



The Predator Among Us

A One Act Play by Dan Kehde

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“The Predator Among Us” premiered May 7, 2015 on the main stage of the West Virginia State University Capitol Center Theater in Charleston, WV.

Cast

Mike...Dan Kehde
Sasha...Siercia O'Brien
Allie...Olivia King

Director... Nik Tidquist

“The Predator Among Us” is a one act play written specifically to show young people the strategies of predators currently active in the US. It’s use of a simple set and lighting requirements make it very easy to be performed in a variety of venues from main stage to classroom. It is a difficult play to watch and challenging to perform.

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Interested in producing this piece? Send all inquiries to CYAC2001@me.com.

Enjoy the play!

CHARACTERS

Mike--40 ish predator
Sally/Ally--15 year old
Sasha--15 year old

SETTING

Blank stage—four chairs at left as a car. Another chair right during internet scenes.

TIME

Present Day

SCENE 1

MIKE:

You really don't know how attractive you are. Youth is its own aphrodisiac. All of you. So very attractive. And I know you've all been through that stranger danger crap in elementary school. Don't you love it? They made millions of dollars convincing 8 year olds that the bad guys are all lurking in vans outside the playgrounds when--we're not lurking at all--in fact, most of us are guys you know--cousins, and step uncles and the guy down the street or the father of one of the girls on the soccer team. We would never hurt anybody, right? Oh sure, there are always the guys you pick up on line? Because it's fun, or it's dangerous, but even those guys--even the guys who really are strangers, and who you've never seen before... We're all the same. We all know what we're doing. We all have the same tricks. Why do we do it? Oh, my, do you really have to ask? It's fun. And exciting. And when it works...well, we all know what happens when it works now, don't we?

(crossing to the right)

Now, then, let me show you how easy it is. You don't believe me, do you? You all think you're smarter than this or, better yet, you've already been targeted and you're saying to yourselves, "He's not like that. He's my friend. He understands me. We're soul mates." Oh, bless you for that.

(Sasha enters on the left, with books, going to school)

Look, there she is. This is Sasha. She's on my daughter's soccer team.

Hello, Sasha!

SASHA:

Hello, Mr. Griffin.

[To audience] Mr. Griffin's really nice. He's Sally Griffin's father. I've known him for about a million years. My parents think he's great.

MIKE:

Now, the first thing to remember is that respect is the key. We all know that. Just give them the respect that their parents don't, and they'll follow you anywhere. And I mean, anywhere. Watch and learn.

(crossing to her)

Call me Mike, everyone else does.

SASHA:

Okay, Mike. [She giggles]

MIKE:

What's so funny?

SASHA:

I've never called an adult by his first name before.

MIKE:

You didn't think we had first names?

SASHA:

Well, I guess.

MIKE:

[To audience] And that's the first step. [To Sasha] Why don't you call adults by our names? We're all humans, right?

SASHA:

My parents would never allow it.

MIKE:

[To audience] Perfect. [To Sasha] Well, I tell you what, this'll be our little secret. Okay?

SASHA:

[Giggles] Well, okay. Oh, there's my bus. See ya!

MIKE:

See ya at practice! Bye Sasha!

SASHA:

Bye Mr....uh Mike. [Giggles]

MIKE:

And so it begins. It seems innocent enough, right? Oh, I know, you're thinking "I call my youth group leader by his first name and he wouldn't do this..." Maybe you're right.

SASHA:

He's not doing anything wrong. Okay, so maybe he's creeping some of you out, but he's a nice man. He's Sasha's dad. He's always been really nice to me. The way things are going with my parents, I could use a nice man in my life.

MIKE

(crossing to center)

Now, all I need next is a little information. Nothing major, just a few points of interest.

(Sally crosses from right and stops)

SALLY:

Hi, Daddy.

MIKE:

(crossing to her and hugging her)
Hi sweetheart, how was school?

SALLY:

It was school.

MIKE:

What time's practice?

SALLY:

[Pantomiming getting something out of the fridge to eat]
Six O'clock.

MIKE:

Are we giving Sasha a ride?

SALLY:

Of course. Her parents don't care about her.

MIKE:

Of course they do.

SALLY:

No, Daddy, they really don't. They're always out doing something--some social--society thing.

MIKE:

They're busy.

SALLY:

Too busy for their own daughter? You know, there are nights when Sash doesn't see them at all? She comes home from practice, does her homework and goes to sleep. Sometimes her mom doesn't even get up to get her breakfast.

MIKE:

Some families work differently than ours.

SALLY:

Maybe so. But I like ours better. [Kisses him on the cheek] I'll go change.

MIKE:

Oh, I'd never touch my own daughter. That's just sick. No, Sally's a great kid. Anyone who even thinks about going after her is going to answer to me. So...what have we learned so far? Well, Sasha's starved for love and affection. And she comes home to an empty house, and her folks aren't keeping close tabs on her. Well, how do you like that? Isn't this easy??? So, let's see what the ride home from practice will get us tonight.

(As Mike was speaking, Sally and Sasha have set up four chairs stage left, to simulate a car. They laugh and both climb in the

back seat, Mike crosses to climb in the driver's seat)

MIKE:

Forever the chauffeur.
(Sally and Sasha giggle)

SALLY:

Home, my good man.

MIKE:

I am your servant, madam.
(Sally and Sasha giggle again)

SASHA:

Thank you for the ride, Mr. Griffin.

MIKE:

Anytime.

SALLY:

Where were your parents this time?

SASHA:

Who knows? Some banquet somewhere. All I know is that I'm supposed to nuke the frozen stuff for dinner and do my homework.

MIKE:

It sounds lonely.

SASHA:

I'm used to it.

SALLY:

Why don't you spend the night at our house?

MIKE:

Sure, you're always welcome.

SASHA:

Thanks, but it's a school night. Mom and Dad want me home on school nights.

MIKE:

Why?

SASHA:

That's what I keep saying. If they're not going to be home, why should I?

SALLY:

It's not fair.

MIKE:

Yeah, well, life's not fair.

SALLY:

It might be better anyway. I've got the biology test from hell tomorrow.

SASHA:

[Laughs] Sally????

SALLY:

It is.

SASHA:

Your dad???

MIKE:

I think you're old enough to say hell, don't you?

SASHA:

You have such a great dad.

MIKE:

See, Sal? I'm such a great dad.

SALLY:

You just think that because you don't have to live with him.

MIKE:

Speaking of greatness, why don't I drop you off at home before I take Sasha out to her place. You could get a jump start on biology.

SALLY:

Works for me.

MIKE:

[To audience]

Wasn't that easy? Now I have Sasha alone, in the car, driving to her house. And her parents aren't home. If I were a weaker man, I'd take her tonight. There are alot of guys that would do just that. Walk her to the door, get inside the house, have sex with her, threaten her to keep her mouth shut and move to the next girl. But this isn't just about that, is it? It's not just about the sex, it's about the power. It's about the manipulation. The simple satisfaction of winning the game.

(Sally gets out of the car)

SALLY:

Bye, Sash. Bye Daddy. See you soon.

MIKE:

Bye, sweetheart. I'll be right home.

(Sasha stays sitting in the back)

MIKE:

Are you really going to sit back there all the way to your house?

SASHA:

[Giggles] I guess not.

MIKE:

Come on, I won't bite.

(Sasha gets out and gets into the front seat)

That's better, isn't it? Thank you for the compliment, by the way. It was a nice thing to say.

SASHA:

But you are great. I wish you were my father.

MIKE:

Really? I rather just be your friend.

SASHA:

Really.

MIKE:

I think kids your age need friends who are older, don't you?

SASHA:

Kids my age are idiots.

MIKE:

[Laughs] Careful, you're talking about my daughter, here.

SASHA:

Boys. Boys my age are idiots.

MIKE:

Pretty much.

SASHA:

Yeah, pretty much.

MIKE:

But you're much more mature than the kids your age, anyway. Don't you think?

SASHA:

Really?

MIKE:

Of course. Look at what you have to do? You come home to an empty house, you fix your own dinners, do your homework without anyone bugging you about it. I bet you do your own laundry too.

SASHA:

Or it doesn't get done.

MIKE:

I'm a firm believer that if you give kids adult responsibilities, then they ought to be treated as an adult.

SASHA:

I agree.

MIKE:

Do you still have a curfew?

SASHA:

Mr....uh, Mike, I'm only in the 10th grade. Of course I have a curfew. Doesn't Sally?

MIKE:

Of course, but Sally's much less mature than you are. What's your curfew?

SASHA:

Ten o'clock on school nights and eleven on weekends.

MIKE:

Do you like that?

SASHA:

Not really.

MIKE:

If you're basically running your own life anyway, shouldn't you have more freedom? I'd give you more freedom.

SASHA:

You would?

MIKE:

As far as I'm concerned you're an adult and you should be treated as one.

SASHA:

I know, right? They still try tell me what to do, who my friends should be, where I can and can't go.

MIKE:

But they're not around most of the time.

SASHA:

Exactly. It's like, "when I'm here, you'll do what I say" but when they have something better to do, it's "you're on your own, kiddo." It's weird. I swear they check my phone to see who I've been texting. I know they check my computer.

MIKE:

It seems like you're basically on your own anyway.

SASHA:

I am. I really am.

MIKE:

Well, we're here.

SASHA:

I wish I didn't have to go inside.

MIKE:

But you do. It's a weeknight, remember?

SASHA:

How could I forget. I really like talking to you, Mike.

MIKE:

I like talking to you, too.

SASHA:

Well, good night. Thanks for listening.
(She leans over and hugs him)

MIKE:

Good night.

SASHA:

See you at practice.

MIKE:

I'll be there.

SASHA:

And, thanks again for the ride.

MIKE:

No problem. Hey, Sasha?

SASHA

(turning)

MIKE:

Why don't you text me when you get inside. Just to let me know you're safe?

SASHA:

Aww, that's sweet. Okay, I will.

MIKE:

Don't laugh. PoohBear9666?

SASHA:

(takes out her phone and logs it in, giggling)

MIKE:

It's Sally's idea.

SASHA:

It's cute. Good night, Mike.

MIKE:

Goodnight, Sash.

SASHA:

What? He hasn't done anything wrong. This is just a nice man who cares about me. It's more than my parents do. I like him. I'm glad I got that ride home with him, and I'm glad I sat in the front seat, and I'm glad we could talk. He's a nice man. Get your heads out of the gutter.

MIKE:

(Sasha walks off left. Mike drives and talks)

Now then, what have we accomplished so far? Let's see I've established trust. I've built up her self esteem. I've discovered that she, in her own innocent way, craves the physical affection that her parents won't give her. I've flattered her by treating her like an

adult, and rewarded her for acting like one. I've been alone with her, hugged her, and I know that she will always tell me when her parents aren't home. And, in a few minutes, she'll be texting me. And, while she's known me as Sally's father for years, I only began the game as her "friend" this morning, less than twelve hours ago. Life is good.

(he parks, gets out and walks to the right)

Hey Sal, I'm home!

(Blackout)

SCENE 2

MIKE:

Does this seem heartless? Am I a villain? Oh come on. She's 15 years old, she knows what she's doing. You know what YOU'RE doing, am I right? Face it, in three more months she'll be sixteen and we can have all the sex we want legally. And we will, if it's still fun, believe me. We will. I bet you didn't know that, did you. I'll bet you didn't know that 16 is the age of consent in this state. I do love living here. But, it'll never last. You young ones get way too clingy after a while. You always want to be around, and you want me to say I love you. And then you think you want commitment. You don't even know what commitment is, but you want it.

Oh, I know that some of you already have one of us and you're saying to yourself, "But he loves me. And I love him, and we're going to run away and be together forever." Uh, no. Look around, do you see many lasting relationships between a forty year old and a fifteen year old? Any PTA meetings, "There's Jerry, he married his daughter's best friend..."? Right. We're not in it for a lasting relationship, ever. EVER. It's for the sex, and for the power, and for the sheer excitement of the chase. And yeah, every once in a while you see some poor 45 year old who actually thinks he's still seventeen and thinks he can go back to high school, but that's the most pathetic of all, isn't it? Not even 15 year olds find THAT attractive.

(takes out his cell phone, texting)

Hi Sash. Having a good day in school?

I really like cell phones. They're so...private. You can say anything you want and you don't even have to say it out loud.

(reading her response)

Her parents are going to be gone over night.

(responding)

Sally's spending the weekend with her mom. [A look to the audience, then, texting] I guess we're both going to be alone.

SASHA:

(lights up left, and Sasha sitting in chair as if in classroom, her book bag by her feet. She's texting, and speaking her responses)

[Reading]

I wish we had practice tonight.

MIKE

And now, the hook. [Texting] So do I. I have a present for you.

SASHA:

Really?

MIKE:

Really.

SASHA:

What is it?

MIKE:

You'll see.

SASHA:

When?

MIKE:

At practice on Tuesday, I guess.

SASHA:

Ohhhh.

MIKE:

Patience, my child.

SASHA:

But I want to see it now. Can you pick me up after school?

MIKE:

[To audience] Ah, sweet victory. [Texting] Sure.

SASHA:

Great. Pick me up at the buses?

MIKE:

I don't like the traffic. Why don't you walk up the hill and I'll meet you there.

SASHA:

Sure. See you then.
(lights out on Sasha)

MIKE:

Now, then, whatever do you think will happen next? (crossing to the "car" and sitting in the driver's seat,)

MIKE:

Do you see how easy this is going to be?

SASHA:

[Standing at right, speaking to the audience] I'm not that stupid. He's Sally's father and a friend of my parents. He has a present for me. I think it's sweet. Look, sometimes two people just...find themselves together, right? Even if I wanted to, which I don't, what would I say? Get away from me, you perve? He's a nice guy. I've done nothing that my parents wouldn't approve of. [Turns

to walk away, then turns back] Okay, so what if I did have a crush on him? He's not going to do anything. He'll never even know.

(Sasha crosses with her bookbag and gets in the passenger seat)

SASHA:

Hi!

MIKE:

Hi!

SASHA:

What did you get me?

MIKE:

Not yet.

SASHA:

But I want it now! [Giggles and reaches over to Mike.]

MIKE:

[Takes her hand and pushes it away]

Not yet.

SASHA:

[Playfully reaches back toward Mike. Mike pushes her hand away. They're both laughing. Sasha begins to tickle Mike, and Mike tickles her back. They almost kiss. Mike pulls away. Sasha pulls away.]

SASHA:

I'm sorry.

MIKE:

No, no. You shouldn't be sorry. I shouldn't have let it go this far.

SASHA:

No, it's my fault. I'm just being stupid, that's all.

MIKE:

How are you being stupid?

SASHA:

I'm just a fifteen year old kid. I should have feelings like this. You're my best friend's father.

MIKE:

You're not just a fifteen year old girl, Sash. I've told you that before. You're a thirty year old in a fifteen year old body.

SASHA:

[Crying] I'm sorry.

MIKE:

[Reaches for her, hugging her] Come here. It's alright.

SASHA:

Oh Mike. I didn't mean...

MIKE:

(with a look toward the audience)

It's alright. [After holding her for a few minutes] Here, [taking out a small jewelry box from his pocket]

This is for you.

SASHA:

Mike, really?

MIKE:

[Wiping the tears from her cheeks] Really. Go ahead, open it.

SASHA:

[Opening it] Oh, it's beautiful.

MIKE:

It's a little soccer ball, see? And that's a real diamond in the middle.

SASHA:

Really. It's so expensive.

MIKE:

I know you don't think so now. But you're worth it. Here, let me put it on you.

(he fastens it around her neck, she turns, they kiss for real.)

SASHA:

(slowly pulling away)

Mike...

MIKE:

It's alright. You can have those feelings, it's okay. I have them too.

SASHA:

Really?

MIKE:

Really.

SASHA:

Oh, Mike. They hug, and kiss.

(lights fade)

Scene 3

MIKE:

(at center, away from the car)

What? I was a good boy. I took her home.

SASHA:

(At left)

So what? I kissed him. And yeah, I kind of feel guilty. Okay, so I feel guilty alot. I don't know why I did it. It just felt...so natural. But now---I don't know, it's a little wierd, isn't it? But...he's willing to--how could I ever be good enough to have a relationship with someone like him? And he's not a perve.

(crosses off left and calls from offstage)

The coffee's almost ready. It might be alittle strong.

MIKE:

(calling after her)

It'll be fine.

(to audience)

It doesn't pay to be in a hurry. What's important now is to start the "us against the parents" game. Oh, it's a great game. The object is to get her to want to break the rules. But it's got to be her idea, right? You don't win until you've gotten her to think that she's doing this on her own.

SASHA:

(bringing in a tray with coffee on it--like a little housewife)

Here we are.

MIKE:

I bet you do this for your parents all the time.

SASHA:

[Giggling] My parents? Never. They'd kill me if they found out what we did today.

MIKE:

The kiss? I think that was innocent enough.

SASHA:

Never! They still think I'm a child. They still monitor my cell phone, remember?

MIKE:

Okay, so that's a little wierd. Especially when you're taking care of

yourself most of the time.

SASHA:

If I were going to get into trouble, don't you think I'd have done it by now? I'm like the perfect child. I don't go out and get drunk all the time like most of my friends, I don't smoke weed and I don't like cigarettes. I come home on time even when they're not home. What do they want from me?

MIKE:

You sound perfect to me.

SASHA:

I do?

MIKE:

Sure.

SASHA:

And I'm old enough to make my own decisions.

MIKE:

Absolutely.

SASHA:

You really think so?

MIKE:

And you're beautiful, and smart, and a really talented soccer player.

SASHA:

Awwwww. I really like the necklace.

MIKE:

What are your parents going to say when they see that?

SASHA:

[Worried] I don't know.

MIKE:

[Reaching for it] Maybe I should take it back.

SASHA:

NO! It's beautiful. I'm never going to take it off. I'll just make something up to tell my parents.

MIKE:

I'm not telling you to lie. In fact, if me giving you a gift makes you...

SASHA:

They lie to me all the time. It's okay. I'll tell them that...some boy in school--Clarence--I'll tell them Clarence gave it to me.

MIKE:

Clarence????

SASHA:

He's had a crush on me since kindergarten. They'll believe it. If they even care to notice.

MIKE:

I don't want to get you in trouble with your parents.

SASHA:

You're not. You're not, really.

MIKE:

I think I should be going.

SASHA:

Don't. Please stay. Just a little while longer?

MIKE:

No...You have neighbors. We don't want the whole neighborhood to think that there's something going on.

SASHA:

[Kisses him] But there is, isn't there?

MIKE:

Your parents...

SASHA:

My parents are never going to find out.

MIKE:

Oh, I nearly forgot. I have another present for you.

SASHA:

Really???

MIKE:

[Reaching into his coat pocket] Here, it's an iphone.

SASHA:

An iphone?!!!

MIKE:

It's the latest one, whatever number that is. It's the one with all the bells and whistles and whatnot.

SASHA:

Oh my God!

MIKE:

You like it?

SASHA:

[Hugs and kisses him] Oh my God. My parents will never understand this.

MIKE:

That's why I bought it for you. So you and I can talk to each other--privately. I know how you worry about them looking over your shoulder all the time.

SASHA:

Oh my God. It's beautiful.

MIKE:

Try it. Text me. See it's right there.
(Sasha texts)

MIKE:

[Reading, smiles, looks knowingly out to the audience and texts back]

SASHA:

Really? You really do???

MIKE:

I really do.[Sasha hugs and kisses him even more passionately]

MIKE:

[Pulling away] Now I really need to go.

SASHA:

[Flirtatiously] Okay. If that's what you want.

MIKE:

Believe me, it's NOT what I want. [They hug and kiss one more time] Good bye. I'll see you soon.

SASHA:

How soon?

MIKE:

Soon enough. Good bye.

SASHA:

Good bye, Mike.

(lights fade on Sasha, Mike crosses to center)

MIKE

Scary, isn't it? We probably could have done it then and there, right? And we will, soon. But, the hook's not quite set yet.

(lights on Sasha, texting)

[Looking at his phone] Close, but not quite. [Crosses off right]

SASHA:

[Speaking to the audience] You're not going to tell me this is wrong. I know. I know, he's way too old for me. It'll never work out. What's Sally going to think? Right? And you're right, he is.

And you're right again, it probably won't work out and Sally will never ever speak to me again but...did you see how we...

Connected? I've never felt so comfortable with anyone before.

Maybe it will work out. I don't have a crystal ball and neither do any of you. I think he's wonderful and I'm pretty sure he feels the same way about me. How could this be wrong?

SCENE 4

(Sasha sits on the floor, or chair, or stands, left, texting. With maybe a stuffed animal? Mike stands right. Lights up on both. Sasha giggles. then stands, phone in hand. To audience)

SASHA:

I think I'm going to die. After Friday night...we didn't see each other for the whole weekend. And we could have! My folks were gone, Sally was gone. We could have spent the whole weekend together! And he wouldn't do it. He wouldn't come over. He said it didn't seem right. It seemed pretty right when he kissed me. So all I did all weekend was sit at home texting. It was kind of romantic.

MIKE:

It's been quite the weekend. You girls text all the time. I knew Sally was on her phone alot but, this is amazing.

SASHA:

[Texting, and speaking] I wish my parents hadn't come home. I want to see you.

MIKE:

I wouldn't see her all weekend. Such drama! Such sweet yearning.[Texting, and speaking] I'll see you at soccer practice tomorrow night.

SASHA:

[Texting, and speaking] That's not the same thing.

MIKE:

Not even close. [Texting, and speaking] I think it's the best we're going to get, don't you?

SASHA:

[Texting, and speaking] Ohhhh, I wish we could just run off and be together like we were on Friday night. Why'd you have to leave?

MIKE:

[Texting, and speaking] Because it was the right thing to do.

SASHA:

[Texting, and speaking] It didn't feel right to me.

MIKE:

[To audience] And now... [Texting, and speaking] It didn't feel right to me either.

SASHA:

[Texting, and speaking] See? Why can't we see each other NOW?

MIKE:

You see, the real art to all of this is to make certain that it's all her idea. Do you see it? That way, if later on her parents find out..."Did you force my daughter to have sex with you?" "Oh no, Daddy, it was my idea. He didn't even want to." That has the tendency to keep the police out of it entirely. Who wants a daughter who's a slut, right? So...

[Texting, and speaking] Because your parents are home, and so is Sally.

SASHA:

[Texting, and speaking] I can sneak out. They're asleep now, anyway. We can meet up!

MIKE:

[Texting, and speaking] I'd have to leave Sally alone.

SASHA:

So?

MIKE:

Oh, what's a boy to do??? See, it isn't my idea. [Texting, and speaking] It does seem right somehow.

SASHA:

[Texting, and speaking] Mike....Puleeeeeeease????

MIKE:

[Texting, and speaking] Okay, at the park beside the school.

SASHA:

[Texting, and speaking] Ten minutes? I can't wait. I love you. (Sasha gets up and runs off left)

MIKE:

I love you too. Hey, my conscience is clear. It's all her idea. (he crosses to the car, center and gets in the drivers side. Moments later Sasha crosses from the left and gets in, hugging him.)

SASHA:

Oh, Mike, I thought I'd never see you again.

MIKE:

Me neither. I...I never should have left on Friday.

SASHA:

I know. Oh, Mike, I don't care how old you are or if you're Sally's dad. I love you. I know it's wrong, but I love you.

MIKE:

I love you too.

SASHA:

I want to be with you. Forever. Mike, I don't want this to be a high

school relationship. I know I'm young, but, you said I'm mature. You said I'm very adult.

MIKE:

You are.

SASHA:

Then can't we be adults? Can't we have an adult relationship.

MIKE:

What do you mean?

SASHA:

You know what I mean.

MIKE:

Sasha, you're only...

SASHA:

But it doesn't matter. Not to me. I want you, Mike. Not just holding hands and stealing kisses. I want you. Come on, we can find a place. A motel, the woods, anywhere.

MIKE:

Are you sure?

SASHA:

I've never been more sure of anything in my life.

[Sasha freezes, Mike steps out of the chair and crosses to right. Lights fade on car. Sasha exits]

MIKE:

Score! It took me less than a week to go from a 45 year old father of her best friend, to her lover. Less than a week. How? Let's review.

One: Gain her trust. I had her call me by name and made it our little secret.

Two: Build her self esteem. I made her believe she was pretty and talented and responsible

Three: Give her what she wants: I found out from Sally what Sasha wanted more than anything--which was love and affection and attention from her parents

Four: Buy her presents. A necklace and an iphone, right? Cheap, considering the ultimate prize.

Five: Pull her away from her parents-- her parents didn't understand her, and were treating her like a child. The phone kept them out of the picture entirely.

Six: Pull her away from her friends -- You're so much older than Sally is...Sally's a child.

Seven: Make her feel older than she is, and reward her for it.

"You're a thirty year old in a fifteen year old body."

Eight: Convince her that you're her protector and that her parents are wrong.

Nine: Set up the secret rendezvous. Have her sneak out of the house or lie to her parents.

Ten: Make her think that sex was her idea-- oh, I could never do that...

It's so easy. You're such perfect targets.

SASHA:

It was wonderful. It was absolutely wonderful. He was so kind and caring and gentle. I don't care what anybody says, this is was the most wonderful thing that's ever happened to me.

MIKE:

And no one will ever know. And if they ever found out, what could they do? Sasha won't testify against me, will she. The last thing her parents will want is for it to go public, and I'll...I'll deny anything ever happened. She's a fifteen year old kid. You kids get crushes on old guys all the time. I'm just one of her fantasies, aren't I? Only this one came true. Perfect. Just perfect.

SASHA:

Of course, it never came to that.

MIKE:

It never does. In all the years I've been doing this, I've never, ever, been caught.

[To Sasha]

This is wrong. This is all wrong.

SASHA:

No, no it isn't.

MIKE:

Of course it is. You're too young. This never should have happened.

SASHA:

Are we breaking up?

MIKE:

Sweetheart, we were never together. We've got to stop. For your sake. You deserve to have a boyfriend your own age.

SASHA:

I don't want a boy...

MIKE:

Someone who will take you to prom, and hold hands at the football games.

SASHA:

But I don't want anybody else.

MIKE:

You know I'm right.

SASHA:

But Mike...

MIKE:

No. This has got to our little secret forever. Now you go back to being a high school kid, and I'll be Sally's dad and this whole thing never happened.

SASHA:

Mike...

MIKE:

It's the best thing. You know it is.

SASHA:

I know. I know. [Walks away, sobbing]

MIKE:

I'll see you at soccer practice. You see? No harm was done, was it? Oh, come on. You can't tell me she didn't get something out of it. And you better believe I did. What's wrong with that?

That's what you're telling yourselves, right? Those of you who might be sneaking out of the house tonight to meet up with some thirty something with a six pack and some weed? "It's my life, leave me alone." Of course, I'm the nice guy in this. Most of my friends aren't.

What I did was rape. Of course it was, consent or not. But at least I was nice about it. Most of the guys out there aren't nearly so gracious.

(grabs Sasha from behind and puts his hand over her mouth)

Shut up. Shut up. Quit fighting me. Quit fighting.

SASHA:

[Struggling] No. Please no.

MIKE:

You know you want it. You know you do. And you're not telling anyone, you understand?

SASHA:

No, don't.

MIKE:

Or I'll come back with a knife and make sure you never have a boyfriend again. Understand? Quit fighting me! [Lets Sasha go and she runs off crying]

I don't know what's wrong with the country these days. It's getting

to where you just can't trust anyone.

SCENE 5

MIKE:

Online is just as fun. And, guess what? It's even easier. Seriously. I know you've all heard the warnings..."Watch out what you put on your facebook page. Stay out of chatrooms, you don't know who's out there." Do you really listen to that? Come on. Most of the people who are telling you that wouldn't know how to get into a chat room if their lives depended on it. Just because Dr. Phil tells them this stuff they think it's true. I love Dr. Phil. "Take control of your children. Take control of your computer." Uh huh. And no, I don't pick them up on porn chatrooms. Have you ever gone on those things? They're disgusting! And I know that there are guys like me who go into the teen rooms and pose as seventeen year old football stars but how easy is that?

(typing)

Hi. I'm so tired from the game last night.

ALLY:

(typing)

Really? Which game?

MIKE:

Were you there?

ALLY:

Which game? Where do you go to school?

MIKE:

And we're off and running. Let's see.

(typing)

WWHS in Ohio. Where do you go?

ALLY:

South Hills in West Virginia.

MIKE:

Did you win last night?

ALLY:

I think so. I didn't go.

MIKE:

Why not? Are you one of those who hate it?

ALLY:

NO. I was grounded.

MIKE:

For what?

ALLY:

I came in late. I hate my parents.

MIKE:

[Sp] God bless you. [Typing] I hate mine too. When they're home.

ALLY:

I know. They're never home except to yell at me.

MIKE:

[Sp] But what fun is that? I don't get the guys that think this is great. It's all just lies. Anyone can lie. And sooner or later, when I finally convince her how cool it would be to sneak out of the house and meet up at Motel 6, she's going to know that I'm not 17 year-old football hero from Ohio. That's when it gets ugly.

ALLY:

[Crossing to him] Hey, you're not in high school.

MIKE:

Yeah, too bad, huh? You want your parents to find out where you are, kid?

ALLY:

No.

MIKE:

You want them to find out that you snuck out to Motel 6 to have sex with a quarterback from Ohio?

ALLY:

No.

MIKE:

Then shut up and get in the room. [He takes her arm and walks her, visibly upset, off right. He returns moments later]

MIKE:

You don't think it happens like that? [Typing] Wouldn't it be great if we could hang out some time, face to face. You're so special to me. And I'm not talking about sex, necessarily, but just to hold you.

ALLY:

I'd like that...

MIKE:

Maybe I could come to WV?

ALLY:

How far away are you?

MIKE:

Not far, maybe two hours. I have my license now. I could borrow my friends car.

ALLY:

It sounds like a dream. Can you really do it?

MIKE:

I can try. When?

ALLY:

My parents would kill me if they found out.

MIKE:

So would mine.

ALLY:

[Sp] I never do this stuff, honest. But...Jared sounded so nice so...down to earth. I know it's not possible to fall in love over the internet, but he's so cute, even if I've never seen him. And he's a star athlete. And he's interested in me. [Typing] Saturday night?

MIKE:

Perfect, there's a dance at the school. I can tell the folks I'll be there.

ALLY:

What time?

MIKE:

Is ten too late? [Sp] and you know the rest.

ALLY:

I can't tell anyone. I can't. Where am I going to go? The police? I'm underage. They're going to call my folks. No! NO! My folks can never, never find out about this. Ever.

MIKE:

But, personally, I'm not into that. I have never forced one of you kids to have sex with me. Ever. Ever. And there have been a lot of you. No, it's always your idea. You have to convince me or it's just not--it's just not worth it. I'm not a rapist. Right? I'm not.

Of course, we all use the same lines, rapists or not, but...there's a kind of artistry to what I do, don't you think?

Okay, so, I'll work anywhere from 5 to 20 chat rooms a night, depending on the night. Look, the kids I'm looking for are the kids who need me. Face it, you know who you are. The kids who need someone to tell them how good they are, how nice, or pretty, or smart or mature. The kids who don't have anyone to treat them with respect or give them presents or listen to them, who either fight with their friends all the time, or just don't have any friends at all. You may have bad home lives, or just have parents who are too busy with their own lives to take the time to have an interest in their children's. You're all my kids. I love you all. In so many ways. In the chatrooms, they're always easy to spot.

ALLY:

[Typing]Why is it that no matter how much you give of yourself

your friends always hate you?

MIKE:

It's way too easy, sometimes. [Typing] Because friends suck.

ALLIE:

[Typing] My friends do.

MIKE:

They'll come around. What did they do?

ALLIE:

I don't want to talk about it.

MIKE:

Okay.

JOYCE:

You deserved it.

MIKE:

Uh oh.

ALLIE:

I hate you.

JOYCE:

You started it.

MIKE:

[Sp] Perfect. It usually takes me longer, but...you see, the first step is to get her out of the chatroom and into e-mail where we can't talk without being overheard or monitored or whatever. [Typing] Allie, this sounds serious. What's your e-mail? I think I can help.

ALLIE:

How?

JOYCE:

You don't want to talk to a loser like her.

MIKE:

I've been there.

ALLIE:

Schoolgirl97@watchword.com

JOYCE:

I'll see you at school. This isn't over.

MIKE:

Of course it is.

ALLIE:

B---

MIKE:

Nice choice of words. [Sp] It just doesn't seem possible, does it? I'm a nice guy. All I want to do is help this poor teeny bopper out of a nasty situation.

MIKE:

[Typing] Hi. You have some really nasty friends...

ALLIE:

You have no idea.

MIKE:

Okay. Everyone texts for hours, right? You get involved in a conversation and suddenly it's 3 in the morning and you haven't even started your homework...

ALLIE:

Oh my god, it's three o'clock and I haven't even started my homework.

MIKE:

It sounds like it might be a good idea.

ALLIE:

Yeah. Thanks for the talk. I really needed to vent.

MIKE:

No problem. Any time.

ALLIE:

What's your real name?

MIKE:

Mike. What's yours?

ALLIE:

Allie.

MIKE:

I supposed I should ask you how old you are, but it really doesn't matter, does it?

ALLIE:

I was wondering the same thing but, you know what, it really doesn't.

MIKE:

I'm really old, Allie.

ALLIE:

Okay, I kind of thought you were.

MIKE:

And you're really young, but you're really mature.

ALLIE:

I am???

MIKE:

Oh yeah. Now go do your homework.

ALLIE:

Now you sound really old. Okay. Goodnight, Mike.

SCENE 6

MIKE:

Goodnight, Allie.

Isn't that so much better than lying? I know that some of you are already in online relationships. Of course you are--you're young, the internet is out there--how could you not take advantage of it, or be taken advantage of? I can hear you right now saying to yourselves, "He's not like that. He'd never do anything like that. That's not the way he is." Please, tell that to your friends. Please. We're not that way at all. We're just a bunch of old guys trying to help young wayward teenage girls make it through the formative years. That's why we go to the chatrooms. That's why we strike up conversations with troubled young women--and men. I don't swing that way, but can you imagine how easy it is for a gay predator to pick up a gay kid online? You guys are perfect. And what's better still is that the guys will never talk. Ever. Perfection. I'm in no hurry. Let's face it, once the hook's been set it doesn't matter when I reel it in. Besides, it's bad form to seem eager. So I might wait a day or two. Besides, I always have other "projects" to work on.

ALLY:

[Typing] Hey Mike, are you out there?

MIKE:

Don't you love it? [Typing] Hi, Allie.

ALLY:

With a Y, thank you.

MIKE:

Hi, Allie with a Y.

ALLY:

Very funny. Where have you been?

MIKE:

Right here, as always. How's your life? [Sp] Okay, so here's what I know about Allie. Allie has a facebook page. God, I love Facebook, don't you? I know, I know, you've all been warned about what you should or shouldn't put on line but, honestly, my kids don't think they have anything in their lives worth hiding. Am I right? Or you're daring guys like us to make their lives more "interesting," shall I say? Let's see: Ally's a 9th grader at South Hills High School in Lincoln County, West Virginia. Huh, that's only about a hundred miles away. 90 minutes. Definitely do-able on a Friday night. I can have her home by midnight. Excellent. Her favorite band is some indie group--the Spanish Thugs. Hmm,

never heard of them. I'll have to do some research. Oooo, her friends are cute, too. She's taking English, History, American Studies, PE, Art, Chorus and Drama. Of course she is. An artist. I love artists. They always think everyone hates them. This will be fun.

ALLY:

Okay, I guess. I hate school.

MIKE:

Of course you do. All artists hate school.

ALLY:

How did you know I was an artist?

MIKE:

You sound like an artist. You write like one. Are you taking art classes?

ALLY:

It's my favorite class!

MIKE:

Of course.

ALLY:

I want to be an artist! Or a singer. Or maybe an actor.

MIKE:

Then you should go for it.

ALLY:

I wish my parents would understand that.

MIKE:

This isn't brain surgery, you know. She'll spend the next hour or so complaining about her parents and I'll agree with her and nudge her to complain some more and she will and I'll agree some more until we both agree that her parents really have no place in her life anymore because, let's face it... [Typing] You're really far more mature than they'll ever understand.

ALLY:

Oh, Mike, you're the only adult that really understands me.

MIKE:

And here we are again.

ALLY:

They won't even get me a decent phone. My screen's been cracked for months. I can hardly read it.

MIKE:

[Typing] I just got a new iphone. Do you want my old one?

ALLY:

My parents would freak.

MIKE:

Don't tell them. We'll put it on my plan. It's okay, I'm rich.

ALLY:

You are???

MIKE:

Yeah, didn't I mention that? [Sp] What? Charming, caring and rich? What fourteen year old could resist? [Typing] Why don't I send it to you?

ALLY:

Really? Okay. Can you send it to my friend, Monica? That way my folks won't open it.

MIKE:

No problem. Monica's the cute one on the left, in case you're interested. Well, we all know where this is leading now, don't we? We'll give it a day or so for the phone to arrive.

SCENE 7

ALLY:

[Typing still] Hi!

MIKE:

[Typing] So, you got it?

ALLY:

It's beautiful. It's almost brand new.

MIKE:

Yeah, they came out with the new ones right after I bought this.

ALLY:

Thank you. Thank you. Thank you!

MIKE:

You're welcome, welcome, welcome. [Sp] Okay, so we'll spend the next few hours talking about school and parents and... [Typing] Can't you talk about this stuff with your boyfriend?

ALLY:

What boyfriend? High school boys are idiots.

MIKE:

[Sp] So true, so true. [Typing] I'm sorry, I just thought that someone as artistically sensitive and mature would surely have a significant other.

ALLY:

Really?

MIKE:

Definitely.

ALLY:

Oh, Mike.

MIKE:

[Sp] Oh Mike, indeed. Gee, I wonder what's coming next? [Typing] I wish I could see some of your artwork. I bet it's amazing in person.

ALLY:

You think so?

MIKE:

Are you kidding? From the pictures you sent, it looks incredible.

ALLY:

That's just the stuff at school. You should see the stuff in my room.

MIKE:

[Sp] I agree. [Typing] We live with life's disappointments, I guess.

ALLY:

I guess. Do you ever make it to West Virginia?

MIKE:

[Sp] I love my life, don't you? [Typing] All the time, why?

ALLY:

You do???

MIKE:

Of course.

ALLY:

Why didn't you tell me???

MIKE:

It never came up before. [Sp] Like a lamb to the slaughter.

ALLY:

The next time you come in, we should meet up.

MIKE:

No. Your parents would go nuts.

ALLY:

My parents don't need to know.

MIKE:

I don't know.

ALLY:

Pleaaaaaaase???????

MIKE:

You see? It was her idea, right? [Typing] Actually, I'll be passing through on Friday.

ALLY:

Really???

What time?

MIKE:

It'll be too late. Around eleven or so. Your parents would never let you out...

ALLY:

I'll sneak out. I do it all the time.

MIKE:

I don't know...

ALLY:

Come on, Mike, I really want to meet you face to face.

MIKE:

[Shrugs to the audience] Okay... [Sp] And so it goes. Now, I can hear you now. Just because we meet face to face doesn't mean she's going to be jumping into bed with me. Sure. Because we all know that some forty year old business man you meet on the internet is looking for a meaningful relationship with a 14 year old,

right? So, let's do the short form.

ALLY:

[All spoken] Hi!

MIKE:

Ally?

ALLY:

I knew it was you.

MIKE:

[Laughing] I'm the only other person in the park at this hour.

ALLY:

Except for the homeless guy sleeping on the bench over there.

MIKE:

I take it back. I have a present for you. [Taking an envelope out of his coat]

ALLY:

Really? You already got me the phone.

MIKE:

Hey, I like you. Why shouldn't I buy you things. Besides, you're really going to like this.

ALLY:

I like you too. [Reaching for it, playfully and physically] What'd you get me?

MIKE:

[Laughing and making her climb all over her] Eager, aren't you?

ALLY:

Miiiiiiike?

MIKE:

Okay, okay. Here. Open it.

ALLY:

[Opening the envelope and pulling out two tickets] What?

MIKE:

It's two tickets to the Spanish Thugs. They're coming to Columbus next week.

ALLY:

[Hugging him profusely] Oh, Mike.

MIKE:

Yeah

ALLY:

Will you take me? I know you're old but...would you take me?

MIKE:

I'm not sure your parents would approve.

ALLY:

Oh they're never going to know about this. Believe me.

MIKE:

It's going to be awful late.

ALLY:

It doesn't matter. It's the Spanish Thugs. Oh my God, I can't believe you did that! I'll tell my folks I'm spending the night with Sasha. They don't even know her. This is going to be great. [Hugs him again] I love you. I can't wait for next weekend.

MIKE:

Neither can I. [Ally runs away excited] Oh I know, YOUR internet friend would NEVER do something like that. Right. Ally was a nice kid. I enjoyed her. Oh come on, it wasn't all one sided. It wasn't...

ALLY:

[To audience] I know you think it's wrong. He's like forty something and I'm still in high school but...some of you know already--I fell in love with him on line. Way before we even met face to face. He was so kind and understanding. And I know I should never let these thoughts get into my head but, I'm going to have a relationship with a guy sooner or later, right? The guys in my high school? You've got to be kidding. Mike was everything I ever wanted, I ever needed. So he was old. We were soul-mates. After the concert...

[Hugging him] Mike, that was insane! Insane!

MIKE:

Yep. Well, it's time to head home.

ALLY:

Awww, I don't want to go. I don't want this night to ever end.

MIKE:

We've got a long drive, we'll be lucky to get home before 4.

ALLY:

Mike, my folks think I'm spending the night with Sasha and then going to her little brother's soccer game in the morning. We have time.

MIKE:

Time for what?

ALLY:

Mike, I love you. We're soul mates.

MIKE:

Ally, I'm old enough to be your father.

ALLY:

But you're not my father. And you've always said I was much older than I really am. Can't we stay? Find a place? I'm ready. I am.

MIKE:

And, that's the way it works. Simple really.

ALLY:

(at her desk at home again, typing)

Mike, are you there?

MIKE:

You know the nice thing about my phone plan? I can cancel it at any time. Ally was cute. But there's a little dancer in Indiana that's having problems with her parents right now. She needs me.

ALLY:

Mike? Mike?

MIKE:

And there's a little poet chick just outside of Morgantown that doesn't have anyone to tell her her art is good. I think I can do that quite well, don't you?

ALLY:

Mike? Where are you?

MIKE:

Maybe I'll see you on line sometime? Come on, you know you want to. It's exciting, right? And your folks will never find out. And you get to go to a motel just like an adult. How cool is that? I'll be out there tonight. Along with about a thousand or so guys just like me, with exactly the same thing on our minds. Come on, make my day. Send me a message, meet me in a chat room. Or maybe I know you already and I'm just waiting for a sign to cross the line to give you a little "special attention." Don't listen to that voice inside your head that tells you I'm dangerous, or creepy or just makes you feel a little uncomfortable to be around. No, you know better. You do. After all, you're all much more mature for your age, aren't you?

SCENE 8

Look, here's the thing. Nobody's ever going to arrest me. They're not. For one thing, not one of the fifty or hundred or, honestly I don't know how many of you I've had sex with. I've been doing this for a long time. But I can honestly say that not one of them would have ever turned me in. Ever. I'm just not like that. Why? Because I didn't do anything wrong. Not really. You know that. Just because I wanted to have sex with a 14 year old? Look around--most of the boys in the audience want the same thing. And I dare say that there are alot of girls here right now that would like to have sex with them. Are any of you committing crimes? Well, yeah, I suppose, in the eyes of the law but not in the eyes of you guys. Am I right? My girls loved me. It was exciting. It was fun. It was their idea, remember? They finally had an adult who appreciated them. Who made them feel as if they were worthy of being loved. And if it ended badly--everyone has a relationship or two that ends badly--but if it did, they always feel so guilty about getting involved with an old guy like me that they'd never tell anyone about it. It's perfect.

It's not as if I'm doing the rock star thing. Look at me. Do I look like a rock star to you? But you know the guys--I've watched them in action, it's just not my style. You know the kind. The thirty something who still thinks he's sixteen? Got him a telecaster and a band and plays at the teeny bars on weekends. Sexting? His kind invented it. Puts an e-mail on his website to build his "fan base" and the next thing you know he's asking you for a picture of his favorite anatomy. It's fun, right?

ALLY:

[Typing] Oh Johnny, I'm not sure I should.

MIKE: [AS JOHNNY]:

[Typing] Sure you should, babe, you've got the body of a twenty year old?

ALLY:

You really think so?

MIKE:

Sure, you're very mature for your age.

ALLY:

Oh, Johnny.

MIKE:

The band's coming into town next week. Wanna hook-up?

ALLY:

Really??? With me???

MIKE:

Of course. I've been wanting to ever since I met you.

ALLY:

But you've never met me.

MIKE:

It makes me want to even more.

ALLY:

Ohhhhhh Johnny!

MIKE:

But send me that picture so I know what they look like.

ALLY:

Johnny!!!

MIKE:

Disgusting, isn't it? It just lacks the...subtly of a true seduction, don't you think. And it's over so fast. One night, and he leaves town again.

ALLY:

But...I love you, Johnny.

MIKE:

Uh huh.

So, you want solutions? Not really. You don't. God bless you, you know it all. You know what to do and how to get out of it. That's the beauty. I love you kids. You've got all the answers. How many years have teachers been showing you the same lame videos about how you shouldn't get involved with strangers on the internet. Or how there are always lines that shouldn't be crossed no matter who. Am I right? But why should you listen to them? Adults get more speeding tickets, more drunk driving citations, have more affairs on their spouses than any of you guys. What would ever give them the right to tell you who to talk to, or trust and text? So, the next time you need someone to turn to? Someone to hug you, and buy you presents, and make you feel important and eventually, make you feel like a real, sexual adult? Well, I'll be out there, or someone just like me. Have a nice day.

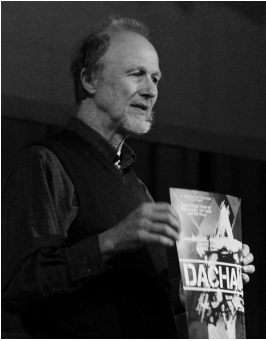
End of Play

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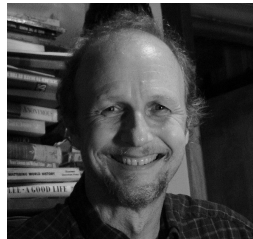
NOTES

About the Author



Dan Kehde is a Charleston, WV- based playwright, librettist and director who, for the past 25 years, has served as co-founder and managing director for the The Contemporary Youth Arts Company of Charleston, WV, an organization dedicated to giving young artists hands on opportunities to bring new works to the American stage. A nearly unfunded, for profit theater company, CYAC has produced over 60 new works in the past 20 years including 17 new Scarpelli-Kehde musicals , more than thirty new plays and ten touring social action one-acts.

Together with his perservering wife, Penny, Dan continues to work with the young people of CYAC while constantly striving to challenge the ever changing lists of new actors that come into the company. Dan is currently working on new pieces of musical theater with composer/collaborator Mark Scarpelli, as well as continuing to create and produce three or four new plays of his own each year.



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