A Dose of Reality

Message: Reality can be harsh…what do we do it to handle it?

Cast: TODD 
LYNN 
LISA 
KAREN 
ERIC 
JOHN 
SPEAKER

Props: Headphones 
Portable CD player 
Backpack

Setting: Three different scenes

Staging: A couch sits at stage right. The couch should sit at an angle so the stage right of the couch is more downstage than the stage left end. A small table with 4 chairs sits at stage left. At upstage center sits a foosball table with one end facing the audience and the handles pointing to stage right and stage left. The counters are set to indicate a score of 8 to 3.

If the lighting called for in the script is not available, just have actors hold a “freeze” position when their scene is not the center of attention.

Time: 10 minutes

Script:

TODD is seated at the stage right end of the couch. He is seated at an angle facing left with his back resting against the corner of the couch. His head is leaned back and his eyes are closed. He wears a set of headphones that are connected to a portable CD player. KAREN is seated in the upstage chair at the table facing the audience. She is staring blankly into space. ERIC stands on the stage left side of the foosball table with his hands on the offensive handles. JOHN stands on the stage right side of the foosball table with his hands on the defensive handles. Lights come up on the scene at stage right. TODD bobs his head to the music and plays air guitar. After a moment, LYNN enters from stage right carrying a loaded backpack. She walks quickly past TODD and sits at the stage left end of the couch as she sets her backpack on the floor.

LYNN: slightly out of breath, digging in her backpack
Sorry I’m late…got snagged by Kathy. Anyway, let’s get to work.

TODD is not aware of LYNN. She pulls a textbook out of her backpack and looks at TODD.
LYNN: Todd? (No response. Louder) Todd? (Still no response. Practically yelling) Todd!

LYNN still can’t get TODD’s attention so she leans over and pulls one end of the headphones away from TODD’s ear and yells...

LYNN: Yo, Todd!

TODD is startled and rips the headphones from his head.

TODD: with an attitude
What is your problem?

LYNN: Sorry…it was the only way I could get your attention.

TODD: still with an attitude
Yeah, well what do you want?

LYNN: confused
I thought we were going to study for the geography exam tomorrow.

TODD: What would be the point?

LYNN: Um…getting good grades so we can keep up our GPA’s in order to get scholarships.

TODD: Okay…so we get great scholarships to top-notch universities. Then what?

LYNN: What is with you?

TODD: Just been thinking. I’ve worked my butt off all my life to get really good grades so I can get a college degree and get a high-paying job. And then what happens?

LYNN: sarcastic
Gee, I don’t know. Maybe so we can be happy and set for life?

TODD: So being slaves to high-paying jobs is what is going to make us happy?

LYNN: Well…I…

TODD: Sorry…I don’t see how knowing the location and population of Indonesia has anything to do with my being happy.

TODD places the headphones back on his head, closes his eyes, leans his head back and returns to playing air guitar. LYNN just sits there, lost in thought and confusion. Lights
fade on stage right scene as they come up on KAREN and stage left scene. KAREN continues to stare off into space. After a moment, LISA enters from stage left.

LISA: as she sits in the stage left chair
   There you are! I’ve been looking all over for you. What are you doing
   sitting back here all by yourself?

KAREN doesn’t respond.

LISA: Karen? (Still no response. Waves a hand in front of KAREN’s face.)
   Hello…earth to Karen.

KAREN: suddenly snaps back to reality
   Huh? Oh, hey, Lisa.

LISA: Whew! Thought we had lost ya for a minute there.

KAREN: What?

LISA: You were pretty deep there. (Pause) Anything you wanna talk about?

KAREN: Oh, it’s nothing really.

LISA: Come on! Nobody gets that lost in thought over nothing.

KAREN: trying to blow it off
   It’s just something I saw on the news last night.

Pause

LISA: Must have made some impression.

KAREN sighs heavily.

KAREN: A reporter did a story from Sudan. They showed this little boy with a
   bloated stomach and glassy eyes.

LISA: Yeah…those stories are always so sad.

KAREN: as if she didn’t hear LISA’s comment, talking to no one in particular
   Because of the political squabbling, food and medical relief isn’t able to
   get to the boy’s village. The reporter said that he along with hundreds of
   others would be dead from malnutrition in just a few days.

LISA: Wow…that’s too bad.
KAREN: Right after that segment was done, they cut away to commercial about dish washing liquid that’s guaranteed not leave spots on your dishes.

They sit in silence for a moment. KAREN looks at LISA.

KAREN: What are we supposed to do, Lisa?

LISA: confused
Do? About what?

KAREN: About that little boy? His village?

LISA: Karen, it was just a news report. I really don’t think…

KAREN: I wonder if that reporter and her crew gave that little boy something to eat before hoping back in their jeep?

LISA: Why can’t you just let it go?

KAREN: anguished
Let it go? Lisa…I can’t get the picture of that little boy out of my head!

Lights on stage right scene fade as lights come up on upstage center. ERIC suddenly flicks his wrist. He raises his hands as JOHN drops his head.

ERIC: He shoots! He scores! (Reaches over and moves another marker over to indicate 9 goals scored.) One more and it’s al over!

JOHN: fishing a ball out of the game, irritated
Yeah, yeah. (Hands ball to ERIC.) Just serve.

ERIC: Hey, you can’t win all the time.

JOHN: I don’t really care about the game.

ERIC: sarcastic
What? The greatest foosball champion of all time doesn’t care?

JOHN: Just shut the mouth and serve the ball, okay?

ERIC: not sure why he’s getting the attitude from JOHN
Whoa, dude! What’s eating you?

JOHN: I don’t wanna talk about it.

ERIC: concerned
Come on, man. If it’s bothering you that bad, you really oughta talk about it.

*Pause as JOHN wrestles with the idea.*

JOHN: It’s my mom, all right?

ERIC: What…she sick or something?

JOHN: No. *(Pause)* She’s getting remarried.

ERIC: And?

JOHN: And the guy’s a jerk! He keeps trying to get me to like him by buying me things.

ERIC: What’s so wrong with that?

JOHN: What’s wrong with it is that he’s not doing it for me…he’s doing it to impress my mom. *(Pause)* Besides, I don’t need anything from him. I already have two video game systems, almost 500 dvd’s and cd’s, a camera phone…

ERIC: So what are you gonna do?

JOHN: I don’t know. *(Pause)* Living with my dad isn’t an option. *(Pause)* Ya know what really bothers me?

ERIC: What’s that?

JOHN: I look at my parents shattered lives and I really start to wonder: what does the future hold for me?

*Lights fade on upstage center as lights come up on downstage center. SPEAKER enters from the audience.*

SPEAKER: Does any of this look familiar? Can you identify with it? I know I sure can. Something is deeply wrong and I can't quite put my finger on it. I feel trapped like I'm standing on a crowded bus and it's hard to move and the air is so thick with sweat and heat that it's becoming hard to even breathe. Everyone is huddled together, shoulder to shoulder like empty milk bottles, as we jerk and rattle back and forth; but no one will make eye contact with me and no one dares ask where we are going. I desperately want to get off but fear keeps me from making a move.

Something is missing inside of me. It’s like a buzzing coming from somewhere down the hall but I can't quite pinpoint it. I hear it when I wake up in the middle of the night - a whisper that's barely audible above
the wind outside my window. A still small voice that is calling out my name. Is it just me…or can you hear it, too?

*Lights out.*