

**Living Bones**

*By: Megan E. Tripaldi*

SETTING: A dark, dead-end hallway in a science museum, the “Nursing Mother’s” area.

AT RISE: We hear screams, panic, and the mechanical roar of a dinosaur. Interchanged with the chaos we hear teachers offstage shouting directions at students and other teachers.

MAURA (Off):

Eleanor, Marcus get away from it! No, don’t go / over to it, it’s going to - No, come this way! THIS WAY!!

SIOBHAN (Off):

Run to the parking lot and wait on the bus! GO!

MAURA (Off):

No, it’s ok, it’s ok! Can you walk? Ok - yes, go with Ms. Phillips, follow -

SIOBHAN (Off):

Head in with the kids! Ms. Clarke and I are going to do a sweep -

MAURA (Off):

Marjorie, please - no, it’s fine, *GO!*

(SIOBHAN and MAURA come flying around a corner. More crashing and roaring offstage. They both double over, catching their breath. SIOBHAN peeks around the corner.)

SIOBHAN:

Oh my god...

MAURA:

Is it - ?

SIOBHAN:

No, it’s still going.

MAURA:

Shouldn’t there be a - a - a switch? A, uh...oh god, what word am I - ?

Fail-safe? / Kill switch?

SIOBHAN:

No, uh - yeah, either works.

MAURA:

Christ.

SIOBHAN:

Oh my god, it's a dead end!

MAURA:

What? I thought this was the way back to the fossils?

SIOBHAN:

(Pointing to a sign.)

MAURA:

No, it's the nursing mother's area. Come oooooon!

SIOBHAN:

Why is this in a sketchy dark corner!?

MAURA:

Because...I don't know, it makes no sense to me!

SIOBHAN:

Me neither!

BOTH:

GAHHH!

MAURA:

Is it - are we, like, safe here?

SIOBHAN:

I mean...

(She looks very cautiously around the corner.)

It's on the other side of the room so, yeah for now, I guess.

MAURA:

I don't - I mean who would build that?

SIOBHAN:

Engineers.

MAURA:

Ok, Siobhan.

(SIOBHAN finally sinks to the ground.)

Hey. Hey, hey, hey you ok? / You good?

SIOBHAN:

Yean - Yeah I just -

(She flaps her hand then gives the thumbs up.)

MAURA:

Ok. No, yeah. Ok.

(Beat. She paces around then takes a look around the corner. Then, suddenly, to no one:)

Fuck! Fuck, fuck!

(She covers her mouth, aware that she's still technically at a school thing.)

Oh! Fudge! I meant fudge!

SIOBHAN:

Maura - Maura! It's ok.

MAURA:

What?

SIOBHAN:

It's ok, all the kids are with Marjorie.

Oh.

MAURA:

Right?

SIOBHAN:

MAURA:

Right. Right, right. Do you think we'll be able to get back to them - ?

SIOBHAN:

I think it will be a while.

MAURA:

Fuck.

(Pause. MAURA sinks next to SIOBHAN. Roaring. Crashing. They are suddenly very calm.)

Hey, you ever accidentally swear in front of the kids?

SIOBHAN:

Hmm? Oh, yeah sure.

MAURA:

How many times? Like, if you had to put a number to it, or - ?

SIOBHAN:

Just twice.

MAURA:

Twice?

SIOBHAN:

Yup. Twice.

MAURA:

That's it?

SIOBHAN:

What are you trying to say, Maura?

MAURA:

No, nothing! Nothing...

SIOBHAN:

Uh huh.

MAURA:

So, like, what happened? To make you -

SIOBHAN:

First time was when I was a student teacher. I got my finger stuck in a kindergartner's coat zipper trying to get it unstuck and I said 'shit.' The look on this kid's face - I gave up and let her play outside in February with her coat unzipped.

MAURA:

And the second time?

SIOBHAN:

Kid whipped a jump rope at me last year and hit me just above my eye. I think it was 'goddamnit' or something.

MAURA:

Wait, that sounds familiar. Was I there for that?

SIOBHAN:

Yup. I think so -

MAURA:

Yeah, yeah! Oh my god, Tommy Wilcox?

SIOBHAN:

Tommy Fucking Wilcox.

MAURA:

Patricia has him this year, right?

SIOBHAN:

Heaven help her.

MAURA:

No, I've heard he's calmed down a bit.

SIOBHAN:

Uh huh.

MAURA:

No, really! Patricia said he's more focused.

SIOBHAN:

What do they have him on?

MAURA:

(Feigning indignance.)

I - you can't - you can't just - !

(SIOBHAN snorts. MAURA leans in conspiratorially.)

I can't say for sure, I haven't seen his file, but we all know it's probably / Adderall.

SIOBHAN:

Adderall. Yup. Of course it is.

(A particularly loud roar. MAURA leans across SIOBHAN to check around the corner.)

Ow, that was my hand - !

MAURA:

Sorry, sorry -

SIOBHAN:

Look, there's no way we're getting out there now if that thing is still going.

MAURA:

No, I know, just - you're sure we got them all - ?

SIOBHAN:

The kids?

MAURA:

Yeah. I just - in all the chaos I might have missed something.

SIOBHAN:

I wish I knew better, but honestly? I don't know.

MAURA:

Oh god...

SIOBHAN:

Look, Marjorie has it all under control. She's been trained in this, she'll be fine.

MAURA:

Trained in what, rescuing children from an out of control animatronic dinosaur exhibit?

SIOBHAN:

...in emergency evacuation scenarios?

MAURA:

What emergency evacuations scenarios? Wait, like lockdown drills?

SIOBHAN:

Yeah. We do them every year -

MAURA:

That's not the same thing! Not even close!

SIOBHAN:

Ok, well how would you suggest we train for something like this?

MAURA:

I - um -

SIOBHAN:

Uh huh! See!

MAURA:

No, I'm just - Oh! Ok!

SIOBHAN:

You got it?

MAURA:

Yeah!

SIOBHAN:

Give it to me.

MAURA:

A yearly screening of “Night at the Museum.”

(They stare at each other for a long time and then burst out laughing.)

No, really I got nothing. There’s no training for this, it’s ridiculous.

SIOBHAN:

Honestly I thought you were going to say “Jurassic Park.”

MAURA:

It felt too obvious.

SIOBHAN:

Yeah, well -

(A roar and a VERY close crash.)

Shit!

(They both stand up and back away from the corner.)

That was really close...

MAURA:

Oh god.

(MAURA starts to hyperventilate.)

SIOBHAN:

Hey. Hey, look at me.

MAURA:

I can’t do this -

SIOBHAN:

It's ok. It's ok um...hey, tell me the last time you swore in front of the kids.

MAURA:

Never.

SIOBHAN:

Never?

(MAURA nods.)

Not even once?

(She shakes her head.)

Jesus. Nev - ? No, it's fine. Uh, ok. Ok, ok - Three things!

(MAURA raises an eyebrow at her.)

Look for three things in the room. Tell me what they are.

MAURA:

I - mm, I don't know -

SIOBHAN:

Just try, ok? Can I take your hand?

(She nods.)

I need a verbal yes.

MAURA:

Yes. Yes you can take my hand.

SIOBHAN:

Ok.

(She does.)

Three things.

MAURA:

Um, ok. Uh, uh - ok the sign for breastfeeding mothers.

SIOBHAN:

Good. Number two?

MAURA:

Um, um, um...this really funky carpet that's probably from the '80s?

SIOBHAN:

Totally. One more.

MAURA:

Uhhh - That air vent above us?

SIOBHAN:

Wait - what?

(MAURA is catching her breath, but points to a vent above them.)

Holy shit. Do you think if - ?

MAURA:

I'm severely claustrophobic.

SIOBHAN:

Well, I'm not! Look, I'm not going to leave you for long, I'm just going to -

MAURA:

You're going to leave me!?

SIOBHAN:

Well, I just - I mean no. No, of course not.

(She slumps to the ground. Beat.)

MAURA:

Uuuugh fuck! Ok.

SIOBHAN:

Ok?

MAURA:

Fuck my anxiety. Give me a boost.

SIOBHAN:

Oh my god, are you - ?

MAURA:

I don't know, just go with it. Put your leg - ?

SIOBHAN:

Ok, no yeah, we're doing this.

(She kneels so MAURA can stand on her knee. MAURA peers into the vent.)

MAURA:

Except...there is no way we're going to fit.

SIOBHAN:

What? No, it looks - Let me see.

(They switch positions.)

Shit.

(She gets down.)

So we're stuck.

MAURA:

Unless...unless we just go for it?

SIOBHAN:

Seriously? Just run out there?

MAURA:

Fuck it.

(Off SIOBHAN's look.)

I'm just really tired of being afraid.

SIOBHAN:

What better way to tackle that fear than face an out of control mechanical dinosaur?

MAURA:

Exactly.

(Pause. SIOBHAN is hesitating.)

I swore in front of my whole class last month.

SIOBHAN:

What?

(MAURA nods.)

Oh my god, I knew it.

MAURA:

How 'bout I tell you about it on the way out?

SIOBHAN:

I -

(One last look and a deep breath.)

Deal.

(They go to the corner and take hands. They look at each other - one, two, three - and then they run. There is one last ROAR. Blackout.)