

Help Me!

by

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Opus 5

a play in one act

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Characters (2 men/2 women, 1 boy):

Kai Summerwind

Pixie Summerwind, his wife

“Buzz” Summerwind, his son (6 or 7)*

Girl Summerwind, his unborn daughter

* “Buzz” is played by the boy and one of the men. Notated as Buzz A or Buzz B (A – Adult, B –Boy)

Set: Bare stage with props.

Living Room:

Couch

Coffee Table

Chair

Dining Room:

Dining Table

Three (3) Chairs

A Field

Costumes: Buzz A and Buzz B should be in similar clothing.

Props: Props should be kept to a minimum. The main focus of this play should be the conflict each of the characters feel, not the costumes, the props, or the set.

Note: Each sequence (I, II, III, etc.) should flow from one to another, allowing only enough time for a change in the “mood” and lighting where indicated or directed.

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Prologue

(Living Room. After a moment, Kai enters in suit and tie. The tie has been loosened, the top button of his shirt undone. The room feels empty, lost, as if Life itself has left. Kai is trying to hold back his emotions, somewhat unsuccessfully. He looks around the room and tears, as if without warning, over take him. A short time later, he recomposes himself and sits on the couch. He dries his eyes again. He takes a worn and folded piece of paper out of his pocket. From the looks of the paper, he has had this for quite some time. It is trace of a child's hand. Kai lays out the paper on the coffee table and places his hand on the hand trace. Then great bursts of tears as the lights fade. Exit Kai.)

I

(The stage is dark. Girl is unseen.)

Girl: You can not see me with your eyes. But I know that you know that I am here. You feel my every movement. Every stretch. Every kick. You feel it all. And you know. You know that I love you unconditionally. I love you with a love that I could never feel for another human being. And I will love you no matter what happens. I am a part of you. And you a part of me. We are one. We will always be one. You and I. Forever. I love you. *(A beat. Unsure.)* Do you love me? *(Exit Girl.)*

II

(Lights come up on Pixie in the Living Room. She is on the phone.)

Pixie: Hi Mom! How're you?...Kai and I were going to stop by tonight...Of course we were going to bring the Buzzard...Well you're the one who started calling him that...So how was your trip?...That's great....Oh of course. So how are Lynette and the kids?...Lynette is pregnant? Again? *(She rubs her abdomen.)* Why doesn't she want anyone to know?...Oh yeah, I can understand that. She has told Mark though, right?...*(Enter Kai, quietly sneaking up behind Pixie.)* Oh good...Well of course I'll tell Kai! He is my husband after all...

Kai: Tell me what?

Pixie *(jumping "out of her skin")*: Ah!

(Kai laughs.)

Pixie: You little...No not you mom! My future ex-husband. *(Kai and Pixie laugh.)* Well I should go. Yes, we're still coming by tonight...*(To Kai)* What time?

Kai: Hmmm, seven?

Pixie *(on the phone)*: How does seven sound?...”Seven-oh-three?” *(Kai and Pixie roll their eyes.)* Yeah, we'll do that. See you than. Love ya. Bye.

Kai *(laughing)*: Didn't mean to scare you.

Pixie *(leaning in for a kiss)*: That's okay. You can make it up to me later.

Kai *(smiling, leaning towards her)*: What'd you have in mind? *(Kisses her.)*

Pixie: Oh, I'm sure I'll think of something. *(Kisses him. A long kiss. Enter Buzz B, carrying a picture he painted in class that day. It is a child's drawing of a house with a chimney. His parents, stick figures with the mom very pregnant, and himself.)*

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Buzz B: Hi Mommy, Daddy.

(Kai and Pixie quickly break the kiss.)

Pixie: Hi sweetie. How was your day?

Buzz B: It was totally wicked!

(Pixie looks at Kai with a “look what you started” look.)

Kai: He didn't get that from me.

Buzz B *(holding out the picture)*: Look what I made for you Mommy.

Kai: What've you got there Buzzy?

Buzz B: It's a picture of the whole family.

Pixie: Oh and you've even got your little brother or sister in there. How sweet.

Buzz B: It'll be a boy.

Kai: And how do you know that?

Buzz: 'Cuz I asked God for a little brother!

(Kai and Pixie smile at each other.)

Pixie: Well, we'll see. Now run along Buzz.

Buzz B: Can I play with my legos?

Pixie *(correcting him)*: “May I.”

Buzz B: May I?

Pixie: Yes you may. *(Buzz jumps up and down for joy.)* After...*(Buzz is disappointed.)*...you put away the G.I. Joes.

Buzz B: Ah, but Mommy. I was gonna build a fortress and the G.I. Joes was gonna come and attack it.

(Pixie gives Kai another “look what you started” look.)

Kai *(smiling)*: Okay, he did get that from me.

Pixie *(to Buzz)*: Yes you may. But I don't want to find the legos in the hallway again.

Buzz B *(exiting)*: Okay, you won't. Thanks Mommy.

Kai *(smiling, approaching Pixie)*: Now, where were we?

Pixie *(stepping away)*: Why are you home so early?

Kai: Huh?

Pixie: You're home earlier than usual today. Why?

Kai: It's Friday. I always leave work early on Friday. *(Concerned)* Are you feeling okay?

Pixie *(shaking "it" off)*: Yeah, I'm fine. It's...it's just this pregnancy. You remember when I was pregnant with...with Steve...I just want this one to be different.

Kai: It will be. I promise.

Pixie: How can you promise that? You don't know! *(Crying, uncontrollably)* You don't know.

(Kai goes to her and puts his arms around her. She turns into him and rests her head on his chest.)

III

(Enter Buzz A and Girl. They are holding hands and playing, dancing, singing. They don't seem to have a care in the world. There is a small patch of dandelions at UPLEFT. After a few minutes they sit, exhausted.)

Buzz A *(hugging girl)*: I love you Sister.

Girl *(hugging Buzz A)*: I love you Brother. *(A beat. Excited.)* Let's pick some flowers for Mommy.

Buzz A: Good idea. She loves flowers. *(Noticing the dandelion patch.)* Oh look. There's some. *(They stand and run to the dandelion patch.)*

Girl: I bet I can pick more'n you .

Buzz A: Oh yeah?

Girl: Yeah!

Buzz A: What'll you give me if I'm right?

Girl: Um...nothing! And if *I'm* right you get to give me a quarter.

Buzz A: Um...*(He's sure she's trying to trick him, but can't quite figure out how.)* Well, okay.

(They begin picking. When all the dandelions are gone and Girl shows she has the most...)

Girl: Ha! Told ya! One quarter please.

(Buzz A, upset, reaches into his pocket and pulls out a quarter.)

Buzz A: Here.

Girl *(Taking the quarter)*: You're just upset because girls are better'n boys.

Buzz A: They are not!

Girl: Are too!

Buzz A: Are not!

Girl: Are too!

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Buzz A: Are not!

Girl: Are too!

Buzz A: Are not!

Girl: Are too!

Buzz A: Are not!

Girl: Are not!

Buzz A: Are too!

Girl: Thanks for agreeing with me.

(Girl gives Buzz A a hug and without him noticing slips the quarter backing into his pocket.)

Girl: C'mon let's go home and give these flowers to Mommy.

Buzz A: I hope she likes 'em.

Girl: Of course she'll like 'em. Mommy loves flowers.

(They walk a few steps and Girl collapses.)

Buzz A: Sister? What's wrong? Are you okay?

Girl *(Trying to stand)*: Yeah, I'm fine. I just tripped. Give me a hand will ya?

(Buzz A helps her stand.)

Girl: C'mon, let's get home.

(They exit.)

IV

Kai *(in tears)*: Why did this happen? What could I have done to prevent it? Why didn't I see it coming? I knew something was wrong. Could I have stopped it? *(Kneeling.)* Heavenly Father? Wilt Thou give me strength?

V

(The stage is dark. Girl is unseen.)

Girl: Mom? Are you okay? Is there anything I can do? That is silly. What can I do? Your unborn daughter. I am powerless inside here. But I know something is bothering you. I wish I could make this easier on you.

VI

(A dining table with three chairs is present. Pixie is setting the table for dinner. She is five months pregnant. She brings on plates and exits, returning with other things to set the table with. She begins to distribute the plates and drops one. It shatters. She cries uncontrollably.)

Pixie: I can't do this anymore! *(She sits.)* Father in Heaven, please see me through this. I can't...I just can't lose another child. I thought this time would be different, but nothing has changed.

VII

Kai *(entering)*: Honey? Is everything okay? *(Seeing the shattered plate on the floor.)* What happened? Are you okay?

Pixie *(Drying her eyes and standing)*: I'm fine. I dropped a plate. *(She kneels and begins to pick up the pieces.)*

Kai *(Kneeling, taking her hands)*: I'll do it. *(A beat.)* Why don't you go lie down. I'll finish getting dinner ready.

Pixie: Thanks. *(She exits. Kai cleans up the glass. When the shattered plate is cleaned up, he falls to his knees, overcome with emotion.)*

VIII

(The stage is dark. Girl is unseen.)

Girl: Mommy? What is happening? I do not understand. Was it something I did? Please Mommy! Please! What did I do? All I feel is pain. *(Realizing.)* Someone is hitting us. Please. What is happening? I am feeling weaker. I have no strength left. Mommy, please. It hurts!

IX

(Buzz A is sitting on the floor playing with G.I. Joes or Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles or some other "masculine" toy.)

Buzz A: Ad lib.

(After awhile.)

Pixie *(offstage)*: Buzz, it's time for bed.

Buzz A: Okay, Mommy.

Pixie *(ofs)*: Would you like me to say your prayers with you?

Buzz A: No, I can do it.

Pixie *(ofs – as if trying to mask physical pain)*: Okay, then.

(Buzz A kneels to pray. Arms folded across his chest.)

Buzz A: Dear Heavenly Father. Thank you for this day. Thank you for my family. Thank you for my friends. Thank you for my teacher. Thank you for the...*(a pause. Trying to think of what else he is thankful for.)* for everything. Amen.

(Buzz A stands and gathers the toys into a bucket or storage container. When he is done...)

Buzz A: You know what I hate? Green beans! They look disgusting. They taste disgusting. *(A beat.)* They ARE disgusting! I think God created them just to torture me! But you know what I hate more than green beans? Being treated like kid! Okay, okay, I know I'm only seven. But I mean seriously! I understand more than

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people give me credit for. There is tension between my parents. And I think it has to do with my baby brother. Yes, I'm sure it's a boy. Because I asked God for a little brother. *(Doubting a little.)* Although...in Sunday School today, the teacher said sometimes we don't get what we ask for. And it's not because of anything we've done. But it's because God has something else in store for us. So I asked God for a little brother. Will I get one? I hope so. But I guess I could love a little sister too. I guess it's all what God has planned for us. No matter what we want. But I suppose I can live with that. As long as she likes to play baseball. I love baseball. It's like the greatest game ever invented! I hope she likes baseball. She'll like baseball. I'm sure of it.

X

(Living room. Pixie is "puttering" around. She is seven months pregnant. The phone rings. Pixie answers it.)

Pixie: Hello?...Oh, hi. How're you, Lynette?...That's good...Just tired mostly...How 'bout you?...I can't believe we're both gonna have our babies in two months...yeah it is kinda weird.

(The baby kicks; Pixie reacts and places a hand on her abdomen. Kai and Buzz B enter. They have been playing catch at the park. Kai is playing with a baseball. They are both wearing baseball caps and gloves.)

Pixie: Oh, Kai and Buzzy are home...Okay...Yeah, I'll talk to you later Lynette. Have a good night. Bye. *(To Buzz B)* So Buzzy, how was playing catch in the park with your dad?

Buzz B: It was totally wicked!

(Pixie and Kai smile.)

Kai: Tell her how many times you caught the ball.

Buzz B: A ton! Like every time.

(Pixie looks to Kai for confirmation. Kai nods.)

Buzz B *(continuing)*: I'm gonna teach my little brother how to catch the ball, 'n then he'll be just as good as me! Well, almost.

Pixie *(To Buzz B)*: How sweet! *(She hugs him. A beat.)* Okay now run along and get cleaned up for dinner.

Buzz B *(still excited, not wanting to leave)*: Okay Mommy. *(He exits.)*

(Kai walks behind the couch, behind Pixie, puts his arms around her and kisses the top of her head.)

Kai: So how was your day?

Pixie: Okay. *(Hesitating a little.)* I can't seem to get anything done. I've just been so tired lately.

Kai: I know. *(A beat.)* Say, why don't we eat out tonight? Or send out for pizza? Or something...

Pixie *(relieved)*: I could go for that.

Kai: Which one?

Pixie *(thinks a moment)*: Out.

Kai: Okay, I'll get washed up. Then maybe we could send Buzz off to stay the night with my parents...

Pixie (*Stands and walks behind the couch next to Kai*): Sounds great to me! (*They kiss.*)

Kai: I'll get changed then I'll call my parents.

Pixie: Okay. (*Kai begins to exit.*) I'm gonna check on Buzzy. (*They exit together.*)

XI

Buzz A (*with great excitement*): Gramma's and Grampa's! Woo Hoot! I love staying there. They let me eat all the ice cream I want. They never make me eat broccoli...or...green beans. (*Shudders at the thought.*) Green beans! Gross! Gross! Gross! Gross! And then we stay up waaaaaaaay past bed time, playing games and sometimes they pull out their telescope and we look at the stars. Grampa knows all about the stars. Like that constellation up there...that's Taurus. He's a bull! He's got big horns. It's his job to protect a group of girls called the ple..ah...the ple-ah-dids...well, something like that. If I have a sister I'm gonna protect her just like Taurus protects the ple-ah-whatevers. Yessiree!

Maybe tonight we'll see a shooting star. Then I can make a wish on it. (*A beat.*) I was gonna ask for a little brother, But I 'spose that's up to God. So maybe I'll wish for Mommy to feel better. Yeah that's a good wish.

(There should be no break between Sequences XII and XIV.)

XII

Girl (*unseen by the audience. Screaming in severe pain, as if unto death*): MOMMY!!!! MOMMY!!!! MO...

XIII

Buzz A: Mommy, what's happening? Is everything okay? What's wro...[ng]?

XIV

Kai: I shouldn't have left. What was I thinking? It was just a few days. Everything was fine the first two days and then on the third day...I should've come home...I had a gut feeling. Oh God! It's all my fault...

XV

Pixie: Steve was born three years ago. I was never able to hold my son and see his smile. I do not know at what point his life ended. But *my* life ended at that moment. It was two years before I was able to live again. When I found out that we were pregnant I was afraid to tell anyone. Even Kai. He was so upset three years ago. Not with me. With himself. With God. He thought he had done something wrong. I thought I had done something wrong. I guess I still do. The doctor said I'm healthy and everything should be okay. I hope that it will be. I can't lose another child. I just can't. We can't. (*A pause.*) We won't survive it.

XVI

(Summerwind Living Room. There is a suitcase open on the coffee table. Pixie, now eight months pregnant, enters carrying some clothing items. She places them in the suitcase. She exits and returns with something else. She does this a few times. She then begins to rearrange the items in the suitcase. Buzz B enters.)

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Buzz B: Whatcha doing Mommy?

Pixie: I'm packing Daddy's suitcase.

Buzz B: Why?

Pixie: Because Daddy has to go out of town for a couple days for work.

Buzz B: Why?

Pixie: Something happened at a far away building that Daddy has to fix.

Buzz B: Why?

(Enter Kai with a carry-on bag.)

Kai: Well this one's all packed.

Pixie *(closing the suit case)*: So's this one.

(Pixie seems upset. Kai goes to her and puts his arms around her.)

Kai: It'll just be a few days. *(Pause. Pixie doesn't react.)* If anything happens I can be here in two hours.

Pixie *(after a moment)*: I know. *(A long pause.)* I know.

(Buzz B goes up to Kai and tugs on his shirt sleeve.)

Buzz B: Daddy?

Kai: Hey slugger. While I'm gone, you'll be the man of the house.

(Buzz B glows with pride.)

Buzz B: I've got something for you Daddy? I'll be right back. *(He exits.)*

Pixie: Take care of yourself.

Kai: I was just about to say the same thing to you.

(Enter Buzz B, carrying a picture.)

Buzz B: Here you go Daddy! *(He holds out the picture. It is a trace of his hand.)*

Kai: What's this for Buzzy?

Buzz B: So while we're apart you can put your had on this and I'll be holding your hand.

Pixie: That's very sweet Buzz.

Kai: Yes, thank you Buzz. *(He kneels down and hold his arms out. Buzz B rushes in for a hug. A long embrace.)*
Well, I should be going.

Pixie: Call when you get there.

Kai: I will.

(Exit all.)

XVII

(Enter Buzz A)

Buzz A: It was all my fault! I was the man of the house. Daddy told me I was. But I was just a boy. How could I be expected to protect Mommy? I couldn't even protect myself. I failed you Daddy. I am so sorry. I was just a little boy. I couldn't even protect myself. It's all my fault.

Mommy was screaming. I was so scared. I didn't know what to do. I was frozen. I couldn't move. I was just so scared. *(A long pause. Quietly.)* And then it was all over.

XVIII

(Enter Girl.)

Girl: Brother!

Buzz A *(Turning to Girl)*: Sister!

Girl: I love you so much!

Buzz A: I love you more!

Girl: Now, do you really wanna start that all over again?

Buzz A: No, but I love you more anyway.

(They hug.)

Girl: When's Daddy coming home?

Buzz A: I don't know. Mommy might know.

Girl: She doesn't know. I asked her.

Buzz A: Well he does have a lot of work to do.

Girl: Yeah.

Buzz A: Have you seen Steve?

Girl: Yeah. He's helping Mommy make cookies.

Buzz A: Ah, then that means he'll get to lick the spoon.

Girl: Maybe if we hurry, we can run in and help too.

Buzz A: I'll beat you. *(He races off.)*

Girl *(Exiting, running)*: Hey, you cheated!

XIX

Girl (*unseen, as before*): Now all is quiet. There is no more screaming. No more crying. All is still. There is no movement. No sound. No breath. No life.

XX

(*Summerwind Living Room. Kai is at DOWN LEFT. Pixie is in the living room. They are talking on the phone.*)

Pixie: So Buzz came home with a permission slip to join the baseball team at his school...

Kai: Very nice.

Pixie: I guess all those evenings and weekends you spent with him finally paid off. He wants to actually play now.

Kai: Well it was just a matter of time –

Pixie (*cutting him off*): Oh, Lynette had twins.

Kai: What? Twins?

Pixie: Yeah, apparently they knew all along, they just didn't bother to share the news with anyone else.

Kai: That sounds like them. Always trying to surprise the rest of the family. So when are you going to go visit?

Pixie: It'll be a few weeks. I don't want to travel any further than the grocery store until after this one is born.

Kai: I don't blame you. Well, everything here is going well, so I think I should be home by tomorrow night.

Pixie: That's earlier than expected. I like.

Kai: I thought you would.

(*There is a loud crash off stage.*)

Kai: What was that?

Pixie: Buzz is in the kitchen. He must've knocked a pan off the counter. Don't worry, I'm sure it was empty. (*Calling off stage.*) Buzz? Are you okay in there?

Buzz B (*off stage*): Yes, Mommy.

Pixie: What was that?

Buzz B (*ofs*): I don't know.

Pixie (*to Kai on the phone*): Hmm, well maybe a neighborhood cat knocked over the trash cans. (*Another loud crash elsewhere off stage.*) Okay, that was weird. (*Moving towards STAGE RIGHT.*)

Kai: Is everything al...

Pixie (*screaming in fear, overlapping Kai*): AHHH! Oh my God! (*ad lib.*)

(Gun shots are heard from off STAGE RIGHT.)

Kai *(screaming, overlapping Pixie)*: Pixie! Pixie! *(ad lib.)*

XXI

(Summerwind Living Room. After a moment, Kai enters in suit and tie. The tie has been loosened, the top button of his shirt undone. The room feels empty, lost, as if Life itself has left. Kai is trying to hold back his emotions, somewhat unsuccessfully. He looks around the room and tears, as if without warning, over take him. A short time later, he recomposes himself and sits on the couch. He dries his eyes again. He takes a worn and folded piece of paper out of his pocket. From the looks of the paper, he has had this for quite some time. It is trace of a child's hand. Kai lays out the paper on the coffee table and places his hand on the hand trace. Then great bursts of tears as the lights fade to blackout.)