



EARNED ENDINGS
Module Activities

Word-at-a-Time Stories

- Gather a group together.
- The group will tell a story one word at a time. For example:
 - Person #1 says “Once”
 - Person #2 says “upon”
 - Person #3 says “a”
 - Person #4 says “time”
- The idea is for the players to listen carefully and go with the flow.
- Keep in mind the dramatic elements from the workshop series.
- Build the story to a climax and ending.



Child Support

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Dequan and Tyasia are in their Brooklyn project apartment. Dequan is pacing back and forth near the wall. Tyasia stands with her back to him, looking out the window

Dequan: To tell the truth, I don't give a damn. It ain't our problem and it ain't our kid. What they do behind their doors don't concern us (he picks his head up) ... or you.

Tyasia: It concerns us if we let it happen. Every night and day the shouting, fighting and then nothing. The silence after all that noise scares me. It's like they killed each other.

Dequan: If they did, I wouldn't be up in the middle of the night waiting for it to start again. I gots to get some sleep and you and they ain't helping!

Tyasia: You think the kid is sleeping soundly in his bed? Those bastard parents come home drunk every night, one after the other. What he does all day alone who knows. The boy hardly goes to school.

Dequan: It's messed up, but I ain't no fairy godmother.

(Sudden shouting and banging start next door and the faint sound of a child's crying)

Tyasia: And I ain't no mother at all. (Her eyes brim with tears, but none fall) But I was a child and I know no child can live like that

(Dequan goes to his wife, holds her and speaks more softly)

Dequan, I'm not saying it's right, but what can we do? Go next door and say, "Hey, stop hitting your kid because I think it's wrong."

(As if magically, the fighting next door ceases)

Tyasia: (speaking in a voice so faint Dequan can hardly hear her as she walks to the bedroom) Not because you think it's wrong, go when you know it's wrong.

(The next day while Dequan is at work, Tyasia hear arguments from next door. Caught in a moment of anger and confusion, she decides to go next door. She knocks. The door swings open and a man opens the door, apparently drunk.)

Man: And how can I help you?



(Alcohol stings Tyasia's nostrils.)

Tyasia: Uh,hi.I'm from-(She is cut off from speaking from the man drunken speech)

Man: Next door. You've come to complain about the noise and poke your nose in whatever other business isn't yours, right?

Tyasia: You want to be direct, fine. My husband works hard and when he comes home he needs his peace, but not only that, I hear what goes on over here.

Man: And what might that be?

Tyasia: The fighting, screaming, and crying, doors slammin-

Man: You a nosey bitch ain't ya? Ever think that if ya can hear us, we can hear you? Oh and by the way I don't give a shit what you or ya punk little man think and if he cant sleep tell him ta get the hell out the projects! Next time I need advice, I'll write Dear Abby.

Tyasia: Nigga..!

Man: Bitch!

(and the doors slams in her face leaving her in the hallway alone or so she thought until she turns around and sees half the 6th floor standing in their doorways, curious.)

Tyasia: You people sure can hear when you want to. (As if on cue, the doors close one by one)

(Later, when Dequan is walking up to his building, he sees his peoples in the lobby laughing and joking he takes the back stairs knowing he'll only get caught up in a cipher. The back staircase runs right behind the lobby and the voices drift through the wall. He runs up the steps to his 6th floor apartment, visibly upset. He enters the apartment.)

Dequan: Tyasia!

(she yells back from the bedroom)

Tyasia: Hold on, I am on the phone.

(he walks into the bedroom and she mutters into the phone and hangs up quickly.)

Dequan: Who was that?

Tyasia: Wrong number, how was your day?



Dequan: Hell with the day. A wrong number is hello and bye. That was a conversation.

Tyasia: What are you talking about?

Dequan: In the lobby, niggas talking about some yelling next door and you. Why you?

Tyasia: So I went next door. You didn't want to do anything so I did.

Dequan: And you got screamed on! And you was talking to the police just now, wasn't you?

Tyasia: What?

Dequan: I done had the police called on me before and I know what it sounds like. That sneaky shit ain't you. I told you ta mind ya business. Now I am in this.

Tyasia: You should have been in it. I remember that man. You should too. He's the one that the police be arresting in the lobby for being drunk, all the time.

Dequan: That bum ass nigga.

Tyasia: Yeah, that bum ass nigga. And the child services are on their way, I've been calling all week.

Dequan: All week! You got that snitch shit down pat. I ain't got nothing ta do with it. I am taking a walk. Police ain't questioning me.

Tyasia: You would walk out now? Now when we're making a decision about our lives?

Dequan: It's not our lives; its theirs.

Tyasia: It's ours! I been trying to get you to stand up and act as a father should act, but maybe it's hopeless. Maybe you ain't ready.

Dequan: Ready for what?

Tyasia: For being a father. I am pregnant.

Dequan: Pregnant! Since when, How long?

Tyasia: I found out a couple weeks ago.

Dequan: And it wasn't worth telling me?



Tyasia: Look how you've been acting. You act like you don't care. I didn't think you be too happy. I think what's going on next door is a perfect example of what a father is and what a father isn't. Maybe you don't want a child, maybe you're not ready. A responsible father would see the problem and do something. How could you leave me alone now when all this is happening?

Dequan: A responsible father would protect his family from unnecessary problems, that is what I did?

Tyasia: You ignored the problem and let a child suffer.

Dequan: I would never ignore my family. I'm not no coward.

Tyasia: Then tell the police what has been going on over there.

Dequan: And that makes me a good father.

Tyasia: No, it makes you a good person.

Dequan: Whatever. I'll do it, but they better not take long. I still ain't got no love for the police.

Tyasia: Just have love for the child, theirs and ours.

The End



CHARACTER PROFILE

(A guide for developing, rich, vivid characters; create one for each character in your play)

Name:

Gender:

Age:

Physical Attributes:

Distinctive Traits:

Family:

Habitat/Dwelling:

Education/Background:

Occupation:

Chief Wish:

Greatest Fear:

Secret:

First response in an emergency:

What animal do you associate with the character: i.e., if this character were an animal what would it be?