

FRAGLIE  
THING  
CRACKS

by  
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POLYCHORON PRESS



FRAGLIE  
THING  
CRACKS

A dark comedy

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## CHARACTERS

**LEO DANIELS** Early 20s.

Smart, lost, funny. A street kid with a past.

**GEOFF BRODIE** Late 20s/early 30s.

A brooding lover out of a Bronte novel, or a Lifetime stalker movie.

**MARY BRODIE** Late 40s/mid 50s.

Geoff's mother. Whip-smart, with a short fuse. She's New England WASPy.

**PAUL BRODIE** Late 40s/mid 50s.

Geoff's father; Mary's husband. Kind and easy-going. Not to the manner born, but comfortable there.

**WES BRODIE** Late 20s/early 30s.

Geoff's brother; Mary and Paul's son. Very much his mother's son.

**TRAY WILKES** Early 30s.

Leo's friend. Short for Tracy. Smart, sharp, anxious, careful.

### Other Characters

These characters can be played by one additional actor, or doubled by the above-listed players. (If doubling, Leo can't and shouldn't double. Everyone else can.) The characters: A nurse, a doctor, Jeff (an old friend of Geoff's), a waiter or waitress (silent part), Harvey (Tray's friend), A minister. Suggested doubling: Geoff plays the nurse; Tray plays the doctor and the minister; Mary plays the waiter; Paul plays Jeff; Wes plays Harvey. It's been done both ways. I think I prefer the additional actor, but it's entirely your call.

## TIME

Mid 2000's

## PLACES

A unit space that suggests Leo's apartment, a hospital waiting room, a cafe, Mary and Paul's living room, a historical society function room, a graveyard. Keep things fluid. If things need to be shifted, the actors can and should do it—but Leo probably shouldn't. Things should sort of happen around him. Dovetail, where possible. No blackouts.

## TEXT NOTES

A forward slash indicates the point of overlap for the next speaker. Don't be polite. Where it's easier to read, columns are used. Ellipses are searches and trailings-away. Dashes are jump cuts and hard stops—they're not pauses(!) Where characters drop the N's at the end of words (tryin, lookin), I've generally left apostrophe off, unless the word wouldn't make much sense without it (goin', in place of going; an' in stead of and).

The dialogue can be pretty tongue-in-cheek, but this isn't camp. The stakes are high for everyone, and each is lonely in her or his own way; each is trying to find or reach their other, each is searching and finding it really difficult. Let the comedy come out of that, rather than winking at the audience.

## STAGE DIRECTIONS AND "MAGIC"

The stage directions are suggestions, and are meant to indicate a kind of landscape for the director, designers, and actors to play in. Use what works for you.

Neither of the original productions used any "literal" stage magic. Even the coffin, in the funeral scene, wasn't literal. Both productions used a chaise lounge, and the reaction was just as satisfying as an actual coffin might have been. I don't think there's any real need for literalism in the play.

# 1. Shit

*(Leo's place. LEO and GEOFF in bed. GEOFF sleeps. LEO is sitting up.)*

LEO

I've always been unlucky in love.  
It's hard to . . . meet someone unless you're ripped or I dunno, it's hard.  
Difficult.

*(A beat.)*

I had'a take my last boyfriend to court cuz'e locked me under the sink once, so when I met Geoff, that's Geoff, when I met'im I was . . . dubious? That a word? Doubtful?  
I was dubious.  
But'e was cute an' all like "I'm a nice guy, I'm not lookin for a hook-up, I'm not just tryina get into your pants."—  
—which, by the way, is like the fastest way into my pants, so . . .

*(A beat.)*

I'm in love!  
An' it don't even feel weird to say that. I always knew when I met the guy I was gunna spend the resta my life with I was gonna know it, an' as soon as we met it was like . . .

*(Some kind of full body gesture that says "fuck yeah!")*

Ya know?

*(A beat.)*

We were goin' at it last night, an' it was amazing, like: an'es on top'a me an'e gets this look on'is face, an'e goes: "Leooohhh . . ."

—That’s my name, this aint—That’s not a story about how’e called out someone else’s name during sex, that’s my na—An’e looks at me an’e goes . . . : “I love you.”

He actually said it! An’e got embarrassed, an’ I told’im I loved’im, too, an’ that aint weird, love’s like this fragile thing, an’ ya gotta grab it an’ protect it, an’ it aint like I go around tellin dudes I love ‘em after one night, I only done that once before tonight.

*(A moment.)*

I love him. I love him!  
I’ma tell’im now, watch:  
Geoff . . . Geoff . . .  
Geoffy . . .

*(Pokes GEOFF.)*

Geoff.

*(Shoves GEOFF.)*

GEOFF!

*(He shakes GEOFF. It’s suddenly clear GEOFF is unconscious.) (A beat.)*

WAKE UP, DOUCHE BAG!

*(A beat.)*

Shit.

*(A moment. Segue to:)*

## 2. We Are Family

*(LEO, dressed, sits in a hospital waiting room. It's early; maybe around 3:30 or 4:00. An ADMISSIONS NURSE works at her station.)*

LEO

I called the 911 dudes (who were really cute, by the way, not that that's—anyway): we got in the thing, the ambulance, an' then I totally, then'e, like, I don't know what happened next, / we got here, they wouldn't tell . . .

*(Voices, off:)*

MARY

It's this way, / that's what the guy said.

PAUL

No, it's this—the guy said this way, / you don't listen to people.

MARY

That's what you're, will you let go / of my shoulder, we're never gonna find it.

PAUL

I don't want to fight with you Mary tonight, can we please behave ourselves?

*(MARY enters, followed by PAUL.)*

MARY

Could you stop hustling me? please?

PAUL

“Hustling” you? / I'm hustli—

MARY

Hassling, for the—OK? Paul? Hassling? Could you give me a

break for ten damn minutes when I'm upset about the—there it—  
are you the nurse?

NURSE

Hunh?

MARY

The nurse the nurse our son is here.

*(A tiny beat.)*

NURSE

I'm . . . not really sure whatcha tryina / say to me right now.

MARY

Our SON is in the HOSPITAL can you tell me where he IS please?

PAUL

Calm down, Mary.

MARY

You calm down You calm down, where's my son?

NURSE

Name?

MARY

Mary Brodie.

NURSE

*(Checking:)*

. . . I don't have anyone by that name . . .

MARY

That's because that's MY NAME!

NURSE

. . . you checkin in, / or like . . . ?

MARY

AHHHHH!!

PAUL

I apologize for my wife, / we're here to—

MARY

Don't you don't you apologize for your wife, I'm being incredibly precise with this woman and she's behaving like a vaudevi— We're trying to find out if our son is OK, could you tell me where he is now, please??

PAUL

His name is Geoff Brodie.

NURSE

Ohhhhhh, the D.O.A.

*(A beat.)*

PAUL

Is there a doctor we can speak to?

*(The NURSE shrug and speaks into her intercom. At the same moment, WES enters. MARY advances at him.)*

MARY

They're saying he's dead, Wes, they're say— at least I think that's what they're saying, I can't actually understand a single word this woman is saying.

NURSE

Doctor Larson to the waiting room.

NURSE

*(Giving her a look, exiting.)*

You can talk to that guy. He came in with'im.

*(Everyone turns and looks at LEO, who suddenly feels everyone's eyes on him. A beat.)*

MARY

You were with him, you were with Geoff tonight?

LEO

I wa—um. Yeah, / I was . . .

MARY

I'm his mother, I'm Mary, I'm . . . / I'm sorry.

PAUL

Did you, did they tell you—do you know / what happened . . .

LEO

Nah, they, no, they wouldn't like tell me anything, / they wouldn't  
. . .

WES

This is, by the way, this is vintage Geoff, dying for no particular reason.

PAUL

Wes.

WES

Well. He disappears for three years, comes back, and *this*?

PAUL

I'm sure he didn't do it on purpose.

*(To LEO:)*

Geoffy an' us, we'd, we'd . . . been estranged for a, from Geoff for a while, he'd only just suddenly sorta made contact again.

MARY

I don't understand this I don't understand these things how these things happen . . .

*WHAT THE HELL IS HIS PROBLEM??*

PAUL

How'd you know Geoff?

LEO

I was—

WES

One night stand, / probably.

PAUL

Wes, knock it off.

*(A quick beat. To LEO:)*

—I mean it's OK if you were, / certainly, it's Geoff's life, it's . . .

LEO

I wa-I was—no, I was . . .

*(A beat.)*

I'm his husband.

*(A stunned silence—including LEO, who most certainly was not expecting to say that. A beat.)*

PAUL

His husband. / OK.

MARY

*What in hell is going ON / here tonight??*

LEO

I'm—I'm—

WES

That, that's . . . bullshi—that's . . . Geoff never said anything about being married, we saw him / two days ago, he never said anything about that.

LEO

No, he . . . it, he . . . *we'd* actually had a fight? About that? Last night, he told me he'd seen you, He said, "baby I cut these people outta my life for so long, I can't just come out an' say 'hey, by the way, I got married, sorry you didn't get an invite,'" so . . .

—I'm sorry, I shouldna, / I shouldna said anythin, I—

PAUL

That's . . . *no*, that's OK, / it's . . .

LEO

No this is this is like your thing, your family thing an' I'm like in the way I shouldna said anythin, I feel like . . . / I just I feel like . . .

PAUL

This isn't—hey, now, kiddo: look at me, OK?

Come on.

None of this is your fault, OK?

This is your "thing," too; it's your time to grieve, too. OK?

OK?

*(A beat.)*

LEO

Umm . . . OK.

*(PAUL shepherds LEO over to MARY, who offers him a tissue.)*

MARY

What's your name?

LEO

Leo. Um. Da—*um* . . . , Davis.

MARY

Leo.

*(LEO nods.)*

What was the last thing he said, Leo?

*(The DOCTOR enters.)*

PAUL

Oh Mary, c'mon, now, / don't be maudlin.

MARY

*I wanna know what he said!*

*(A beat.)*

DOCTOR

Mr. and Mrs. Brodie?  
I'm Dr. Larson. Why don't  
you come with me?

LEO

Well um . . . he sai—

*(PAUL takes MARY'S hand and they start out,  
trailed by WES. MARY notices LEO isn't  
following.)*

MARY

Leo?

LEO

What? Oh, um. / Yeah, I . . . OK.

DOCTOR

I'm sorry. Family only, please.

PAUL

Ya know, this country is... ridiculous. This young man is my son's  
lover, my son's husband, so why don't we drop the bull and  
apologize to him, please? Apologize to my son-in-law.

*(A quick beat.)*

DOCTOR

Oh. Um. I'm sorry, I was / under the impression—

LEO

It's—look, it's fine, it's OK, it happens a lot.

WES

I bet it does.

PAUL

*(As they go:)*

We're years into a new millennium and it just *burns* me. Could we please act like human beings, for the love of God? C'mon, Leo.

*(The DOCTOR leads MARY and PAUL out. WES follows. LEO trails slowly behind. Suddenly WES turns and gives LEO a withering and very strange look, which stops LEO in his tracks. The family is gone.)*

*(A moment.*

*LEO then turns and advances at us:)*

LEO

*What the fuck'm I doing??*

I can't *stop* myself, it's li-it's like . . . I'm standing there an' alla this shit keeps falling outta my mouth an' I'm like, "shut up, toolbox," an' it don't ever matter cuz I can't stop.

*What is WRONG with me??*

*(A beat.)*

I should leave now, Right?

*Oh my G—You must think I'm nuts!*

*(A beat.)*

I think I'm *nuts!*

I'ma get outta here, I'm gunna—

*(LEO turns to go, but as he does, GEOFF suddenly appears, blocking the exit.)*

*(A moment, as they stare at each other.)*

*(Then, MARY pokes her head in from the other direction.*

*She, of course, sees none of this.)*

MARY

Leo, honey, you coming?

LEO

. . . be . . . be right there . . .

MARY

Hurry, darling. We're saying goodbye to Geoffy.

LEO

Apparently I am, too.

MARY

Of course, darling. You are his husband . . .

*(A beat. Sotto:)*

Such as you are.

*(She goes. A moment.*

*LEO and GEOFF stare at each other.*

*LEO starts to stammer something, but can't manage any words. GEOFF reaches out to him.*

*A moment.*

*Segue to:)*

### 3. Hilarious

*(LEO and TRACY having lunch in a cafe the next day. Later, MARY and PAUL at home.)*

LEO

Aint that funny?

TRAY

No.

LEO

*(Continuing over:)*

Aint that kinda hilari—wait, what?

TRAY

It's fucked up.

LEO

Yeah but like in a hilarious way.

TRAY

No, in like a fucked up kind of way. These are people's feelings, Lee, not some, I'm saying this is people's grief, real grief, it's not some anecdote, it's about them.

LEO

Girl, I'm wasn't tryina be a jerk, it just came outta my mouth an' I couldn't stop myself, I wasn't tryina—I don't even know what you're tryina accuse me of, but I wasn't tryina do that.

TRAY

Well what'd they say when you told them?

LEO

Told them what?