

## NOT EVERYONE GETS ON OPRAH

by KAY BETH SHUTE

**GENRE:** Drama

**SYNOPSIS:** In the middle of a normal day, Elizabeth's world is turned upside down and her faith is challenged when her daughter is in a horrible car accident.

**DIRECTOR'S TIP:** This script is autobiographical. The author is relating a tragic event from her own life to help others learn the lesson she did about God's presence in our lives and His compassion and empathy for our suffering on this earth. Make sure your actors know that so they treat the material appropriately. Have them play these people as realistically as they can. Be careful not to make Elizabeth over-the-top, but keep her fear, anxiety, and pleading with God real and raw. Your goal here is to take the audience on an emotional ride so they want to reach out and hug this woman in her darkest times, then to rejoice with her when she changes her approach to her loving, compassionate God. Casting is key here. Make sure you have an actress who is comfortable with displaying raw emotion on stage but who can keep the tendency to over-act in check.

**TIME:** Over 5 minutes

**CAST BREAKDOWN:** 2F, 4M, plus extras if possible

**TOPIC:** Grief; Listening to God; Loss; Parenting; Prayer; Provision; Surrender

**SCRIPTURE REFERENCE:** Isaiah 53:4-6; Psalm 13:1-5; Psalm 31:9-10; Psalm 34:18; Psalm 147:3; Joshua 1:9; Matthew 11:28-30

**CHURCH YEAR SEASON:** Any

**SUGGESTED USE:** Worship service; a workshop or presentation for survivors or those suffering

**CHARACTERS:**

ELIZABETH PETTY: Mother of 15-year-old Anne; married to Mark; has a strong faith, but she is rocked by the events that unfold

MARK PETTY: Step-father of 15-year-old Anne; married to her mother, Elizabeth; he's the strong, quiet type

HIGHWAY PATROLMAN: Could be male or female

DOCTOR: Very straight-forward, not the best bedside manner; tells parents the facts without any cushion and isn't at all touchy-feely; could be played by same actor as highway patrolman; could be male or female

NURSE: Caring but professional

VOICE OF GOD: Offstage voice (could be pre-recorded)

EXTRAS: people pantomiming everyday activities

**PROPS:** Four chairs

**COSTUMES:** Everyday clothes, surgical gown, rubber surgical gloves

**SOUND:** Siren from highway patrol car, voiceover of God's voice

**LIGHTING:** Regular stage lighting, spotlight or special for center stage

**SETTING:** Various locations are established: car, waiting room, hallway of hospital, general public area

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*Elizabeth and Mark are sitting in chairs facing full front as if in a car. Mark is driving and Elizabeth is sleeping. Regular stage lights up.*

**ELIZABETH:** Anne should be home by now. I'm going to say another prayer. *(Folds hands and bows head.)* Heavenly Father, please keep Anne safe as she drives home from cheer-leading practice and let her arrive home safely. In Jesus' name. Amen. *(Lifts head and speaks to her husband.)* Do you think she's home yet?

**MARK:** Probably. I guess it depends on what time she left practice.

*We hear sirens of a highway patrol car. Mark looks in rearview mirror and Elizabeth looks over her shoulder.*

**ELIZABETH:** Are you speeding?

**MARK:** No. I'm not doing anything wrong. *(He pulls over.)*

**HIGHWAY PATROLMAN:** Mark Petty?

**MARK:** Yes, officer?

**HIGHWAY PATROLMAN:** Your daughter has been in a car accident and is at the hospital in Superior, Nebraska.

**ELIZABETH:** *(Begins to cry and becomes almost hysterical)* Oh, no... is she okay... please tell me she is okay! Is she okay? *(She lifts her hands and looks up)* Oh, dear God, please let her be okay!

*Lights shift to a single spot on Elizabeth. She stands up as the officer exits but Mark remains seated and frozen.*

**ELIZABETH:** *(Spoken as a monologue)* It was July 27, 1999. Our world stopped. Our lives changed forever. Little did we know all that would happen from this moment on.

*Elizabeth sits back down and Doctor enters as the lights shift back to regular stage lighting.*

**DOCTOR:** Mr. and Mrs. Petty. Your daughter has been burned over 36 percent of her body full thickness. Both of her ankles were broken as well as her wrist. She will be here anywhere from two to three months and will undergo surgeries where we will debride the burned tissue and graft her good skin to cover the burned areas. She will lose about 35 percent of her scalp, her right ear, probably her right hand, or even part of her right arm, although we are going to do our best to save it. Our biggest battle will be the infections she will get as she doesn't have her skin to protect her from them. There is a 20 percent chance she will die. I've got to go back into surgery on her now as they have lost the pulse to her hand. This might be when we lose it. We'll do our best