NAZ

By Sharon Dunn

Performance Rights

It is an infringement of the federal copyright law to copy or reproduce this script in any manner or to perform this play without royalty payment. All rights are controlled by Eldridge Publishing Co., Inc. Contact the publisher for additional scripts and further licensing information.

The author's name must appear on all programs and advertising with the notice: "Produced by special arrangement with Eldridge Publishing Company."

PUBLISHED BY

ELDRIDGE PUBLISHING COMPANY
www.histage.com
© 1997 by Sharon Dunn

Download your complete script from Eldridge Publishing
https://histage.com/naz

STORY OF THE PLAY

Investigator Keith Schwartz has been sent to look into the alleged suicide of Mr. Nazareth, a patient at the Fallen Oaks Correctional Facility for the Criminally Insane. But there are complications. The body has disappeared from the morgue. Staff and patients are hiding something. Even the head psychiatrist seems reluctant to talk. As the interviews begin, Schwartz encounters a variety of patients: from the quiet Sandra who wears red sweaters so people will think she has a personality, to the troubled Lana, whose life has been forever changed by Mr. Nazareth. Who is responsible for Naz's death? What really happened that night? The play is both a whodunit mystery and a retelling of the gospel for a modern audience.

CAST OF CHARACTERS

(4 M, 3W)

KEITH SCHWARTZ: The investigator.
SANDRA MILLER: A patient.
DR. STEVENSON: The psychiatrist.
EDDIE: A patient.
HOWARD: A patient.
LANA SWENSON: A patient.
MR. GRAFT: An orderly.

SETTING

A barren room. The walls are an aging, institutional gray. SR is a table and two chairs. An open briefcase rests on the table.

(AT RISE: KEITH sits on the corner of the table and speaks into a small tape recorder. He wears business attire with his tie loosened and the top shirt button undone. His blazer is slung over the chair.)

KEITH: This is Keith Schwartz at the Fallen Oaks Correctional Facility for the Criminally Insane. I have just toured the grounds including the room where the alleged suicide took place. I am now ready to begin interviews. First on the list is—*(Reads from a paper in HIS briefcase)* Sandra Miller. Sandra has a history of mental illness. Looks like she's been in and out of here and places like this most of her life. *(Clicks off recorder, walks to door)* Let's get this over with. It's been a long day. *(Opens the door)* Sandra Miller? *(SANDRA enters. Her shoulders curve forward in a permanent slouch and she holds her arms close to her body. SHE wears a bright red sweater.)* Sandra?

SANDRA: Yes.

KEITH: Have a seat. *(Looks up from papers)* That's a nice sweater you're wearing...

SANDRA: Thank you. I wear it because it makes people think I have a personality.

KEITH: *(Also sitting down)* Pardon?

SANDRA: I tend to fade into the woodwork. People don't notice me much, so I wear bright colors.

KEITH: I see. I just have a few questions—

SANDRA: Not all the women here are like me. Most of them have personalities. Some of them have a couple of personalities. Hah! I made a joke. A loony bin joke.

KEITH: OK, Sandra, let's start with your relationship to the victim. *(Clicks on tape recorder)*

SANDRA: Lana has a personality. You'll meet her, I'm sure. Is she on your list of people to talk to?

KEITH: I haven't checked. How well did you know Mr. Nazareth?

SANDRA: Lana is very pretty, but I don't think her hair is its natural color.

KEITH: *(Clicks off tape recorder)* Do you always talk this much?

SANDRA: Sorry, it's just that this is like having center stage. You know sometimes I say something and people don't even know I'm talking. But you can't help but hear me.

KEITH: Yes, and I want to listen Sandra. Can you tell me about the night Mr. Nazareth died?

SANDRA: He didn't kill himself. That's what this investigation is about, right?

KEITH: We suspect homicide. The coroner said the bruises on his neck looked like they were caused by hands, not a rope. Unfortunately, the body was brought in late at night. The next morning it was gone. Another reason to suspect homicide. Sorry, I really didn't need to go into all that detail.

SANDRA: That's OK. It's interesting. I can tell you right here and now that he didn't kill himself.

KEITH: Really, why?

SANDRA: Because he wasn't sick. Not like the rest of us. I don't even know why he was here. I know why I'm here but-

KEITH: *(Yawning)* OK.

SANDRA: I'm boring you, aren't I? *(Stands up)* I knew it. I just knew it. I should be committed to a home for the deadly dull.

KEITH: No please, sit down. It's not you. I'm just very tired.

SANDRA: It is late, isn't it? I suppose you want to get home to your wife and kids. Do you have a wife and kids?

KEITH: I used to. Let's get back to the matter at hand. Tell me about the night he died.

SANDRA: I'd rather not.

KEITH: Why?

SANDRA: Because I'm only supposed to think happy thoughts. Dr. Stevenson said so.

KEITH: Let's break it down into small details...specifics.

SANDRA: You didn't hear me. Only happy thoughts. Nobody hears me.

KEITH: I have to find out what happened. If someone killed Mr. Nazareth—

SANDRA: Naz. Everyone called him Naz.
KEITH: Why was that?
SANDRA: Because one day he said, "Just call me Naz." So we did. You know, I'm really not as sick as the doctors say I am. I don't even know why I have to stay here.
KEITH: Miss Miller, when did you last see Mr...Naz?
SANDRA: Co-ed support group.
KEITH: And what exactly is that?
SANDRA: The men and women are kept in separate buildings, but three days a week we have support group together. The theory being that a lot of our problems stem from our "inability to relate to the opposite sex."
KEITH: Who else was there?
SANDRA: Can we please talk about something else? How about my childhood or maybe my mother.
KEITH: I am not your psychiatrist. Please, just tell me who else was at the meeting.
SANDRA: Me, Lana, Dr. Stevenson, Howard, Eddie.
KEITH: Anything unusual happen at the meeting?
SANDRA: Have you read my file?
KEITH: I've glanced at it.
SANDRA: Doesn't seem right, does it? Every little thing I ever did wrong is in that file. You can decide what kind of person I am before you ever meet me.
KEITH: It's not your whole file, just a history of your past crimes. I'm looking for motive when I read your file. Someone who kills this violently usually gives an early indication of their capabilities.
SANDRA: I didn't mean to hurt Mr. Billingsly.
KEITH: Mr. Billingsly?
SANDRA: He's the reason I was committed. He was my landlord. He kept banging on my door saying my rent was due. I didn't have the money. I lost another job. I can't take criticism. They tell me I'm doing something wrong and I just walk off the job.
KEITH: Sandra, whatever you did, it doesn't matter. I just need some questions answered about Mr. Nazareth.

SANDRA: He was a very nice man. I wish he wasn't dead. He took the time to listen to me. Sometimes during my individual counseling sessions I can tell the doctor's mind is wandering. I know she gets bored with me. I can almost hear what she's thinking. "Should I have beef or pork for dinner? I hope I win my tennis game today." Naz wasn't like that, though. I'm a different person because I knew him. You can check your watch if you want. I saw you looking sideways and twisting your wrist.

KEITH: I wasn't—it's just that I've only got twenty minutes allotted for each interview.

SANDRA: Everyone's on a clock, aren't they? I don't think Naz even had a watch. Have I helped you at all?

KEITH: Some.

SANDRA: But not very much?

KEITH: Investigations are difficult. All these different pieces of the puzzle. Perhaps you've given me a crucial piece and I won't realize it until I'm nearly done.

SANDRA: Time for me to go now? *(HE nods.)* It was nice meeting you. I hope I wasn't too boring.

(SANDRA exits. KEITH sits down and massages his temples. Enter DR. STEVENSON, a professional woman in her mid-30s. She wears a straight skirt with matching blazer in a neutral color.)

DR. STEVENSON: Was that Sandra Miller I just saw leaving here?

KEITH: *(Rising)* Yes, it was, Dr. Stevenson.

DR. STEVENSON: I thought we agreed that you would talk to me before you interviewed any of the patients.

KEITH: I'm on a tight schedule. She was available and I needed to get started.

DR. STEVENSON: Some of these people lie habitually. I wanted to lay down some ground rules. Any inflammatory remarks should be checked with me before you prepare your final reports.

KEITH: I apologize. You're here now, let's get started.

End of Freeview

Download your complete script from Eldridge Publishing
https://histage.com/naz

Eldridge Publishing, a leading drama play publisher since 1906, offers more than a thousand full-length plays, one-act plays, melodramas, holiday plays, religious plays, children's theatre plays and musicals of all kinds.

For more than a hundred years, our family-owned business has had the privilege of publishing some of the finest playwrights, allowing their work to come alive on stages worldwide.

We look forward to being a part of your next theatrical production.

Eldridge Publishing... for the start of your theatre experience!