the guise of caring for Virginia and for the sake of Michael. Tracey looks on as Virginia's life suddenly ends as she chokes to death on her lunch; Tracey pours Virginia's glass of water down the sink.

After Virginia's funeral service, Michael and Chad discuss their mother's Final Will and Testament. Chad makes his announcement to contest the Will for his lions share; Michael defends his ground, which only aggravates the underflow of smouldering years of unspoken hatred between the three of them.

Characters

The character descriptions for the Morris family are listed below. They are intended as a brief outline and further character development is encouraged.

Virginia

Virginia, Matriarch and a survivor of a harsh life, she has fought her way through tough times for herself and her children. Virginia dreamed of a life with a wealthy man who would take care of her every whim and care, but reality dealt her a cold harsh blow via the man she settled-for in a life mate.

Chad

The eldest child of the two boys and the man of the house, both his and mother's, Chad is a man's man, a tough individual who has learnt the harsh lessons of his father and his mother. A Builder by trade and a side line drug runner for his boss, Mr Czerny, Chad takes control in the company of his wife, Tracey and his two children, Charlie and Ricky.

Michael

The child born to make his parent's marriage work, Michael is the younger of the two boys and the one disregarded by his father and has had nothing but disdain from his brother, ever since he was five years old. A Police Constable in the Westminster LGBT Borough Liaison Metropolitan Police, Michael has been a proud LGBT officer for the past twenty years.

Tracey

Tracey, fifteen years younger than Chad is the contemptuous, yet timid tigress of her wed-locked family. Her life strategy is survival of the fittest, a lesson learnt from her family home of no regular income, a kitchen table occasionally without food and protecting her body from her father's wandering hands. At the age of fourteen she learnt her vagina was the way to a man's heart.

Setting

Period

This play is set in modern day London. Early summer.

Location

The location of this play is situated in a large metropolitan city.

In an area renown for a strong mix of purpose built and social housing, the *location* houses those families and individuals whom financially struggle and are often kept in the eyes of the law.

In the social housing dwelling of Mrs Virginia Morris, the kitchen is basic, the lounge out of date and tired and the general look and feel of the living areas are unkempt.

Relationships

Virginia is mother to Chad and Michael. Chad is the eldest child and Michael the youngest of the family. Their Father passed away a number of years ago due to prostate cancer.

Tracey and Chad are married; they have two boys of their own named Charlie and Ricky. Charlie is the eldest child and Ricky the youngest of the family.

Michael and Frank are long term lovers and have been in a very happy relationship, until recently.

A Note To The Director:

The main scene of this play is the Kitchen in Virginia's home. Depending on the demographic of the performance location, names of places, brands and other names can be changed to suit the performance location. Some dialogue language may be toned down to suit audience demographic and legal restrictions and regulations for staging and action.

On Stage

HOUSE

The set for the House consists of a basic kitchen, dining / eating area and informal seating area with a disused brown coal fireplace and mantle, sofas, chair, side tables and other usual lounging area furniture and decorations.

The front door sits down stage right. Immediately in front of the door is the dining / eating area, with a dining table surrounded by chairs.

Up stage right is the basic kitchen with a window looking out over a small backyard. An Island bench for the kitchen separates the kitchen from the dining area. The kitchen consists of a bench space and cupboards, a sink, hob and other basic kitchen facilities.

An exit to the bedrooms and the rest of the house sits up centre stage.

The front door entrance sits up stage left. Either side of the front door small windows look out into the front yard and the street. A coat rack sits by the front door.

Down stage left is the informal seating area. Two two-seater sofas and a single chair surround a television, in front of the brown coal fireplace.

VIRGINIA ENTERS COMPLETELY NAKED.

VIRGINIA: Boys learn about women by parading naked.

CHAD: Jesus, mum.

TRACEY BURSTS OUT LAUGHING. MICHAEL ENTERS.

MICHAEL: Mum. Back into the bedroom. Get dressed. Come on.

MICHAEL ESCORTS VIRGINIA TO HER BEDROOM. THEY EXIT..

CHAD: Once Mum is medically incompetent, it means the current will is no longer valid. Mum is legally incapable of making financial decisions for herself. Luckily, she has me, her faithful Trust Executor, to make financial decisions for her.

TRACEY: Make sure you run ... don't walk ... to the lawyer's office once you have the signed document.

CHAD: I will have legal claim to the will. I will have full access to her bank accounts, investment accounts, this house, credit cards...

TRACEY: Now you're pushing the boat out.

CHAD: Once I sit down with that Mister Surrey and rewrite the will to favour us, we won't have nothing to worry about.

TRACEY: My boys...

CHAD: ...won't have nothing to worry about. But first, I'm taking Michael to the pub to tell him how this works.

TRACEY: I need to get out of here. The boys need supper. I'm not waiting for you.

CHAD: I'll find my own way home.

TRACEY: What a conscientious little man you are. On top of it all. So diligent about managing everything. You won't waste a second. What has that little arse truckdal ever done for her?

CHAD: I am the man.

TRACEY: Make sure the removal truck is big enough. I don't want to miss a thing.

MICHAEL ENTERS FROM VIRGINIA'S BEDROOM.

CHAD: How about you and me go down the pub and...

MICHAEL: You want to be seen in the pub with me?

CHAD: Don't be a twat.

MICHAEL: I'm going grocery shopping for mum.

CHAD: Pub. Now. It's where men go to talk.

MICHAEL: Grocery shopping.

CHAD: Do that later.

MICHAEL: I don't want to.

CHAD: I don't give a shit.

MICHAEL: Not my problem.

CHAD: I'm not leaving everything to the last minute because you can't man up.

MICHAEL: Jesus. I'll be going through the funeral plan with Mr Cribb this week.

CHAD: Pub. Now.

CHAD EXITS BY THE BACK DOOR. AS MICHAEL EXITS, TRACEY CALLS HIM BACK IN.

TRACEY: Michael.

MICHAEL: Yeah?

TRACEY: Why haven't you introduced Frank to mum? What have you got to lose?

MICHAEL: You ask the most extraordinary questions.

TRACEY: I'm serious.

MICHAEL: He's black.

MICHAEL EXITS.

TRACEY: Holy shit.

TRACEY PREPARES A FRESH PLATE OF FOOD AND PLACES IT ON THE DINING TABLE. VIRGINIA ENTERS FROM HER BEDROOM WITH THE AID OF HER WALKING CANE.

TRACEY: The boys have gone down the pub.

VIRGINIA: Together?

TRACEY: I've made you supper. You got your button?

TRACEY GATHERS HER THINGS. VIRGINIA SITS AT THE DINING TABLE. SHE MOVES FOOD AROUND ON THE PLATE IN FRONT OF HER,

VIRGINIA: It's around my neck. Chad wants to talk about me going on a beach holiday to Hove. Who the fuck wants all those pebbles up their arse. Then he'll talk me into a Care Home. Bullshit. When did getting old become so important? A Care Home. Yesterday I was fussing over your wedding. You was crying over your hair. Then the grandkids turn up and before you know it, I'm taking pills. It starts with your eyes. Damned eyes.

TRACEY: Must get the boys home for their supper.

VIRGINIA: It all seems so gradual, your eyes start to fail, then your hearing isn't so good. It's the missing of words and pretending to know what is said. Then your legs don't work; it starts in the ankles. The throat becomes your worst enemy, but the nose is the problem, which is connected to the eyes, but they're failing. It's no surprise they get worse. Then the cancer sets in, eats away at everything good about life. Cancer. It's the new word they created to call dying?

TRACEY: I was wondering if there are any black families living in the street?

VIRGINIA: You know my rules about this street; no Irish, no Blacks, no Dogs. Why?

TRACEY: I'll be by tomorrow morning to clean up.

VIRGINIA: You're a help.

TRACEY STANDS IN THE KITCHEN AND POURS A GLASS OF WATER DOWN THE SINK. VIRGINIA TAKES A LARGE BITE OF HER FOOD AND CHEWS QUICKLY.

VIRGINIA: Now I need a bloody nurse to wipe my arse. When did old become normal? Old. It's terminal. Sometimes I wonder if dying of cancer, is a blessing. At least it doesn't take decades. Getting old means your brain attacks you. Old. No thanks.

VIRGINIA STRUGGLES TO BREATHE, EVENTUALLY SHE STARTS TO CHOKE ON HER FOOD. VIRGINIA FUMBLES FOR HER PANIC BUTTON AND REPEATEDLY PRESSES IT. EVENTUALLY VIRGINIA CHOKES TO DEATH. SHE FLOPS DOWN IN HER CHAIR, FACE DOWN IN HER FOOD, REMAINING SEATED AT THE DINING TABLE. SHE GOES LIMP AND SLUMPS. VIRGINIA IS DEAD. TRACEY EXITS.

SILENCE.