

# ***The Broken Piano***

*by*

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Cast of CharactersPEGGY:

20's

ROXANNE:

50's

Place

Dining room

Time

Morning

2.

Setting: The play takes place in a cluttered dining room. It has way too much furniture in it and is overly decorated. Shelves of figurines and paintings hoard the walls.

At Rise: The play opens with Roxanne making tea on one side of the dining room and Peggy sitting in front of her piano on the other side of the room. They face one another.

ROXANNE: Peggy, are we going out for our walk today?

PEGGY: No.

ROXANNE: Are you sure?

PEGGY: Yes.

ROXANNE: ...I'm going to invite Grandmother over for lunch..would you mind?

PEGGY: I'm rehearsing piano today.

ROXANNE: Yes, but couldn't you wear those new headphones I bought for you?

PEGGY: I don't like them.

ROXANNE: Why not?

PEGGY: It's too much pressure on my ears.

ROXANNE: Can't you adjust them?

PEGGY: No.

ROXANNE: Surely you could adjust them.

PEGGY: I can't.

ROXANNE: But surely you can if they were so expensive.

PEGGY: They don't adjust pressure.

ROXANNE: Can I have a look at them?

PEGGY: No.

ROXANNE: Why not?

PEGGY: Because, you taking a look at my headphones, in order to see if you can adjust their pressure, irritates me! Do you think I'm too dumb that I can't figure it out on my own? I already tried many different ways to see if I could alleviate the pressure and I can't. I can't because the headphones don't have that capability...you just have to believe me.

ROXANNE: I wasn't saying I didn't believe you.

PEGGY: You insinuated.

ROXANNE: I wasn't trying to insinuate anything.

PEGGY: You did.

ROXANNE: Should we bring them back?

PEGGY: No.

ROXANNE: If they hurt your ears, we can get a refund and use that refund to purchase better headphones for you.

PEGGY: I can't be bothered.

ROXANNE: Why not?

PEGGY: It's too much trouble.

ROXANNE: It shouldn't be.

PEGGY: Why shouldn't it be Mom?

ROXANNE: Because you should be able to practice your piano uninhibited.

PEGGY: I don't use the headphones.

ROXANNE: But that's the point.

PEGGY: What is?

ROXANNE: The point of buying the headphones in the first place.

PEGGY: I never wanted headphones.

ROXANNE: So why did you ask me to buy them?

PEGGY: I didn't.

ROXANNE: But you did when passing the store, you said, "Mom, I'd like to look at some equipment." Didn't you say that?

PEGGY: Don't try and turn this whole thing on me.

ROXANNE: What do you mean Peggy?

PEGGY: You're so clever. You coaxed me into going into that dreadful shop. I couldn't have cared less about going there but you guided me to it and of course I wanted to go in but it wasn't my original intention, I wasn't even thinking about going into the music shop. I'm broke. I have no money. Why would I even consider it? But we went in because you suggested it, you took us down that path and we went in. And where did you go? You walked straight over to the audio section, to get me to fumble over headphones.

All of those clunky, degenerate headphones that function only as a way to cost shopper's money. And you fell for it. You kept going on about THIS headphone or THAT headphone and the COLORS and the this and the that and you turned my stomach like always. I had no choice but to have you buy them! And WHY? WHY? You know why? Because YOU have guests. YOU are forever inviting *guests* into our house and so you want me to wear those stupid headphones like some lump in a corner, while you serve tea and cookies. All the while pointing at me and talking about me while I try to concentrate on my playing.

ROXANNE: I never talk about you.

PEGGY: Yes you do! You point and you laugh and you talk.

ROXANNE: That is why you have a bedroom.

PEGGY: What??

ROXANNE: Bring your piano into your bedroom. I've told you time and again that it has no place in the dining room. It takes up space!

PEGGY: You take up space!

ROXANNE: Peggy, that's no way to talk to me.

PEGGY: Don't insult my music!

ROXANNE: I wasn't trying to insult your music.

PEGGY: Going on about how I take up space. You do! You're the one who takes up space. We have more shit in this home that we don't need, It's cluttered with crap. Everywhere I turn in this home is another painting on the wall or another unnecessary figurine. It's a disgrace! Wasting our money on items just to make yourself feel good and all it does is collect dust and make it harder to walk through the home.

ROXANNE: Excuse me, but I am allowed to do as I desire in my own home! This is my home Peggy! Maybe one day when you have a home of your own you can discover the joy it gives to decorate it.

PEGGY: Please! I wouldn't dare waste my life on such trivial things! Ha!

ROXANNE: That is fine Peggy. You may do as you like, it is your life but this is my home and you don't have a say in how I choose to live in my home.

PEGGY: I live here too!

ROXANNE: That is true, you do.

PEGGY: So I *should* have a say. How many times has my elbow knocked over that horrible glass owl. And why do you even have a thing for owls anyway? You make no sense.

ROXANNE: I think owls are beautiful creatures. You should learn to have more of an appreciation for nature.

PEGGY: You've never even seen an owl.

ROXANNE: I have. I am quite traveled Peggy and you should not accuse me of things you know nothing about.

PEGGY: I wasn't accusing you of anything. It's a statement. I was making a statement.

*PAUSE.*

*Roxanne makes herself a cup of tea. She sips it calmly and reflects.*

*Peggy turns back to her piano and stares down at it.*

ROXANNE: Dad has told me that he would like for you to bring your piano upstairs into your bedroom.

PEGGY: Why?

ROXANNE: Because he doesn't want it here.

PEGGY: You don't want me here.

ROXANNE: Peggy, would you please listen to what I am asking of you.

PEGGY: Fine! You want me to move everything today! Will it make your life so much better?!

ROXANNE: I can help you move it -

PEGGY: No! NO! I'll move the whole damn thing!

*Peggy lifts up her piano in a rage and it slips through her fingers and comes crashing down to the floor, also knocking down a shelf of figurines.*

*SILENCE.*

*Roxanne walks calmly to the closet and takes out a broom and dust pan.*

PEGGY: One of the keys...

ROXANNE: Hm?

PEGGY: I can't find...one of the keys popped off.

ROXANNE: Oh.

*Roxanne begins sweeping the broken  
figurines into the dust pan.*

PEGGY: Will you excuse me?

ROXANNE: I'm sorry but I am cleaning your mess.

PEGGY: I am trying to find the key to the piano.

ROXANNE: And I am trying to clean this mess.

PEGGY: You will sweep the piano key into the dust pan I am sure of it. You will throw it out and I will have to go through all the trash to try and find it. Will you just stop, please?! *Just stop!*

*Roxanne continues sweeping.*

ROXANNE: If I see the piano key I will stop.

PEGGY: What's wrong with you? Just stop!

*Roxanne refuses to stop sweeping.*

*Peggy screams and storms out from the  
room.*

*Roxanne bends down and picks up the broken  
piano key. She sits down in a chair and  
looks out.*

*A tear streams down her cheek but she quickly  
wipes it away.*

*Suddenly there is stomping heard above, followed  
by footsteps coming down the staircase and  
Peggy enters the dining room.*

*Roxanne holds up the piano key.*

*Peggy takes it gently.*

*Roxanne stands up and continues sweeping  
the mess.*



PEGGY: Piano's broken.

ROXANNE: Is it?

PEGGY: The key snapped off.

ROXANNE: Oh.

PEGGY: You happy?

ROXANNE: I wish I could say I was happy, Peggy.

*Peggy picks up the piano and leaves the room.*

*Roxanne throws away the smashed figurines into the trashcan.*

*Roxanne does this a few more times until everything is cleaned up perfectly.*

*Roxanne sips her tea and composes herself.*

*Roxanne goes to the phone mounted on the wall and dials.*

*The lights ever so slowly come down over Roxanne's following dialogue, until the stage is completely dark as she reaches her final word.*

ROXANNE: Hi mom, how are you doing? (beat) Good. Everything is good. I wanted to see if you'd like for me to come pick you up in an hour. Will that give you enough time to get ready? Yeah? Perfect. I have the most delicious blueberry pie. And I have your favorite lemon ginger tea. Arnold got the fireplace working again so we can sit in the living room together quite comfortably. Yes, it just needed to be cleaned. It functions perfectly now, better than before...(she laughs)

**END OF PLAY**