

# **BREAK**

*a One-Act Play*

*by Monique Brown*

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### **STORY OF THE PLAY**

Kyle, William, Natalie, and Richard are not likely friends. With different backgrounds, from different worlds, they never would have met outside of the subway station. Even there, wrapped up in themselves, they never would have spoken to one another. But when a subway car stops unexpectedly, they have no where to run. Battling individual demons and unable to control their frustration any longer, they have no choice but to turn to one another. As expected, they experience conflict as their personalities clash and tensions rise. In the midst of crisis, with nothing but time, these four strangers reflect on their childhoods, remembering single events that underlie their current insecurities and define the people they are presently. Slowly, they begin to realize that pain is something everyone understands, no matter where it comes from. Despite initial difficulties, they bond in their shared experience and must look ahead, together, in hopes of coming out stronger on the other side of the darkness.

### **Running Time**

30 minutes

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## **CAST OF CHARACTERS**

*(4 m, 2 w)*

**KYLE:** A high school student.

**NATALIE:** Another high school student.

**RICHARD:** Another high school student.

**WILLIAM:** Another high school student.

**ONE:** Female. Plays Kyle's mother, William's girlfriend,  
Natalie's mother, and playground kid.

**TWO:** Male. Plays Kyle's father, Natalie's father, other  
playground kid, and offstage voice of train conductor.

**TIME:** The present.

**PLACE:** A subway car.

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**ORIGINAL PRODUCTION**

**Break** was first presented as part of the Florida Playwrights' Process in 2001 under the direction of Pam Reed, with dramaturgy by Jim Rayfield and Production Stage Management by Emily Nettnin. The cast was as follows:

ONE..... Layla Seale  
TWO ..... Dominic Bertolami  
KYLE ..... Adam Thompson  
NATALIE ..... Chelsea Canning  
RICHARD ..... Henry Zebrowski  
WILLIAM..... Eric Koroknay

The playwright would like to thank the Florida Playwrights' Process and Elizabeth Brincklow, FPP Artistic and Program Director, for their invaluable assistance in the development of this work.

*The Florida Playwrights' Process is an integral part of The PACT Institute for the Performing Arts, the education department of PACT, Inc./Ruth Eckerd Hall located at The Richard B. Baumgardner Center for the Performing Arts, Clearwater, Florida.*

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## BREAK

*(CURTAIN rises to reveal a dark stage. Slowly a SPOTLIGHT rises center stage where ONE and TWO stand dressed completely in black. THEY speak stoically and monotone.)*

ONE: You talk.

TWO: No one hears.

ONE: You scream.

TWO: No one listens.

ONE: You cry.

TWO: No one comforts.

ONE: You plead.

TWO: No one cares.

*(ONE and TWO remain stoic as the SPOTLIGHT dims. Gray SPOTLIGHT appears DSR where KYLE stands.)*

KYLE: *(Exasperated.)* Why can't you listen to me?

*(SPOTLIGHT dims, as a red SPOTLIGHT appears DSL where WILLIAM stands.)*

WILLIAM: *(Furious.)* Accept me! Accept me!

*(SPOTLIGHT dims as a blue SPOTLIGHT appears USL where NATALIE is huddled in the fetal position.)*

NATALIE: *(Hopeless.)* Why won't anybody love me?

*(SPOTLIGHT dims as an orange SPOTLIGHT appears USR where RICHARD stands.)*

RICHARD: *(Glancing around frantically.)* Stop laughing at me!

*(SPOTLIGHT dims. SPOTLIGHT rises CS where ONE and TWO still stand stoically.)*

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ONE: You talk.  
TWO: No one hears.  
ONE: You scream.  
TWO: No one listens.  
ONE: You cry.  
TWO: No one comforts.  
ONE: You plead.  
TWO: No one cares.

*(Long pause.)*

ONE: You break.

*(SPOTLIGHT dims. ONE and TWO exit SR. Full LIGHTS come up to reveal a subway car. The seats are long benches where 3 people can sit comfortably. Two benches sit UPS, facing the audience. Four more benches sit in a row facing the right wings. A large space remains DSR where no benches sit. KYLE sits on the DS bench closest to SR. He wears headphones and stares into space. RICHARD sits on the USR bench with his arms crossed, looking down with eyes closed, asleep. NATALIE sits on the USL bench, reading a book. WILLIAM enters DSL as though through a door, wearing a backpack over one shoulder. He sits on the DS bench closest to SL and starts rifling through his backpack. The characters share a few moments of silence, lost in their own thoughts and ignoring each other. The car is empty except for them. They yawn, stretch, fidget, etc. The only SOUND is the whirl of the subway car as it moves through the tunnels. After a few moments, the train comes to a rather abrupt stop. The LIGHTS begin to blink, dim, and flicker. KYLE removes his headphones and glances around.)*

KYLE: What happened?

RICHARD: They haven't said yet.

KYLE: *(To HIMSELF mutters expletive. Then to RICHARD.)*

When are we going to move again?

RICHARD: They haven't said yet.

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KYLE: Is there a problem with the car?

RICHARD: (*Agitated.*) They haven't said yet!

(*An offstage VOICE suddenly comes on as the train driver.*)

ONE: (*Monotone.*) Passengers, we have come to a stop as the result of technical difficulties. The wait shouldn't be more than a few minutes. We'll alert you as soon as the situation changes. In the mean time, we do ask that you stay in your current subway car to prevent congestion. Thank you for your patience as we handle this situation.

RICHARD: There you go.

KYLE: (*Sarcastic.*) Thanks.

(*KYLE is obviously perturbed. He glances through the fourth wall as though it is a window, but soon grows bored. He seems to have forgotten his headphones, which lay carelessly next to his seat. He turns and looks at the other passengers briefly, and his eyes settle on NATALIE, or rather, her book.*)

KYLE: What are you reading? (*NATALIE shows no response.*) Excuse me, miss, what are you reading?

(*NATALIE suddenly looks up, surprised.*)

NATALIE: What? Oh! It's the new Anne McCaffrey novel.

(*Silence as KYLE stares at NATALIE. She waits, then getting no response, turns back to her book. Kyle suddenly speaks.*)

KYLE: Why?

NATALIE: Why what?

KYLE: Why would you want to fill your mind with that useless dribble?

NATALIE: Excuse me?

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