

Her Value

By CASSANDRA and ANGELIQUE

Content Warning: This play contains subject matter about sexual harassment and ableist harassment.

Cast of Characters

Wren: PCC student, woman, friends with Sky and Michael, protagonist

Sky: PCC student, woman, visually impaired, friends with Wren and Michael, Paul's and Jessica's sister, Mom's daughter, protagonist

Michael: PCC student, man, friends with Sky and Wren, potential ally

Chad: Tri-Met passenger, man, antagonist

Bus Driver: Tri-Met employee, man, potential ally

Dr. Andrews: PCC Instructor, man, antagonist

Mom: Sky's mother, woman, antagonist/potential ally

Paul: Sky's brother, man, antagonist

SCENE ONE - PCC Morning Scene

(The Scene opens at PCC. Wren is sitting alone at a table studying. Her books, notes and computer are spread out in front of her. Michael walks over.)

Michael: Wren! I can't remember the last time I saw you this early in the morning. It must've taken some serious espresso after last night's Scrabble.

Wren: Oh! Hey Michael, yeah, I've had three espressos thus far, and about a gallon of water. We really need to stop taking a shot every time someone gets a 30-point score, we're both too good. I think my liver's gonna give up while I'm still young.

Michael: Ha! All right, 40 it is. *(Michael sits)*. Are you ready to lab later on?

Wren: Yeah! I'm actually really excited for today! Did you remember to write up the lab procedure?

Michael: Oh man, I knew I forgot something...

Wren: *(checks phone to see the time)* I have to get to a meeting with my advisor to look over my application to the aerospace engineer program, but we can write up the procedure together at lunch, ok?

Michael: Really?! Oh, you're a lifesaver Wren!

Wren: No problem!

Michael: And I can't believe I am going to know a real live rocket scientist!

Wren: Ha! If I get into the program! I'm a little stressed about it. Oh, Sky might need to go over this too, you know how she is with the vocab.

Michael: I'll text her.

End Scene

SCENE TWO - Sky At Home In The Morning

(The scene opens at Sky's house. Sky is at the table studying. Mom walks in holding the baby.)

Sky: Morning Mom...where's Jessica?

Mom: She slept late and is still getting ready. I'm getting Paul and Jessica's lunch - do you want anything?

Sky: No, thanks, but I already made Jessica's sandwich.

Mom: You are the best! *(Mom is staring at the fridge door without opening it.)*

Sky: What are you doing?

Mom: I'm just re-reading your acceptance letter to OSU!

Sky: I still can't believe you put that on the fridge.

Mom: It's a really big deal...you could be the first in our family to go to college!

Sky: Well, I'm already going to college at PCC.

Mom: But you know what I mean...

Sky: I know...and I am really excited too!

(Paul enters.)

Paul: Morning!

Sky: Morning!

Mom: Hey sweetie.

Paul: *(to Sky)* What are you doing?

Sky: Preparing for my bio lab today. I keep getting these vocab words confused.

Paul: I'm sure you'll do great. You got the brains in the family you know, all I got were these amazing good looks.

Sky: Whatever...

Mom: Here's your lunch Paul, you don't want to be late for school.

Paul: Thanks, Mom - you're the best. Bye! *(Paul exits.)*

Sky: Bye!

Mom: Paul is right sweetie, you do work too hard.

Sky: But I have to get a "C" or above in this class to actually be able to start at OSU in the fall.

Mom: Don't worry about it - they need to meet their "disability" quota - they are not going to change their minds.

Sky: What do you mean?

Mom: Nothing... I am so proud of you; I think I'm just worried about what I am going to do without you helping me around the house.

Sky: I know...I'm sorry...

Mom: It's ok Sweetie, but speaking of all that, could you please be home a little early tonight? Because Paul has youth group and Jessica has ballet class.

Sky: Sure, of course Mom. But right now, I have to run for my bus. I'm meeting Michael and Wren before class to go over the lab for today.

Mom: OK, thanks, bye sweetie.

Sky: Bye, Mom.

SCENE THREE – Tri-Met Scene

(The scene opens outside on a sidewalk. Sky approaches the Tri-Met bus stop. Chad, another passenger is already waiting.)

Chad: Whoever dressed you today sure knows how to make you look good.

(Sky ignores the comment)

Chad: Aren't you gonna say "thank you?"

Sky: Um, sorry, thanks...

(The bus pulls up.)

Chad: Here's the bus, let me help you!

(Sky hesitates but Chad grabs Sky and pushes her ahead of him, steps behind Sky so she boards first and shows fare to the driver. Chad watches Sky board and begins to walk behind her when the driver stops him. Sky sits in the seat just behind the driver, and puts her bag into the empty seat next to her.)

Driver: (to Chad) Hey! Fare please?

Chad: Oh yeah, sorry. I was distracted by watching that *(points to Sky)* walk up the stairs.

(Chad moves to sit next to Sky, pushing her bag aside, legs spread wide into Sky's space, leaning close to stroke her shoulder)

Wow, your dress is really soft.

(Chad slides his hand up to lightly twist Sky's hair around his finger)

You're just soft all over, aren't you? Who did your hair for you?

(Sky laughs nervously and pulls away)

Sky: My hairdresser chose the color.

(Chad drops his hand to Sky's shoulder)

Chad: Nice! So... where are you headed?

Sky: School.

(Chad slaps Sky's knee and leaves his hand there)

Chad: Oh wow! School?!? Good for you! *(Chad begins stroking Sky's knee)* I didn't know blind people could go to school. Is that hard?

Sky: This is my stop.

Chad: Wait! What's your Insta?

(Sky walks off)

Chad: I was just trying to be nice...Bitch...

End Scene

SCENE FOUR - PCC LUNCH SCENE

(The scene opens at the PCC Cafeteria. Wren is sitting at the lunch table looking at a book and eating when she notices Michael approaching.)

Wren: Hey!

Michael: Hi! So how was your meeting with your advisor?

Wren: Pretty good - she thought I did a good job in the application, but she said I need an internship to give me more experience.

Michael: Maybe Dr. Andrews knows about an internship or something?

Wren: Maybe. Where's Sky? She said she really wanted to meet us for lunch to go over this stuff.

Michael: She texted to say she was running late, something about the bus.

(Dr. Andrews approaches the table and peers over Wren's shoulder)

Dr. Andrews: Hey you two!

Wren: Hi Dr. Andrews.

Dr. Andrews: It warms my heart to see students helping each other study for my class over lunch!

Michael: Yeah, although it's really just Wren helping me.

Dr. Andrews: Good for you Wren! You go girl!

Wren: Thanks.

Dr. Andrews: And Michael, you're lucky, I would have done better in a lot of subjects if I'd had a tutor like Wren *(winks)*.

Michael: Um, yeah...

Dr. Andrews: See you both in class!

Wren: See you.

Michael: Bye.

(Dr. Andrews exits.)

Wren: I can never tell if Dr. Andrews is weird around me or if he is just a socially awkward science nerd?

Michael: Nooo, he's weird around you.

(Sky enters looking around for her friends, Michael spots her and waves her over to their table)

Michael: Hey Sky, here we are!

Wren: Hey Sky!

Sky: Hey guys, how's it going? Was that just Dr. McCreepy talking to you guys?

Wren: Yep.

Michael: Yeah, Wren was just helping me with the procedure for lab today. Are you feeling ready?

Sky: I think so... I really have to pass this lab and the midterm to start OSU in the fall. I'm freaking out a little!

Wren: You'll do fine. And you know, you can always take the class over again if you need to, and start OSU later.

Sky: I just don't know how much longer I can live with my family. I feel bad about it but I can't wait to get out of there. And, sorry to be whiny, but this day has already sucked and it's only noon.

Michael: What's up?

Sky: I ran into another jerk on the bus this morning.

Wren: Seriously? Again?!

Michael: Are you ok?

Sky: This dude was all over me on the bus and saying really gross things.

Wren: I'm so sorry Sky. Why are people so horrible?

Sky: Who knows... I'll be alright though, but I might try going home without my cane today.

Wren: Are you sure?

Sky: Do you want to know, honestly? I feel like my cane makes me a target for all these creeps; it's like I have a huge bullseye on my back or something.

(There is a quiet pause among the group)

Michael: I'm so sorry you both have to deal with this kinda stuff.

End Scene

SCENE FIVE - PCC Classroom Scene

(The scene opens in a PCC Lab classroom. Class is ending and Dr. Andrews is at the front of the class speaking. The group of friends, Sky, Wren and Michael are sitting together at a lab station packing up their things.)

Dr. Andrews: Good work! Remember your lab report is due today; although I saw some of you still scratching it out in the common area with assistance. *(Dr. Andrews winks at Wren. Sky and Wren roll their eyes at each other.)* And also remember the final is coming up soon and it's 35% of your grade.

(Sky and Michael begin to head out, with Wren bringing up the rear.)

Dr. Andrews: Wren, do you have a few moments for a quick chat right now?
(Sky and Michael pause and look at each other)

Wren: Actually, I have another class to get to.

Dr. Andrews: This will only take a minute, I have your mid-term results.

Wren: Oh!?! Cool! I'll catch up with you guys in a few minutes.

(Sky and Michael exit.)

Dr. Andrews: *(approaching Wren with midterms in hand)* This is one of the most difficult midterms I've put together and you scored perfectly. I have never seen anyone come through my classes with as much natural skill *and* hard work that I see in you.

Wren: *(excitedly)* Thank you so much! I did study really hard, I enjoy the challenge. Actually, I just met with an advisor for the aeronautic engineering program, and she told me it would help my application if I had an internship in the field. Do you know about any?
(Dr. Andrews steps closer to Wren, placing his hand on her shoulder)

Dr. Andrews: Woah. That is a pretty competitive program, I don't know if you would fit in there.

Wren: But you just said I have a lot of skill and discipline, and I think I could do really well in that program. It's been my dream for a long time now.

Dr. Andrews: Good for you! Well, you are pretty feisty and if any gal could do it I bet you could.

Wren: *(with a hesitant look on her face)* Um, thanks.

Dr. Andrews: You know what, I want to help you. You could be my personal intern. I am working on a research grant for an environmental organization and I need an assistant. What do you think?

Wren: I guess that could work.

Dr. Andrews: Hey, this internship would help you get into the program, but no skin off my nose if you don't take it. I was just trying to help.

Wren: No, no. I was just thinking. That's great. I really appreciate it.

Dr. Andrews: Wonderful. Let's meet next Tuesday after class and get things started.

Wren: Ok, bye, thanks so much again.

Dr. Andrews: No problem! *(smiling)* I accept homemade cookies as payment. See you next week!

(Wren walks out of the classroom and finds Sky and Michael waiting for her)

Sky: What did he want?

Wren: Well he wanted to tell me how well I did on the mid-term.

Michael: Cool!

Wren: Yeah and then I asked him about the internship thing and he offered me a *(using air quotes)* "personal internship" with him on a research grant.

Sky: Gross.

Michael: Ugh...

Wren: I know!

Michael: Well, you're not going to take it right?

Wren: I really don't have much of a choice.

Sky: Michael, this would be really hard to navigate, Wren needs the internship to get in the program.

Michael: But there's always a choice.

Wren: Not for everyone.

Sky: *(looks at her watch)* I am so sorry, I told my mom I would be home early tonight. I gotta go. Wren, let's talk later.

Michael: OK, bye, travel safe.

Wren: Yeah, talk later.

End Scene

SCENE SIX - Sky Home Scene

(The scene opens back at Sky's house. Mom is in the kitchen, cooking and holding the baby. A basket of fresh laundry is on the floor behind her.)

Mom: Paul! Your dinner is ready! Hurry up, we have to leave soon!

(Sky enters)

Mom: Sky! Why are you so late?

(Mom walks over to hand baby off to Sky who snuggles the baby into her side, kissing their head)

Sky: Sorry, I tripped and fell on the way home. It's dark.

(Paul enters, grabs his plate and starts eating)

Paul: Hey Sky.

Sky: Hey.

Mom: I wish you would just use your cane. Are you all right?

Sky: Yeah.

Mom: And I specifically asked you to be early tonight. Your dad still needs his dinner and I've got to hurry up and get Paul to youth group, then pick up Jessica from ballet.

Sky: I know, I'm sorry, but why can't Dad help out some? Cause now I don't have time for my homework either.

Mom: Sky. You know how your father is. Now please, just get his dinner on the coffee table, he's watching the game.

(Sky places her backpack on the table and pulls her cane out to place next to it.)

Sky: Why can't Dad just get his own dinner? He's perfectly capable.

Mom: It's just how it is Sky. How many times do we need to go over this? I don't have time to make both your father's and your brother's dinners before Paul's Youth Group and the five thousand other things that need doing.

Sky: I still have to study for my midterm in Biology...I did not do well in my lab today! You know it takes me longer to finish assignments than other people.

(Paul takes a big drink of water and puts down the cup next to his plate. He gestures to Sky's cane.)

Paul: You wouldn't even need that thing if you would come see the healers at church.

Sky: Oh, right - because it worked so well before. This isn't something that can *magically* be cured with prayer. This is reality. MY reality!

Paul: Or is it because you don't want to lose your free ride to OSU on your handicapped scholarship!

Sky: Oh my God!

Mom: Sky! Watch it.

Paul: Well, you're not going to find a husband if you don't, 'cause who is going to want you like that?

Mom: That's enough Paul.

Sky: What if I don't want to get married?

(Mom puts her hand on Sky's shoulder and looks her in the face with concern)

Mom: But who will take care of you?

Sky: I can take care of myself!

Mom: Oh Sky.

Paul: Just come to the healers...

Sky: NO!

Mom: Let's get going Paul, or you're going to be late. And we still have to pick up Jessica.

Paul: *(mocking, bratty tone)* Whelp, have fun being blind in hell then.

Mom: Paul!!!

Sky: *(quietly)* I think I'm already there.

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 “Her Value”

1. What obstacles does Sky face from her family and other individuals to navigating her life independently?
2. Why do you think Wren feels she has no choice but to be her professor’s personal assistant?
3. As a bystander on the bus, what could you do to help the situation between Sky and Chad?
4. What are the ways that ableism and sexism intersect in this play?
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?

12. How does toxic masculinity show up in the play?
13. 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.
14. 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?