

IMPLOSION

The Time

The very near future

The Characters

LARRY – late 40s

RUTH ANNE – mid 40s

DEREK – early 20s

NORMAN – mid 70s

BRIANNA – late 20s

The Setting

Inside a tract house in white suburban San Jose, California.

It's a well-maintained home, built in the early 1960s, and solely occupied by three generations of the same family for more than half a century. The furnishings are treated kindly as well, and have not been replaced in nearly two decades.

We're mostly in the family room, but there are glimpses of a kitchen, a step-down living room, and a hallway to bedrooms and bathrooms. The two doors in the room are to the garage and the front steps.

The only detail that's close to out of the ordinary is the vast collection of board games and puzzles. There are boxes and boxes of puzzles and games everywhere.

And the walls ... the walls transform from solid to transparent to fractured, as indicated in the script.

The Costumes

The attire of all characters is nonspecific to season or time of day. No bold colors or patterns. And it never changes.

IMPLOSION

The deep orangey, penetrating rays of an autumn late afternoon sun brighten the family room and investigate the areas beyond.

The walls are solid.

A bedroom television blasts a college football playoff game. This is the only indication of human presence until LARRY, Caucasian, enters from the hallway, crossing through the family room and exiting into the kitchen.

As LARRY disappears, we hear NORMAN, shouting from one of the bedrooms.

NORMAN (*offstage*): AND MORE BEER!

LARRY (*with exasperation, from the kitchen*): Got it, Dad!

NORMAN (*offstage*): WHAT?!

LARRY: GOT IT!

LARRY can be heard, and sometimes seen, as he opens and closes the refrigerator, and begins searching through the kitchen cupboards.

RUTH ANNE, Caucasian, enters from the garage wearing a wide-brimmed straw hat and smudges of dirt.

LARRY (*loudly, to be heard*): Ruthie?!

RUTH ANNE (*the same*): Yeah?!

LARRY: Where's the Fiddle Faddle?!

RUTH ANNE removes her hat and pushes back sweat-soaked strands of hair from her face.

RUTH ANNE: In the pantry!

LARRY: I looked there! I only see the honey nut flavored!

RUTH ANNE: Why are we shouting?!

LARRY appears from the kitchen, carrying a six-pack of Bud Lite.

LARRY (*inside voice*): Sorry. We don't have original flavor?

RUTH ANNE: Not if it's not there. We did. Maybe Derek finished it off.

LARRY starts back into the kitchen.

LARRY: Dad hates the honey nut flavored.

RUTH ANNE (*after him*): He won't know the difference.

LARRY reappears, six-pack in one hand, a box of honey nut Fiddle Faddle in the other.

LARRY: Oh, he'll know. (*as he starts down the hall*) Game's almost over.

RUTH ANNE: Then why the six-pack?

But he's gone.

RUTH ANNE waits.

NORMAN (*from the bedroom, with utter distaste*): HONEY NUT?!

A slight smile from RUTH ANNE and then she heads into the kitchen.

An empty stage as we now hear water running from the kitchen faucet combined with the football broadcast and shouts of fan dismay from LARRY and the NORMAN.

Then, on top of these sounds, there comes the just audible, bass-heavy burst and rumble from a not-too-distant detonation.

The running water stops. The TV volume lowers.

RUTH ANNE runs out quickly from the kitchen to the center of the family room, drying her hands with a tea towel. She is listening.

A few seconds later and LARRY joins her, also listening.

Nothing.

RUTH ANNE (*almost a whisper*): D'jou hear that?

LARRY: Those kids on Ramblewood, with their cherry bombs?

RUTH ANNE: I don't think so. (*pause*) I felt it.

They stand unmoving, listening.

Just the game.

LARRY: Anything special for dinner?

RUTH ANNE: No. What were you thinking?

LARRY: Haven't made my Chicken Diane in a while.

RUTH ANNE: Mmm, *love* that. Derek's off at seven.

LARRY: So ... seven-thirty? Will Brianna be here?

RUTH ANNE: I'd plan for it.

NORMAN (*from the bedroom*): LARRY! WHAT'RE YOU DOIN'?!

LARRY: JUST A MINUTE, DAD!

NORMAN: I CAN'T HEAR THE GAME!

LARRY: USE THE REMOTE!

NORMAN: *WHAT?!*

LARRY: THE RE— ... NEVER MIND, I'LL DO IT!

With an eye roll, LARRY starts off, then stops and turns.

LARRY: How're the crocus coming along? Or is it "crocuses"?

RUTH ANNE: Or "croci." All purpley and yellow. They're so hardy, even *I* can't kill 'em.

LARRY (*with a smile*): And *that's* saying something.

LARRY exits down the hallway and soon we hear muffled male voices as the TV volume increases.

RUTH ANNE thinks a moment, then goes to the front door, opens it and looks out. Perhaps she takes a step outside. In the distance, a single siren wails.

From, the kitchen, we hear DEREK.

DEREK (*offstage*): Mom.

With that word, the noise of the football game and any associated sounds immediately cut off.

RUTH ANNE jumps and turns quickly toward the kitchen. She's been caught.

RUTH ANNE: What, honey?

DEREK (*offstage*): She's like a watched pot. Brianna won't get here any sooner cuz you're standing there.

RUTH ANNE (*closing the front door*): I wasn't waiting for her, Derek. I just ... I thought I heard something.

DEREK (*offstage*): Yeah, right. Don't worry, she's gonna *love* you.

RUTH ANNE: (*with a forced laugh*): Oh, I know *that*! It's not *me* I'm worried about.

DEREK (*offstage*): Relax, Mom. Not everything has to end in disaster.

A long moment.

RUTH ANNE: Derek?

When there's no response, RUTH ANNE carefully opens the door again. The moment she does, the football sounds return, and more sirens.

RUTH ANNE continues to look outside for a long moment before returning to the family room, closing the front door behind her.

She looks nervous, not quite sure what to do next.

Then, from a pants pocket, she removes her cell phone and taps twice before putting the phone to her ear.

RUTH ANNE speaks after only a few seconds.

RUTH ANNE: Hi, honey. Mom. Just wanted to let you know that your Dad is cooking dinner tonight. Chicken Diane. So ... yippee! ("*that was dumb*") Anyway, invite Brianna, if you want. We're eating at seven-thirty. (*pause*) Can you call me back when you get this? The, uh, this went straight to voice mail and I want to make ... just call me, okay? Or text. Well, bye. Your dumb mom.

RUTH ANNE pockets the phone and turns toward the hallway just as NORMAN, Caucasian, enters from the same, holding a beer. He almost runs her over.

NORMAN (*a bit too demanding*): You got today's paper?

RUTH ANNE: Today's ...?

NORMAN: Newspaper. I wanna check the game schedule.

LARRY enters from the hallway, following NORMAN and carrying the remote.

The sound of the football game continues.

LARRY: Dad? I pulled up the guide on the TV. It lists every game.

NORMAN (*looking around the room*): I can't read *that*. On "the screen." It's in the *paper*. Where is it?

RUTH ANNE: I thought everyone had finished reading it.

NORMAN: Aw, *jesus*.

LARRY: It's okay, Dad.

NORMAN (*to RUTH ANNE*): What'd you do with it?

LARRY: Come watch the rest of the game.

NORMAN (*dismissively*): It's a *blowout*. (*to RUTH ANNE*) Can you get me the paper?

RUTH ANNE: I ... *can*.

NORMAN: Aw, *jesus*.

RUTH ANNE: I was doing some gardening ...

NORMAN: Here it comes.

RUTH ANNE: ... and I needed newspaper to put down under the Dutch Iris when I took them out of their baskets. I'm sorry, Norman, I saw you reading the paper this morning.

NORMAN: I didn't know I only get one shot at it! That I had to do all my newspaper readin' in one *sittin'*!

RUTH ANNE (*starting for the garage*): I might be able to brush off the Sports section.

NORMAN: Forget it!

The football broadcast from the bedroom is interrupted by a prerecorded "breaking news" intro.

BROADCAST ANNOUNCER (*accompanied by music and SFX sting*): Stand by for breaking news ...

LARRY (*simultaneously, starting for the front door*) I'll run out and get you a new paper, Dad.

NORMAN: Don't be *crazy*! I'm not a *child*! It's not unreasonable—

NEWS ANCHOR: (*overlapping, from the bedroom*): It's just been verified by our affiliate ABC7 in San Jose, California.

RUTH ANNE: —Ssh! Norman, be quiet a minute!

NEWS ANCHOR: Authorities are confirming ...

NORMAN (*overlapping*) Don't you “ssh” me!

NEWS ANCHOR: ... an explosion in ...

RUTH ANNE: (*overlapping*): I'm trying to hear the TV!

NEWS ANCHOR: ... the Almaden Valley area of San Jose.

They listen, frozen, the men focused as much on RUTH ANNE as on the news report.

NEWS ANCHOR: I believe that's in the south part of the city. Again, responding to reports of what looks now to be a devastating explosion at a, there's a map right there, it looks like the Hamal Meats ...

RUTH ANNE (*buckling slightly*): Oh, god, no ...

NEWS ANCHOR: ... and Market that appears to be ...

NORMAN (*overlapping*): What?

NEWS ANCHOR: ... on Crown Boulevard.

During the following, LARRY reaches out to RUTH ANNE, but she pushes him away and struggles — in what she will later describe as “walking through quicksand” — to the bedroom with the television.

LARRY and NORMAN follow, leaving us alone to hear the breaking news as the lights slowly begin to dim.

NEWS ANCHOR: Our affiliate is telling us they don't yet know of any confirmed injuries, according to a police spokesman. ABC7 is deploying news crews, along with helicopter coverage. Again, there has been a massive explosion at Hamal Meats & Market in San, uh, just a, a Pakistani-owned grocery and deli in San Jose, California.

The lights shift to evening.

A few lamps in the family room and the hallway light provide the only illumination.

NORMAN sits in a large recliner; RUTH ANNE is pacing and trying again to reach DEREK on her cell phone.

RUTH ANNE: Hi, Mom again. Please call. Please.

She taps off.

A long moment as RUTH ANNE stops, in the center of the room, and looks around purposelessly.

NORMAN watches.

NORMAN: He'll call. *(no response)* You've left enough messages. Maybe stay off the phone in case Larry has learned anythin'.

RUTH ANNE: That's not how it works.

NORMAN stands, with some difficulty.

NORMAN: You wanna eat somethin'? I need to eat somethin'. We never had dinner.

RUTH ANNE shoots NORMAN a look as if he just shit on the floor.

NORMAN: What?! I'm hungry. We don't get to eat anymore? *(starting for the kitchen)* I'll be glad to make you somethin'. You wanna sandwich? I know we got some tuna fish.

NORMAN enters the kitchen and continues to talk as he goes about making two sandwiches.

RUTH ANNE remains standing in the center of the family room.

NORMAN *(from the kitchen)* Derek's a smart boy. If there was somethin' goin' on he'd pick up on it and get out of there before anythin' happened. Maybe he's helpin' out, workin' with the firemen or police or whatever to save whatever can be saved. People or whatever.

From the kitchen, the sudden grinding sound of an electric can opener causes RUTH ANNE to jump.

The noise ceases before NORMAN speaks again.

NORMAN: Which is why he's not answerin' his phone. Same with Larry. They're busy helpin' out. Doin' what they can. Although, I gotta suspect there's also a bunch of them Muslims [*pronounced 'MOOZ-lums'*] there. *(pause)* They *all* come a-runnin'.

The sound of NORMAN mixing mayonnaise and tuna in a bowl.

NORMAN: You want sweet pickle? I like a little sweet pickle in my tuna fish. And red onion.

RUTH ANNE taps her cell phone.

RUTH ANNE *(into the phone)*: Derek, I keep hoping you'll see my voice mail alert and pick up. I know you're not ignoring me. So call. Or just come home. I'm here.

RUTH ANNE taps off.

The sound of pickle and onion chopping from the kitchen.

NORMAN: Gotta hand it to ya. Made sense to me that you oughta stay here in case Derek shows up while Larry goes to the site. But I woulda *bet* you wouldn't go for it. Says somethin' about you that you can think logical in a situation like this. Besides, what's there to see there anyway? Just a bunch of blown up Muslim meats.

RUTH ANNE turns with deliberation and disappears down the hallway.

Seconds later we hear the unintelligible murmur of television news.

NORMAN (*continuing*): Never felt good about the boy doin' deliveries for those sand monkeys. McDonald's or Burger King weren't hirin'? Shoulda stayed in school. Never came to me for my opinion, no one does, but I woulda told him to just tough it out. He only had another year. They say a bachelor's degree now is like a high school degree when *I* was his age.

The front door opens and LARRY enters slowly.

LARRY drops his jacket on the floor as he crosses the family room and sinks into the recliner. He's left the door open.

NORMAN: I think he oughta go to a trade school. Maybe become a plumber. He spends enough time in the bathroom.

LARRY: Dad?

NORMAN: Larry?

LARRY: Who you talking to?

NORMAN: Your wife.

LARRY: No you're not.

NORMAN enters from the kitchen with two plates, each holding a sandwich.

NORMAN: I was.