

THE MISSING PIECE

Original Stage play

By

CLEVELAND O. McLEISH

THE SCRIPT

ACT 1

ACT I - SCENE I

LIGHTS UP

Asher and Tommy onstage (SL) playing basketball [shooting hoops]

TOMMY: Hey man. When are we gonna finish that tree house?

ASHER: Well if we could get all the stuff we need, we could probably finish it this weekend.

TOMMY: This weekend huh. Didn't you have things to do for Miss Sweetiepie.

ASHER: Yeah, I do. But that aint gonna take me all day.

They shoot a few more hoops.

TOMMY: By the way...this church thing...you really serious bout it?

Pause. Asher considers as he makes another basket.

ASHER: Yeah...I think God is calling me into something big.

TOMMY: I wish I felt what you feel.

ASHER: It aint always about feelings bro.

TOMMY: So you say. I still don't get this whole thing about the existence of God.

ASHER: It's not so hard to believe if you stop to think about it.

TOMMY: Well then. Maybe I don't want to think about it. I'm seeing what them kinda thinking does to you man. I aint sure I want that.

ASHER: What has it done to me?

TOMMY: You don't have fun anymore. All you focus on is teaching that VBF class.

ASHER: Its VBS...Vacation Bible School. And besides, teaching is a gift. I don't see myself doing anything else.

TOMMY: You don't do anything else. I sure miss my best friend.

ASHER: I'm still here Tommy.

TOMMY: Yeah...but you don't think for yourself anymore. You're different.

ASHER: I'm better.

TOMMY: Difference of opinions.

ASHER: Why are we even having this conversation?

TOMMY: What!! I can't talk to you about anything anymore.

ASHER: I didn't say that.

TOMMY: Maybe not in so many words.

ASHER: Alright boss. You win.

TOMMY: And while we're on the topic of things we don't discuss anymore...

ASHER: No! No! No!

TOMMY: Aww c'mon.

ASHER: No!

TOMMY: Fine. One day you will talk about it.

ASHER: Yeah, maybe, but not today.

Asher makes rings around Tommy with the basketball and shoots a hoop as...

LIGHTS FADE.

ACT I - SCENE II

LIGHTS UP

Grandma is busy knitting.

Asher enters the Apartment and throws down his gear.

ASHER: Hey grandma.

LIZ: Hey there little fella. Where you coming from at this hour.

ASHER: Down the road shooting some hoops with Tommy.

LIZ: Did you remember to stop at the grocery store and pick up those few items for your grandma.

ASHER: Yes mam I did.

Asher holds up a bag and place it on a nearby counter.

LIZ: Good boy. (pause) Asher come here a minute.

Asher hesitates before going to sit near his Grandma.

LIZ: I need to talk to you about something.

ASHER: Grandma...

LIZ: I know it's a sore topic for you...but you at least need to know what's happening with the funeral arrangements.

ASHER: No grandma...I don't. I really don't care. I don't even think I will be going to the funeral so can we not talk about this right now.

LIZ: How long will you run?

ASHER: As long as I can.

LIZ: Asher...

ASHER: Grandma please. I was having a good day.

Asher exits.

Grandma stops knitting for a beat.

Enter Bishop Leighton Jones.

BISHOP: Hey there sweetie pie.

LIZ: (with a distracted look on her face) Hey Bishop.

BISHOP: Yeah, I'm happy to see you too.

LIZ: Oh, you aint the cause of my long face this morning Bishop...its...

BISHOP: Asher.

LIZ: Yeah.

BISHOP: These young ones really know how to get to ya these days don't they.

LIZ: I just wish I could get him to understand that there are some things you just can't run from.

BISHOP: Like God's calling on your life.

LIZ: Like the death of your parents.

BISHOP: Yeah, that too. It's a lesson we all have to learn sooner or later. Don't worry.

LIZ: I can't help but worry.

BISHOP: Yeah, I know. (pause) This may be a bad time but I actually came over to talk to Asher.

LIZ: Why?

BISHOP: Thing is, I see a lot of potential in Him. He's already teaching a VBS class I was wondering if he wanted to take on the responsibility of Youth Director.

LIZ: He's only fourteen years old and besides, his mother just died. Can't it wait..

BISHOP: Asher is a very bright and smart young man. I think he could handle it.

LIZ: Well, you can try to talk to him. See what he says.

BISHOP: Maybe I could try to talk to him about the things he doesn't want to talk about.

LIZ: You could try that too...but expect the worst.

BISHOP: Always do.

LIZ: I'll go get him.

Liz puts away her knitting needles and exits.

Liz finds Asher in the Alley crying. Her heart breaks.

She goes to him and hugs him.

LIZ: I'm sorry Asher.

ASHER: I don't feel anything Grandma. I don't miss my parents. Why don't I feel anything?

LIZ: There's someone here to talk to you. I think he could explain it better than I can.

ASHER: Who is here grandma?

LIZ: Bishop Jones. Will you talk to him dear? He sure wants to talk to you.

ASHER: Okay.

They exit the alley into the apartment where Bishop is waiting.

BISHOP: Hey there Asher.

ASHER: Hello sir. (wiping a tear from his eyes)

BISHOP: Can I talk to you a minute. Have some things I want to discuss with you.

Grandma leaves.

BISHOP: How you holding up.

ASHER: I'm fine sir.

BISHOP: Good. You're a promising young man Asher.... Kids your age are usually very....lost, but you have a solid foundation on which you can become anything you want. Now I know ya got things thinking about...and some things you don't want to talk about...but your future depends on how you handle the different situations you face in life.

ASHER: I think I know that.

BISHOP: Good. So can we talk about your mother?

ASHER: She's dead. What's there to talk about?

BISHOP: Do you know how she died?

ASHER: Drugs, of course. She and my old man couldn't kick the habit.

BISHOP: She didn't die of drugs. She struggled with the addiction yes, but the cancer got her...not drugs.

ASHER: She had cancer?

BISHOP: Yeah...fought it for years.

ASHER: I didn't know that.

BISHOP: How do you feel Asher.

ASHER: I don't feel anything, sir.

BISHOP: Are you suppressing your feelings son?

ASHER: How can I suppress what is not there?

BISHOP: Okay, Lets talk about your father.

ASHER: Lets NOT.

BISHOP: What do you feel now?

ASHER: Can we talk about something else, please?

BISHOP: You can't run from your feelings forever.

ASHER: Why does everyone think I'm running? I'm not running. I simply just don't want to talk about it.

BISHOP: So you say.

ASHER: You're really starting to annoy me sir.

BISHOP: Well then, I wouldn't want to do that now would I.

Pause.

Silence.

BISHOP: How would you like to take charge of the youth arm of the church?

ASHER: You mean, become Youth Director?

BISHOP: Yes, the post is yours if you want it.

ASHER (excited): Wow...yeah, I think I can do that. I have so many ideas...yeah; I will give it a try.

BISHOP: Good. We'll talk again very soon.

ASHER: Not really looking forward to it...but... (on a different note) Thank you sir.

BISHOP: No prob.

Bishop exits.

Grandma comes out with two glasses of lemonade. She looks around for the Bishop.

LIZ: Where's the Bishop.

ASHER: He just left.

LIZ: Oh my. I made him a glass of lemonade.

ASHER: Don't worry. I'll take care of it for him.

Grandma smiles as Asher takes both glasses.

LIZ: Are you okay.

ASHER: Getting better everyday, Maam. My life couldn't possibly get any worst.

Grandma knows enough about life to restrain her response. Asher drinks one glass Of lemonade and exits with the other in his hand as

LIGHTS FADE....

ACT I - SCENE III

LIGHTS UP

Asher is onstage pacing back and forth momentarily checking his watch.

Tommy casually strides onstage wearing a Starter jacket and walking smoothly.

TOMMY: Hey man.

ASHER: I've been waiting for two hours man. What's up with that?

TOMMY: Sorry man. I made a small stop down the road...at that new girls place.

ASHER: When are you gonna change.

TOMMY: No time soon I hope. What's up?

ASHER: Where'd you get that jacket?

TOMMY: You like.

ASHER: Yeah...its hard man.

TOMMY: Yeah, this was a gift from one a ma ladies.

ASHER: You are fortunate.

TOMMY: Yeah, anyway. I was thinking. Now that the tree house is done we could have a little party this weekend.

ASHER: I was thinking the same thing.

TOMMY: Good.

ASHER: But...

TOMMY: Oh no, no man. Don't tell me about no responsibility at church. What about us? Your friends need you too.

ASHER: I know that...but...

TOMMY: I really don't want to hear bro.

Pause.

Two street boys (Hawk and Jacks) walk onstage.

HAWK: This must be our lucky day.

TOMMY: Hey Hawk....what's up.

HAWK: You hailing us like we friends.

JACKS: We aint your friends. We hungry....what can y'all do for us right now.

TOMMY: We just as hungry as y'all.

HAWK: Is that right.

TOMMY: Yeah.

JACKS: Yow punk nice jacket (as he grabs the collar of Tommy's jacket).

TOMMY: Hey watch your hands man...this was a gift.

HAWK: Nice gift.

ASHER: We aint looking for trouble.

HAWK: We neither. We just looking a food. What say you homeboy.

ASHER: I can't help you.

HAWK: Yeah, as usual. We'll just take this jacket and call it a day.

TOMMY: No way.

JACKS: Hawk you hear this. Boy you aint got a choice.

TOMMY: Really...well you aint getting this jacket. Yow step man and stop terrorizing us.

Hawk pulls a gun.

HAWK: Yow Jacks this boy be dissing. He don't know who he dealing with. You ever seen a gun before. (As he points the gun in Tommy's face)

No response.

HAWK: Oh so now you scared huh. Just give us the jacket so we can get out of here, I aint got time for you fools.

JACKS: Yeah.

TOMMY: NO!

Hawk grabs Tommy's jacket and start to pull it off....Jacks tries to assist.

Asher grabs Jacks and they wrestle to the ground. Hawk and Tommy continues to wrestle until a loud explosion is heard.

Tommy looses his strength and also his grip on the jacket as he slowly falls to the ground.

JACKS: Man what have you done?

HAWK: Lets get outta here.

Hawk pulls the jacket away from him and exit quickly.

Jacks is not far behind. Tommy collapses on the stage.

ASHER: No, no, no, no.

Asher goes to his friend.

ASHER: Tommy.....Tommy.....

Tommy doesn't respond. A small crowd starts to gather onstage as....

LIGHTS FADE.

ACT I - SCENE IV

LIGHTS UP

Asher is sitting alone on his bed in the apartment. He has a bouquet of flowers in his hand and he's crying. He's also dressed in a full black suit.

Outside, Liz greets other members of the family and friends who were present at the funeral. Only the Bishop and a few others remain to be greeted last.

PAULA: How you holding up Sweetie pie?

LIZ: Not too good...but I will live. My only regret is that she hadn't given her life to the Lord so I won't be seeing her again. (Liz wipes a tear)

PAULA: Yeah, I know. Stay strong okay. God will sustain you in this time.

LIZ: Thank you.

PAULA: I was looking forward to seeing Asher.

LIZ: I don't know where he is. He was supposed to be at the funeral but he didn't show. I think maybe he's inside the house.

PAULA: Would it be a good idea for me to see him now?

LIZ: I honestly don't think he wants to see anyone.

PAULA: Yeah, I will come back another day then. He must really be feeling this whole thing.

LIZ: Yeah...and the death of Tommy is weighing heavily on him too.

PAULA: Oh Lord...I didn't even remember that. Dear Lord give him strength. Sweetie pie...I will be seeing you my dear.

LIZ: Thanks again.

Paula waves to the Bishop and leaves.

Bishop hesitates, and then throws his hands around Liz.

BISHOP: You gonna be alright sister.

LIZ: By God's grace I will.

BISHOP: Stay the course...look neither to the left nor to the right. God will provide the strength you need. I guarantee it.

LIZ: Don't worry about me pastor...pray for Asher. This whole ordeal is taking a great toll on him.

BISHOP: I know, I know. But Asher is looking for an answer I can't give him. Sweetie pie, I have seen young men like Asher. If he leaves, let him go. Eventually he will return. The word of the Lord is in his heart and he can't run from it forever...but I think he's gonna try.

LIZ: I'm gonna see if I can talk to him.

BISHOP: I'll pray for you both.

Bishop exits.

The remaining family members hug Liz and exit leaving her standing alone onstage.

She walks to the Apartment.

LIZ: Asher...are you in there?

Asher hears but he doesn't respond.

LIZ: Asher...please open the door.

Asher remains.

LIZ: God can see you through this.

This gets Asher's attention. His eyes are swollen from tears and red with anger.

ASHER: God is the cause of this. Don't dare call his name to me.

LIZ: That's not fair Asher.

ASHER: Fair!!! What have I done to deserve all this huh. What did I do to your great God for him to take away everyone I love, huh? Can you answer that grandma.

LIZ: I can't give you the answer you're looking for.

ASHER: Right. Always more questions than answers when it comes to the mighty God of Heaven and earth...but I'm not impressed anymore grandma. God don't care about us. You don't hurt people you love.

LIZ: You don't know what you're saying.

ASHER: Yes I do. Tommy was right all along. Church forces us not to think for ourselves...but I'm thinking for myself now and all of a sudden God makes no sense and I want no part with Him.

Liz eyes wells up with tears.

LIZ: Asher, please open the door. Let me come in.

ASHER: I don't want to. I wish to be far away from you grandma. I want nothing to do with you and your God.

LIZ: Why are you saying that? You're all I have left.

ASHER: God will just take you away from me. Just like he took my mother, my father and my best friend. He'll just take you away too... that's what he does grandma.

LIZ: Asher, God never promises that life would be a bed of roses...but He did promise never to leave or forsake us...to always be with us...to strengthen us when we're weak...

ASHER: Grandma...save your sermon for someone who cares. It means nothing to me anymore.

Asher crushes the flowers and drops them in a waste basket.

He exits at the back of the apartment.

LIZ: Asher.....Asher....

Grandma crosses to the alley and goes round back.

She enters the apartment to find Asher missing....

LIGHTS FADE.

END OF ACT I

ACT II

ACT II - SCENE I

LIGHTS UP

Sweetie pie is a little older now and age has taken a toll on her body causing her To move much slower and she now wears thick glasses to be able to see properly.

She is alone in her apartment as she slowly moves around trying to make her dwelling a little more tidy. She sighs as she moves.

Outside the apartment someone has arrived.

He's dressed almost like a pimp as he strolls onstage. He pulls a key from his Pocket and presses a button and the familiar sound of a fully powered car locking Its doors is heard offstage and by now we recognize this young man to be Asher.. But a little older.

He swings and flashes down the alley and appear in behind sweetie pie in her Apartment.

ASHER: Hello there grams.

LIZ: Whose that?

Asher pulls off his shades to reveal familiar eyes.

LIZ: Dear Jesus, Asher is that you?

ASHER: None other grandmother.

LIZ: I can't believe this.

She moves towards him to hug him but he steps off.

ASHER: Please lady...bet you been cleaning all day. Can't afford for you to ruin my polyester.

LIZ: Excuse me sir. I thought maybe you would be happy to see me after all these years.

ASHER: Yeah, well life gets busy sometimes.

LIZ: And sometimes we forget where we're coming from and the small people who made us who we are.

ASHER: I didn't come here to get my conscience abused.

LIZ: Why did you come?

ASHER: Well to be honest I dealing with a B down the road.

LIZ: A 'bee.' Is that B for Bimbo.

ASHER: Now you're passing your place old lady.

Liz can't believe that this is her precious grandson.

LIZ: You have changed.

ASHER: No arguments there. Everyone thought I would have turned out to be a no good drug addict like my parents...but look at me now.

LIZ: Yeah, you turned out worst.

ASHER: Difference of opinions there. I aint doing crime...all I have I worked hard for and I did it all by myself, no mother, no father, nobody. I went back and finished high school, got myself a job, worked my way up the ranks and look at me now. I am a new man. A better man.

LIZ: Any chance of me getting my old Asher back.

ASHER: Not a chance lady he died the day Tommy died so get used to the new me.

LIZ: Well the new you aint staying here.

ASHER: I could always go rent a hotel room or something...but you look like you need a man around here...so ya got me for the weekend. And besides, I got me someone I want you to meet.

LIZ: Who?

ASHER: All in due time. (pulls out his cell phone and dials a number and puts phone to his ears) Hey babes, how far are you?

Crystal enters from SR with phone to her ears and a 7-month stomach.

CRYSTAL: I'm just around the corner....babes.

ASHER: Why you sound like that?

CRYSTAL: Will you just come get me! (hangs up)

ASHER: (to sweetiepie) Yeah, that girl loves the ground I walk on. (exits)

Asher comes down the alley to meet Crystal. He takes her to his apartment
Where sweetiepie is waiting.

ASHER: Crystal, meet my guardian and grandma Liz affectionately called sweetiepie.

CRYSTAL: Hello.

LIZ: I know you.

ASHER: Good. Now that we've met...I think we will proceed to our room.

LIZ: Excuse me.

ASHER: Grandma, don't create a scene....please. Before you even respond keep in mind that I'm a grown man.

LIZ: With all due respect sir...this is a godly home and I kinda liked your idea of a hotel room for you and your....baby mother....but don't think for one minute that I will allow infidelity in my house.

ASHER: Yeah yeah, wonderful speech and all but we're tired and need to rest...so we'll pick up from here tomorrow, okay.

Asher grabs Crystal and leads her offstage.

LIZ: Asher....Asher....Oh Lord have mercy this boy is gonna give me a heart attack.

Liz exits behind them as

LIGHTS FADE.

ACT II - SCENE II

BISHOP: (offstage) Anybody inside?

LIGHTS UP

Sweetie pie is sitting in a chair with her hand on her forehead.

LIZ: Yes Bishop. I'm still here. Come on in.

ASHER (offstage) Is that the old Bishop. I thought he was dead. Don't let him know that I'm here.

Bishop finds his way inside.

BISHOP: Ha. Ms. Sweetiepie. How you doing this evening. Looking young as ever I see.

LIZ: Oh Bishop your mouth is too sweet. Don't you see I'm an old woman.

BISHOP: Ms. Sweetiepie you never change. Anyway, I brought some soup that the ladies from down the church prepared for you.

LIZ: Thank you Asher and ... (*Pause*) Just set it down over there.

BISHOP: Asher??? Your mind playing tricks on you again.

LIZ: (smiling) Oh no. Not this time. My boy's home. He's back home.

BISHOP: He's here? Now? Where is he?

LIZ: He's inside.... (calling offstage) ASHER! The Bishop wants to see you.

Asher enters in a not so pleasant mode.

ASHER: (shots a disgusting look at Liz) Hi Bishop...(sarcastic) Good to see you.

BISHOP: (filled with anxiety) Asher ma boy. Is that really you I see. Come here.

Bishop embraces an uncomfortable Asher who pulls away quickly.

ASHER: What's happening Bishop?

BISHOP: You been gone for so long and all you can say is 'what's happening Bishop?' How have you been boy. Keeping the faith I hope.

ASHER: I'm good man. Never better.

BISHOP: So what have you been doing with yourself these days?

ASHER: Well life has been treating me pretty well you know. I got ma own place now. Working two and three jobs. You know...its all about the benjamins.

BISHOP: I see. The blessings of the Lord are still following you.

ASHER: Uhmm, you can say that. (rolls his eyes)

BISHOP: So, my son, how's the faith.

ASHER: Never better.

BISHOP: Will I see you at church this weekend.

ASHER: Church...well its kinda like this sir...I don't do church anymore. As I told sweetiepie, church is for little boys. Big man, real man don't have time for church. Who needs church when you're on the top of your game and besides, I don't need God. He certainly don't need me.

BISHOP: Sorry to hear you speak like that son, but everyone needs God...especially you. Asher ma boy, all this is temporary and like the prodigal son...one day you will return home.

ASHER: Yeah, yeah...that's what I can't stand with you church folks, You always judging people. Who the hell do you think you are...you know what preacher...I'm done with this. (Asher walks towards exit)

BISHOP: God is everywhere son. You can't run from him. (Asher exits without responding) Lord have mercy...that boy is a stray sheep sweetiepie.

LIZ: He's also a soon to be father,

BISHOP: What?

LIZ: Oh yes. He's with Ms. Jone's grand daughter...Crystal....

BISHOP: Crystal is with child.

LIZ: Soon to deliver too.

BISHOP: Uhm.

LIZ: What's with that 'Uhm.'

BISHOP: Lets just say, if I was Asher I would make sure that baby is his before claiming ownership. That Crystal aint no angel. She attaches herself to men who she knows can take care of her...if you know what I mean.

LIZ: Oh Lord give me grace. She slept under my roof. Oh Jesus.

BISHOP: I think that boy needs some serious talking to.

LIZ: I been doing that since he got here. Believe me Bishop, Asher will not see change until God stirs his cold heart.

BISHOP: What happened to him SP. He used to be such a promising young man.

LIZ: Life Bishop. Life always happens to them young uns. They can't seem to handle the pressure of dealing with lifes struggles.

BISHOP: Yeah, so sad. But I still believe in a God who never sleeps. That boy will come hope SP. Don't give up praying and talking to him.

LIZ: I wont Bishop. Not while there's breathe in this old body of mine.

BISHOP: Yeah, he will praise God one day for his praying Grandmother. I guarantee it.

LIZ: Amen.

BISHOP: I can't stay much longer with you Sweetiepie. I got to be about my masters business.

LIZ: You go on Biship. I'll be alright.

BISHOP: You sure bout that.

LIZ: I'm sure. Go on.

Bishop leaves as

LIGHTS FADE

ACT II - SCENE III

LIGHTS UP

Sweetiepie already on stage sitting...waiting....

After a beat, Asher enters. He almost turns back when he sees his grandma.

SWEETIEPIE: Oh I see you're back.

ASHER: Yeah so.

SWEETIEPIE: There's something that I've been meaning to talk to you about Asher.

ASHER: I don't have time for this.

SWEETIEPIE: (forcefully) Then make time son. This is important.

Pause.

ASHER: What is it this time? I hope its not one of your lectures.

SWEETIEPIE: Its about that young woman you have sleeping under my roof.

ASHER: What about her?

SWEETIEPIE: What do you know about her Asher? How long have you known her? She has a reputation you know.

ASHER (under his breathe) So do you. Annoying and Miserable.

SWEETIEPIE: What did you say?

ASHER: Nothing.

SWEETIEPIE: Bishop says she aint no good.

ASHER: Bishop! What does he know. He should stick to preaching and stay out of peoples business.

SWEETIEPIE: Don't be like that. He cares about you. He's just looking out for you as a father would look out for his son.

ASHER: I don't buy that crap. You know that. I don't need nobody looking out for me as if I'm some child. I don't need a father. I never did. I've been taking care of myself since I was small.

Pause. This cuts SP deep.

SWEETIEPIE: That's not fair....You are being very ungrateful right now.

ASHER: So what? I can be whatever I want to be.

SWEETIEPIE: Asher, Crystal is well known among the fellas around these parts. I don't know who is left that she has not played one way or another.

ASHER: How church people know so much huh? I can't believe that I'm standing here having this stupid conversation with you.

SWEETIEPIE: You can choose to believe what you hear or not Asher. Its up to you. Crystal has done quite a few abortions especially when the men in question don't support her financially. Ask her if you think I'm lying...not that she would admit. Asher, you aint the first man she has made a father...that is if you are the father.

ASHER: Old woman. You and that Bishop of yours need to mind your own business and not sap up every little rumour you hear on the streets. I thought you'all had more sense than that.

SWEETIEPIE: I'm just looking out for you.

ASHER: And I said I need nobody to look out for me. I look out for myself.

Sweetiepie gets up to exit.

SWEETIEPIE: Your own bitterness is blinding you to some obvious truth son. Think about it. You want to know the truth about that girl of yours...just deny her something she wants. That usually works.

She exits without saying another word.

Crystal enters before Asher can even process the info he just received.

CRSTAL: What that old fool blabbering about?

ASHER: You heard all that...sorry sweety. That's my grandmother. Always meddling into peoples affairs.

CRYSTAL: She better be careful about what she's saying. She should be glad I know Jesus, or else I would have just...(pause)

ASHER: Watch your mouth. That's my grandmother you talking about. No one talks about her that way but me.

CRYSTAL: Oh so now you putting her over me. I should have known...next thing you probably talking about Jesus. You're weak.

ASHER: What are you talking about?

CRYSTAL: You men are all the same.

ASHER: 'You men.' When did I become a part of a group?

CRYSTAL: My dear, you have always been a part of a group. What? You thought you were special. (laughs)

ASHER: I'm a joke to you now. Is that it. And here I was defending you thinking you were sincere.

CRYSTAL: Its just a word. No one is sincere anymore. We live for what we can get. Its just the rule of the jungle babe.

ASHER: I sure don't want my child to grow up on these jungle principles of yours.

CRYSTAL: Your child. Didn't your precious grandmother say it was not yours.

Pause.

ASHER: Whats that supposed to mean?

CRYSTAL: For get it. I'm just messing with you. Anyway babe, Walmart is having a sale so I need some money.

Asher considers.

ASHER: I'm kinda low on cash right now babe.

CRYSTAL: What?

ASHER: I don't have any money.

CRYSTAL: Then what good are you.

ASHER: Excuse me.

CRYSTAL: You are pathetic you know that. I've been looking forward to the day when you would give me a reason to step.

ASHER: What?

CRYSTAL: Yeah babe. There are bigger fishes in the sea than you right now. I don't need you anymore.

ASHER: (laughs unable to believe what he is hearing) I cant believe you just said that. Woman you're carrying my child.

CRYSTAL: Actually your grandmother was right. This is not your child.

Asher is caught between a desire to run or to beat the hell out of this woman.

ASHER: I've spent so much money on you.

CRYSTAL: I know. That's why I'm still here honey. You have nothing else that I want.

ASHER: Get out.

CRYSTAL: Oh, did I awake the big bad wolf.

ASHER: GET OUT.

Crystal flashes past him and exits.

Sweetiepie comes back out.

SWEETIEPIE: You okay Asher.

Asher exits without responding.

SWEETIEPIE: Dear Lord when will this boy stop running.

LIGHTS OUT

ACT II - SCENE IV

LIGHTS UP

Asher onstage pacing back and forth.

ASHER: Why me huh? No matter how hard I try, trouble always seem to follow me. What did I do to deserve this huh?

No response.

ASHER: An answer would be good thou great and mighty God...but knowing you I can expect you to respond in silence right? Yeah, I thought so.

Just then a man and his family is walking by. They seem to be having a good Time. The man, his wife and daughter is having ice cream.

ASHER: That could have been me. Why couldn't I have that? Don't I deserve anything good. What did that man do to be so happy? He aint no better than I am. What do they have to be so happy about?

Asher suddenly realizes that the gentleman looks familiar. He tries to walk away Before he's seen...but it is too late. The man, Adam, recognizes him and comes Over with his family.

ADAM: I don't believe my eyes. Asher James...preacher boy...is that you?

ASHER: (pretending that he doesn't recognize Adam) Yeah that's me...Asher James...and you are?

ADAM: Its me....Adam....Adam Rollings remember. Little Addy from Miss Wilburns Sunday school class.

ASHER: Mmm...Adam Rollings (pretends to ponder) Oh Adam. Yes I do remember now. How you doing man?

ADAM: You know I can't complain. Lifes been good. Got myself a wife and daughter and (touches wifes belly) another is on the way....oh by the way...Asher meet my wife Terry, my daughter Jewel and soon to be born son Josh (gestures to Terry's stomach)

ASHER: Nice to meet you all.

ADAM: Yeah, God has been real good to me. I can truly say I'm blessed and highly favoured of the Lord. But enough about me....how have you been ma man?

ASHER: Yeah, I've been good. Life has treated me well. I got me a good job.
Yeah...never better.

ADAM: No little Ashers or Mrs. Asher.

ASHER: Nah...family just aint for everybody you know....(with a tone of sadness)
maybe especially not for me.

ADAM: Man, do you even hear what you're saying. I can't believe you would say
something like that and obviously you don't really mean it. What happened to you man,
you don't sound like the Asher I know.

ASHER: Things change and so do people.

ADAM: True that...but cmon man...you can't honestly stand there and tell me that
you've never felt the need to have a family.

ASHER: Well...I wouldn't say that.

ADAM: Then what are you saying bro? You don't belong to a church no more? What
happened to all the godly principles you used to speak so highly about?

ASHER: They died with my past.

Adam signals for Terry and Jewel to go wait for him offstage.

They exit before Adam speaks another word.

ASHER: You don't have to hang around me if you don't want. Your family needs you.
Feel free to go to them.

Pause.

ADAM: Asher...I don't know if I can help but its my duty to try. Principles don't die.
They just get shoved one side or replaced.

ASHER: Why does everybody think that they need to lecture me about my life?

ADAM: Instead of complaining why not be grateful that there are people who care about
you. Yes, its your life but you're not living it the way you're supposed to....the way you
were called to.

ASHER: Who decides that?

ADAM: You do. Asher, you have greatness bent up in your bones but you have chosen a
lifestyle of denial. I know that even with achievements you get lonely sometimes...no

one to share it with and it makes you miserable. I know that deep down inside you yearn for true love....and in the midst of it all your heart searches for your creator....your comforter....

ASHER: Adam...its easy for you to talk like this. You've not been through what I've been through. You had a father and a mother who loved you.

ADAM: You of all people should know where me and my folks are coming from...or have you forgotten.

Asher tries to remember.

ADAM: You don't remember what I've been through...where God has brought me from? You don't remember that it was your testimony that kept me going when I thought I couldn't make it. I was like you once...remember.

ASHER: Actually I don't.

ADAM: Then let me remind you. Yeah I had both parents but it was a life of abuse. For years my father abused me and my mother. I met you at the end of that road Asher. You were something else at your church. You told me that all things work together for good to them that love the Lord and I believed you. That faith took me through and saved both my parents. Now you have become who I was Asher...lost and confused. But you just need to remember who God is.

ASHER: Or maybe I just don't know my way back okay.

ADAM: Jesus said I am the way, the truth and the life. If you know Jesus you know the way brother. God is always waiting with open arms to receive his children. Just remember always that in the end nothing else matters but him.

Adam rest a reassuring hand on Adams shoulder.

ADAM: Go home Asher. Stop running.

Asher nods in tears as his friend leaves him standing there onstage with his Thoughts.

The Bishop enters with a state of emergency.

BISHOP: Asher...come quick. Sweetiepie has been admitted to the hospital.

ASHER: What?

BISHOP: Lets go quickly boy. Ask me your questions in the car.

They exit.

LIGHTS OUT

ACT II - SCENE V

LIGHTS UP

Asher is alone in the apartment with his thoughts.

The Bishop enters.

BISHOP: Hey there son.

ASHER: Hey Bishop.

Bishop makes himself at home.

BISHOP: Yeah well...I think you probably have a million and one questions so I just thought maybe you would want some company.

ASHER: Yeah its fine. You practically live here anyway.

BISHOP: Uhm, me and SP we go way back.

ASHER: I know.

BISHOP: So how you holding up?

ASHER: I don't know. So much has happened over the past few days...I don't know how I feel. All the wounds of the past that I've tried to cover up have now been reopen. Even the death of Tommy. It feels like it happened yesterday....my father...my mother...now my grandmother....(tears come)....I thought I was in control of my life you know....but I'm not, am I?

BISHOP: No son. You aren't. You never were.

ASHER: Yeah, feel free to lie a little so the truth don't hit me so hard okay.

BISHOP: Lying is an unnecessary detour in life Asher. Why not just face the truth and get it over and done with.

ASHER: Why not?

BISHOP: We're just clay in our master's hand. Sometimes he breaks us to make us into newer, better vessels.

ASHER: A necessary process I presume.

BISHOP: Quite so.

ASHER: So what do I do now?

BISHOP: I think you should allow the Potter to do his work.

Pause.

More tears come.

BISHOP: You see your trials come to make you strong, and the storms won't last too long ...it's only temporary....weeping may endure for a night but joy comes in the morning.

ASHER: God forgive me. Forgive me for not trusting you all these years...give me the strength and the courage to have faith in you....now and forever.

BISHOP: Amen.

Bishop hugs Asher who is still in tears.

BISHOP: Welcome home son.

LIGHTS FADE TO BLACK.