

TICKING
Jonathan Dorf

Cast of Characters

JOHN DOE, a middle-aged gun salesman

JAY DOE, mid-teens, John's son

JOHNNY DOE, ten, John's son

Author's Note

Ticking may play alone, or with *You're Next* and *Play's End* as the opening play of the *Gunplay* trilogy.

(The Doe family kitchen. Morning. JOHN DOE, just approaching middle age and in business attire, sits at the kitchen table and reads *Soldier of Fortune*. Upstage, a stove, with a pot on, at minimum, the right rear burner. Enter JAY DOE, fifteen, John's son, carrying a bookbag.)

JOHN

There's an egg in the pot on the right rear burner.

JAY

I'll get something at school.

JOHN

We never make eggs on the right rear burner.

JAY

Where's Mom?

JOHN

Mommy had to go to work early. Tell me about the right rear burner.

JAY

What about it?

JOHN

Tell me why we don't cook on it.

JAY

I didn't touch it.

JOHN

I didn't ask if you touched it.

JAY

I didn't.

JOHN

I asked why we don't cook in the pot on the right rear burner.

JAY

Mom—

Mommy. **JOHN**

Why can't I call her Mom? **JAY**

She prefers Mommy. I prefer Mommy. **JOHN**
(beat)
Johnny calls her Mommy.

Mommy cooks. *We* don't cook. **JAY**

Mommy is the family cook. She represents our family. The question remains. **JOHN**

What? **JAY**

Why don't we cook in the pot on the right rear burner, the pot that is to remain at all times, lid on tight, on the right rear burner? **JOHN**

Because we're screwed up? **JAY**
(under his breath)

Sit down. **JOHN**
(beat)

I gotta' get the bus. **JAY**

Sit at the breakfast table with Daddy. **JOHN**

I didn't touch the pot. It's right there. **JAY**

We're having a discussion. **JOHN**

I'll miss the bus. **JAY**

Sit!

(Jay sits.)

What do you think of when you see that pot?

JOHN

I didn't do it.

JAY

No one is asking you that question.

JOHN

I'm not even ready for school.

JAY

Get up earlier. I've never felt that getting up at seven was early enough. I've always felt that you miscalculated by twelve minutes.

(beat)

Tell me about the pot.

JOHN

What about it?

JAY

Tell me about that pot, young man.

JOHN

I didn't take your stupid gun!

JAY

I didn't ask you about our gun.

JOHN

It's not *our* gun.

JAY

It's a family weapon. How do you know our family weapon isn't there?

JOHN

Is it?

JAY

You know it isn't.

JOHN

JAY

You said there was an egg in the pot.

JOHN

I didn't say there wasn't a gun.

JAY

Fine. You're right. I'm wrong. Can I go?

JOHN

The gun and the egg could be side by side. Or the egg could be broken and on top. The gun would be sticky, but it should still fire. Takes more than an egg to stop a gun.

(beat)

You knew.

JAY

Knew what?

JOHN

You knew about the gun.

JAY

I did not.

JOHN

Don't lie to Daddy.

JAY

I'm not a liar.

JOHN

I didn't say you were a liar. I told you not to lie. Love the sinner, hate the sin. That's from the Bible. I didn't mean to call you a liar.

JAY

I didn't take it.

JOHN

Let's not discuss that right now.

JAY

But I didn't.

JOHN

We're not discussing that.

But you think I took it. **JAY**

I'm saving that thought for later. **JOHN**

When? **JAY**

Later. **JOHN**

(beat)
Did you wake up your brother?

I told him to get up. **JAY**

Did he? **JOHN**

He said he would. **JAY**

When was this? **JOHN**

When I got out of the shower. **JAY**

And when was that? **JOHN**

I don't know. Maybe fifteen minutes ago. **JAY**

Maybe? **JOHN**

About fifteen minutes ago. **JAY**

About is the broad side of a barn. **JOHN**

What? **JAY**

JOHN

It's as bad as maybe. Is *about* ten minutes? Or twelve. Or thirteen. Or six. Some people have very strange ideas of "about." You're supposed to look out for your brother.

JAY

I woke him up. I'm pretty sure it was—

JOHN

What if it was ten minutes ago? Are you willing to bet your life on it?

JAY

What are you talking about?

JOHN

You're shaping your brother's life. Or would you only risk his?

JAY

You oughta' take it easy on the coffee. Daddy.

JOHN

That's not funny. But then your sense of humor was always . . . different.

Like what you see? Hit the back button and follow the instructions to order a perusal copy of the full script!