

The Group Session

By

Lindsey Paulette

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ACT I

Scene One

DR.MILLER sits at the center of a semi-circle.

Around her sits CAROLINE, MEREDITH, JOANNE, and SARAH.

They sit in an awkward silence.

Meredith and Caroline sit up straight with their hands in their laps.

Joanne slouches back in her chair with her arms folded lazily across her chest and looks up at the ceiling, bored.

Sarah sits balled up in her chair with her back to the rest of the group.

DR.MILLER

I know you want to talk so how about you just say something?

Silence.

She looks from woman to woman waiting for one of them to speak.

Nothing.

DR.MILLER

The therapy only works if you speak.

JOANNE

What do you want us to say?

DR.MILLER

We can start with how your day's been going so far.

JOANNE

Well, I woke up this morning. Felt pretty good about that but then one of the nurses told me I had to come to this session after lunch and well...now the whole day's kind of gone to shit.

DR.MILLER

(Sighs)

Sarah-

JOANNE

Don't talk to her. We're talking about Joanne right now. This is about me.

DR.MILLER

This is about...everyone.

JOANNE

Well if it's about everyone, how come I'm the only one talking?

DR.MILLER

That's a good question. Sarah, how are-

MEREDITH

They forced me to take my pills again this morning...I found that rather unnecessary. You know? It really...it really...well I won't lie, it *pissed* me off.

Joanne dramatically sucks in a mock gasp.

MEREDITH

Bite me, Joanne.

JOANNE

You can't really be pissed off about having to take pills that you need, Meredith.

MEREDITH

I don't need them *that's* the problem.

JOANNE

Oh, you don't need them? Is that why you launched into a full on panic attack when you stopped taking them?

MEREDITH

It wasn't a panic attack. And if it was, it had nothing to do with me taking or not taking my pills. My wife was out of town, we were in the middle of trying to sell our house, the paperwork was piling up at my firm, and I was about to make my daughter late to her dance recital. I was...stressed.

JOANNE

People take pills for stress.

MEREDITH

Yeah well, people take pills for everything. You don't think there's something wrong with that?

JOANNE

Hey, whatever works works.

Meredith roles her eyes and leans back in her chair, arms crossed.

DR.MILLER

Sarah, do you have anything you wanna-

CAROLINE

I felt a little...down this morning.

JOANNE

(Mock Shock)

What? Caroline felt down this morning? No way.

MEREDITH

Joanne.

JOANNE

(mockingly)

Meredith.

DR.MILLER

Um, okay. Well lets talk about that. Why did you feel down?

CAROLINE

I don't know. I just felt...sad.

JOANNE

Booooooring.

MEREDITH

Why do you have to be so mean?

JOANNE

I'm not mean.

CAROLINE

(softly)

You are kind of mean.

JOANNE

Oh shut up, Caroline. Why don't you go swallow another handful of pills?

MEREDITH

Joanne!

JOANNE

What? She tried to kill herself, multiple times. Are we just supposed to act like that didn't happen?

CAROLINE

Well at least I didn't try and kill my own husband.

JOANNE

Am I supposed to be insulted? It requires skill to kill another person.

MEREDITH

That must be why you weren't successful.

JOANNE

(sarcastic chuckle)

I had a "mental break" remember? I wasn't of sane mind. If I was, I promise you I would've gotten the job done.

MEREDITH

Don't joke like that.

JOANNE

Who's joking? I wanted- sorry want the man dead. And the second I get another opportunity that's exactly what he'll be.

CAROLINE

You're not going to get out of here, if you keep talking like that.

JOANNE

That's fine. I'm right at home here. Free mattress, subpar food, *lots of puzzles*...and besides, there's no way I could leave behind my bestie, Sarah. She'd be absolutely devastated if I weren't here anymore. Isn't that right, Sarah?

MEREDITH

Oh come on, Joanne, leave the poor girl alone.

DR.MILLER

I'd like to hear from Sarah actually.

JOANNE

Really? What could the little freak here possibly have to contribute to this conversation?

DR.MILLER

I wouldn't know, since you never let her speak.

Joanne stands up and crosses the circle until she's standing in front of Sarah's face.

JOANNE

Got anything to say, Sarah? Anything you're just dying to get off your chest? Hmm, Sarah? Do ya, do ya, do ya?

DR.MILLER

That's enough.

JOANNE

(Sarcastic)

Poor little, Sarah, can never find the words to say. Such a poor poor sad little girl. How'd you wind up here with the rest of us crazies anyhow? (*thinks*) Hmmm. You know what? I think I've got it. It must be because you're crazy too! You think that could be it, Sarah Bear? Or is that too much of a stretch?

DR.MILLER

That's enough!

Joanne sits back down, a nasty grin on her face.

JOANNE

Alright, what's next?

Everyone sits in awkward silence and refuses to look at Joanne.

Joanne lets out a disgusted sigh.

JOANNE

What are you giving me the silent treatment now?

MEREDITH

It's not the silent treatment. There's just nothing to say.

JOANNE

Oh, there's plenty to say. For example, Caroline, how about we discuss that whole trying to kill yourself thing? That's a topic I'd really like to dig into.

MEREDITH

I hardly think that's appropriate.

JOANNE

How is it not appropriate? This is group therapy. Isn't the whole point of this to talk about our thoughts and feelings? Discuss *how* we ended up in this hell hole to begin with so that we can find a way to cope with it?

DR.MILLER

Well yes but-

JOANNE

So, I wanna talk about it. Why'd you do it, Caroline?

MEREDITH

You don't have to answer her.

JOANNE

Come on, Caroline, why'd you do it. Hmm?

CAROLINE

I don't wanna talk about it.

JOANNE

How are you gonna move past it, if you can't talk about it?

CAROLINE

It's none of your business.

JOANNE

Okay. That's fine. We don't have to talk about it.

CAROLINE

Thank you.

Silence.

DR.MILLER

Well-

JOANNE

But you know, if you bottle it in you're just gonna explode one day. Meredith knows all about that. Don't you, Mere?

MEREDITH

I know what you're doing. It's not gonna work.

JOANNE

Hmm. I wonder if that's because of all the pills they have you hopped up on. What do you think, Dr.Miller? Think that might be the reason Meredith here suddenly has her emotions in check?

MEREDITH

How are you gonna talk to me about having my emotions in check when you're a full blown psycho?

JOANNE

Not a psycho. I'm a socio.

MEREDITH

What? No you're not.