

About That Night

By: MADELYNNE and NATALEE

Content Warning: This play contains subject matter about sexual harassment, sexual assault, and disordered eating.

CAST OF CHARACTERS:

Josh: PCC Student, man, white person, friends with Catie, Halley and Josh, antagonist

Ryan: PCC Student, man, person of color, friends with Ryan, Catie and Halley, potential ally

Halley: PCC Student, woman, person of color, waitress at a strip club, friends with Ryan, Josh, and Catie, protagonist/potential ally

Catie: PCC Student, woman, white person, single mom, friends with Ryan, Josh and Halley, protagonist

Charlie: Customer at the strip club, man, white person, antagonist

Scott: Bar manager at the strip club, man, white person, Halley's boss, antagonist/potential ally

SCENE ONE - Study Group

(The scene opens with Ryan and Halley in a library study room. Books and notes are spread out on the table with a plate of snacks. Catie and Josh enter the study group late.)

Josh: Thanks again for picking me up Catie, I can't believe my car broke down. Sorry we ended up running late.

Catie: Yeah, don't mention it. Hopefully they didn't get too far without us.

Halley: Hey guys, we were just getting settled.

Catie: Hey! Oh my God, Halley, you made coffee cakes? That's so nice!

Ryan: Actually, I made them, a study group is nothing without snacks and coffee.

Josh: Yeah, right Ryan. You probably bought them.

Ryan: Listen, I made them, for real. It took so much time out of my morning and Halley won't even try one.

Halley: Man, I told you already, I ate before I got here and I'm still full. But they really do look amazing.

Josh: *(tries a coffee cake)* Oh wow these *are* good! You would make a great housewife.

Ryan: *(laughs)* Whatever, anyways, let's get down to it.

Catie: I can't wait till this is over. After midterms we can finally have our game night again.

Halley: AND If we finish the study guide today, you guys should come out to see me at work tonight. We can have a small celebration, y'know?

Catie: Yeah, that sounds good. It would really help deal with the stress of midterms. Plus, Alice's dad is watching her tonight.

Ryan: Oh sure, I've actually never been to a strip club.

Josh: No way! Now you have to go.

Halley: Awesome I'm so excited. I'm off at 11, PLEASE, get there earlier.

Josh: Catie, do you mind grabbing me again? I don't know if my car will be working by tonight. I'll get gas this time.

Catie: Oh yeah, sure. We'll talk about it later, we should really get started.

End Scene

SCENE TWO- Another Round

(The scene opens at the strip club where Halley works as a server. It's dark, with dancers on stage and dimly lit tables. Customers are scattered throughout the club. Josh, Catie and Ryan are at a table. Halley is taking their orders.)

Halley: Hey guys, I'm so glad you're finally here! I still have a little bit before I get off, but can I get you guys started on drinks?

Josh: I'll just have a beer, I don't wanna drink too much, I have work tomorrow. Hey Catie, if you want, you can drink and I can drive home.

Catie: I'll take you up on that, I haven't been able to drink in forever but tonight I don't have to worry about Alice - so that would be awesome! I'll have an AMF. Just make sure I don't put the "A" in "Adios" Motherfucker.

Ryan: I'll just have a beer, I want to be at least a little productive in the morning unlike someone...

Catie: Ha! But for reals can you guys keep this on the down? If Alice's dad knew I went out even WITHOUT Alice, he'd make a statement to the courts.

Halley: Of course! Okay, I'll get those for you guys.

(Halley leaves the table and brings Charlie a drink at another table.)

Halley: I have this for you, Dear.

Charlie: Thanks, Sweetheart. You know, I would love to see you on that stage as well.

(Charlie has his hand on Halley's back and slides it to her lower back)

Halley: Touching the girls or waitresses is against our policy. The manager is watching too. Behave yourself or I'll take your drink.

Charlie: Oh, come on, a little doesn't hurt.

(Charlie begins to be much more forceful with her. Halley pushes his hand away.)

Halley: Seriously Charlie, get your hands off me!

(Halley walks to the bar and faces Scott, the bar manager.)

Halley: Charlie is here again and I'm seriously so over this. We need to 86 him!

Scott: That is still no way to act with a customer!

Halley: He just went against ALL policies...

Scott: *(interrupts)* No, if you've got a problem with a customer you talk to me about it! We will discuss this later. Go to the back and cool off. Your shift is over anyway.

(Halley walks away. The Bar Manager walks over to the table with Charlie.)

Scott: I apologize on behalf of her, she is moody lately.

Charlie: Hey, I get it, you need them feisty working here, but I like it. Her especially.

(Halley comes out from the back room, having changed out of her work apron. She is clearly distressed, and goes over to the table of her friends.)

Catie: Hey, we all saw what happened... And you okay?

Halley: Yeah, I'm fine.

Ryan: Are you? He must think that because he's in a strip club he can get away with that. I like to grab a handful, but not like a creep.

Halley: He is in here almost every weekend and he pulls the same shit every time. The manager will do nothing because he's a good customer.

Josh: People think you're hot and you make good money, what's the problem?

Halley: I still don't really like strangers touching me like that.

Josh: Relax! You should take it as a compliment. Anyways, want another drink Catie? I'll buy this round.

Catie: No thanks, I'm pretty comfortable where I'm at.

Josh: Too bad, I already ordered and they're up.

(Josh hands her a drink.)

Catie: Okay, only because it's coming out of your pocket and it's already here.

End Scene

SCENE THREE - Morning After

(The scene opens at PCC in a classroom. Bags and computers are out on desks. The students are chatting before class starts.)

Halley: Hey, where's Professor Wilson? He's usually here before class.

Ryan: He emailed the class to say he was running a few minutes late this morning.

(Catie enters the classroom and approaches the group.)

Catie: Hey guys.

Ryan: Hey Catie, how are you feeling? You got super drunk, I totally didn't expect you to be here this morning. I would have skipped a 9 am class after a night like that. I guess Josh did a good job taking care of you last night.

Halley: Yeah. It's good you two live in the same apartment complex. When I said "celebratory drinks" I didn't mean *that* celebratory *(laughs)*. So, what happened? You two seemed to be having a good time when you left.

Catie: I don't really remember much about last night...and I was not having a good time with Josh.

Ryan: What do you mean?

Catie: I mean I woke up next to Josh this morning and you both know I'm not looking to hook up with anyone, much less Josh. All I remember was that he kept handing me drinks.

Halley: What?! Catie there is no way Josh would do anything with you against your will. I know he's super persistent, but he's really not that kind of guy.

Catie: But there is no way I would want to stay the night with Josh! Everything feels really off. I'm not really comfortable with anything that might have or might not have happened.

Ryan: I'm sorry you had a bad night. How about we get some food after class to make you feel better? I'm sure after all of that drinking, some pasta might be a good hangover snack.

Catie: I don't want food, I can't stay for class anyways, I just came to drop off my homework.

Ryan: Oh, you can't stay for class?

Catie: No, I have to pick up Alice. Her dad has to work and I can't afford the daycare anymore since we split.

Halley: Is there anything I can do to help?

Catie: No, mostly I was just hoping I could confide in you guys about this, you know? But never mind. Ryan, can you tell the professor later that I can't make it in?

Ryan: Sure...

Halley: Hey Catie, I'm sorry if we made you feel bad, it's just hard to believe that about Josh. Do you still want to study later?

Catie: Yeah, no worries, sure. I'll catch up with you guys later

Halley: OK.

Ryan: OK, bye.

(Catie drops off her homework on the instructor's desk and leaves the classroom.)

Ryan: That was... a lot.

Halley: Yeah, for real.

Ryan: But I'm still in the mood for pasta, you down to go out after class Halley?

Halley: I'm actually good, I'm not really hungry,

Ryan: C'mon dude, you will be in a couple hours...

Halley: I just usually don't get hungry till later in the day, besides I have to finish up some homework in the library after class. Anyways, here comes Professor Wilson...

End Scene

SCENE FOUR- Catie's House with Halley

(The scene opens in Catie's living room. Catie and Halley are sitting on the couch with their books and notes open on the coffee table in front of them.)

Halley: Thanks for working with me for so long and letting me come over, Catie, I really couldn't understand this concept from the study guide.

Catie: It's all good, but I thought you had to work tonight?

Halley: Not anymore. My manager pulled all my shifts after what happened the other night.

Catie: No way! Such a douche! I'm glad I could help at least a little bit before I dropped the class.

Halley: Yeah, just shitty you had to do that. Sorry.

Catie: Don't apologize, you did nothing. I just can't be around Josh. He keeps trying to text me. I'm avoiding him at school.

Halley: I can understand it. Just keep your head up, okay? *(Halley gets up to grab a book from her backpack and peeks in the bedroom)* Alice is so precious when she sleeps. Seemingly rambunctious, but precious.

Catie: She's pretty okay for a kid. I should probably start dinner. Want to stay and eat with us?

Halley: Actually, I'm not hungry, but thanks for offering, I just need to get the guide done. The stress of not understanding it is filling enough.

Catie: Really? I am starving. We have been studying for hours and haven't eaten anything, I can't believe you aren't hungry.

Halley: I'm just not. This diet has been shrinking my appetite so much, just being busy.

Catie: I almost never see you eat. You have been looking a lot thinner lately, you are eating right?

Halley: I am, plus, I don't even look that thin.

Catie: I mean, if that's the case, you have been looking really good! You will have to tell me your secrets.

Halley: *(uncomfortable laugh)* I will soon. What are you thinking of making?

Catie: This really good coconut curry. I actually got the recipe from... *(Catie is interrupted by the phone ringing)* I'm sorry I really need to take this, I'll just be a minute *(Catie picks up the phone)* Hello?...Yes, I appreciate you asking, Tuesday evening still works for the appointment.... Yep. Have a great evening. *(Catie hangs up the phone and looks at Halley)* Sorry about that.

Halley: It's all good! Is everything okay?

Catie: If the world could just stop revolving long enough to keep up, that'd be great.

Halley: Something with Alice? What's going on?

Catie: With everything going on with Josh, I made an appointment at Planned Parenthood to make sure I am still clean and I'm not pregnant.

Halley: Well, I'm glad that you are taking care of yourself.

Catie: It's not just for me, the last thing I would need is Braxton using this against me to get full custody of Alice. I have to schedule a doctor's appointment in the morning and a custody meeting with an attorney later in the day.

Halley: Do you need anything? That really sucks...

Catie: Yeah, adding in the issue with Josh makes it feel like everything is falling apart. I look at Alice and just keep going. It's all I can do.

Halley: I know this happened last week, but have you thought about talking to the cops at all?

Catie: I wanted to, but there were a thousand things going through my head when this happened. I thought that Josh was my friend. It would also make it 10 times worse for me to get custody of Alice, it would be one more thing stacked against me according to Braxton.

Halley: I know this is tough, let me know what I can do for you.

Catie: Thanks. I'm going to wake up Alice for dinner.

End Scene

SCENE FIVE- Confrontation

(The scene opens at PCC. Josh approaches Catie outside the classroom)

Josh: Oh man, I'm so glad I bumped into you! Did you change your number? You haven't been replying to my texts.

Catie: *(flustered)* Oh, I thought you had class right now?! Sorry for not texting back, but I've got to go, see ya.

(Catie tries to leave, but Josh grabs her arm)

Josh: I'm skipping class with Ryan and Halley - you should come with us.

Catie: I really need to go Josh, please let go.

Josh: C'mon Catie, it feels like you are avoiding me. Is this about the night at the club? (*Josh pauses*) For real? I thought you were thinking the same thing. I mean you let me buy you all those drinks.

Catie: I never wanted to sleep with you Josh.

Josh: That's total bull, besides it's your fault for drinking so much.

Catie: Look I really have to go, I have to pick up Alice.

Josh: Whatever.

(Josh lets go and Catie leaves)

End Scene

SCENE SIX- We Miss You

(The Scene opens in the Academic Advising office. Ryan enters, sees Catie's waiting and approaches her.)

Ryan: Catie! Wait up! I haven't seen you in while. I have a few before the meeting with my advisor, you doing okay?

Catie: Sort of. Just trying to get through the term. What are you seeing an advisor for?

Ryan: I was figuring out my transfer date. What about you? Is it about you dropping the class?

Catie: They suggested that I should drop school entirely to take care of Alice.

Ryan: I mean it would give you more time to be a mom, you only get this time once. We are getting together this week to have a game night if you want to come and catch up? It might lift your spirits.

Catie: Thanks for offering, but I can't. I still can't be around Josh and feel comfortable. We will talk soon though.

Ryan: I know Halley would love to see you, she's been having a hard time. It's almost like she's lost some light. Just ignore Josh. I was hoping we could all go out again, maybe soon?

Catie: Maybe, we'll see. I have to go.

Ryan: I hope we do, we all miss you. Even Josh, I'm sorry about whatever happened that fucked up our group.

Catie: Again, Ryan it was good seeing you. I miss game nights, too. I'm just busy. I really have to go pick up the girl. Her daycare closes soon.

(Ryan hesitates for a moment, then leaves. Catie finishes packing her bag.)

End Play

STUDY GUIDE QUESTIONS

(Please refer to the full Study Guide on the Illumination Project website for more detailed information)

Questions about Interventions

In Theater of the Oppressed (TO), when audience members enter the scene to change its outcome it is called an "intervention." TO has certain ground rules for interventions including:

- *Audience members cannot take the place of the person causing the problem (the antagonist).*
- *Audience members can take the place of the person experiencing the problem (protagonist) if they share a similar identity in terms of gender, race, ability etc. This is primarily relevant depending on at what oppression is impacting the character (i.e. if the character is a person with a disability impacted by ableism then the audience member ought to be a person with a disability as well etc.)*
- *Audience members of any identity can take the place of the "potential ally/bystander/friend" character.*

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1. Why do you think is it "against the rules" for an audience member to take the place of the person causing the problem (the antagonist)?
 2. Why do you think there is a rule that asks that you only take the place of the protagonist if you share an identity with that character?
 3. Which of the characters could have changed their actions to create a different outcome? Pick one or more characters (keeping in mind the ground-rules above) and give a detailed explanation of the strategies and tools the character could have used to create a more positive situation.
 4. In general - how could support be provided to these characters and how would it have changed the outcomes? What are some resources the characters could have used?
 5. What do you think gets in the way of someone intervening in an oppressive situation?
 6. Describe one or more of the oppressive situations in the play. What are some strategies/tactics you personally would use to intervene in this situation?
 7. If you saw a friend being assaulted or harassed what would you do or say? Would this approach differ if you did not know the person?

8. What types of privilege do you have that could be useful when intervening in these scenarios?
9. What can you do personally to work to end this oppression?
10. What actions can PCC take to make the college more welcoming and inclusive especially in relation to the issues represented in the play?

Questions for “About That Night”

1. Why do you think Josh is unable to understand Catie’s changed attitude towards him and her unwillingness to spend time with him after he raped her?
2. Why do you think Halley and Ryan are initially unwilling to believe that Catie did not give Josh permission to sleep with her?
3. In *About That Night*, can you see what problem Halley has beside being harassed in the bar? What can you do support Halley as a friend?
4. Who in the play has the potential to be an ally? How do they succeed or fail in being an ally?
5. What systems of oppression are present in the play? How do they impact individual characters?

General Questions

1. What are some examples of sexism in the play?
2. How is gender role socialization and the gender binary represented?
3. How does sexism intersect with other forms of oppression (classism, racism, ableism etc.) in the play?
4. What is the impact on the characters when there is intersectionality between two or more oppressions?
5. What are some of the social institutions (education, media, criminal justice, economic etc.) represented in the play?
6. How do these institutions promote or uphold systems of sexism and gender oppression?
7. Do you see any variation of severity in struggle between women with different backgrounds and identities?
8. Do some characters have an easier time being believed than others?
9. What is the impact of institutional sexism and oppression on the characters in the play? Think about how all the characters are impacted not only the protagonist.
10. How are men and women characters impacted differently by sexism?

11. Describe some of the examples of privilege from the play?
12. Which of these scenarios have you not experienced or noticed? How could your own privilege contribute to that?
13. How does toxic masculinity show up in the play?
14. Theater of the Oppressed plays are called “anti-models.” This means the first run through of the play always ends with the main character(s) “losing.” What did the main character(s) lose? Please be detailed.

Knowing that men and people who are gender non-binary can also be harassed or assaulted why do you think the play focused on the dynamic of how these issues impact women?