

Can't see, won't see

A single scene play

estimated running time: 15 minutes

Synopsis:

After being told of his suicide, FIONA sees the ghost of her boyfriend MARK. She remonstrates with Mark and tells him that she did love him, that she would have run off with him and taken her family's money with her. In fact, Mark is not dead. It is a trick played on Fiona to get her money by Mark and LUKE, Mark's secret lover. Mark shoots Fiona backstage. While gathering up the money, the two men see shapes in the darkness. Panicked, Luke shoots Mark. As he tries to dispose of Fiona, she rises from the dead to kill him. It was a double betrayal by Mark and Fiona. The gun was firing blanks. They leave Luke's body with Mark's suicide note. It's written in Luke's own hand. Even though he handled it, he never noticed that the suicide note of Mark, the man he thought he controlled, was in fact his own. With Luke, like Fiona, it was can't see or won't see.

Characters:

Mark, Luke and Fiona, all ordinary looking folk in their twenties.

Family suitability:

The play is suitable from secondary school age onwards (as far as I can ascertain). There is some mild blasphemy, fake blood, audio gunshots and some scary moments.

Technical requirements:

Although there is shooting in the play, there is no need for a gun to fire. The actual moment of the shooting is always in darkness or occurs off-stage. The gunshot can therefore be a sound effect.

Two of the actors will need to have fake blood on them.

The only props in the play are a table, two chairs, a glass of water and some pills, a torch and a gun. A low window is also required, facing the back of the stage.

Scene 1 (of one).

INTERIOR. ROOM - NIGHT.

A table and two chairs sit, centre stage, lit by a lamp. The rest of the room is low lit. There is an entrance on the near left and another on the rear right. A window faces away from the audience.

FIONA enters. She paces across the stage with a phone in her hand. She is desperate.

FIONA: Come on. Come on!

LUKE enters. Fiona turns and looks at him.

Where is he? Where is he, Luke?

LUKE: I went looking for him. I went back to his flat. It was empty.

FIONA: Where is Mark?

Luke walks over unsteadily to the table. He leans against it.

LUKE: So I went to the gazebo. The one where we had that midnight picnic. You remember that one?

Luke rubs his face.

That's where he was. He'd used a gun.

Fiona collapses in tears.

Luke goes over and kneels beside her, trying to comfort her.

LUKE: Hey, come on.

FIONA: No. It's not possible!

LUKE: Sit. Sit down.

LUKE guides FIONA to the table.

She sits down.

LUKE: I'm sorry.

FIONA: He can't have! He can't have killed himself! Why? Why would he do that? He wouldn't do that. Oh god. I can't believe it. Oh Jesus.

Luke takes a piece of paper from his pocket.

LUKE: I found this by his body, before the police arrived.

He shows her the piece of paper.

She glances at the note, without touching it. She cries.

I had to take it. I had to leave him there. If the police found this, they'd ask you questions. The whole thing, you and him, it would be out in the open. Fiona, I did the right thing, didn't I?

FIONA: Oh Mark.

She gets up and walks aimlessly.

Luke turns the paper around on the table and reads it.

LUKE: What does it mean, 'if you won't be with me, then I'd rather be gone'?

FIONA: He, he proposed to me. I said no.

LUKE: But I thought you two were in love?

FIONA: We were.

She cries.

It's not what you think, Luke. I did love him. We loved each other, but I couldn't let him marry me. Don't you understand? If he was with me, if he was married to me, he'd start to hate me, start to hate being with me. I'm not well, Luke. I'd drive him away, or drive him nuts. That's why I said no! I said no for him.

LUKE: But you're better. You're much better now. You're getting well.

FIONA: Well? That's a laugh.

LUKE: It's not you anyway. It's this house. There's something wrong with this place.

LUKE (CONT): Can't you feel it? That's why Mark loved the garden, the gazebo. It was away from this place.

FIONA: It's just a house. It's just four walls.

LUKE: Your family have rotted and died in this house! Reared in the shadows among wax and dust. Ghouls, all of them!

FIONA: Don't. Not now.

Her hands shake.

Can you get my pills please, Luke?

LUKE: Okay.

Luke exits, front stage left.

Fiona looks at the note again. She puts her hands to her face and weeps.

The room beyond the table's light darkens a little.

Fiona shivers. She looks around her.

FIONA: Luke?

There is no answer. Fiona looks around nervously. She starts to sing a song in a tremulous voice.

In all the fires of evening, in all the lights of night, I see a life still gleaming, I see a heart still bright.

From out of the shadows, Mark appears. He has a terrible wound in his chest. He is holding a gun.

Fiona takes her hands from her face. She sees Mark. She chokes back a scream.

Mark. No. You're not standing there. You're dead. I can't see you.

Mark steps forward towards the table.

Fiona gets up off the chair, knocking it over. She backs away across the floor.

You're not real. You're not real!

Luke enters, front stage left.

LUKE: What's going on?

FIONA: He's there, Luke. I can see him!

LUKE: Mark?

FIONA: Yes, there. Standing there with blood on him.

LUKE: Come back to the table. Sit down.

Fiona looks at him in fear. She makes herself walk back to the table.

I have your pills.

Luke leads her back to the table.

FIONA: I can't see you, Mark. I won't see you!

Luke helps Fiona sit down.

LUKE: Take them one at a time.

Fiona takes the pills. She puts them all in her mouth and drinks the water.

FIONA: He's not there.

LUKE: You say it. You have the strength to do that. He would never haunt you. He loved you, Fiona.

FIONA: He loved me. Yeah, he loved me didn't he? And look what that's done, him loving me. Look what that's done! I would have done it. I would have gone away with him. I didn't care about what they all said. The whole stinking lot of them could die for all I care. I loved him. I would have gone away with him.

She pulls open a drawer in the table.

I got out the money. I got it all out.

She lifts up a slim bag of cash.

We could have gone together. Escaped.

She looks at the bag.

Wasted.

She throws the cash and the slim bag on the floor.

She looks over at Mark. She stands up and walks a little towards him.

FIONA (CONT): Haunt me, go on! I was scared! I was scared. I'm always scared! I was thinking of you. Why would you want to be with a nutcase? A screaming messed up shell of a woman?

She slumps to the floor, weeping.

Mark steps forward. Fiona scrambles up.

Keep away from me, Mark! Don't torment me!

LUKE: He's not real, Fiona. Tell yourself he's not real.

Mark takes another step forward.

Fiona gets up and staggers backwards.

FIONA: It's not fair. I didn't want to hurt you. I would never hurt you. Keep away from me.

She backs away, into the shadows at the back of the room. Mark turns towards her. Fiona grips her hands into fist.

I'm not going to believe this. You're not real. You're in my mind.

MARK: Selfish.

FIONA: What?

LUKE: What did he say?

FIONA: I'm not. I'm not. There's the money! I got the money out.

MARK: Selfish.

FIONA: I'm not selfish. That's all I could get out! They won't give me the access to any more. They keep me here like a bird in a cage. A mad bird tearing at its feathers.

Mark raises the gun.

FIONA: No. You would never do that.

Mark aims the gun at her.

You're not real, Mark. You're in my head. I can make you go away. I will not see you.

There is silence for a moment.

Luke looks at Mark.

LUKE: Go on, shoot her.

FIONA: What?

She looks wide eyed at Luke and Mark.

Mark.

Mark walks towards her. She backs away into the doorway of the rear stage right exit.

You can't be doing this.

Mark and Fiona both exit, rear stage right.

(OFF STAGE) Mark! Please!

There is a shot from off stage.

Luke leans back in his chair.

Mark enters, rear stage right.

He sits down opposite Luke and tosses the gun on the table.

LUKE: Finally. Jesus, all that effort and she didn't even have access to the accounts.

MARK: You're a psycho.

Luke leans across the table, trying to stroke Mark's hands.

LUKE: Hey, lover, don't get like that. You put her out of her misery. Ended her pain.

MARK: You liked it, didn't you? You liked seeing her realise I'd betrayed her. That I was going to kill her. You get a kick out of that.

LUKE: No! No way. Jesus, baby. Hey. She was screwed up. She's nuts. She didn't want to go on anyway. Look, we got what we wanted, what we planned for. The money.

LUKE (CONT): We can go away together. Like we planned, remember? You and me.

Mark says nothing.

We deserve it. We both deserve it. She was in pain.

Luke tires of persuading Mark.

Look, we've got to leave. Her doctor's going to turn up soon. Let's get the money and go. The train leaves in twenty minutes.

Luke gets and begins gathering up the money, scattered over the floor.

Mark watches him. He gets up and helps.

They hear a door swing from offstage.

MARK: What was that?

LUKE: Nothing. For Christ's sake, she's the one we were trying to rattle.

MARK: Are you sure we're alone?

LUKE: Yes! They're all in Aspen, or sleeping in their coffins downstairs. (PAUSE) I'm joking! Jesus, just keep picking up the money.

MARK: There is something about this house. I felt it when I was with her. It sucks the heart out of you. No wonder. (PAUSE) Screw this!

Mark tosses the money he's holding in the air.

What I am doing. What's wrong with me?

LUKE: Nothing's wrong with you.

MARK: It's you! What have you done?

LUKE: Don't blame me. I helped you.

MARK: You twisted scum! You cruel, cold bastard!

Luke steps forward and slaps Mark hard on the face.

LUKE: You shut up now. You shut up good and proper.
You're making me angry now.

Mark stares at Luke.

MARK: Okay.

LUKE: That's good. Hey, don't get sad. We're just rattled, okay?

MARK: Okay.

LUKE: Babe. You were good. You did a great job. She never suspected you.

MARK: No, she didn't, did she?

LUKE: Not for a single moment.

MARK: She wanted it to be true, she couldn't have seen it was wrong, if it was right in front of her face.

LUKE: Yeah. You did real good. We've got lots money. Everything now is just great.

The lights go out. The stage is plunged in darkness.

What? What's happened?

MARK: The generator. They have their own generator. It must have failed.

LUKE: The torch. Where's your torch?

MARK: It's here, in my pocket. I'll get it.

Mark takes a square torch from his pocket and puts it on the table.

The torch's weak light shines towards the back of the stage.

LUKE: Right. Now. Let's get the money and get out of here.

They both kneel down and start picking up the money from the floor.

Something darts through the black shadows at the back of the stage.

Jesus! What was that?

MARK: What was what?

LUKE: Oh no.

MARK: What was what?!

LUKE: The money. Get the money.

They continue picking up the money.

Another dim shape darts through the deep shadows.

Come on. Come on! What's going on? What the hell is going on? (PAUSE) You didn't kill her. That's what's going on. You didn't kill her.

MARK: Of course I killed her. Don't torment me. You wanted me to kill her. There's something back there, isn't there? There's something in this house.

LUKE: Get the money.

Luke dumps the cash he's gathered on the desk.

A door slams.

Get the body.

MARK: What?

LUKE: Get the body. She needs to go out the window, remember?

Luke walks to the window, dimly visible in the torch light.

He opens the window. Mark stands up.

MARK: I ain't going back there.

LUKE: It's okay, baby. Remember, It's better if it's suicide. She was nuts, wasn't she? Everyone will believe it.

MARK: I shot her!

LUKE: From this height, no one will know the difference. Go on. It'll be fine.

MARK: It's her ghost.

- LUKE: Get the body!
- Mark stares at Luke. He dumps the money he's picked up on the table.*
- He walks to the exit, rear stage right.*
- Luke walks back to the table. He looks at the money, the note and the gun.*
- Mark returns, carrying Fiona.*
- MARK: She's cold already.
- He lays Fiona down in front of the window.*
- I can't throw her out.
- LUKE: She's dead!
- MARK: I know she's dead! I killed her but I can't just throw her out the window.
- LUKE: You've gone nuts! We don't have time for this!
- MARK: We're all nuts! If we're not, there's something wrong with us!
- LUKE: All right. All right. Let's stay calm. If we stay calm, we'll be okay. No one will spot us if we stay calm.
- There is a scream from back stage.*
- MARK: Shit. She's still alive.
- Mark scrambles to get the torch.*
- LUKE: Mark!
- Mark grabs the torch. He swings it madly around.*
- MARK: Die, you mad freak, die!
- Mark fires the gun in a moment of darkness.*
- He swings the torch back towards Fiona. A new splash of blood is sprayed across her still body.*
- LUKE: You nut! Give me the gun!
- MARK: Who's there? Who's there? Come on out!

Mark fires the gun again.

LUKE: Give me the gun! Give me the gun!

Luke grapples with Mark. They fall to the floor.

They wrestle with each other. Luke punches Mark.

MARK: Ah!

LUKE: Stay down! Stay down!

MARK: Christ! My arm!

The commotion stops.

They both slowly get up. Luke is holding the torch. he shines it on Mark.

LUKE: I'm sorry. I'm really sorry, Mark my love. I got scared. We all get scared sometimes, don't we? I'll make it better for you soon, real soon. It'll all be fine.

Luke steps back from Mark.

I'll push her out the window. You just relax.

MARK: My arm.

LUKE: You just relax. Are you relaxed?

MARK: No.

LUKE: That's good. By the way, Mark.

MARK: What?

LUKE: You were right, babe. I do get a kick out of it. A big kick.

He swings the torch full on Mark.

Mark sees the gun in Luke's hand, pointed at him.

MARK: No. You cruel bastard!

LUKE: Not me. I hate the sight of blood.

Luke turns off the torch.

The gun blasts out.

Luke turns the torch back on. Blood is oozing from Mark's chest.

LUKE (CONT): Yuk.

Mark collapses on the floor.

Luke puts the gun and torch on the table, positioning the torch so it shines at Mark's body, Fiona's body and the window beyond.

Luke steps over the two prone bodies as he walks over to the window. He leans out.

Nice night for a suicide, Fiona my dear.

Fiona stands up.

She grabs Luke's legs and pushes him out the window.

No!

He disappears from sight.

Fiona stands up. She looks out the window.

She walks away from the window to where Mark is lying. She kneels down and kisses him on the forehead.

Mark turns over and gets up.

She and Mark embrace.

MARK: It worked.

FIONA: Thank you.

MARK: We did it.

FIONA: You believed in me.

MARK: Yeah.

They kiss again.

Mark walks to the back of the stage.

He flicks a switch. The lights come back on.

Mark walks over to the window and looks out.

MARK CONT): He got his suicide.

FIONA: Will they believe that?

MARK: No signs of struggle. No bullets from a gun that only fired blanks.

Mark steps over to the table.

And a suicide note on the table.

FIONA: But that was your note.

MARK: I forged his handwriting.

FIONA: What?

Fiona steps towards the note on the table.

MARK: Don't touch it. It's only got his prints on it.

FIONA: But he would have noticed. His own writing?

MARK: And faced the fact he'd been betrayed, that he was being cheated? Won't see, Fiona. Won't see, can't see.

Mark picks up the piles of money.

He stuffs them back in the slim bag.

Come on. We'll still be able to catch that train.

He holds his hand out. FIONA takes it.

They leave, stage left.

END.