

Love Me Do

Time: Early Tuesday morning, before school

Date: December 9th, 1980

Place: Southside of Chicago

Location: Modest apartment across 63rd street from Marquette park

Setting: Living room of the apartment

Players

Mom: 34 years old

Son: 6 years old

The stage is decorated as the living room of the apartment. A long couch with two standing lamps and a coffee table face the audience at center stage. On the coffee table is a framed photograph of a handsome young man wearing a police uniform. The small black and white television sits on a stand and faces the couch from right front of stage. The left front of stage has a record player also on a stand w/ records underneath.

Side A

Play begins with mom turning off television

Mom

(Crying) Oh God I can't watch anymore, this is a nightmare. Dear Jesus why?

Mom wipes her eyes w/ tissue and walks from tv to record player and picks up an unknown album and hugs it like a baby in her arms. She opens the top of the record player like she is going to play a song but sits down on the couch and continues crying instead. She stares at the record on her lap fondly. She traces the image on the album cover with her fingers as if she were drawing it. A long quiet moment passes. She is praying. She clasps her hands together and rocks as she cries and prays. She ends the prayer by kissing her fingers and touching the face on the record. The album cover has drops of her tears. She wipes her tears as she hears her son coming. She looks back and sees him groggily walk into the room. She tries to hide her tears but he notices right away.

Son

Why you crying mom what's wrong?

Mom

Oh son it's horrible sit down.

The boy sits on the couch next to his mother and stares up at her eyes. She grabs and holds him tight still crying.

Mom

They shot John Lennon.

Son

Who's John Lennon?

Mom

They killed him. Oh my God they shot John Lennon.

Son

Mom who's John Lennon?

Mom

(gathering herself, pulls her son from her shoulder and looks at him) Sweetie you know who John Lennon is. (she points to the record) John Lennon from The Beatles. You know The Beatles, I play them all the time.

Son

(Pointing at the record) Oh him? He's John Lennon? He's awesome!

Mom

No sweetie that's Paul McCartney. Yes, he is awesome. All The Beatles are awesome. (Mom and son stare at the record as she points.) This is Ringo Starr and this is George Harrison. John, Paul, George and Ringo. Now say it with me.

Mom and Son

(Pointing at the record together.) John, Paul, George and Ringo. (repeat) John, Paul, George and Ringo. (again) John, Paul, George and Ringo.

Mom

You got it kiddo now you know The Beatles names. (rubs her sons head) And the name of this album is called HELP. (mom seems cheered up a bit by her son and a memory. She stares momentarily into the distance) They were the best band ever.

Son

(pointing at John Lennon on the album cover, breaking his mother's daydream.) So he's dead mom?

Mom

(looking into the distance blankly.) Yes son. He's dead.

(Mom and son sit quietly in the living room. Mom continues to stare blankly as her son watches her, not knowing what to do. Finally he musters up enough courage to speak.)

Son

They were the best band ever mom?

Mom

(snapping out of it looks at her child) Yes son they were. (now speaking passionately.) They changed the world.

Son

The whole wide world?

Mom

You better believe it kiddo they changed the world.

Son

Wow!

Mom

Wow is right son and you wanna know something else?

Son

(Nodding his head.) Mhm.

Mom

Yoko Ono has your baby picture.

Son

Who?

Mom gets up and walks to the record player. She puts the HELP record away and picks up another album and sits back down.

Mom

(pointing at picture of Yoko on the album.) Yoko Ono son. She's Japanese.

Son

She has pretty hair mom.

Mom

She's beautiful son. Yoko Ono is John Lennon's wife.

Son

She has my baby picture?

Mom

Yes she does. I gave it to her when we met.

Son

You know Yokono?

Mom

Her name is Yo-ko O-no son, two words. Say her name for me.

Son

Yoko Ono, that's easy to say mom.

Mom

Good. It's important to pronounce people's names right. The answer is no. I do not know Yoko Ono but I did meet her. She came to my school one day and I was standing right next to her.

Son

The school downtown mom? With the lions in front?

Mom

Yes. The Art Institute. Yoko Ono is an artist. She showed her art in the gallery and spoke afterwards and toured the school. It was such an honor. She liked my photography and we talked. You had just been born my boy and I gave her your baby picture and she kissed it and said you were beautiful. She knows who you are kiddo.

Son

Wow that's awesome! Yoko Ono kissed me.

Mom

She kissed your picture. It sure is awesome, you have no idea.

Son

Does John Lennon know me?

Mom

I bet he does. I'm sure when Yoko got home she showed him your picture. What ya think about that? (taps him with a finger on the nose.)

Son

Very cool mom. Your the coolest mom ever.

Mom

Thank you son. Your the coolest kid ever. Now go wash up the bus will be here soon.

Mom and son hug

Son

Mom, I think we should stay home from school and work today because your sad.

Mom

Yeah right. Nice try kiddo. Now go get ready. Besides. The whole world is sad today. We lost a great man. A wonderful, wonderful person. We can help cheer our friends up.

Son

Why did they kill him mom? Why?

Mom

(tearing up again) I don't know son. I don't know why anyone would shoot John Lennon. Sometimes people just do bad things.

Son

Were they really famous around the world?

Mom

Around the world son. The Beatles spread love everywhere. Everyone caught Beatlemania.

Son

Was Beatlemania a virus ma? Like the flu?

Mom

No son. Well, a little bit, but in a good way. A virus you don't want to catch but Beatlemania was incredible. Nobody got sick at all. Well, if you went to the concert maybe you got hysterical like my girlfriends did. Two of my friends fainted.

Son
Why?

Mom
Because we were so excited to be there. We had Beatlemania!

Son
What did it feel like?

Mom
It felt like fun kiddo. Like the best time ever.

Son
Did you get Beatlemania?

Mom
Of course. The whole world did, but the concert wasn't that fun to me.

Son
Why not? Where did you see them?

Mom
(mom can't resist telling the story. she rests back on the couch and looks upward, reminiscing. The boy sits cross-legged on the couch with eyes of pride and anticipation.) I saw The Beatles play at the Hollywood Bowl in Los Angeles, California. My three best gals were with me and two of them fainted as soon as The Beatles walked onstage. It was so loud you couldn't even hear them sing.

Son
Why not?

Mom
Because we all had the Beatlemania virus! Every girl was screaming at the top of her lungs.

Son
(interrupting) Even you mom?

Mom
Are you kidding? (boasting) Your mom was the loudest one there. But then I tried to hear them and I couldn't. Helicopters were flying up above and it was so noisy I couldn't hear a thing. People were fainting everywhere. It got scary and I never even heard them sing. But I still saw The Beatles son, and met Yoko Ono. (mom looks down and smiles at him.)

Son

Why were they so famous?

Mom

Because of their music. It was so energizing and beautiful. Nobody ever heard anything like that before.

Son

What's your favorite Beatles song?

Mom

Son are you stalling? You are going to school today you know that right?

Son

I know mom but I gotta know what your favorite is.

Mom

There are so many I can't choose just one. But if I play one of my favorites you have to get ready right after.

Son

Okay.

Mom

(walks over to record player and places album underneath and pulls out a small record. She turns it on and plays the song. As soon as it starts her knees bend at the harmonica. She still has Beatlemania. She turns around to her son and starts singing.) Love, love me do. You know, I love you. I'll always be true... (she stretches out her arms and jumps toward her son. she grabs his arms and they swing around.)

Son

(excitedly) I know this song.

Mom

You know The Beatles, now sing along.

Mom and Son

(singing and swinging in circles.) So plee-e-e-eeese, love me do. (They dance and sing for the entire song. Afterwards they laugh and hug. Then mom points to the bedroom and her son smiles.

Son

Mom when I grow up I'm gonna be just like John Lennon and The Beatles and spread love all over the world. I'm gonna marry a girl as pretty as Yoko Ono too.

Mom

That's a nice thought kiddo now hurry up. (kisses his head.)

He walks offstage to get dressed and mom sits back down on the couch crying again. The lights dim. End of act one.

Side B

(Mom walks out of darkness dressed for work. She is a waitress. The framed photograph catches her eye as she is almost out the door. She picks up the photograph, stares at it, and begins crying again. She sits on the couch and talks to the photograph.

Mom

Jacob, first they shot you now John Lennon. What is wrong with this world? Why do all the good ones have to die? Dear Lord Jesus help me find the strength. (she stares at the photo a long time.) Why does Han have to grow up without his father? Why Jake? You were such a good man. Jake, why is John Lennon dead? Why? Why?

She cries a bit longer, hugging the picture frame, and finally puts it back down. She gets up and slowly walks to the record player. She flips the record over and plays the B side of the two song record. The song is P.S., I Love You. She sits back down and picks up the picture again. She hugs the photograph. She stands up and swirls in time to the song. The entire song plays and she sings every word while dancing with the photograph. She sets the photograph back down in exactly the same spot. After she dries her eyes with a fresh tissue she turns out the light. The stage goes pitch black. She closes the door and leaves for work. End of play.

