

# Script Analysis Outline

## PART I

### I. WHERE DOES THE PLAY TAKE PLACE?

#### A. What does the author list in the stage directions?

- p. 3 - "A winter apartment, clean and tidy with sprinkles of leftover Christmas decorations."  
The entire play takes place in the living room of this apartment, including weather cues like snow.
- p. 13 - Shuffling and frustration are heard upstairs for a few moments.
- p. 47 - Frost hangs in the air.
- p. 59 - It begins to snow.

#### B. What do the characters say about place specifically in the dialogue that give you clues?

- p. 5 - OPAL: The roads were terrible but there was no traffic throughout Waco.
- p. 15 - OPAL: Hi there. This is Opal, from house 409.
- p. 18 - OPAL: Because this is Texas and winter should be 30 degrees and some slush, not this.
- p. 20 - OPAL: Fucking Texans don't know how to deal with a snow storm.

#### C. How do the characters describe the place they are in?

- p. 13 - JOAN: Jesus why is it so cold in here.
- p. 16 - EDITH: Snow. It's completely covering the door.
- p. 19 - EDITH: Not often, it's worse this time of year. She hates being cold.
- p. 29 - JOAN: The rest of the house is freezing.

#### D. What is the significance to the place they are in?

This location in particular is significant because it does not often snow in Texas; all of the characters are from Texas, and so they do not know how to deal with a snowstorm of this magnitude. Additionally (as we found out during the winter storm in February 2021), Texas houses and residences are not built to keep out the cold- they are built to cool down quickly and retain cool air in the summer, which means that they are not well-insulated against cold at all. (A note: This play was written BEFORE the winter storm in February 2021- the original production was in rehearsals when the storm struck; the script turned out to be scarily accurate!)

#### E. Summary, in what country, city, town, building, room does the play take place and why did the playwright choose this location for this story?

This play takes place in the living room of an apartment/house in Austin, Texas. The entire play takes place in this living room- characters enter and exit from other rooms (including the upstairs portion of the residence), but all of the action is contained to the living room (partially because the house very quickly reaches subzero temperatures and the warmest area turns out to be the living room). The playwright chose this particular location because freak winter storms like this one are abnormal in Texas, and those from the area do not always know what to do in these situations; during the February 2021 storm and during winter storms of years past, there have been too many instances of people in Texas freezing to death and/or developing severe hypothermia in their own houses. As aforementioned, this play was written BEFORE the February 2021 storm, so this was not a source of inspiration; however, the effects on the characters in the play ended up playing out in "real life", displaying how well the work was researched.

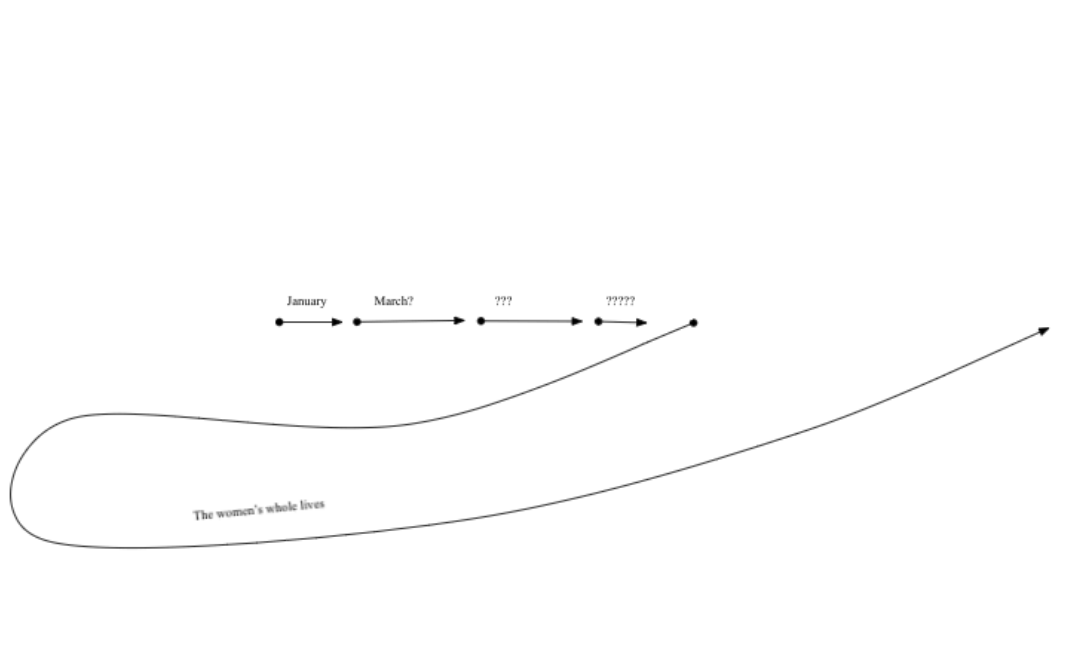
### II. WHEN DOES THE PLAY TAKE PLACE?

#### A. What does the author list in the stage directions?

- p. 3 - "A winter apartment, clean and tidy with sprinkles of leftover Christmas decorations."
- p. 6 - Joan flips on the television and listens quietly to the nightly news.
- p. 13 - Early morning. A chill quiet stills the living room.
- p. 21 - The scene shifts. Time pauses.
- p. 21 - The scene shifts again. More time.

- B. What do the characters say about the time, date, month, day, year, season, etc., specifically in the dialogue that give you clues?
- p. 4 - EDITH: The [Harry Styles] album has been out for two weeks-  
JOAN: Three-
  - p. 5 - JOAN: So Edith told me there was a fire at the Christmas parade?
  - p. 8 - EDITH: It just turned six.
  - p. 17 - JOAN: Today is Saturday, hopefully Paul will be here by Monday morning. That's just 48 hours. We can make it 48 hours.
  - p. 28 - EDITH: Look at the expiration date.  
JOAN: January 18th, 2015.  
EDITH: This one says April 14th, 2013.  
JOAN: These are from like 8 years ago.  
EDITH: 12 years.
  - p. 29 - EDITH: The cheese smells funny.  
JOAN: I just opened it the other day.  
EDITH: It's growing something.
  - p. 33 - OPAL: Can pickles even go bad?
  - p. 44 - OPAL: It's not Joan's birthday.  
JOAN: But my name is on the cake.  
OPAL: My birthday is Sunday.  
JOAN: Sunday?  
OPAL: Yours isn't until March.
  - p. 44 - OPAL: Do you really think it's March?
  - p. 48 - OPAL: From the end of November to the fifties of February.
  - p. 49 - OPAL: It's agonizing. January.
  - p. 52 - EDITH: We're graduating in a month, we don't need to study anymore.
  - p. 57 - EDITH: You could feel the December wind blowing through the stained glass windows.
  - p. 64 - MIRANDA: Paul hasn't been with us for some years now... Paul passed away about five years ago.
  - p. 64 - JAMES: Listen, I don't know if you're mad at me or what, but it's been a few days and I'm starting to get worried.
  - p. 64 - JOHN: Police are currently investigating the mysterious circumstances surrounding the three women found trapped in their home after a freak storm covered their house in snow last winter.
- C. How do the characters describe the time period in which they are in?
- p. 56 - JOAN: We'll fall in love slowly, through late night phone calls and early morning walks.
  - p. 56-57 - Joan's monologue about pictures
  - p. 57 - EDITH: There was this deep green shag carpet that looked like it belonged in my great grandmother's house.
- D. What is the significance to the time period, day, date, month, year, season, decade, century?
- The most significant part of the script is the season- it is quite literally in the title; the dialogue at the very beginning of the script (including the conversation about Harry Styles' Fine Line, which was released December 13th, 2019) places the story right at the beginning of January, which is usually the coldest period in Texas. After this, time begins to warp- food that was bought just a few days ago begins going bad, the girls begin to become confused about what month it is, and Miranda mentions that their maintenance man (who Opal speaks with on the phone in the second scene) passed away five years ago. This suggests a significant passage of time in a highly improbable span- and yet the women seem to travel back in time as well, when Opal and Edith revert to their childhood selves and Joan acts as their mother. This implies that the girls are either hallucinating due to symptoms of hypothermia, or they are going through their entire lives before being reborn again as Joy, Bee, and Tulip.

E. Over what timeframe does the action of the play occur? Construct a time chart for the action.



F. Summary, at what time of day, day of the week, date, month, year, season, decade, century does the play take place and why did the playwright choose this period of time?

The timeline of this particular play is **COMPLICATED**. The very beginning- when the women are fully lucid- is set in early January; this is the coldest month in Texas, and the most likely month for snow to occur. However, time slowly begins to warp and skip as the story progresses- this is shown by things like supposedly fresh food going bad, confusion over what month it is, Opal holding a conversation with Edith's mother (who has just died), and Miranda saying that Paul (who Opal speaks with on the phone at the beginning of the play) passed away a full five years ago. The playwright chose to highlight the fact that time is purely a construct through the manipulation of the play's timeline, asking what would happen if time no longer behaved in a linear fashion. The play is still rather ambiguous (it is likely that the women contract hypothermia, symptoms of which include confusion and memory loss; this provides some explanation to the events of the play, but not all of them), and includes some elements that are slightly supernatural in addition to the warped timeline; it exists everywhere and nowhere in time, and in the spaces in between the two.

### III. WHAT HAPPENED BEFORE THE PLAY BEGAN?

A. What does the author list in the stage directions about the past?

p. 3 - "A winter apartment, clean and tidy with sprinkles of leftover Christmas decorations."

B. What do the characters say that references the past?

p. 3 - JOAN: Do you think he just got back early?

EDITH: That doesn't explain the woman he was with.

p. 4 - EDITH: The [Harry Styles] album has been out for two weeks-

JOAN: Three-

p. 5 - OPAL: Well my best friend from elementary school has ignored me for the last three weeks-

EDITH: It has not been three weeks-

p. 11 - EDITH: What did you end up doing with all those flowers?... She's gonna press them?

p. 20 - OPAL: I thought you went shopping?

EDITH: I only got a few things. The store had been stripped empty.

p. 22 - EDITH: Did you have your dad's funeral there?

OPAL: I don't know. I just remember the gravesite.

- C. What can you infer about the past either historically or based on the textual evidence?
- Based on the things that are listed in the script, we know a few things. The very first scene involves Joan and Edith discussing Opal's boyfriend, who they saw with another woman; it is implied that he is cheating on Opal. Harry Styles' *Fine Line* has been out for three weeks, and the girls are firmly entrenched in it. Opal and Edith, while from the same town, have not seen much of each other over Christmas break. Edith's conversation with her father reveals that they have received a large number of flowers from an event; due to the fact that Edith mentions that "distractions are good", it is most likely a funeral. Edith went shopping before the snowstorm hit, but was only able to get a few things, since the store was empty- this implies that the residents of Texas knew that the storm was coming. Finally, Opal's father has died- she was very young when it happened, so this is not in the recent past.

#### IV. WHAT IS THE PLAY'S THEME?

- A. Describe the major and minor thematic elements found in the play.
- Some major and minor thematic elements of this play include the warping of time (the play examines what would happen if time suddenly stopped moving in a linear fashion); grief (Edith and Opal have both lost parents and are grieving for them- Edith has presumably lost her mother especially recently- and Opal eventually grieves for the loss of her relationship); connection, both with each other and the people outside of the home (these connections are tested, reaffirmed, and broken throughout the play); reality and what is and is not "real" (the women are frequently forced to question this throughout the story); and rebirth (three shadowy women constantly hover in the background of the play, foreshadowing the three women's rebirth at the very end).

#### V. WHAT HAPPENS IN THE PLAY?

- A. Briefly describe the stasis or "balance of forces" at the start of the play.
- The stasis at the very beginning of the play is somewhat normal- Edith and Opal have a preexisting friendship (they have known each other since elementary school), and Joan came into the picture somewhat later; this leads to her feeling somewhat excluded from the close relationship that the other two women have, but each makes an effort to include the other, and they have a very obvious respect for each other. As the play begins, it is beginning to snow outside; however, no one expects it to stick.
- B. Briefly describe the "intrusion" or disruption of that stasis.
- The stasis is disrupted when the women discover that they are snowed into their house without power and with very little food. Each of them are brought closer together, and it is revealed that each woman has hidden grief with the other two; as their sanity degrades, even this is stripped away.
- C. Is the play climactic or episodic in structure?
- The play is mainly episodic in structure- there are distinct scenes, some of which repeat as time begins to warp and change; however, there is still a climax: this occurs when two of the shadowy women who have hovered in the background of the play (specifically the two played by the same actresses who play Joan and Edith) advance and take Opal to join them, and are subsequently reborn as Bee, Joy, and Tulip. This particular scene implies that all three of the women have either died or lost their minds completely- they are no longer "themselves" at this point.
- D. Construct and insert an action chart for the play that includes Acts, Scenes, Units, and Beats.