

PERFORMED FOR : **LIVING BEYOND MYSELF**

A Welcome Thing

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Drama That Works

DESCRIPTION:

2 men, 1 woman, and one girl about 15 years old

We worry about appropriateness often. How is this going to look? Is this okay? Maybe more than God does? That is the thought Ron probes as he tells to us the story of a fifteen year old girl in need of help. Sometimes in scenes with "young Hannah" and sometimes talking to the audience directly, Ron unfolds a story that brings together this girl and a most unlikely candidate – his bachelor brother, Paul. Ron witnesses first hand how Paul, who "doesn't care for people all that much..." stood up in church one Sunday to perform a simple act of compassion, radical in its social innappropriateness. An act that needed to be done. What does God call us to and why? It's simplified for Ron, "Appropriateness gives way to compassion in the mind of God."



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A WELCOME THING

(LIGHTS – The lights will come up on the “home”. The lights for the “home” should obviously include all the playing areas—foyer, kitchen/dining room, bathroom and all the imaginary hallways that connect them. The light should extend out a few more feet beyond the stage right edge of the set. The actors will be referring to a room just downstage and to the right of the bathroom, that we will not see, but I want to give the actors a little extra room so they won’t move out of light.)

(We see two men, a woman and a girl standing in what appears to be the foyer of a home. The two men are not wearing coats and the woman is just beginning to remove hers. The men are brothers, RON and PAUL. The women are JUNE and fifteen year-old HANNAH.)

(The stage is relatively bare except for a chair, coat rack and hanging light fixture in the foyer.)

(LIGHTS—Note: This hanging light fixture is a practical light, although at this time we can see that the light is not on.)

(A table and three chairs are found in the kitchen/dining room and a small stand with a vase containing a blue flower are found in the bathroom. The men are careful throughout the interaction.

PAUL asks HANNAH for her coat. HANNAH chooses to keep her coat on and will wear it almost throughout the scene. PAUL, JUNE and HANNAH will move from the foyer to the kitchen.

PAUL: Can I take your coat?

HANNAH: No I’ll hang onto it for now.

JUNE: This, is not how I remember it

PAUL: Well, we did some painting recently

(Ron reaches his lighting special on the downstage side of the wagon. LIGHTS—RON stays in the foyer area, steps to the downstage edge of the wagon. As he hits this mark, a smaller area of light around him comes up as the rest of the “home” comes down a bit.)

(Ron addresses the audience.)

RON: We know, don’t we, the way things are supposed to be. So we look to make a correction to the system that will take care of the poor and all the rest who

don't have what they're due from life... if we can just make the right adjustment to the system, well then everyone will have what they need, a home, a job, a family.

(LIGHTS—The special on Ron comes down and the lights on the rest of the area comes back up.

(RON re-enters scene in the kitchen.)

PAUL: And over here is the dishwasher, though it hasn't been used in a long time.

HANNAH: *(nothing)*

RON: Not sure it still works.

HANNAH: *(nothing)*

RON: S'pose you can try it if you like.

PAUL: Be good to make sure one of us is here—the seals and gaskets 'll probably leak.

RON: And the sink's there, and the microwave.

PAUL: That's only three, four years old.

RON: And the fridge. *(laughs)* Well, guess you don't need us telling you what's right in front of you.

JUNE: No, that's fine.

PAUL: *(assessing)* Well.

(RON moves on around corner, others shuffles after)

RON: *(as he passes by the pantry)* Pantry round the corner for cans and things.

JUNE: *(as she observes the lay of the land)* so, that's goes upstairs. What's this?

RON: Oh basement. Washer 'n' dryer. This switch is for that light *(he gestures towards the hanging light in the foyer)*. We gGot a bulb out.

PAUL: I'll take care of that that right now. *(he begins to move back to the kitchen)*

JUNE: You don't have to.

PAUL: Don't need anybody falling down and getting hurt or anything—it needs to be done.

(LIGHTS—Note: PAUL mimes getting a bulb from the pantry and moves to the foyer. He grabs the chair next to the coat rack and steps up on to it to change the bulb. He will remove the bulb from the hanging light, bring it down to his body as if exchanging it for a new one, and then replace the bulb.)

(As he is doing this RON addresses the audience.)

RON: “It needs to be done.” You're going to want to remember that. Okay, I'll deal you in—this is June and a young friend of hers—Hannah. *(re-engages in the scene)*

JUNE: So , this will work, huh?

HANNAH: Mmm.

RON: Down this way's is the powder room.

JUNE: “Powder room”?

RON: The... you know, the “commode”.

JUNE: *(humored)* The bathroom?

RON: Yeah, there's a bath in here, too. Or you can take a shower with that contraption.

JUNE: *(referring to a fake flower in a vase)* Well the blue flower is really nice. *(laughs)* I never knew you Soley boys had a decorating eye.

RON: *(He doesn't look at HANNAH.)*

(LIGHTS—By now Paul will be approaching the stage right edge of the wagon, which is where the imaginary switch for the hanging light is located.)

Paul did that. It's for Hannah. Figure it might be a welcome thing.

(LIGHTS—PAUL hits the imaginary switch and we will see the hanging light turn on.)

PAUL: Bingo!

JUNE: *(touched by the flower)* Well, isn't that sweet?

PAUL: *(PAUL heads to kitchen to throw away bulb. He speaks loud enough for the others to hear from the other room.)* That's all it was. Keep the spares here in the kitchen pantry—top shelf.

RON: *(to audience)* You don't know how long Paul struggled with finding something that would touch Hannah, he's a 47 year old mother hen already. Finally decided on the blue flower—went with a hunch, just like when he stood up last week in church. *(re-engages in the scene)*

PAUL: And ah, that your is your room over here. Not a lot of space outside the bed.

RON: That closet has a lot of storage in it, though. You can move stuff around however you like.

PAUL: *(slight pause, to RON)* Well, we'll go get things ready for dinner. *(PAUL exits to kitchen)*

RON: *(to audience)* Awkward moments will make you do things. Make you slid into APPROPRIATENESS. Like the awkwardness you're feeling watching this, lying all around your feet like a dew on the grass—'What's up with that guy?' Well, as Paul's brother, I can assure you there's nothing in it at all but a heart to bring joy to a child who's facing things they shouldn't be facing at fifteen. Somehow, her story got into him and being smart, proper, "APPROPRIATE"—slipped down his priority list a few notches. Now, he says whatever it takes to let a little ray of sunshine into her life, as small as it might be...a little humor, a little respect, a little love. *(returns to scene)*

JUNE: So, what do you think?

HANNAH: It's...Oh, it's so weird!

JUNE: I know, but Honey—you've got to let that go. These are all weird days now.

HANNAH: They're nice.

JUNE: They are. A bit odd sometimes, but as good as gold. I've known 'em my whole life. *(laughing)* I never would have thought of it but God's found you a fine place to live for the next few months.

RON: *(to audience)* June was in Paul's class all the way through High School. June's mom used to joke that they'd get married one day, have their own family but that never happened—Paul's still a bachelor, as am I—must be something in the water. We still go to the same church with June though—she's a good woman. We have no idea what we're in for. This house hasn't had a woman's touch for 23 years. *(returns to scene)*

HANNAH: What about then? After?

JUNE: Let's just deal with that when we get there, okay? Just stick to your school and work when you can. They'll take you to the doctor. If you need anything else you let them know.

HANNAH: *(sighs)*

JUNE: And you can always call me.

HANNAH: Only if I need to.

JUNE: I can't take you in, but I can talk anytime so you call me. Okey?

RON: *(to audience)* Hannah's mother won't have her any more. No other family. June was her teacher back in the 7th Grade...how desperate do you have to be to knock on an old teacher's door? This young woman has more courage than her shadow can hold. She stayed with June for two days but June's got a father whose Alzheimers is getting serious—he cornered young Hannah last week, while she was brushing her teeth. Scared her. Everybody's dealing with their stuff aren't they? *(returns to scene)*

HANNAH: I have to use the "powder room." *(HANNAH starts to enter bathroom)*

JUNE: *(stops HANNAH)* And don't think of yourself as a burden to them. They want to do this. They stepped up and said so—wasn't any arm twisting.

(HANNAH enters bathroom, JUNE enters kitchen)

RON: Still not sure.

JUNE: Neither's she.

RON: yeah

JUNE: I guess you don't get to be with things like this, you just jump.

RON: *(laughing)* Well, we sure did that, didn't we? *(to PAUL)* Have to credit you with that, Paul. Credit or blame—it's all on you.

JUNE: No blame! Paul got tugged by the Spirit. It wasn't his doing.

RON: She's gonna be okay out here with a couple over the hill bachelors?

JUNE: She's gonna bring a little sunshine into this old place—you just watch.

PAUL: Just want her to be comfortable.

JUNE: She's got a baby coming in three months—maybe getting used to comfortable isn't what she needs right now. Thank you boys...

RON: Yeah sure, we got the room like Paul says, besides... 'bout time we focus on something other than car parts, don't you think?

PAUL: We need to.

(LIGHTS—The lights in the “home” will remain the same, however a small area just downstage of the table and outside the home will come up to the same level as the rest of the house. Ron will cross downstage to this light and address the audience. This will be the only time that Ron steps out of the reality of the “home”.)

RON: So now the cat's out of the bag—she's pregnant. And two guys who don't know her are going to take her in. What do you make of that? *(pause, shaking his head, chuckling)* Yeah, me too. But for a second, go beyond what's appropriate, that's what Paul did. Go to the fact that here's a person with so little who's carrying so much. And here's a couple people *(PAUL and RON)* with more than enough and too little to care about. You know you don't hear a lot about this sort of thing, I didn't. Not until your pastor stands up in front of the church and talks about “putting feet to our faith” and “what's it going to take?” and “is God talking to YOU about this?” and that's when THE most unlikely candidate responds...

HANNAH: *(HANNAH returns to kitchen)* Mr. Soley?

(LIGHTS—Ron will be pulled back into the scene by Hannah's voice. As he crosses back upstage to the house. The light downstage of the table will fade out.)

RON: Upp... Upp ... Upp ... Upp ... have none of that. Ron and Paul.

HANNAH: Thanks for the flower.

PAUL: You like it?

HANNAH: It's nice.

RON: Just so you know—that bathroom's all yours.

PAUL: Yeah, Ron and I will use the one upstairs.

HANNAH: *(smiles)* Okay.

RON: *(addresses audience)* Paul stood up right there in the service and said “I will, Pastor”. Had everybody in the church turn around and look. Jack Barrens was sitting in front of me had to turn around and whispered for me to shut my mouth, ‘cause it was hanging open. See, Paul’s not like that. He doesn’t care for people all that much, to be frank — and a fifteen year old girl??? *(laughs)* people are going to wonder ... but I know. It’s just God, reaching a little deeper into his chest telling him “it’s time”... “its time to do something, its time to think about somebody else for a little while”. You know Paul’s been wondering why he’s taking up space ... I think maybe June’s mother was right—maybe the two of them are patching together a little scrap of family after all. *(re-engages in the scene)*

JUNE: *(getting up)* Well...I should go...

RON: Where you going?

JUNE: ...I should.

PAUL: I thought you were staying for dinner.

JUNE: You know,... another night.

HANNAH: You’re not going to stay?

RON: Are you sure?

JUNE: Next week. You’ll be fine. *(she begins to exit and then turns back to HANNAH, who is obviously concerned)* You’ll be fine. *(JUNE exits quickly and PAUL follows to see her out. It’s quiet as RON and HANNAH experience an awkward moment together.)*

(LIGHTS—As Ron, who is standing near the stage left side of the table, begins to speak a smaller area of light around him will come up as the light in the rest of the “home” comes down a bit.)

RON: Okay, now's that moment that makes you not do things like this. I mean is God really calling us to this? Can't he find a woman to take care of our Hannah, a mother that lets her back in, maybe a classmate's house that she can stay at? No. Sometimes, God chooses radical ways to do his work. A prostitute cleaning dust from between Jesus' toes, a famished widow feeding a flake of a man, armies fighting battles by walking in circles ... You see God isn't bound by society standards or common sense, not a thousand years ago not ours today. He's got a much longer view of things, much higher vision. APPROPRIATENESS gives way to compassion in the mind of God.

(LIGHTS—As Ron finishes his monologue, the smaller area of light around him will come down as the rest of the “home” comes back up. Ron rejoins the scene with Hannah and Paul.)

RON: *(another awkward moment between the three of them)* How you feel about ham and sweet potatoes?

HANNAH: *(warming)* Sounds good, I'm hungry.

RON: Well, we can't have that can we Paul? *(PAUL stands)* No sir, can't have that.

(LIGHTS—As Ron finishes his line, the lights in the rest of the “home” will come down. The only light that will remain is a small special on Hannah, who is sitting in the upstage chair at the table. PAUL and RON move towards kitchen to prepare the meal. The light will stay on Hannah for a moment and then fade to black as the vocal intro comes to an end.)

(Start “A Simple Act” by Greg Ferguson. Available on www.willowcharts.com)