

Get the Hell Off

by
Robert Gately

Name: Robert Gately
Address: 2545 Black River Road
Bethlehem, PA 18015
Phone: 610-866-7965
Cell: 610-730-9481
Email: gately@verizon.net
Web: www.rgately.com
WGA registered

FADE IN:

INT. LIVING ROOM - DAY

BERTHA and HAMILTON sit on a sofa in mid-conversation. Hamilton is also reading the news paper and seems comfortable with silence. Bertha appears more excitable.

A BOX OF TISSUES sits on top of coffee table which is immediately in front of them.

BERTHA
I don't like the way Johnny talks
to his ... his ...

HAMILTON
His imaginary friends?

It's hard for Bertha to admit it.

BERTHA
Yes.

HAMILTON
(through the paper)
Every boy has imaginary friends.

BERTHA
He curses when he talks to them. He
doesn't curse at anyone else. Just
to them. It's terrible, the way he
talks to his ... his ...

HAMILTON
... imaginary friends, Bertha. He's
just make believing.

BERTHA
It's just terrible. I want you to
talk to him.

HAMILTON
(while reading)
About what, Bertha?

BERTHA
About his language ... aren't you
listening to me?

JOHNNY, 10, smiling and with energy, bursts into the living room peddling his go-cart. As he rides around the couch ...

JOHNNY
Hi, pops.

HAMILTON
 (through the paper)
 Hi, son. Watch you mouth.

JOHNNY
 Okay, pops.

Johnny peddles a little further then stops, as if he is a bus driver picking up passengers - his imaginary friends, that is.

JOHNNY
 Okay, Knucklebrains. Those of you who want to get on, get the HELL on. Those of you who want to get off, get the HELL off.

Bertha gasps while Hamilton just continues to read his paper. Johnny makes a turn and then disappears out of the room.

BERTHA
 Did you hear that? He said the 'H' word, Hamilton. HAMILTON?

Hamilton puts the paper down temporarily.

HAMILTON
 What, Bertha. What. WHAT!

BERTHA
 Did you hear him? He said 'hell'.

HAMILTON
 I told him to watch his mouth. What more do you want me to do, beat him?

BERTHA
 I want you to be serious with him. You're never serious with him. He said 'hell', Hamilton.

HAMILTON
 Shiver-me-timbers.

Hamilton continues reading while Bertha grabs a couple of tissues from the tissue box and blows her nose loudly. She takes several deep breaths and finally calms herself.

BERTHA
 We're raising a social menace. I just know it. Next he'll talk to us that way. Then his teachers. Then he'll go to school with a gun and...

Johnny races back into the room with his go-cart.

He peddles around the couch and stops at an imaginary bus stop and talks to no one we can see.

JOHNNY

Okay, you Teletubbie turtle-brains,
those of you who want to get on,
get the HELL on. Those of you who
want to get off, get the HELL off.

Bertha holds her chest as if someone punched her. She jumps to her feet and runs to Johnny and waves her finger at him.

BERTHA

You listen here, young man. I don't
like the way you're talking. You
talk nice, do you hear me?

JOHNNY

Yes, Mommy.

BERTHA

Okay. Go. Play nice.

While Johnny TOOTS his imaginary horn and exits, Bertha sits back down on the couch. Her neck tightens, becomes spasmodic. She puts a finger on a pressure point; the twitching stops.

Hamilton turns a page and continues reading. He appears calm.

After a beat, Johnny bursts through the doors again and races around the couch. He catches a glimpse of his mother who is looking very cross at him. He waves and smiles.

Bertha softens and smiles back. Maybe she has been a little tough on him.

Johnny stops at the customary stop and ...

JOHNNY

Okay, you needle-neck flunkies,
those of you who want to get on,
get the HELL on. Those of you who
want to get off, get the HELL off.

Bertha bolts to the imaginary bus stop and waves her finger in Johnny's face once again.

BERTHA

That's it, young man. You go into
your room right now. You're being
punished, do you hear me? Now go.

Johnny, shoulders slouched, slowly peddles his go-cart and disappears off-screen. Bertha returns to the couch.

BERTHA
Did you hear him, Hamilton?

HAMILTON
Hear what?

BERTHA
AREN'T YOU LISTENING? He said
'hell' again and ...

Hamilton puts the paper down, folds his hands across his lap.

HAMILTON
Confound it, Bertha! Big deal. He
said it to his imaginary friends.

BERTHA
He said ... 'flunkies'.

HAMILTON
Flunkies is not a bad word.

BERTHA
It's not? It sounds like one.

Hamilton sighs and goes back to reading. Bertha throws her hands to her face, close to a breakdown.

SUPER: "THREE HOURS LATER".

Bertha looks at her watch. She nudges Hamilton and -

BERTHA
Hamilton, do you think Johnny had
been punished enough?

The paper slides down. Hamilton is sleeping, and Bertha lets out with a gigantic sigh. She gets up and walks to the door and disappears from view. After a couple of seconds -

BERTHA (O.S.)
Okay, young man. Have you learned
your lesson?

JOHNNY (O.S.)
Yes, Mommy.

BERTHA (O.S.)
Alrighty, then. You play nice now.
Don't say any of those bad words.

JOHNNY (O.S.)
Yes, Mommy.

Johnny then bolts into the room pumping hard on his go-cart. Bertha is close behind and retreats to the couch.

Johnny stops, looks to Bertha and smiles. She smiles back. He turns to his imaginary friends and ...

JOHNNY

Those of you blowhards who want to
get on ...

(yelling)

GET THE HELL ON.

(faster)

Those of you who want get off, then
get the HELL off. Those of you who
didn't like the three-hour delay,

(points at Mom)

complain to the BITCH over there.

Johnny peddles quickly out of the living room and off-screen.

Bertha appears to have breathing problems. She feels her arms. Her face. After a beat she turns to Hamilton who is sound asleep. She shakes him.

BERTHA

Wake up ... wake up.

Hamilton wakens.

BERTHA

Your son ... your son ...

Johnny bursts through doors but this time he peddles to the couch with two baseball gloves in the back of the cart. He stops in front of Hamilton and tosses a ball up and down.

JOHNNY

Dad, you want to have a catch?

HAMILTON

Sure son. That would be nice.

Hamilton gets up and helps Johnny off the go-cart. They take the gloves and bolt off-screen.

Bertha stares straight ahead. She takes one solitary gulp of air, then exhales slowly. A single twitch in her neck causes her head to jerk slightly. After a beat, it jerks again.

And one more time.

FADE OUT

-THE END-