



TEDDY SAYS HIDE

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Fastaval 2015

Playtesters

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You all contributed many relevant thoughts which were incorporated into the scenario.

Sparring Partners

Peter Fallesen. Thank you for always pushing me to be my best and, for critical feedback, and comments on the scenario that made it a lot better.

Marie Wolfsberg Oscilowski. Thank you for finding the best parts of my ideas, for seeing mistakes in my story design way before I could accept them, and for Teddy.

Monica Hjort Traxl. Thank you for sparring on the design process, and pointing out the need to focus on real people with real lives.

Play Time

3-4 hours.

Participants

Four players and one game master.

Ludography

Scenarios that were important sources of inspiration:

“The Black Pram,” by Alex Uth.

“Depereo,” by Asbjørn Olsen.

“Fifteen Men,” by Simon Steen Hansen, Niels Jensen, and Anders Troelsen.

“Just a Little Lovin,” by Tor Kjetil Edland and Hanne Grasmo.

“I Say a Little Prayer,” by Tor Kjetil Edland.

“The Last Adventure,” by Max Møller.

“Let the World Burn,” by Peter Fallesen.

“The Loss,” by Peter Fallesen.

“Vasen Road,” by Mikkel Bækgaard.

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Introduction

Silas and his Mom escaped from Dad one evening when he was not home. Silas is nine years old. They are trying to build a new life while staying hidden. Dad is constantly hunting them. Slowly fear takes over their lives.

“Teddy says Hide” is about domestic violence. After the victim has escaped from the abuser, the immediate threat has disappeared. Everything might seem normal on the outside, but the constant fear is still there.

The scenario is a psychological thriller, which follows Silas and Mom’s breakdown in the face of a looming ever-present threat. There are also elements of psychological horror that come into play through scenes designed to be unpleasant for the characters *and* the players.

Through two “Safety scenes” in the scenario, the players are given the option of sacrificing things that make their lives good and worthwhile, in order to hide better from Dad. Whenever they do, they get a safety lottery ticket. In the last scene of the scenario, the characters safety is determined randomly, using these tickets. If they don’t go far enough, Dad will surely find them in the end, if they go too far, life becomes living hell, and going back to Dad will seem like a relief.

The two main characters examine the same question from two different angles: “How much of yourself are you willing to sacrifice for the person you love?” For Silas this means sacrificing his childhood for a life of constant fear and hiding in order to keep his mother safe. For Mom it might involve going back to a person who is going to hurt her in order to make Silas happy.

The story takes place in a small country town. Maybe in Denmark, maybe somewhere else. The location is safe, in some respects, since it is far away from any place where Dad might coincidentally run into them. However, certain places are obvious places to look in a small town. There is only one school, and two supermarkets.

Silas and Mom live in a small green house on the outskirts of town, near some woods. It is somewhat safe because it is secluded, but if Dad finds them, they are all alone.

The Characters

There are four characters in the story. Silas and Mom (Julia) are the main characters. They are archetypical and very straightforward to play. Their complexity comes from interactions with the scenarios' main antagonists, Teddy and "Dad, who isn't there." Teddy is a manifestation of a nine-year-old kid's imagination, while "Dad, who isn't there." represents the influence that Dad still holds over Mom's life.

When playing the antagonists, pretend that they are normal characters. They can speak to Silas and Mom and interact with them physically. The only thing they cannot do, is to interact physically with the story world, such as moving a cup. As long as you just pretend they are there, most scenes are no different to play than if the characters existed.

I leave it to you to interpret what the different scenes mean. Playing out an intimate sex scene between Mom and "Dad, who isn't there" is quite easy. They just do it. What it means within the story is a different matter. Perhaps it means something along the lines of Mom longing for Dad's body and wanting to be with him – perhaps something different.

Silas is a nine-year-old boy who once had a happy childhood. At some point he realized that something was wrong with the way Dad treated Mom. Then he became scared. How much of his life he is willing to sacrifice in order to keep Mom safe?

Teddy is Silas' Teddy bear. Teddy has watched over Silas ever since he was a baby, but Teddy has become more and more twisted and scared over the years. Teddy is the manifestation of Silas' and Mom's inner voices of anxiety. It pushes Silas to go further and further in order to stay safe, even if it destroys his life.

Mom (Julia) is a woman who Dad subjected to abuse for many years, up until the point where it became normal for her. In the end, she ran away from him. She is terrified of him, but as life becomes harder for her and Silas, she longs back into her cage.

"Dad, who isn't there" is the manifestation Mom's presence in Mom's life, even when he isn't there. In the start, he is a horrible presence that she tries to push away but can't. As Silas' and her life starts breaking down, he becomes more like a saving grace. He whispers to Mom that all she has to do is to make a simple phone call, to tell him where they are and apologize.

I recommend that you read the characters now.

The Story

The first act of the story introduces the characters and the escape from Dad. We follow Silas and Mom, as they run away from their apartment and through the forest. At the end of the first act, they finally get a feeling of respite and safety.

The second act focuses on the lie of safety that Silas and Mom hold onto, and how it breaks down. Mom starts taking safety precautions in order to make it harder for Dad to find them, but when doing so, she also feeds Silas' sense of paranoia. At the end of the second act, the focus shifts to Silas' sense of anxiety, as he has a dream where his mother is being burned alive.

The third act focuses on how anxiety takes over Silas' life, and the safety precautions he forces himself to take. As their lives break down, Mom's memories of Dad change character. There were good parts about their relationship, and at least Silas was happy. Going into the climax, Dad finds their house. Mom is forced to choose whether to take him back, and possibly create a life for Silas, or try to flee.

The outcome of the scenario is determined by the Safety Lottery. If they win, they escape. They move to a new place and Silas' fear continues. If they lose, Dad finds them. If no one flees, the safety lottery is used to determine how Dad takes revenge on them.

What you need to play

- A printout of the scenario.
- A stopwatch or a smartphone to time the safety scenes.
- A loud speaker or a smartphone, to play the intro and outro tracks.



How to Play

“Teddy says Hide” plays like a classical “Fastaval freeform” game in most respects.

Most of the scenes are acted out using live action roleplay, without costumes (semilive), others are played with the participants describing what happens.

As with other classical freeform games, you are expected to introduce the scenes, guide the players in the right direction, and provide atmospheric descriptions where appropriate.

There are a number of set scenes that you should follow.

The Safety Lottery

The outcome of the scenario will be determined by a lottery in the last scene. At the start of the game, you put eight danger tickets on the table. Silas and Mom can earn up to eleven safety tickets in the scenes “Mom’s safety scene,” “Silas’ safety scene,” and “Oscar’s visit.” They are the most complicated scenes in the scenario, so make sure you know exactly how to run them.

The Stroking Mechanic

Beginning in the scene “In Lust,” Mom has to agree with “Dad, who isn’t there” whenever he physically strokes Mom’s cheek (physically in the play room). This represents Mom’s inner doubt. For example, Mom tells “Dad, who isn’t there” to leave her alone, but then he strokes her cheek and talks about how much she desires him. Suddenly Mom’s desire takes over, and she talks about how much she misses him. At another time she might be talking about how Silas is doing at school. First, she says he is doing fine, but then “Dad, who isn’t there” strokes her cheek and talks about how tough it is for Silas. Suddenly, she is in doubt and agrees with him: Maybe Silas is having a tough time in school.

The purpose of this mechanic is to give the person playing “Dad, who isn’t there” a tool to push around Mom, even if she resists. He can use it in any scene with Mom, after “In Lust”. You may remind them of the mechanic if forgets to use it in the later scenes.

Mom should not be instructed in this mechanic beforehand, such that it remains a nasty surprise.

The mechanic cannot be used to make Mom call Dad or choose to take him back.

The play area

Have an open area in the room with a few chairs where the players can physically roleplay the scenes that require it.

Dimming the lighting to create a horror like atmosphere works really well.

Consider having some ambient background music running in the background.



PREPARATION FOR PLAY

Preparation for Play

Preparation will take up to one hour, depending on the group's level of experience. Your main task is to take the players from a group of people who are nervous and probably do not know each other, to a group who are ready and pumped to play the game. Once the game is running, it is very hard to fix things, so make sure the players are well prepared.

Discuss the Players' Expectations

You need to know what roleplaying background the participants have, and what experience they are expecting.

One challenge can be players coming from different roleplaying backgrounds and wanting different experiences. To some degree, you can cater to these expectations by assigning the roles accordingly. For other things, you have to state the differences outright. If someone chose the game because it sounded like a horror game, you might say that there are tense and unpleasant moments, but that the game is not classical horror.

Introduce the Game

After hearing the players' expectations, introduce the scenario.

Important points to get across:

- The scenario is about Silas and his mother, who have escaped from Dad.
- The scenario is a psychological thriller that focuses on the stress of living under a constant fear of being found.
- The roles Teddy and "Dad, who isn't there" exist in the characters thoughts. They are played as if they exist and are normal roles, except for not being able to physically affect the fictional world. They can touch the other players and talk to them, but aren't able to move a chair.
- The scenes with Teddy and "Dad, who isn't there," represent inner thought processes. What actually happens in the scenes is left open for interpretation.

Introduce the safety lottery

Put the 8 danger tickets on the table. Explain that the outcome of the scenario will be decided by a safety lottery, and that they can earn a total of 11 safety tickets for the lottery in certain scenes during the scenario.

Safety Mechanics

Agree upon a set of safe words, which stops the game and allows you to discuss how to proceed. I recommend, "Stop the game". This is important because the game can get tough for some players. **Make sure that everyone has agreed to use it, and that they can trust the other players to use it as well.**

First Exercise

Ask the players to stand in a circle with closed eyes. Count to twenty with closed eyes, together as a group. If two people say a number at the same time, you restart.

Physical Boundaries

Take a round among the players where you ask them what their physical boundaries are, and where they are alright with being touched.

Second Exercise

Split the players into two groups. In each group, one person his eyes closed while the other gently strokes and massages his body.

Third Exercise

Split the players into two new groups. Instruct the players to stand across from each other, to start physically flirting with each other as if they were young lovers, without saying anything.

Fourth Exercise

Split the players into two new groups. Instruct the players to physically sit together as if they were a mother and a nine-year-old child, without saying anything.

First Practice Scene: I Love You

This scene practices letting go of the need to avoid silence, when playing a role.

Two young people are sitting at a café. One of them is trying to say “I love you” to the other person, but cant get himself to do it. The other person knows that he wants to say it, but is too shy to ask directly.

Your Goal is to create as much awkward silense tension between the two as possible. Cut the scene and ask them redo it many times, asking for more awkward silence.

For both practice scenes you want to make sure that everyone tries them, so swap people out during the scenes or redo them with new people after you have run them the first time.

Second Practice Scene: I Hate You

This scene practices going all in and letting go of inhibitions.

A man comes home drunk to his partner who has been waiting for him all evening.

Your goal is to make the argument so heated, that the players are shouting at the top of their lungs. After a couple of seconds, cut the scene and point out that the argument needs to be more heated. Let them play for a bit. Push them. You can swap out one of the people playing it, instructing the new person to make the argument even more heated.

Casting

Decide who plays the different roles and hand out the character sheets. Use the impressions you gained during the warmup exercises and the presentation rounds.

First, make sure the player is capable of playing the role. Silas is a very straightforward role and can be given to an inexperienced player. While Mom isn't the most difficult role to play, she gains a lot by being given to a reasonably mature player.

Teddy and especially "Dad, who isn't there," can be challenging to play, and it is important that they are up to the task. "Dad, who isn't there" needs to be able to draw out Mom's doubt and lust. He needs to be cast to someone who is both able to make him very scary at times and just a bit too pleasant at other times. Teddy needs to be capable of pushing the main characters around, while seeming cute and innocent.

Second, consider what kind of experience the player wants. If in doubt, ask. Players who want to affect the story and the creative agenda should play either Teddy or "Dad, who isn't there." Players who just want to immerse themselves into the experience, should play Mom or Silas. Mom experiences many conflicting feelings, whereas Silas' experience is mainly related to anxiety and paranoia.

Third, consider at the chemistry between the players. You should have gotten some idea of the chemistry between the different players from the practice scenes. Especially Mom's relationships with Silas and "Dad, who isn't there" are important to get right. Silas' and Teddy's relationship is important to a lesser extent.

If any of the players want to avoid physical contact, consider giving them Silas or Teddy, since these roles can be played with less physical interaction.

Answer Questions About the Roles

Make sure that everyone has understood his or her roles.

Make Sure You are Ready to Play

Have a small break. Has everyone been to the toilet? You want to be ready so you can run the game with as few breaks as possible.

Answer any questions that the players might have, and make sure that everyone is ready to play.



ACT 1: FLEEING TO SAFETY

They run terrified into the night with a figure running after them. He is shouting out to them. Begging them to come home. Shouting is replaced by silence. Is he still looking for them?

The purpose of this act is to introduce the characters, and to provide a positive reference point for all their dreams before everything breaks down.

*Tragic, Tense,
Beautiful.*

Intro music

Put on “Black is the Colour of my True Loves Hair” by Nina Simone. Play <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NWmCbEbMmeU> up until 3.24. The remaining part of the track will be used for the outro.

The Escape

Introduce the scene: Silas and Mom are frantically grabbing everything they need in order to escape before Dad comes home. The clothes and cupboards contents are spread all over the floor, as they rush to find everything that they need. A single chair is barring the main door.

While this is happening **Dad** describes how he is arriving at the apartment block and walking up the stairs. What happens, when he finds that he has been locked out and they are trying to escape?

The goal of this scene is to show that Dad is a person they need to be scared of.

You can occasionally ask **Teddy** to describe the messy apartment.

If you need to make the scene more stressful, focus more on Dad getting closer. Start stressing Silas and Mom by asking questions about things they have forgotten to take along.

Comforting Teddy

Introduce the scene: Silas is comforting Teddy, because he is scared. They have escaped from the apartment, and have hidden in a nearby forest. They are lying near the roots of a big tree, as Dad's yelling can be heard in the background.

While this is happening, **Dad** describes how he is walking around in the forest, shouting out to them, and begging them to come home.

The Goal of this scene is to introduce the loving relationship between Teddy and Silas, as well as showing Dad's desperation

You can occasionally ask **Mom** to describe the wet and dark forest.

Under the bridge

Introduce the scene: They are sitting underneath a highway bridge that offers some protection from the pouring rain. Trucks slash through the puddles on the nearby road. There is warmth, love, and safety. Mom is telling Silas a good night story. It starts with “once upon a time, there was a little prince.”

The Goal of this scene is to introduce the loving relationship between Mom and Silas.

You can occasionally ask **Teddy** to describe looking out at the rain and cars. Feeling safe.

A New Home

The characters take turns at providing descriptions of their new home. The goal of the scene is to introduce the new location with warmth and love.

Introduce the scene: Describe the small town that they have moved to. Then describe their small green house on the outskirts of it. The house is old, and there is a forest and a pond next to it

“Dad, who isn’t there” describes how the house looks from the outside.

Teddy describes the house from the inside.

“Dad, who isn’t there” describes Silas and Mom unpacking.

Mom describes some of the small touches she made to make it feel like home.

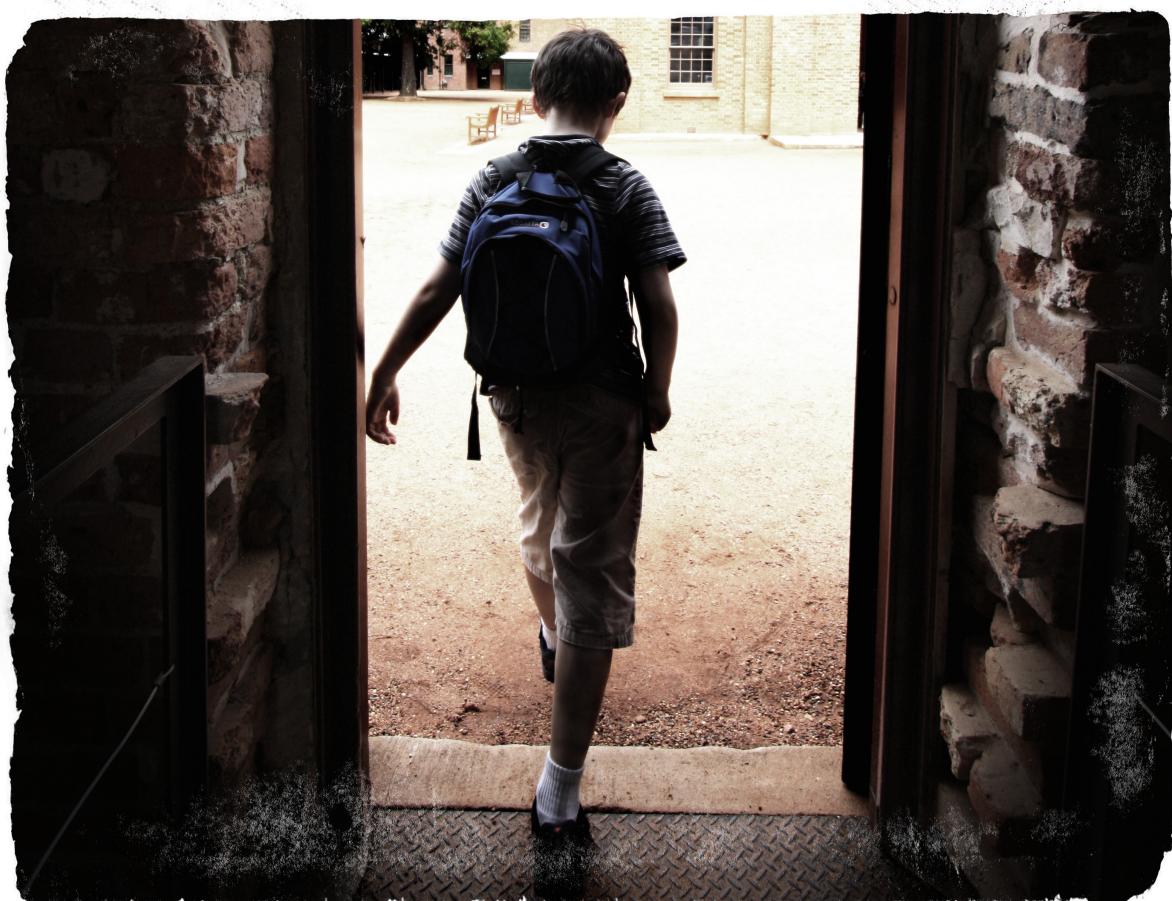
Silas describes places where he plays with Teddy.

Mom describes the small doctor’s practice where she works as a nurse.

Silas describes the town school.

If you need more descriptions, ask more questions.





ACT 2: SAFETY LIES

She tells herself every day that she is safe, yet it is as if Dad's shadow follows her everywhere. She is broken, but there is still hope for Silas.

He just wants a normal life with some friends he can play with, and a place to call home. Is that too much to ask for?

*Tense, Loving,
Self-delusional*

Another Man

Introduce the scene: Mom is eating lunch with Thomas, a secretary from the doctors practice where she works as a nurse. Is it a new acquaintance or is there a potential for something more?

Thomas is played by Teddy's player.

At some point you **introduce “Dad, who isn’t there.”** It starts with him admiring her body from afar and moving closer. What does “Dad, who isn’t there” say to her, when he sees that she is with another man?

The goal of this scene is to introduce the nasty presence of Dad, even in his absence, and through this, to show how her previous relationship has broken her. (Thomas can’t interact with “Dad, who isn’t there”)

A New Friend // Home Paranoia

There are two scenes in this part. They are played out in parallel. After the first one has played out for a bit, you introduce the second one. From then on, you cut back and forth between the two scenes at dramatically appropriate moments.

Introduce the scene: Silas is playing with one of his new friends named Oscar. Oscar is playing a hunter looking for Silas, who is playing a monster. Do they have something together? Or is it clear that Silas former friendships were better?

Oscar is played by “Dad, who isn’t there.”

The goal of the scene is to follow Silas struggle to establish a new life, and to give him something that will hurt if he loses it later.

Introduce the other scene, after a short while: Mom comes home and the front door is open. She starts frantically searching the house to make sure Dad isn’t there.

Teddy plays Mom’s inner voice of anxiety, by describing the house together with you.

The goal of this scene is to create a stressful scene with Mom searching the house, showing that Mom is still horribly afraid, even if she puts on a different mask to everyone else.

The scene ends with Mom reaching Silas room. There are rose petals spread over the floor. All the toys are hiding from a small wooden figure standing in the middle of the room.

Mom's Safety Scene

In this scene, Mom gets the opportunity to make sacrifices in order to get safety tickets and thus better hide from Dad. The scene is a meta-scene. Rather than actually taking place, it reflects a process that Mom goes through in the duration of several weeks.

The goal of this scene is to put the scenario's core thematic on a knife's edge. She now has to start making sacrifices in order stay safe from Dad, but in doing so, she might endanger Silas' sense of safety.

You play the four problems, one at a time, following a strict timing procedure. Every successful safety solution earns them one lottery ticket (the last problem earns two). The price is that the solution always represents a sacrifice, and the more sacrifices they make, the more their lives fall apart.

Introduce the Meta-Scene: Mom is sitting in Silas' room, with the rose petals and the toys that are hidden away. "Shadow Silas" approaches her. He looks just like Silas, except the colours have almost disappeared from his face and clothes.

Teddy takes the role of "Shadow Silas" in this part (a role which functions almost exactly like Teddy).

First, Mom and "Shadow Silas" talk about an area of their life, before any sacrifices are made. This provides a feeling of what the stakes of the sacrifices are. The area spoken about should always be related to the safety problem of that round

You ask interrogating questions into this conversation, to draw out potential safety problems. This might be questions like "What clothes are you wearing?" and "What time of day is it?" Although it will often be obvious, try to keep them guessing about what the safety problem will be about.

Second, you present the safety problem.

Third, Mom and "Shadow Silas" have **60 seconds** to come up with a solution to the safety problem. Once they come up with a solution that you consider sufficient, you declare this and ask if Mom is willing to implement this solution. If she doesn't they just continue the scene. If they don't come up with a sufficient solution within the time frame, they lose the round and don't get the safety ticket.

Fourth, "Dad, who isn't there" has **60 seconds** to convince Mom that adopting the solution is a bad idea, and point out all the consequences of implementing it.

Fifth, "Shadow Silas" has **30 seconds** to convince Mom to implement the solution, even given these consequences.

Finally, you ask Mom whether she is going to implement the solution they came up with.

First Round (Describe the procedure during this round)

Interrogation questions: How often are Silas and Mom out on the streets. Can they easily be spotted?

Safety problem: What are you going to do to make sure that Dad can't spot you and Silas on the streets?

Solution criteria: There needs to be something that makes them harder to spot, and something that limits how much they go out.

Second Round

Interrogation questions: How is the house furnished? How do the windows look?

Safety problem: What are you going to do, to make sure that your house is as safe as possible, if Dad comes?

Solution criteria: There needs to be something to prevent outsiders from looking in at night, as well as something that makes it harder for intruders to get in. This could be covering the windows, so that outsiders can't look in, and locks on the windows and doors or alarms everywhere.

Third Round

Interrogation questions: What route does Mom take when she goes to and from work? What route does Silas take to and from school?

Safety problem: What are you going to do to make sure that Dad doesn't follow you or Silas on the way home from work or School?

Solution criteria: There needs to be a paranoid effort to shake off people that might be following them. She might get them to take different and longer routes home from school and work, even some times going off the track in the forest

Fourth Round

Announce that the fourth round gives 2 tickets instead of one.

Interrogation questions: How is Silas' social life at school? Does he get invited to birthdays?

Safety problem: Silas is vulnerable if he goes on trips to birthdays, since Dad might spot him. How are you going to handle this?

Solution criteria: The vulnerability needs to be removed. Mom might decide that Silas can't go to social arrangements with the class, or finds a way to come along to all of them.

The Safety Lie

In this scene, we see the aftermath of the safety scene. The goal of this scene shows how things have changed as a result of what happened in the safety scene. If things have become more like a prison and less like a home, reflect this in the descriptions.

Introduce the scene: Silas and Mom are sitting together in the living room, watching evening cartoons together. The funny animations, provide a colourful contrast to the darkness of the room.

During the start of the scene, Silas and Mom are not allowed to speak.

Instead, Teddy and “Dad, who isn’t there” provide descriptions of the room, emphasising how things have changed as a result of the last safety scene.

At some point, you describe how Silas says “I am scared” to Mom, forcing her to relate to his fear in some way. After this point, Silas and Mom are allowed to speak again.

Dreams of a Burning Woman // In Lust

You once again play two scenes in parallel, cross cutting between two dream sequences. Play them slowly and provide generous amounts of flavourful descriptions.

Silas’ dream: Silas and Teddy are back in their old home. Silas has woken up in the middle of the night, and can hear Mom weeping in the background.

During the scene, you provide descriptions of how they slowly sneak toward Mom’s room. The smell of petrol becomes stronger, as Mom’s screams become louder. They approach the door slowly, whispering to each other. There is a distinct stench of burnt pig.

When they open the door, you cut the scene.

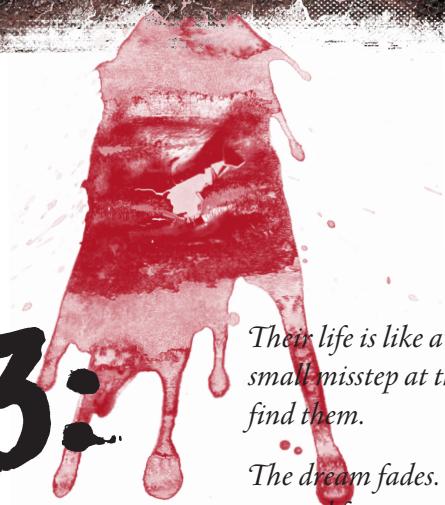
After a bit, cut to Mom’s dream: Julia (Mom) wakes up in her bed, and Dad is staring at her. She doesn’t know how long he has been looking at her. She remembers that it was once alright for him to be in her bedroom. Remind Dad, that he loves her and wants her.

You now introduce the stroking mechanic. Whenever “Dad, who isn’t there” physically strokes her cheek, she has to agree with him.

The goal of these scenes is to mark a clear shift in focus from Silas building a new life, to Silas worrying about Mom’s safety, while showing that Mom still wants Dad, even if she is terrified of him.



ACT 3: SAFETY GAMES



Their life is like a house filled with traps. One small misstep at the wrong time, and Dad might find them.

The dream fades. Reality sets in. Maybe what you escaped from, wasn't all bad. Is the dream a lie they tell each other in order to keep on going?

*Anxiety, Madness,
Breakdown.*

Silas' Safety Scene

This is the scene where Silas and Teddy can earn safety tickets. The scene functions exactly like Mom's safety scene.

This scene is a reflection of a terrified nine-year old boys imagination. Your goal is to make Silas go as far as possible with the solutions. The point isn't whether Silas' solutions objectively make a big difference in hiding from Dad, but rather how far he is willing to go in order to keep his mother safe.

This scene should be downright horrible. In one playtest, Teddy convinced Silas to sneak into Mom's bathroom and swallow a lot of her pills, if he felt like it was going to be a dangerous day. This way, he would be sick and he would keep Mom safe by forcing her to stay at home.

Introduce the Meta-Scene: Silas is sitting together with Teddy in his room, surrounded by broken toys.

First, Teddy and Silas talk about an area of their life, before any sacrifices are made. You ask interrogating questions into this conversation, to draw out potential safety problems. Once you accept a safety solution, make sure Silas agrees to it before preceding

Second, you present the safety problem.

Third, Teddy and Silas have **60 seconds** to come up with a solution.

Fourth, "Dad, who isn't there" has **60 seconds** to convince Silas that adopting the solution is a bad idea, and point out all the consequences of implementing it.

Fifth, Teddy has **30 second** to convince Silas to implement the solution.

Finally, you ask Silas whether he is going to implement the solution.

First Round

Interrogation questions: How does Silas' normal school day look like. Is he outside during the breaks, where Dad might easily spot him. Does he sit in a place where he can be seen from the street?

Safety problem: What are you going to do to make sure Dad doesn't find you, if he comes to your school?

Solution criteria: Silas needs to be well hidden, so that Dad can't see him from the streets, and wouldn't be able to easily find him if he entered the school. This might involve staying inside in all the school breaks and hiding every day after school. Alternatively, it might involve Silas staying home from school entirely.

Second Round

Interrogation questions: How does Silas normal day at home look like? Does he go outside? Does he have any special daily routines?

Safety problem: What are you going to do, to make sure that you are ready, if Dad comes to your home?

Solution Criteria: Silas needs to constantly be on guard when at home. This might involve constantly checking the windows to see if Dad is coming and checking that all the windows and doors are locked.

Third Round

Bonus round for 2 tickets.

Interrogation question: How are Silas mornings with Mom. Are there any signs that the day is going to be good or bad?

Safety problem: Some days you have a feeling that Dad might be walking around town. How can you make sure that you and mom stay at home these days?

Solution criteria: The solution needs to be something that keeps both him and Mom at home, even if it means that Mom will be fired from her job in the long run.

The fourth security problem is resolved in the next scene.

Oscars Visit

Introduce the scene: Oscar comes and visits Silas one day when he is at home. The circumstances that he comes under, reflects what happened in the safety scene. He might come around to play or he might come around because he is worried for Silas. Maybe they play together, maybe they just talk.

At some point, you introduce Oscar as the last safety problem: If Dad sees them together, he might take Oscar hostage, hurt him, and make him tell where Silas lives.

Teddy is now allowed to speak to Silas, pushing him to reject Oscar.

They get 2 safety tickets if he makes Oscar leave him alone.

If the scene drags out, you put a 2 minute timer on it, after which point the opportunity for the safety tickets is lost.

Everything is Fine

Introduce the scene: Mom is putting Silas to bed. Mom is telling him a bed time story. Teddy and “Dad, who isn’t there,” are also there, speaking to Silas and Mom respectively.

Make sure that everyone is physically close together.

The goal of this scene is to depict Mom and Silas relationship after his breakdown.

The focus of the scene should be on Mom and Silas. If Teddy and “Dad, who isn’t there” are taking up too much space, ask them to back away for a bit. If they are taking up too little space, ask them what they are thinking.

The Boy We Loved

Introduce the scene: Teddy and “Dad, who isn’t there” are talking about what a wonderful kid Silas was when he was younger. Whose fault is it that he is breaking apart?

The goal of the scene is to create an argument between Teddy and “Dad, who isn’t there” where they get to play out the core conflict between the two characters. Is Teddy a monster for pushing Silas to sacrifice everything to keep his mother safe, or is Dad the only real monster.

If they are having trouble turning the scene into an argument, ask “Dad, who isn’t there” directly to confront Teddy with the fact that he is destroying Silas.

Night Watch

Introduce the scene: Teddy has woken Silas up in the middle of the night, so that he can keep watch in case something comes.

At some point, you describe how they can see a figure arriving through the dark. He lights a cigarette under a street light. It is Dad.

Play out the scene until Silas has woken up Mom and told her that Dad is coming, then cut directly to the next scene between Mom and “Dad, who isn’t there.”

The goal of this scene is to introduce the crisis situation, which forces the climax of the scenario.

Taking him Back

Introduce the scene: Mom and “Dad, who isn’t there” are alone in her bedroom. Instruct them that Mom has to decide whether to run away from Dad, or stay

The goal of this scene is to give “Dad, who isn’t there” an opportunity to convince Mom to stop running and take her back.

If “Dad, who isn’t there” is having trouble in this scene, you can start pushing Mom as well, asking her how she thinks Silas is doing. If he isn’t using the stroking mechanic, you can remind him of it.

When the scene is done, cut back to the previous scene with Silas and ask Mom to explain to Silas, whether they are running away or not.

If Mom chooses not to run away. Ask Silas whether he tries to run away, or whether he stays with Mom.

If Mom and Silas run away together, go to “Resolution A: Hide and Seek”

If Silas runs away without Mom, go to “Resolution B: Hiding Alone”

If no one tries to run away, go to “Resolution C: Revenge”



Resolution A: Hide and Seek

Introduce the scene: Silas and Mom are fleeing into the dark rainy woods.

Dad is played by “Dad who isn’t there.” He describes how Dad is looking for them. Coming closer and closer.

You can ask **Teddy** to come with descriptions of the scary forest, while urging them to hurry.

Play the scene until Silas and Mom have found a hiding place. If they don’t do this by themselves, announce that Dad is coming closer and they need to find a place to hide.

The goal of this scene is to provide a tense and atmospheric depiction of Silas and Mom’s escape.

The safety lottery

You now mix together all the safety tickets with the 8 danger tickets. Announce that you will draw out the tickets one by one: They remain hidden if 3 safety tickets are drawn before 3 danger tickets are drawn (best out of 5).

While you draw out the tickets, so that everyone can see them, **Dad** describes how he gets closer and closer to their hiding place.

If they win: Describe how they have moved to a new place and Silas is still living in fear, checking all the windows constantly.

If they lose: Describe how Dad approaches them in a calm manner and announces how happy he is to see them again.

You end the scenario by putting on the outro music track, which is “Black is the Color of My True Loves Hair” by Emile Latimer and Nina Simone. Play the second half of the track you played in the intro, starting at 3.24 (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NWmCbEbMmeU>).

Resolution B: Hiding Alone

Introduce the scene: Silas running into the dark rainy woods, with Teddy in his hand, trying to run away from Dad.

Dad describes how he is looking for him. Coming closer and closer.

Mom describes also looking for Silas, shouting out for him to come out of his hiding place and that she loves him.

You can ask **Teddy** to come with descriptions of the scary forest, while urging Silas to hurry.

Play the scene until Silas has found a hiding place. If he doesn't do this by himself, announce that Dad is coming closer and he needs to find a place to hide.

The goal of this scene is to provide a tense and horrible depiction of Silas escape.

The safety lottery

You now mix together all the safety tickets with the 8 danger tickets. Announce that you will draw out the tickets one by one: He remains hidden if 3 safety tickets are drawn before 3 danger tickets are drawn (best out of 5).

While you draw out the tickets, so that everyone can see them, **Mom** describes how she gets closer and closer to the hiding place.

If Silas wins: Describe how Silas is lying in the wet mud. Shaking, cold, and hugging Teddy.

If Silas loses: Describe how Mom approaches him, hugs him, and tells him that everything is going to be alright.

You end the scenario by putting on the outro music track, which is "Black is the Color of My True Loves Hair" by Emile Latimer and Nina Simone. Play the second half of the track you played in the intro, starting at 3.24 (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NWmCbEbMmeU>).

Resolution C: Revenge

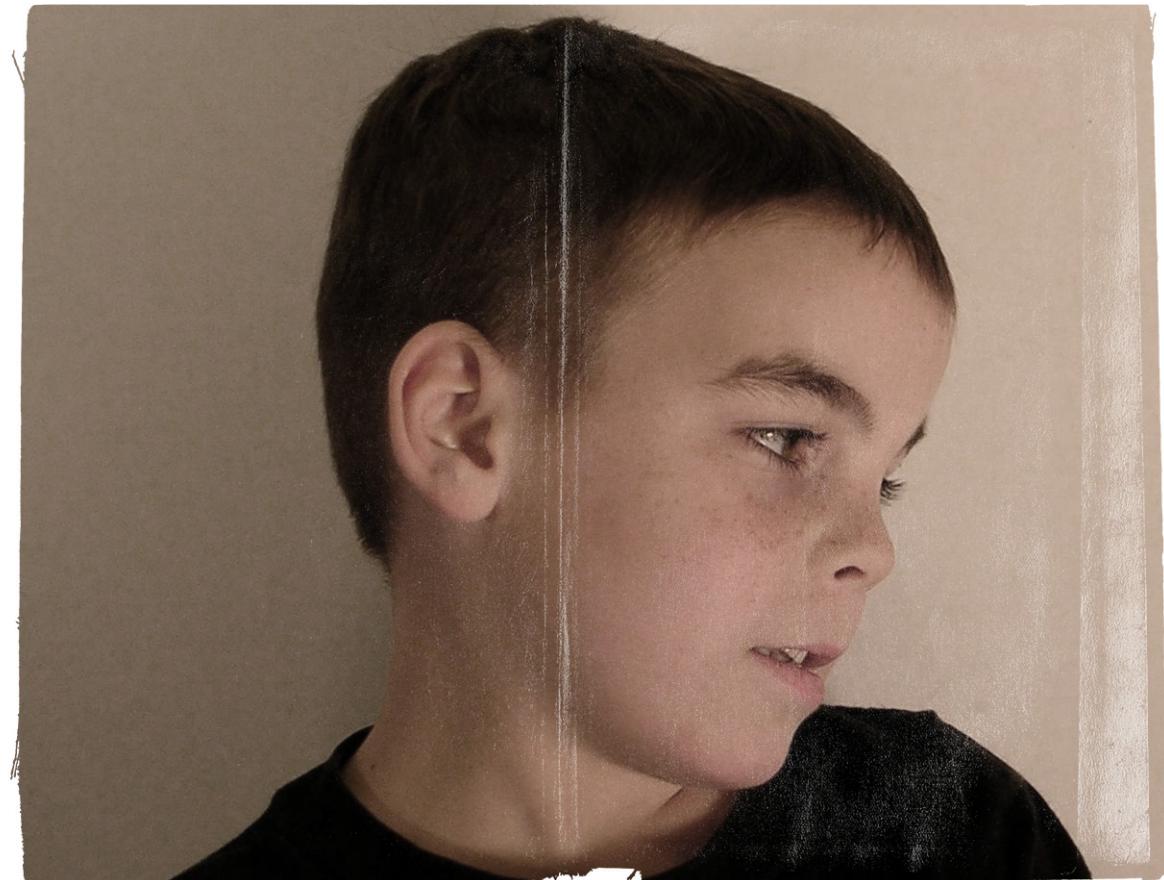
In this resolution scene, you start the safety lottery directly. Mix together all the safety tickets with the 8 danger tickets. Announce that you will draw out the tickets one by one: Mom remains safe if 3 safety tickets are drawn before 3 danger tickets are drawn (Best out of 5).

Introduce the scene: Silas is sitting in his room, quietly hugging Teddy, while looking into the wall.

“Dad, who isn’t there” occasionally describes Mom’s begging and screaming which can be heard in the background.

You draw out the tickets and announce the results while Silas and Teddy play the scene. When the winner has been found, you announce whether Mom is safe or not, and then cut the scene.

You end the scenario by putting on the outro music track, which is “Black is the Color of My True Loves Hair” by Emile Latimer (and Nina Simone). Play the second half of the track you played in the intro, starting at 3:24 (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NWmCbEbMmeU>).



SILAS

The Terrified Child

His life was beautiful. Good friends, a good family. His teddybear, Teddy, kept him safe. He had the best Dad in the world. One evening, the illusion was shattered.

The night was young when he awoke. He heard Moms voice in the background. Even though he could not discern what she was saying, it was clear that she was begging. Fear took over. He hugged Teddy, while lying in his soft bed and counting the cracks in the ceiling. The begging didn't stop. The next night he pretended to fall asleep. For the rest of the evening, his world slowly fell apart. He was five. He was never quite sure what Dad did to her.

The next day everything changed. He now saw all the traps that had been invisible to him before. One intonation in a specific word, could mean that one needed to be extra careful. One wasn't supposed to know anything. One should be happy and thankful. One shouldn't get back late from school. One should laugh at Dad's jokes. The worst days were the ones where Dad was trying to be nice, especially if he had bought ice cream. Then he knew that something was wrong.

The boys name is Silas. He is nine now. Mom, Silas, and Teddy escaped an evening where Dad wasn't at home. Silas misses his friends from before he moved. He isn't allowed to visit them. Mom says they are safe, but deep down Silas knows that Dad is still looking for them. They are hiding in a small green house near the outskirts of a small town. He is terrified of what Dad might do to Mom if he finds them. Silas is still just a child who wants to have some friends and play.

Teddy

Silas best friend is how a teddy bear. They have played since he was a baby. A constant guardian. A voice that tells him a truth that he would rather overhear.

Mommy

Hugging him tight whenever he is upset. Warmth and love. Silas life would fall apart if something was to happen to her.

How to Play Silas

Playing Silas is all about immersion. It is more important that you immerse yourself into Silas and his situation than playing the role well. Try to understand him and make his choices have weight. How far is he willing to go to keep the people he loves safe?

Silas doesn't talk about how Dad hurts Mom. Maybe he has some idea of it, maybe he doesn't. Dad is always nice to Silas.

The Safety Lottery

At the end of the game, the outcome will be decided via a lottery. If Silas and Mom wins, they stay safe. The odds are very bad to start out with, but Silas and Mom can improve their odds in specific scenes during the game. There are 8 danger tickets. You can earn a total of 11 safety tickets, at a price.



MOM

The Ravaged Animal

It was all a dream. An uncontrollable romance. They were two wild animals, filled with infatuation. They had surrendered to each other. He appreciated her more than anyone had done before. She was the most important thing in his life. It was fantastic. She surrendered to him. The day she became pregnant, the dream started falling apart.

Some times they still held onto the dream. Other times he didn't treat her well. To begin with, she was scared, but the fear started fading. She was like a caged animal in a circus, surrendering completely to Dad. Her one point of hope was Silas. She really only lived for her son. And Dad always treated Silas wonderfully.

Everything had become normal. She had been trained so well. What happened to a street animal meant more to her than what happened to herself. She told herself that Silas was oblivious to what was going on after he went to bed.

Her real name is Julia. Silas just calls her Mommy. He is nine. They escaped an evening where Dad wasn't at home. He is still looking for them. They hide in a small green house in the outskirts of a small country town. She has gotten a job as a nurse at the local doctors practice. She is terrified of what Dad will do, if he finds them.

Dad, who isn't there

*The is something out there in the dark.
She sees his face in every man she looks at.
She is terrified of him.
She loves him.*

Silas

A hope that he might have a better life than she had.

Scenes with Silas should be positive, even if it means that Mom has to lie.

Playing Julia

Playing Julia is all about immersion. It is more important that you immerse yourself in Mom and her situation, than you play her well. Do not actively try to play her as a woman. Try to understand her and make her choices have weight. How much of herself is she willing to sacrifice for the person that she loves?

Julia does not talk about what dad does when he hurts her. Maybe Silas has some idea, maybe he doesn't. Dad is always nice to Silas.

The Safety Lottery

At the end of the game, the outcome will be decided via a lottery. If Silas and Mom wins, they stay safe. The odds are very bad to start out with, but Silas and Mom can improve their odds in specific scenes during the game. There are 8 danger tickets. You can earn a total of 11 safety tickets, at a price.



TEDDY

The Twisted Guardian

Ever since Dad gave you to Silas, you have been his guardian. You hugged him when he was afraid. You closed his eyes and pretended that everything was alright. When he had fallen asleep you would hear Mom's weeping in the background.

As the years went by, you could no longer sit back and watch, while Mom got worse and worse. One evening, while Dad was being particularly nasty, you woke Silas from his slumber. Even though he couldn't hear what she was saying, it was clear that she was begging. He changed after this point. He wasn't the innocent boy that you loved anymore. He was five.

Silas now saw all the traps. The small nuances in Dads speech, which could be the difference between a good and a bad day. Why you should never be late for dinner. You should never look like you knew what was going on. Act happy and thankful. Always laugh at Dad jokes. The worst days were the ones where Dad had put an extra effort into the Dinner. Then you knew that something was wrong.

Silas is nine years old now. Mom, Silas, and Teddy escaped an evening where Dad wasn't at home. Things are different now, but the fear is still present. They live in a small green house near the outskirts of a country town. When Teddy visualises Dad's punishment, he sees Mom's skin melting into a burning mattress.

Playing Teddy

Teddy is a monster who thinks he is doing the right thing. You are Silas' inner voice of anxiety that takes over his life and breaks him. While Teddy's intentions are good, his thought processes are twisted like a nine-year old boy's terrified imagination. Your goal is to pressure Silas as much as possible, and make him more and more paranoid, in order to keep him and his Mother safe, even if it destroys him. While doing this, you put on a mask of niceness and cuteness. Hug him and support him, with a hand on his shoulder, as he starts ripping his life apart. Luckily, you have a tool available for this purpose:

The safety lottery

At the end of the game, the outcome will be decided via a lottery. If Silas and Mom wins, they stay safe. The odds are very bad to start out with, but Silas and Mom can improve their odds in specific scenes during the game. There are 8 danger tickets. They can earn a total of 11 safety tickets, at a price. Your job is to make sure that they always pay this price and gain as many tickets as possible.

There will be two safety scenes. One with Mom, and the other with Silas. In these scenes you have to come up with solutions for different safety problems, to gain safety tickets. A safety problem might involve Silas being too recognizable on the streets. Here, a solution be make Silas get a different haircut and completely different set clothes, even if he doesn't like them.

In Mom's safety scene, you play the role of "Shadow Silas." He acts and talks like Silas, but is otherwise played almost exactly as Teddy.

Teddy

In Silas' safety scene, you play the role of Teddy. Push him to take drastic safety measures that break his life apart. The solutions here only have to follow the logic of a nine year old terrified kid, and are allowed to be downright horrible. In one playtest, Teddy convinced Silas to sneak into Mom's bathroom and swallow a lot of her pills, in order to keep mom home from work.

You know everything the person you speak to knows. You know all their fears and insecurities. Use it against them.

Teddy is mainly a prominent character in the second half of the scenario, where you start breaking Silas down. Until then, you will mainly be playing a supporting function, as the voice of anxiety, as well a scene as a secretary from Mom's work and a scene as "Shadow Silas."

The voice of anxiety

In some of the scenes where Teddy isn't present, you will be asked to describe things in the environment. Pretend that Teddy is standing next to them. Incite paranoia and stress, by describing potential dangers.

Thomas

In one of the scenes, you will be playing a secretary from the doctor's practice that Mom works as a nurse. They are out drinking Coffee. Your goal is to make sure that meeting Thomas is a positive experience.



DAD

WHO ISN'T THERE

The Voice of the Beast

“Dad, who isn’t there” represents the influence Dad still holds over Mom. You play this role exactly as if you were a ghost. You can interact physically with the other participants, speak to them, and describe things that you see. You cannot interact physically with things within the fiction, such as moving chairs in their house. You will primarily be playing with Mom, but will be able to speak to Silas on certain occasions.

The outline of her exquisite body makes your mouth water. Her cleavage becomes even more apparent, as she bends forward to comfort your terrified son. You are almost there, but not quite. You are broken. Missing a part of yourself. Dad isn’t with them anymore.

Your love used to be like mad animals filled with infatuation. She domesticated you. She made you into something bigger. You made her into a goddess. She surrendered. She was yours.

Your beloved abandoned you one evening when you weren’t at home. She stole away your nine-year-old son. She wanted to escape. Every time she misses Dad, she sees you.

Mom needs to accept the cage. Dad isn’t perfect, but neither is she. Everything would be better if they were together again. All she needs to do is to pick up her phone, give away their location, and apologise. Then you would all be together again. Once you are, you will make sure that she will never leave you again.

Playing “Dad, who isn’t there”

“Dad, who isn’t there” is a reflection of Mom’s broken mind. At the start of the game, your goal is to be a terrifying pressense that Mom is afraid of. As the paranoia starts making their lives difficult, Mom’s doubt starts taking over. As a result, you change. You become the nicest person on earth, while pointing out all the things that are wrong with her life, and how much Silas is suffering. Think Romeo meets Hannibal Lecter. Towards the end of the scenario, you tell her that all she has to do, to make Silas happy again, is take back Dad. If you succeed, you will first give her the impression that you are a monster, then you will lead her right back into the monsters jaws.

The Stroking Mechanic

Your main tool to push around Mom's doubt is the stroking mechanic. It will be introduced around the middle of the scenario, in a dream where Mom is back in her old apartment with Dad.

From this point on, whenever you play a scene with Mom and you stroke her cheek (physically in the play area), she has to agree with you. This represents Mom's inner doubt. For example, Mom tells you to leave her alone, but then you stroke her cheek and talk about how much she desires you. Suddenly Mom's desire takes over, and she talks about how much she misses you. At another time she might be talking about how Silas is doing at school. First, she says he is doing fine, but then you stroke your cheek and talk about how tough it is for Silas. Suddenly she is in doubt and agrees with you: Maybe Silas is having a tough time in school.

Mom doesn't know about the stroking mechanic until it is introduced in the scene. Try to keep it this way, so that she gets a nasty surprise.

You cannot use this mechanic to make Mom call Dad or choose to take him back.

Silas Friend Oscar

During two of the scenario's scenes, you will be playing Silas friend Oscar. Oscar is nine years old, like Silas. Your goal is to make Oscar as likable as possible, and to show what a good boy Silas can be, if only he gets the chance.

The Safety Lottery

At the end of the game, the outcome will be decided via a lottery. If Silas and Mom wins, they stay safe. The odds are very bad to start out with, but Silas and Mom can improve their odds in specific scenes during the game. There are 8 danger tickets. They can earn a total of 11 safety tickets, at a price.

Use the sacrifices they make against them. If Mom decides to install an alarm in order to be more safe, or if Silas decides to hide during the school breaks, you can point this out to her in all the subsequent scenes and use it against her.



DANGER



DANGER



DANGER



DANGER



DANGER



DANGER



SAFETY



SAFETY



DANGER



SAFETY



SAFETY



DANGER



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