

Mini Play Number Fourteen

BLACK DOG

John and Ty's mom is saturated with feelings of worthlessness and guilt. She works hard in raising her two boys. She loves them and they love her. But she feels she is a poor parent, lacking in so many ways. In reality she has made her family happy in difficult circumstances, but, she feels burdened and deep in her heart she feels alone. Her anxiety and depression crush her. She collapses emotionally. Will she, can she, recover?

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DEPRESSION



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FOREWARD

Zik-Zak Corolla's mini plays for pleasure and purpose.

The accounts in the plays are drawn from real-life experiences but the characters are fictitious.

The plays will help raise awareness and promote useful discussion of social issues that now effect most families. The aim is to help safeguard our kids from the increasing dangers they face in this ever-changing world.

Interactive and fun, the plays and the following *Questions for Discussion*, help raise awareness of challenges that affect the younger generation. They have been designed to promote discussion and dialogue especially between kids and their parents or guardians, teachers and others who are genuinely concerned about the welfare of our society.

Because the plays address real issues the language used is at times direct but is unlikely to be offensive. Feel comfortable about playing.

Tips for playing

Drop the directional notes and change the genders of the characters if it is more appropriate to your setting and cast; but be sure to follow the general thrust of the play. Short, the plays may be, but they are carefully researched, thoughtfully penned – and they pack a punch!

It is important to have fun acting out the plays and to get fully involved in the *Questions for Discussion*. Remember not to be judgemental but to listen, consider and learn.

Get Involved. Get Motivated. Play Safe.

Invite your family and friends around for the evening. Make a night of playing and learning. Have some fun!

Speak to the teachers at your kids' school. Get competitions going – Best Production, Best Actor, Best Answer, Best Lesson Learned. *

Contact local groups and clubs to put on a production of a selection of the plays. *

Be expansive. Get on social media (if it is safe and sensible) and spread the word. *

Go Big! Invite the local radio and TV station to come and see your very own special premiere. *

** Performances are authorized for educational purposes only; not for commercial gain.*

Enjoy! Hugs! – Zik-Zak Corolla

LIST OF PLAYS

No.	Subject	Title of Play
1	Alcohol/Driving	Bumpy Ride
2	Alcohol/Social Media	One More Shot
3	Peer Pressure	Movie Madness
4	Peer Pressure	The Breeze and the Wind
5	Bullying	I'm a Bully Are You?
6	Gun Crime	Mommy
7	Bullying	He Deserves Respect
8	Bullying	Gotta Change Wanna Change
9	Drugs	How Is Sally Getting On?
10	Drugs	A Fish on the Line
11	Drugs	Will You Be My Girl?
12	Drugs	You Gotta Show Love
13	Depression	The Phone Call
14	Depression	Black Dog
15	Child Sexual Abuse	No. 26
16	Child Sexual Abuse	The Restaurant
17	Knife Crime	1:30am
18	Knife Crime/Gangs	Trouble Brewing
19	Knife Crime/Gangs	23
20	Body Image	Carrots and Onions
21	Single Mom	That Night
22	Sex/Alcohol	Fast Car
23	Self-Harm/Sexual Abuse	Do You Think They'll Believe You?
24	Cutting/Self-Harm	Me and My Mom
25	Self-Harm	Brain Box
26	Gambling	The Monster
27	Binge Drinking	A Target to Kill
28	Binge Drinking	What a Party!
29	Gun Crime	Rap A Ta Tat Tat Tat
30	Gun Crime	Miss Isabella Lindeman
31	Cyberbullying	Drastic Action

P14 Subject: Depression

Title: Black Dog

Characters

Mom

John

Ty

Mind

Amy

Teaser

Mom loves and tries her very best to look after her two boys, but her heart is hurting.

Scene One

Mom (Washing some breakfast pots). John, you've nearly finished. When you've done give me a hand washing-up please.

John (Nodding in Ty's direction) How come he's not doing it?

Mom (Ignoring John) And Ty, you've got five minutes.

Ty Okay Mom. (Munching his breakfast) You don't want me to get indigestion, do you?
(John and Ty snigger) Oh! and Mom don't forget our pickups.

Mom Please.

Ty Please. Lots of pleases, please (Getting up)

Mom I've already done them clever clogs. John leave the pots, I'll finish them. You'll both miss the bus (Looking at the clock) if you don't go now.

John Watch out for that black dog Mom (Leaving and laughing, with Ty).

Ty I don't know why she goes on about that. I don't get it, 'black dog?' She seems okay to me.

John Dad used to say, 'that's women for you Son.' (Both laugh)

Scene 2

(John and Ty come home from school)

John Hey! Mom.

Mom Hi boys. Had a good day? See any lovely girls then?

Ty Give it a rest Mom. They don't play football (Quietly) Well not many of them.

Mom That's because girls have brains unlike you two dorks (Laughing).

Ty Ha! Ha! Ma. And talking of dorks how come you gave me a different pack up today? Mr Smith – our gym teacher said it wasn't a very healthy meal! And he should know!

Mom So he's a gym teacher, not a cookery teacher then?

John Anyway Mom, my football kit was still dirty. Mr Smith still made me wear it though. Not very pleasant Mom I can tell you. How come you didn't wash it?

Mom Because you didn't take it out of your bag, did you? I'm not a nursery nurse? Take it out now. You too Ty and I'll put them in the wash now before I forget.

John She's starting to forget Ty.

Ty. Hey! Mom. Kylie's mom is getting married again. Wedding's next month.

Mom I thought you said it was Trevor Davis's mom that was getting married again, Ty?

John He did. I mean she is. So, including Tara Buffin's mom last summer – that's three from our year who've got new parents. Like erm . . . dogs on heat, Ty.

Mom Don't you be rude. I'm sure they'll make it work. You can be very happy when your married (Thinking) You'll find out one day!

Ty Have you thought of getting married again Mom? (Putting his arm around mom). No more black dog!

Scene 3

(Later that night, alone with her mind who sits behind her)

Mom Three marriages! What must they think of me!

Mind Not much. The years have gone quickly and no fella in sight. You must feel hurt?

Mom I shouldn't feel hurt. A lot of people are worse off than me. I've got two great boys. I've every reason to be happy (Slight pause) They all think I am.

Mind But, you're not are you? You try to be the perfect parent, but you fail. You couldn't even . . .

Mom Make a proper lunch.

Mind Or wash a football kit. But you slipped up, didn't you? One of your unguarded, weaker moments.

Mom Yes. Yes, I did. I regret it though (Pause) I told them about the black, the black dog.

Mind The black dog. That weighty.

Mom (Going to her knees. Sobbing) Crushing, dark, unbearable depression.

Mind There you said it. (Pressing, urgent) Say it again. Say it again.

Mom Crushing sadness. Help me. Someone help me. (Sobbing as the boys enter the room)

Ty Mom are you okay? Mom? What's wrong?

John (Bending down close to his Mom. Softly) I'm going to call Aunt Amy. Don't worry Mom.

Scene 4

Mom Thanks for looking after the boys Amy (Smiling) Five weeks is a bit of a long time even in a five-star hospital (Laughing).

Amy It flew by. The boys, they made me feel young again.

Mom And thanks more than anything for listening that night. Just listening and listening to the (Slight pause) garbage I must have vomited out.

Amy It wasn't garbage Honey. It was years of hurt, sorrow, stress, panic - you name it! You've . . .

Mom Bottled it up for years pretending to be the perfect mom, when I wasn't.

Amy No, you're not perfect. No mom is. You've suffered a lot, that's for sure and then there was the exasperation, the fear, the hurt – and the rest! And yet you have brought those boys up a treat – you and no one else but you.

Mom That's what I'm beginning to see. I've got value. I don't have to be the best. Because no one is. I don't – none of us do – need to be . . .

Amy Or, can be – perfect!

Mom It was the listening that did it, Amy. You, that night, and then the hospital. The listening. No judging. No snap out of it. Just what they call empathetic and sympathetic listening. Thank you.

Amy No more black dog then?

Mom He's in the back yard.

Mind Just waiting to be let in.

Mom (Shudders)

John (The boys come into the room) Hi Aunt Amy. Hey Mom. Can we have some dinner?

Ty Please! (Happy)

THE END

Questions for Discussion for Black Dog

1. How do you feel about Mom and her two boys?
2. Did the boys have a full understanding of their mother's unhappiness?
3. Do you feel the boys loved their mother?
4. What was causing Mom's unhappiness and depression?
5. How did Mom get help?
6. What type of friend did Amy prove to be and how did she help Mom?
7. What is 'the black dog?'
8. What battle did Mom fight?
9. Did the boy's dad understand his wife's emotions? Did his thinking affect his sons' thinking?
10. Did Mom have value?
11. Is there shame in feeling depressed?
12. How can you help someone who is depressed?
13. If you get depressed what should you do?
14. What have you learned from the play?
15. Throw open the discussion.

THE END