

Playing Pretend
by Jason Johnson-Spinos

A little girl¹ wearing a backpack drags four chairs to assemble a play fort (perhaps more of a barricade). Her hands tremble slightly as she works, humming softly to herself. The tense voices of her parents drift onstage, their violent sentences overlapping.²

MOTHER

—it was her number. Just cause the name says Brian // doesn't mean I'm going to think—

FATHER

Brian's my trainer, are you kidding me? // You're joking, right?

MOTHER

You think I'm so fucking dumb. You've always thought // I was dumb.

FATHER

I don't think you're dumb. You're hysterical. And you're drunk. I think you should call Jeffrey // and schedule another—

MOTHER

I don't need to call Jeffrey, I need a fucking husband who isn't fucking his fucking...

Silence.

The little girl is now entrenched in her fort, cradling an iPhone that she's pulled out of her backpack. She presses the button until we hear the beep.

LITTLE GIRL

Hi Siri.

SIRI

Hey there. *(Or whatever Siri says)*

LITTLE GIRL

Siri... do you want to play pretend?

Lights.

¹ Can be played by an adult

² // indicates when the next line should begin