

**Behind Closed Doors**  
**Devised by Young People from Salford Young Carers and Gorse Hill Studios.**  
**Written by Lee Brennan**

*Stage is set with three empty beds (Stage Blocks) and Three Clouds Hanging above each bed, positioned for Projection and LX.*

**Scene One (Bedroom Scene One):**

*SFX (James Blake – Retrograde)*

*Company enter holding carrier bags, within each carrier bag is something which represents a job / task of young carer, actions follow. At the same time two teenagers enter and sit on CS and SR bed, going about their evening activities. One by one the bedroom light goes out, and the company freeze as the SL bed light comes on, we see Daisy for the first time – who is only now winding down for the evening, she pulls out her diary – music transitions into a vocal, which is the diary entry:*

Vocalist (Representing Daisy):

*Dear Diary,  
The hidden truth is what you're missing  
The hidden truth hid in this person  
The hidden truth is what you're missing  
The hidden truth hid in this person  
  
I want to shout for help, get my emotions out  
The hidden truth is what you're missing  
The hidden truth hid in this person.....*

*Daisy falls asleep whilst writing the diary entry, LX out.*

*SFX V/o (Mr Davenport): Ok before you leave for lunch, your homework is to create a presentation for the whole class exploring bravery and courage and what that means to you.*

**Scene Two (School Scene One):**

*SFX - Company enter stage, pattern of corridors, action and noise. Transition of stage blocks from bedroom to school. All move to their positions.*

*SFX Text Message – everyone hits position one for phone, BEAT, returns to everyday dialogue.*

*Enter James and Daisy – Big jeer company reaction,*

**James:** Ok funny guys, heard it all before, just give it a rest, we are just mates.

- Eh James, why don't you give Daisy a rest, snapchatting at midnight.....just ask her out, stop being a wuss.
- Oooohhh James.....Tell me that you love me!!

*(Company reaction, laughter and silliness)*

**Daisy:** We're just mates, stop embarrassing him.....although I do think you're cute!!

*Company even bigger cheers and jeers*

*SFX Text Message – everyone hits position two for phone, BEAT, back to action.*

- Why don't you do your presentation for Mr Davenport on: 100 ways to be courageous when asking out a girl.

**James:** I can give you a 100 ways to knock you out!!

- You can hit me, but you can't hit puberty.

*Company – big reaction, 'Banter'.*

*SFX – love / cheesy txt message – company reaction to the different ring tone.*

- Sorry!!

- Paul, why do you always have to act like the hard man, James is being sweet.
- I am the hard man (action) don't see any of you doing a bungee jump from Transporter bridge in Middlesbrough – that's what I'll do the homework on, how brave I am, bungee jumping 160ft.
- You cried like a girl all the way through it!!

*Company – 'Banter'*

- I'm just putting this out there, but my presentation will be on hippopotomonstrosesquipedaliophobia

*Company Reaction – confusion*

- What's that you freak?
- It's a fear of words, BOOM!
- IDIOT

*SFX Text message, full company check including JAMES. Everyone freezes – James receives a message (PROJ) 'Your Mum has been taken to Hospital', James breaks away from the group – friends carry on, slow motion transition into Hospital.*

**Scene Three: (Hospital):**

*James walks into LX, reposition stage blocks to provide height for hospital sequence. PROJ of heart monitor, running across all three clouds.*

*SFX – Heart Monitor, running throughout the scene.*

*Company position themselves in the BO, onto the Stage blocks with torches in hand.*

- Okay, we've got a female, approximately early forties, a forklift truck has dropped a pallet on her. Significant blood loss. Her GCS, varied, between 9 and 14, her B/P is 95 over 60, sats are 95.
- Maintain open airway. Begin primary survey. Crash bleed anaesthetics. She'll need arterial blood gas.
- Signs of intense trauma. I'll do blood glucose. May need IV dextrose. So, I will put another line in.

**James:** Excuse me....Excuse me....Can anyone help? Where's my Mum? I've been waiting here for an hour. Excuse me....Can you tell me anything about my Mum? What's happened, is she going to be ok?

- O<sub>2</sub> and suction. 4 miligrams of IV lorazepam and give titrated doses of 1 miligram at a time.
- Has anyone tracked down her medical records, we need to know who is her next of kin?
- Can someone page Dr Hopwood and prep her for theatre.

**James:** She's being operated on....what does that even mean? I just want to see my mum, when can I see her. Is she ok....Can someone tell me....Is she going to be ok?

- Dr, ICU have a bed and been briefed on the patient.
- Can you administer 10mg of morphine on an IV every four hours

**James:** Mum...Mum...I'm here. It's all going to be ok. I'm still waiting to hear what's gone on from the doctor, they're not really telling me much.

- Your Mum is very poorly....she's going to be in hospital for a long time...is there anyone at home who can help you?

**James:** Mum don't listen to the Dr's, you're going to be fine. I have told them there's someone at home, so please don't worry I can take care of myself. I've got to go....I love you Mum.

#### **Scene Four (Bedroom Two):**

*James walks away as the beds are re-set. We see the opening sequence, although this time there are two empty beds (James / Daisy) During this sequence, the company now double up the same actions, leaving a pillow and bedding on each empty bed.*

*Daisy and James, enter and mirror the same movement and sit on the bed.*

*Daisy takes out her phone and texts James:*

*“Hey how're you, everything ok. Missed you at School today xx”  
“Had better days xx”*

*“What's up, sending hugs xx”*

*“Thanks, I need the hugs right now xx”*

*“You sound sad, please don't be sad – always here for you xx”*

*“Promise you won't say anything xx”*

*“Of course, what is it xx”*

*“My Mum's had a bad accident at work xx”*

*“OMG – is she ok xx”*

*“Don't know, Doctors said she might be in a wheelchair xx”*

*“Really? Are you ok?”*

*“I'll be fine, just want my Mum to be ok”*

*“Will you have to look after her?”*

*“Yeah, I'm sure my Auntie will help too”*

*“What about your Dad?”*

*“Hard to explain”*

*“Sorry for asking...Do you want me to come round?”*

*“Nah, It's ok, thanks though. Promise me you won't say anything”*

*“Promise!! I'm going to let you get some sleep. Will I see you at School tomorrow?”*

*“Yeah – Good Night xx”*

*“Night xx”*

*“xx”*

*“<3”*

*Daisy pops her phone under her pillow and takes out her diary, SFX music as a diary entry:*

Vocalist (Representing Daisy):

*Dear Diary,  
Tiredness and exhaustion within myself  
Little do they know my mum's mental health  
Appointments, medication, happy or sad  
Little do they know my mums condition is bad*

*Mum is amazing, she's always aware  
Why I do what I do with her in my care  
Whenever she needs me I will always be there  
Today was a positive day for her, for you I am willing to share.*

### **Scene Five (School Two):**

*Morning at School, Company enter, group chatting about a party from the weekend. Transition of stage blocks from bedroom to school. All move to their positions.*

- It has to be funniest thing I've ever seen, watching Joe's face when the neighbours knocked on complaining about the noise.
- (mimicking Joe) Yes Mrs Hawthorn...Sorry Mrs Hawthorn...I'll never do it again Mrs Hawthorn.

**Joe:** Thanks guys, just lap it up, I've been grounded till I'm 18, I'm never having another party for as long as I live.

- (Everyone) Yes Joe...Sorry Joe...We'll never do it again Joe!

*Everyone laughs and Jokes*

- I couldn't stop howling at Keegan spewing up his guts in his Grans garden.
- I was puking everywhere, cause Hannah spiked my drink, I've never been so ill.
- You were puking because Daisy turned you down at the party.

*Everyone reacts- SFX Text Message*

**Daisy:** I turned him down cause he's a minger and I like someone else.

*Company react, heartbeat getting more intense.*

- Where is lover boy? He's been late everyday this week.

**Daisy:** He's just got stuff going at the moment, he'll be here in a bit I'm sure. Just take it easy on him, while he works stuff out, yeah!

- What do you mean?

**Daisy:** Nowt, I shouldn't have said anything.

- You can't say that and then not tell us what's up with James, we're his mates too.

**Daisy:** If James wants to tell you, it's his choice, but I've promised him I won't say anything.

- But you already have, so you might as well tell us, then we can help him out too.

*Daisy pauses and thinks for a moment, then take out her phone, at that very moment one of the group grabs the phone – the group gather around and react to reading the messages: 'What?' / 'No' / 'Wow'*

- Jeez, can't imagine what he's going through

- Do you think his Mum will get better?

**Daisy:** I don't know, he doesn't like talking about it, please don't mention anything to him, I've only told you cause I'm worried about him.

- (Everyone) No I won't say a word / Promise / My lips are sealed.

SFX – Text message, Embarrassing from one person (New Track)

- Sorry

*James enters looking tired and subdued. Daisy makes room for him to sit next to her. The group are a little awkward, not knowing the best way to respond. Daisy gives James a little kiss on the cheek.*

- Hey James, you managed to sort your presentation out yet for Mr Davenport?

**James:** Nah!

- I've not even thought about it.
- I'm either doing mine on Angelina Jolie or JK Rowling
- Well I've finished mine last night, it's all about Christopher Reeves!
- Who?
- Christopher Reeves, the original Superman
- You are such a Beiber!!
- Shut it! He had a horse riding accident, spent the rest of his life in a wheelchair, and then fought for stem cell research.....
- I bet James wishes his mum was superwomen!

*Beat – the group recognise the character overstepped the mark.*



**James:** What?

- Just saying...if your mum was superwoman, she wouldn't be in a wheelchair.

**James:** Who's told you about my Mum?

- Lex Luther!!

*Group React with laughter, James changes his focus to Daisy and realises that she has broken his trust.*

**Daisy:** Sorry....I didn't mean...I just wanted....

*James turns and walks away from the group, angry that Daisy has betrayed his trust. Daisy follows him and the group freeze their action.*

**Daisy:** James...James...Please stop, let me explain. I'm sorry.

**James:** Daisy, just leave me alone

**Daisy:** I just wanted everyone to understand what you're going through.

**James:** Like you'd know what I'm going through? You know, I thought you were different....I thought you cared. But no, you just wanna to talk crap behind my back.

**Daisy:** They forced me to tell them...

**James:** Stop chatting...you're just full it, get out of my face and leave me alone.

*James exits, leaving Daisy by herself.*

## **Scene Six (Learning new Skills)**

*Stage blocks transition to a platform, x3 Mics live, the company now become Announcers / Commentators for an imaginary Boxing match. The Boxing*

*reflects the battle James faces when trying to learn new skills as a Young Carer. Possibility of Beatboxing throughout the Commentary / or using instrumental music.*

*SFX – Entrance Music*

**Declan:** LETS GET READY TO RUMBLE, ladies and gentlemen welcome to tonight's main event, the SYC battle of the century, here in the home of a Salford resident.

Introducing in the red corner. weighing 102 pounds, from Odsall Salford, the best pound for pound battler of the last 20 minutes, with 0 wins, 0 of them coming by the way of knockout. In the biggest fight of his life it's James 'The Carer' Linden.

**Levi:** In the blue corner we have a gang of chores, armed and ready to bring the battle to the streets of Salford. Up first, for the second time this week is The Cooker.

Round One, As you can see James is off to a slow start, trying his hardest to light the cooker. Wait a moment, did someone invite CO 'The Silent Killer' to the fight as it's in the floating in the air. Oh! Oh! He's done it again, it's lit and that's a KO for the stove.

**Anaya:** Round Two, next up it's the oil and onions a deadly combo in anyone's book. They come out spitting in all directions and that's a clear point to the onions, James is going to have to up his game here.

Round Three, after a shaky start in Round two he fumbles with the spaghetti putting it into the pan – clumsy work that from the carer. James goes for a cheap shot with store bought sauce....what's this, he's now leaving the pan for an xbox break, risky move!

**Ricci:** Round Four, the undefeated washing machine comes out fresh but James makes a sneaky move by hitting the on button and sends the washing machine into a spin. Oh no, James has lost his focus and he's mixed the whites and colours... think he's got a disaster on his hands here.

Round Five, James is on the ropes when the doorbell rings, can this nightmare get any worse, it's the landlord asking for next month's rent. James is short but throws a counter punch with a tall tale about his mum being at work.

**Aiden:** Round Six, he's come out a different person although he's clearly exhausted from this relentless battle. Surely that can't be all the contenders he's going to take on tonight: the chaotic cooking, the wild washing machine, the menacing medication and the loathsome landlord all defeated. Looks like we've found our new champion for the evening – time for him to get some rest before his next battle tomorrow at 5:30am.

*James assumes his usual position on the bed, reduced sequence of opening but both James and Daisy carry in their own pillow and bedding.*

*James takes out his phone PROJ: x15 Unread Messages.*

**Jade:** Over the next few days, James tried to put on a brave face but he was just kidding himself and telling everyone:

**James:** I'm fine

**Jade:** He really wasn't, the rage built inside of him, not having anyone to talk to and his so called friends turning against him, sending nasty text messages – which they just say is:

**EVERYONE:** BANTER!!!

**Jade:** I've not seen him for a few days now, tried to talk to Daisy but she's not being her usual self either, always avoiding us, especially me:

**Daisy:** I can't sit with you – I've got homework to do.

**Jade:** She says, with a tear in her eye. It didn't get any easier for James either, in fact it got worse, school pressures, teachers on at him for not coming to school, being late for everything and trying to be the most supportive person he knew how around his mum. Daisy tried to reach out James

*Daisy and James continue the dialogue via text messages in the evening.*

*“Hey xx”*

*“Hey”*

*“How’re you? xx”*

*“.....”*

*“I know you must hate me right now, and I’m sorry xx”*

*“Sorry for what, breaking my trust or sorry that your mates are idiots”*

*“I didn’t want to hurt you; I care about you xx”*

*“So why tell the world my secret”*

*“It wasn’t like that, they robbed my phone and read my messages xx”*

*“Really?”*

*“Yeah – they thought it was funny xx”*

**Jade:** Daisy and James, spent the next half an hour or so chatting and rekindling the connection they had prior to the fall out. James managed forget the real world for a short time, it was like stepping back in time – when the only thing he needed to think about was himself, until Daisy asked:

*(Text – projection - and Dialogue delivered at the same time)*

**Daisy:** How’re you feeling now?

**Declan:** There was no easy answer: James felt exhausted, frustrated, angry, helpless but none of that mattered because all he wanted to do was make sure his Mum was comfortable and that she knew, he loved her.

**James:** It’s confusing...can’t really say what I want to say.

**Daisy:** Try me!!

**James:** It doesn’t matter...look it’s getting late and you’ve got school tomorrow.

**Daisy:** It’s ok if you don’t want to talk.

**James:** Maybe another time, yeah?

**Daisy:** If it helps, I sometimes write stuff down – I know it sounds stupid, but it helps me.

**James:** I don't think that'll work for me, but thanks – I'm going to go. Speak soon. Good Night x

*LX fades on SL bed, we see James deep in thought – grabbing a bag, he pulls out a pen and pad:*

*James' Dairy ENTRY*

*Dear diary, ok here we go. dear diary. dear diary, I can't express myself, I've left myself, I need to sit back relax and rest myself. I'm mentally drained from the pain, I can't find the words its driving me insane.*

*My angers coming out like a flow of ocean. Deep down its harsh but you see no emotion, am frozen not spoken can't talk cause am not open. Nothing to commit to no love or devotion. It's all left me broken. My mum's been run over, I have to take care when she needs someone to hold her. At night time its colder, I get weaker by the day I'm over.*

*LX fades on SR bed – BO*

**Scene Seven:**

*LX up, all company stood around James' bed, with letters and phones. Company are representing school, teachers, authority all questioning James (and his Mum) as to why he's no longer attending.*

**Aiden:** Dear Mrs Linden, we notice from our records.....

**Grace:** James, you're not just letting me down; you're letting yourself down...

**Declan:** School is the most important time in your life, you've got to grasp these opportunities whilst they are there...

**Alfie:** Why isn't your homework done...

**Brandon:** You have more potential; you need to apply yourself...

**Caitlin:** Mrs Linden, your son's file has been passed onto the authorities.

**Levi:** Oh, James stop feeling sorry for yourself, you're going to have a big shock when you get out in the real world...

**Anaya:** You do realise your parents can go to prison if you keep missing school with unauthorised absences?...

**Ricci:** James I've heard all the excuses in the world, it's time to grow up and start to take some responsibilities...

**James:** You don't understand, my mum was in an accident and without me helping, she has no one!!!!

**Jade:** Not one teacher asked James, did he need any help, what was going on at home or reach out, they all just presumed James was being lazy and fought against him.

**James:** Are you even listening to me??

**Brandon:** The council sent letter after letter, James didn't know or understand what they meant, so couldn't reply or respond.

**Kaya:** James would do anything he could to protect his mum, he was scared.... scared that the authorities would take his mum away from him.

**James:** Stop....Stop.....Stop!!!

*Company freeze as Declan steps out of the action.*

**Declan:** It took for Mr Davenport, James' English teacher, to visit him at home, to realise something needed to change. There was no quick fix, no change to the system, no magic wand – but for James, being able to talk to someone was the start of feeling connected to the world again.

**Caitlin:** Not every day was easy, at school the bullying, the name calling, the pushing and shoving continued – but for James, his choice was to avoid it, avoid them and....

**Callum:** When it all got too much, he'd just grab his diary.

*Company, slowly move away from the action, leaving Zaza in position US of James' bed.*

#### James – 2<sup>nd</sup> Diary entry

Dear diary, back to school again, just like a hooligan. Tryna get past the pain so I just grab ma pen. Will this ever end. Reach my hands out and hold on to hope, tryna stay calm but really can't cope. Tryna stay focused, tryna stay put, tryna keep my eyes on the words in the book, but if you look. you can see that it's not working, that am still here hurting, burning, angry and cursing its certain. You think the pains bout to end but it just worsens.

#### Scene 8 – School Presentation

*SFX, transition – stage blocks move to end on position to create a White Board within a school classroom. Company move to position facing US apart from Daisy, who is stood looking vulnerable and nervous.*

*V/o (Mr Davenport): Ok Settle down...so today, we are all going to share our presentations on what Courage means to you. Daisy, sorry you've got the short straw by starting first....when you're ready.*

*PROJ – running slide show of images of Carrie Fisher.*

**Daisy:** Hi.....Ok, so erm....my presentation is on Carrie Fisher. She's most famous for playing Princess Leia in Star Wars.

**Brandon:** (Mimicking Yoda) Powerful you have become, the dark side I sense in you.

*Company Laugh*

**Daisy:** ...Sorry Sir, I'm a little nervous...Carrie Fisher, is a strong woman who I admire, not because she's a celebrity, but because she's a Mum and has gone through some difficult times. We think people who experience mental health issues are weird, but it's not their fault and their families still love them.

Carrie Fisher was diagnosed with....sorry this isn't easy....she was diagnosed with...Bipolar. *(Daisy is clearly upset as the topic is very close to her) I'm sorry..*

*(Company feel Awkward, unsure what to do, James steps up and reassures her it's ok)*

**James:** It's ok...Sir, if it's ok I'll start my presentation and let Daisy continue with hers later? Thanks sir. *(composing himself)* right, this isn't going to be easy so bear with me...my presentation will be about someone that most of you won't know...my Mum. My mum is amazing, she always knows the right things to say and a few months ago her life and mine changed forever. Spending weeks in hospital after a forklift truck crushed her, she was still positive - but she knew that I was the only one to help her, once she got out of hospital. That wasn't easy and I still find things hard, so I try to write in a diary to help me understand my feelings and to remind myself how far my Mum has come. If it's ok – I'd like to read you some...

*Dear Diary, the past is in the past so let's leave it all behind, caring each and everyday, it's a tale as old as time.*

*(Members of the company, move into new positions, representing a number of diary entries from young carers across the country)*

**Jade:** *Dear Diary, My Mums in hospital trying to get some help, whilst I'm lay here in bed worrying about her health...*

**Ricci:** *Dear Diary, I wish he was here, I wish he was ok, but instead he's in hospital and that's where he needs to stay...*

**Megan:** *Dear Diary, not seeing friends is the way it has to be, but love for my family is what completes me...*

**Adien:** *Dear Diary, cleaning, washing and the weekly shop, sometimes I scream 'when will it stop'?...*

**Zaza:** *Dear Diary, we live our life and we get by, it's sometimes hard and I sometimes cry*

**Grace:** *Dear Diary, I light the dark and twinkle brightly, being happy and being spritely.*



**Callum:** Dear Diary, my mum and I are the best, she does her bit and I do the rest.

**Declan:** Dear Diary, my Dads moods are difficult, I thought I was all alone. The young carers helped me to see I'm not on my own.

**Brandon:** Dear Diary, I feel proud of what I have become, because every fear I've faced I've managed to overcome.

**Anaya:** Dear Diary, being a young carer can sometimes be tiring, but meeting other carers is always inspiring.

**Levi:** Dear Diary, it's always hard to see my Dad's tears, but I'll stand by him for many years.

**Chloe:** Dear Diary, homework or caring, I'm always torn - I wish I was a unicorn.

**Levi:** Dear Diary, I want to be seen as a human being, that alone will help my well-being

**Caitlin:** Dear Diary, life gets better or so I'm told it isn't easy and I'm feeling old.

**Kaya:** Dear Diary, I don't tell anyone, to protect my Heart, and yet everything feels like it's falling apart

*(Company remain in their positions, as we focus in on James & Daisy/ Daisy is the only one who has remained in her original position)*

**James:** So...my Mum needs my help everyday and I'm called a young...sorry.

*(Daisy stands and crosses to James, holds his hand as they both deliver the same speech)*

**James / Daisy:** So...my Mum needs my help everyday and I'm called a young carer *(Daisy and James look at each other)* but we are so much more.

*We are hidden from the world, sometimes without a voice, but we will change that.*

*B/o*

*The End.*