

"Build"

by

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Build

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CHARACTERS

Leslie	The director (male or female).
Jason	The actor playing Tyler.
Kelly	The actor playing Rachel.
Angela	The actor playing Tyler's mom.
Michael	The actor playing Tyler's dad.
Lisa	The costume designer.
Raymond	The stage manager.
Alex	The board operator.

SETTING

On a stage.

TIME

One week before opening.

"Build"

ii

SCENES

ACT I

Scene 1      On stage.

Now

"All the world's a stage and most of us are desperately  
unrehearsed."

-- Sean O'Casey

ACT I

SCENE 1

(LIGHTS UP. The STAGE is set like a living room, with a couch, paints on the wall, coffee-table; as much of the whole nine yards as is available. JASON, who plays Tyler, sits upon the couch, cradling a beer.)

JASON

Rachel broke my heart when she left. Here it took me every part of my being to open up to another person, after everything I'd been through growing up, and she just dashed it to the floor, thinking it was resilient: like a squish toy, or like, a hackey-sack. But it wasn't. It was a dinner plate, fragile china that she just took off the shelf and smashed to the ground.

(He takes a swig from the beer.)

JASON

So here I'm left with all these shards and I'm trying to piece them together with Super Glue...

(RAYMOND, sitting in the audience, the stage manager, sitting with a copy of the script, chimes in.)

RAYMOND

Krazy Glue.

JASON

What's that, Raymond?

RAYMOND

The line is, "So here I'm left with all these shards and I'm trying to piece them together with Krazy Glue, and the fragments just stick to my fingers, making it impossible to fix."

JASON

(shielding eyes from the lights, trying to see Raymond)

Right. Well I knew the line. Leslie, does it really make a difference whether I say "Super Glue" or "Krazy Glue"?

(LESLIE, the director, sitting to one side of Raymond, stands up.)

LESLIE

Jason, our producer has business interests in Krazy Glue and we can't very well promote his competitor, can we?

JASON

No, no, I guess not.

LESLIE

Thanks, Jason. Can we take it from the top?

JASON

Do you mean top of show or top of the monologue?

LESLIE

Top of the monologue. Please, Jason.

(ALEX, the booth operator, calls down to Leslie.)

ALEX

Just him or do you want the whole transition again, Leslie?

LESLIE

We're a week from opening, what do you think, Alex?

ALEX

(beat)

So...you want me to bring the lights back, Leslie?

LESLIE

(holding back exasperation)

Yes, please, Alex.

ALEX

All right. Standby. Going dark!

(From backstage, along with Jason, we hear three other voices say:)

JASON, ACTORS

Thank you dark!

(Leslie smacks head. Sits. BLACKOUT. After a beat, the LIGHTS come UP again. Jason has returned to his initial position.)

JASON

(exactly as before)

Rachel broke my heart when she left. Here it took me every part of my being to open up to another person, after everything I'd been through growing up, and she just dashed it to the floor, thinking it was resilient: like a squish toy, or like, a hackey-sack. But it wasn't. It was a dinner plate, fragile china that she just took off the shelf and smashed to the ground.

(He takes a swig from the beer.)

JASON

So here I'm left with all these shards and I'm trying to piece them together with Super Glue, and the fragments just...

RAYMOND

You said it again!

JASON

I said what again?

RAYMOND

"Super Glue"! We changed it to "Krazy Glue"!

JASON

I'm sorry. I learned it as "Super Glue."

RAYMOND

But we changed it to "Krazy Glue."

JASON

I know. I'm just having trouble remembering the line change. I'll have it right by opening.

LESLIE

I know you will, Jason, but we'd appreciate it if you could get it right now.

JASON

I'll try. From the top again?

LESLIE

(sighs)

Yes. No. Wait. (beat) Kelly! Can you come out here?

(We hear Kelly from OFF-STAGE.)

KELLY

Shit...ow...Okay, Leslie, I'm coming. Just give me a minute.

(Kelly, who plays Rachel, enters wearing a cut-off t-shirt and sweatpants, holding her script.)

LESLIE

(beat)

Where's your costume, Kelly?

KELLY

Well, I just did my last scene, I figured I was done and could get comfortable.

(LISA, the costume designer, sitting to the opposite side of Raymond, jumps up.)

LISA

Are you saying my costuming is uncomfortable?

KELLY

No, Lisa, I'm saying I thought I was done.

LISA

You could live in those costumes, I designed them to be very comfortable...

KELLY

(looking to the director)

Leslie?

LESLIE

Lisa, you did wonderful work. The costumes look fabulous and everyone says they're really comfortable...

(MICHAEL, who plays Tyler's father, sticks his head out from one of the WINGS.)

MICHAEL

They are, Lisa, they really are. I'm tempted to steal mine after the run to use as pajamas.

LISA

(beat)

You want to wear my costume as pajamas...?

LESLIE

Thanks for the help, Michael, I got it from here.  
Please just wait at your mark.

(Michael exits.)

LESLIE

Please, Lisa, we need to get through this.

(Lisa looks at Leslie, harumphs, then  
sits.)

LESLIE

Always fighting fires. No, Kelly, could you do me a  
favor?

KELLY

What's that, Les?

LESLIE

Could you have Rachel dancing around the stage behind  
Tyler as he's talking?

KELLY

But Rachel left.

LESLIE

I know she did, it's a metaphor.

KELLY

You want me to just improvise a dance?

LESLIE

Yes please.

KELLY

In that costume?

LISA

(jumping up from her seat)

There is nothing wrong with that costume, it's very  
flexible! You could do splits in that thing!

KELLY

Bitch, have you tried on that thing? Oh, that's right,  
your fat thighs wouldn't fit into my costume. There  
won't be any splits.



LISA

What?! I...I don't have to take this abuse! I've won awards for my work! All you've ever gotten is a write-up in the free paper!

(Lisa ambles out the AUDIENCE and exits.)

KELLY

I was trained at Tisch, thank you very much!

LESLIE

(in stage whisper, to Raymond)

I swear to God, if I could I'd trash this whole production and start over.

RAYMOND

I don't blame you.

LESLIE

Kelly, honey. Could you just do it now? I don't know if it'll make it in the show, I just want to see how it looks. Try starting hiding behind the couch and make your movements reflect what Tyler's saying.

KELLY

Okay, Leslie. When do you want me to quit hiding?

LESLIE

Uh...(looking at Raymond's script)...how about "Here it took every part of me"?

KELLY

You got it Les.

LESLIE

(in stage whisper, to Raymond)

I hate it when she calls me that. (loud) Okay, from the top of the scene again!

ALEX

You want the light transition again?

LESLIE

(turning in seat)

Yes, Alex, I want the goddamn light transition! (beat) Please. Thank you.

ALEX

Okay. Standby. Going dark!

JASON, ACTORS

Thank you, dark!

BLACKOUT. LIGHTS UP. Kelly's dance is terrible, and extremely distracting to Jason, as she keeps upstaging him.

JASON

Rachel broke my heart when she left. Here it took me every part of my being to...open up to another person, after everything...I'd...I'd been through...been through growing up, and she...she just dashed it to the floor, thinking it was res...thinking it was...Leslie! That's, like, seriously distracting.

LESLIE

Stop! Kelly! What are you doing?

KELLY

You said, "improv a dance." That's what I'm doing.

LESLIE

I also said, "behind Tyler." Why are you downstage?

KELLY

(shrugs)

It felt right. There's not a lot of room back here to move.

LESLIE

You're going to be in a constricting dress! You can't do three-quarters of the movements you were doing!

KELLY

You are going to keep me in that thing?

LESLIE

Just...just tone it down. (to Raymond) The balance was off there, wasn't it?

RAYMOND

(stage whisper)

HER balance was off, and I don't mean physically.

LESLIE

You're not helping. (beat) Michael! Angela!

(Michael and ANGELA, playing Tyler's parents, poke their head out one WING.)

TOGETHER

Yes, Leslie?

LESLIE

Can you do me a favor and stand on either side of the stage? Downstage? Off to the sides, like right in front of the wings?

ANGELA

But Michael and I are about to enter.

LESLIE

I know that. This probably won't be in the play, I just want to see it, okay?

ANGELA, MICHAEL

Okay.

(They fight amongst themselves briefly over who gets which side. Angela gets the one near their entrance, Michael carts across the stage. When they're in position:)

LESLIE

All right, top of the scene again!

MICHAEL

Er...Leslie?

LESLIE

Yes, Michael?

MICHAEL

What's Angela and my motivation here?

LESLIE

You have none. This isn't a scene. I'm trying to help Jason focus for Tyler.

ANGELA

If we're on stage we have to have a motivation.

LESLIE

(to Raymond)

If I could I would.

RAYMOND

You'd have to replace me too. I'm never doing this show again.

LESLIE

(to Angela)

You motivation is to help Tyler remember his roots,  
where he came from, his strength.

ANGELA

Oh, okay. Got it.

LESLIE

We ready?

(Everyone nods or says consent.)

LESLIE

All right then, top of monologue, with light  
transition, thank you!

ALEX

Going dark!

JASON, ACTORS

Thank you dark!

(BLACKOUT. LIGHTS UP. As soon as Jason starts, Angela turns back to look at Jason. Kelly's dance is still awful, now with improv costume restriction, but remains behind the couch. By "open up to another person" Angela is holding Jason's hand, waving for Michael to join them but he's stock-still in his position like a deer in the headlights.)

JASON

Rachel broke my heart when she left. Here it took me every part of my being to open up to another person, after everything I've been through...

LESLIE

Cut! Stop! What the hell is going on? Angela, what are you doing? I told you where to stand.

ANGELA

I know, but this felt right for my character.

LESLIE

Your character is an abusive alcoholic, not a nurturer.

ANGELA

Not when my baby's heart is breaking.

LESLIE

Take a break! Take a break! All of you, off my stage, now! Go away for fifteen minutes. (beat, everyone lingers) Now!

(Exeunt, in various directions. Leslie ambles to the stage and sits, defeated, on the couch.)

LESLIE

What am I going to do Ray? This thing's a mess. We open in a week and we have no show.

RAYMOND

(making his way to the couch onstage)  
I told you we should have done The Chairs. Smaller cast, less costuming, easy lighting...

LESLIE

I know, I know! You're right, we should have! But we've got this steaming pile on our hands. So what do we do?

RAYMOND

(sitting on the couch next to Leslie)  
What you always do: work it hard and pull a show out your ass.

(Leslie looks at Raymond somewhat annoyed. BLACKOUT. END.)