

A Disturbance in The Work Force

A short play by Bret Slaughter

Characters:

Bill Meeks-the father
Susan Meeks-the mother
Sam Meeks-the teenager
Burt Walnut-Bill's friend

Scene One: A bar somewhere in Chicago. Bill Meeks is having a drink with his friend Burt.

Burt

(buzzed)...So I ask this sweet looking gal if she is able to start *my* car (if you know what I mean). So she smacks me in the face and says, "You're the mechanic. Why don't you start it *yourself!*" (Burt laughs. Bill stares at his drink.) Eh, Bill, are you feeling O.K.? You seem to be somewhere else.

Bill

(worried) Oh Burt, I'm just worried about going home to my wife.

Burt

Why are you worried?

Bill

When I get home I gotta tell her that I quit my job today.

Burt

What? Why would you go and do a thing like that? Your wife's gonna kill you.

Bill

Yea, I know, but I was fed up with cleaning pools for that asshole of a boss of mine. He never treated me like I was worth anything. Nothin' was ever good enough for him. So today I finally told him to go screw himself. After fifteen years of abuse I just couldn't take it anymore.

Burt

Gosh Bill that's very brave of you, but now what are you going to do ?

Bill

I guess I'll have to tell the wife the bad news.

Burt

Well, can't you just go clean pools for someone else?

Bill

Let me ask you something, Burt.

Burt

Shoot.

Bill

Do you like being a mechanic?

Burt

Sure, it's all right. It pays the bills. Why?

Bill

It seems that lately I've been wanting more out of life than cleaning pools for some asshole and coming home to a nagging wife.

Burt

Why don't you leave her, too?

Bill

Oh, I can't do that Burt. We got our son Sam. He's sixteen now. And I suppose she still has her good Moments every once in a while. I love them both, but I guess I just need some change in my life. Something better. Something different.

Burt

Like what?

Bill

I wanna be a movie star.

(Burt bursts into laughter. End Scene One)

Scene Two: Bill's House, later that night. In walks Bill to his waiting wife

Susan

(irritated) There you are. It's about time. I've been waiting two hours for you to get home. Your dinner is cold and I'm not warming anything else up tonight, not even you. Are you listening to me?!

Bill

Yes, dear.

Susan

What's the matter with you? Where have you been?

Bill

Now, calm down, muffin butt, I was just having a drink with Burt.

Susan

Well, next time call me so I know. You should know that by now.

Bill

Yea, O.K. Uh Susan, there's something I gotta tell you.

Susan

(ignoring him) You know, your son came home with a bloody lip today. That's the third time this month he's come home with either bruises or blood on his face. What kind of a boy are you raising? A pansy? Teach him to be tough or something.

Bill

Again? That poor kid. There's got to be a way to stop those damn high school boys from kickin' his ass all of the time. Anyway, sweetie, I really have something important that I need to tell you.

Susan

Yes what is.... Holy Jesus Christ on a cross at Christmas!

(In walks their son Sam dressed like a woman)

Sam, why the hell are you wearing my dress!

Bill

Damnit boy! What's gotten into you? I bought that dress for your mother to wear, not you, and where did you get that wig?

Susan

Our son's gone fruity!

Bill
Explain yourself, Sam.

Sam
I've decided to become a woman.

Susan
Obviously.

Bill
But why, son? Why?

Sam
Well, for starters, from now on I wish to be called Samantha.

Susan
(trying not to laugh) You have got to be joking.

Samantha
I figure, now that I look like a girl, maybe those boys at school will stop beating me up. Because it's wrong to hit a girl and all. Plus, I'm sick of the same ol' boy stuff.

Bill
What's wrong with boy stuff?!

Samantha
Now I can feel beautiful.

Susan
Oh, darling, I thought you were beautiful before.

Samantha
But I didn't

Bill
Didn't we ever tell you that you were good looking? I know we did.

Samantha
Yes, but you never told me I was beautiful. Actually I think I kinda like being a girl. I like the free feel of a dress on my knees. I like the way the eyeliner brings out my beautiful brown eyes. This is the change in my life I've been waiting for.

Bill
I can't believe my son has turned gay.

Samantha

Don't worry Dad. I'm not gay. I still find girls attractive. I just want to dress like one.

Bill

So I've got a lesbian for a son.

Samantha

Daughter.

Bill

Whatever, but you're gonna have a big problem getting a date.

Susan

(smiling) Now that I think about it, she does look sort of beautiful.

Sam

Thanks, Mom.

Bill

Now Susan, don't you encourage him. Uh, I mean her. Uh, whatever.

Susan

I always did want to have a daughter. Do you want to try on some more of my old dresses, Samantha?

Samantha

Sure. I guess I will need a new wardrobe. Oh, and Mom, could I have a couple tampons?

Bill

What? Now come on!

Susan

Sorry, dear. I went through menopause a few years ago.

Bill

(surprised) You did? Why didn't you ever tell me?

Susan

You never asked. Couldn't you tell by the way I was acting?

Bill

No. You always act kind'a moody.

Susan

Well it's for your own good. Someone has to keep your day-dreaming mind in check.

Samantha

Come on Mom. Let's go raid your closet and then I want to do my nails.

Susan

Ooohh. I want to do mine too. It's been so long.

(Susan and Samantha exit)

Bill

What a day. What am I going to do? My son is a transvestite and I got no job. I need to look for a job as a movie star. Let's see. (pulls out a phonebook) I'll check the yellow pages. Motels..movers...movie theatres. No movie stars. What does a guy gotta do to become a movie star? Man, it will be great to see myself on the big screen. I'm sure the money will flow like lava from a volcano. I'll be able to buy Susan all the clothes she wants. I guess Samantha could get some, too. I can see my name in the titles now: " Bill Meeks and Tom Cruise in Mission Impossible Five."

Susan

(from offstage)

Bill, I need some money to buy some more nail polish.

Bill

Damn. I just remembered. If I don't have a job. I don't have any money. I gotta tell Susan....Sure. Come in here.

(In walks Susan)

Susan

This is so strange. I don't think the neighbors are going to accept this whole Samantha thing.

Bill

Susan, I have to tell you something.

Susan

Yes, I know you don't like it, but don't you want the kid to be happy?

Bill

I've got good news and bad news.

Susan

What is it?

Bill

I quit my job today.

Susan

What? Are you out of your mind?! First the kid loses it and now my husband. What are we going to do? Are you going to find another job?

Bill
That's the good news

Susan
What is?

Bill
I want to be a movie star.

Susan
What the hell is going on around here?!

(End Scene Two)

Scene Three: The afternoon of the next day. Bill and Susan are at the house. Bill is having problems finding a job as a movie star.

Susan
I still can't believe you quit your job to pursue this ridiculous mission. I don't know what's giving me a worse headache, you or the rain.

Bill
I'm sorry dear. I couldn't stand working for that prick of a boss anymore. I felt like I needed a change in my life. I want something better.

Susan
Well, just don't go trying on any of my clothes.

Bill
You don't have to be so vehement about it. The first thought that entered my mind after I quit my job was my childhood fantasy about being in the movies. The thought made me salivate to think about it. Don't you think I would make a good movie star?

Susan
No I don't. You make a good swimming pool cleaner.

(In walks Samantha soaking wet from the rain, beat up, holding a broken umbrella)

Bill
Oh my goodness. What happened to you Sam? I mean Samantha

Susan

You poor thing. You're completely drenched, and your mascara is running all over your cheeks. What happened to your umbrella?

Samantha

On my way home from school a group of girls jumped me, kicked the crap out of me, and broke my umbrella. I guess they didn't like the fact that I was trying to be like them. Do you think I could have some money for a new one?

Susan

We can't. Your father quit his job yesterday.

(giving Bill an evil look)

Samantha

Nice one, Dad. I guess this whole family is kind of messed up right now. What kind of work are you going to do now?

Bill

I want to be a movie star.

Samantha

Did I say kind of messed up? I mean really messed up. So how soon do we see the Academy Award, Dad? Or are you still putting in applications?

Susan

I think we're doomed, my child. We'll be forced to live on the streets begging for food while your father stands on a street corner holding a sign that says, "Will star in a movie for change." Maybe I can find a job somewhere. But then who will take care of you two?

Samantha

I could walk the streets and sell my body as a hooker.

Susan

No honey, that might not be a good idea.

Bill

Yea, especially when someone finds out what's under that dress.

Susan

In fact, I think that's the silliest thing you've ever said.

(the telephone rings; Bill answers)

Bill

Hello? Hey there, Burt. You what? You did? Seriously? You mean *the real* Tom Sellik? You didn't...Really? Of course I'll do it! Burt, this great! What a true friend you are.... Okay. Thanks again, buddy. Bye.

(Samantha and Susan stare curiously at Bill)

Guess what, my lovely wife and confused son!

Susan and Samantha (together)

What is it?

Bill

Our worries are over and future is beginning! That was my buddy Burt on the phone, and check this out. The one and only Tom Sellik came into Burt's garage with a broken Ferrari. While discussing the problems with the car Burt started shooting the breeze with Tom. They talked about this and that and then Tom brought up how the other day at his swank mansion in Hollywood his personal swimming pool cleaner had a freak accident and somehow drowned in Tom's pool. I guess Tom was having real bad luck with pool cleaners because this was like the fourth or fifth guy he'd lost in the past year. So Burt mentions that he has a friend who was a damn good pool cleaner and recently quit his job to pursue better clientele. I guess Burt did such a good job fixing the Ferrari that Tom took the recommendation and wants me to move to Hollywood and be the new pool cleaner making way more money than before. Do you know what this means? We're moving to Hollywood. I'm gonna clean pools for a movie star.

Susan

Is this for real?

Bill

It sure is. And Samantha won't be a freak anymore. That transvestite stuff is the latest craze out there in Hollywood.

Sam (takes off wig)

Well, if it's normal to dress in drag there I'm not going to do it. I want to be original. Folks, I'm Sam again. This changes everything.

Susan

It sure does. I'm somewhat sad I'm losing a daughter, but who cares. I'm going to meet Tom Sellik!

Bill

You sure are sweetie. We're selling everything and moving to California. Thank you, Burt. Thank you, Tom Sellik. Lookout Hollywood! The Meeks are coming.