

# Drama Samples

Leslie Neal  
[www.lesliewriter.com](http://www.lesliewriter.com)  
[leslien0202@gmail.com](mailto:leslien0202@gmail.com)  
404-422-4139

Sample 1

JACKSON'S HEIST

Setting the scene:

JACKSON'S HEIST is the story of Trace Jackson, a boy who finds himself orphaned in a town obsessed with crime prevention. Unfortunately, Trace comes from a long line of criminals, and the residents of the town treat him as such. Ultimately, after a decade of planning, Trace takes revenge on the town with a successful bank heist.

Much of the story references themes and story lines from "Great Expectations," such as Pip receiving money from a mysterious benefactor, paralleled with Trace receiving money from one and then becoming a twisted version of one as well. Though overall this story is darkly humorous, there are many dramatic scenes.

The following scene is a flashback to when Trace learns some secrets about the horrible town and the family of sheriffs who run it. Mr Hattigan is a born-and-bred local who bonds with Trace through their shared status as outcasts. This conversation is the main catalyst for Trace's final revenge.

INT. MR. HATTIGAN'S HOUSE - 3 YEARS EARLIER

Trace is lying under Mr. Hattigan's kitchen sink, grunting and squirming as he does his best to act as plumber.

Mr. Hattigan sits at the kitchen table, chipping pieces from an apple with a knife, dipping them in caramel sauce, eating as he cuts.

MR. HATTIGAN

You've been a good friend to me,  
young'un.

Trace stops what he's doing and slides out from under the sink, to sit on the floor with his back against the wall.

TRACE

You've been a good friend to me,  
sir.

MR. HATTIGAN

Doc says I got the sugar.

TRACE

Should you be eating that?

MR. HATTIGAN

Prolly not. But, I figure the  
cancer'll kill me before anything  
else can.

TRACE

Don't say that.

MR. HATTIGAN

Hell, boy, I'm ready. I'm old, and  
side from you, I'm alone.

(pause)

You got secrets, son?

TRACE

Well...I don't...I guess so. I  
think I do.

MR. HATTIGAN

I think it's the secrets what give  
you the sickness. I got some, not  
cuz I'm shamed though...I got 'em  
still cuz I ain't had a soul to  
tell 'em to.

TRACE

You can tell me.

MR. HATTIGAN

I know I can. I know I can relieve myself of the burden, but I'd just be giving it to you.

TRACE

I can handle it.

MR. HATTIGAN

You think so, huh?

(pause)

Maybe you're right.

Mr. Hattigan continues to cut, dip and eat his apple. He says nothing. Trace starts to fidget.

TRACE

Well?

MR. HATTIGAN

I'm thinkin'. First line's the most important. Like 'It was the best of times, it was the worst of times.'

Trace laughs a bit.

TRACE

Or, 'Call me Ishmael.'

MR. HATTIGAN

My father's family name being Pirrip, and my Christian name Philip, my--

TRACE

'My infant tongue could make of both names nothing longer or more explicit than Pip.'

MR. HATTIGAN

Pip. Right. You know 'Great Expectations'.

TRACE

It's the only book I ever owned. It was my mother's favorite...or so someone told me.

MR. HATTIGAN

Hm. An orphan who gets money from a criminal.

Trace lies back down and scoots under the sink again.

TRACE

So what's the secret?

MR. HATTIGAN

I'm only telling you because I think you need to know.

TRACE

Now I *need* a burden?

MR. HATTIGAN

You need a reason.

Trace stops working again, and slides out. This time he comes to sit at the table next to Mr. Hattigan.

TRACE

A reason for what?

MR. HATTIGAN

A reason to take revenge.

TRACE

On--

MR. HATTIGAN

On Sheriff Walton, on his little brat, on the town, on your girlie--

TRACE

(getting angry)

I have no reason to take revenge on her. I lo--

MR. HATTIGAN

Good. If you can forgive her for foresakin' you, then you should. You always, always should forgive when you can...But when you can't...

TRACE

You take revenge? Ha ha. I don't think so. I think I should just go to college far away, like Miranda, and forget this place ever existed!

Mr. Hattigan drops his knife and grabs Trace's arm. He looks desperately into his eyes.

MR. HATTIGAN

And leave it for some other Pip to come along?!

(MORE)

MR. HATTIGAN (CONT'D)  
 You'd let some other boy go through  
 what you went through?! You're a  
 sad sack-a-shit if you're OK with  
 that.

Trace yanks back his arm.

MR. HATTIGAN (CONT'D)  
 I don't think I'm gonna tell you my  
 secret.

TRACE  
 Fine. How about this? How about I  
 consider whatever idea for revenge  
 you have, but only after I hear  
 this big secret?

MR. HATTIGAN  
 You're gettin' smart with ol' Hat.  
 I'm not so old or sick I forgot how  
 sarcasm works!

TRACE  
 Sorry. No sarcasm. Let me make an  
 informed decision.

Mr. Hattigan picks up his knife, returns to his apple, and never looks up. Trace switches between staring the old man's face, and watching the apple slicing.

MR. HATTIGAN  
 My wife was young, ya know. 'Bout  
 20 years younger than me. I was a  
 lucky man to find a young, sweet  
 thing like her, and I loved her. I  
 loved her like nothin' you ever  
 seen. She made the sun rise. She  
 made my hair stand up...

He reaches for his head.

MR. HATTIGAN (CONT'D)  
 ...when I had hair.  
 (pause)  
 I couldn't have gotten a lady like  
 her, 'cept she's barren, and most  
 young men want sons. I was already  
 old, been married once...that one  
 left me...for another lady...

Trace perks up.

MR. HATTIGAN (CONT'D)  
 ...But that ain't the secret.  
 Settle down, boy.

Mr. Hattigan sighs and sets down the knife.

MR. HATTIGAN (CONT'D)  
 Well, you know about those young  
 women...

Trace looks down, as Mr. Hattigan looks at him. It only lasts  
 a moment, before they return to their positions.

MR. HATTIGAN (CONT'D)  
 Those young women like young men.  
 And so my wife got her eye on one.  
 And he got his eye on her.

Trace's eyes widen.

MR. HATTIGAN (CONT'D)  
 And I'd be a fool if I thought she  
 didn't love him. But he was a white  
 boy, and the son of the Sheriff,  
 and she was black girl can't have  
 babies?! No, sir, wasn't a chance  
 in the world that love mattered one  
 bit. She was young, and he was a  
 handsome one...she didn't know he  
 was just using her for--

TRACE  
 It's OK.

Mr. Hattigan clears his throat and wipes his eyes.

MR. HATTIGAN  
 Well, I...well to make this  
 fast...I ain't got lotta time  
 left...  
 (he chuckles)  
 ...I caught 'em.

Trace sits back in his chair, stunned.

MR. HATTIGAN (CONT'D)  
 Yep. Caught 'em naked as jay birds.

TRACE  
 Oh my god. What happened? Who was  
 this guy?

MR. HATTIGAN

I'm gettin' there, boy, I'm gettin' there. I came in, and in those days...well, these days too...we carried guns, and before I knew it, I saw nothin' but red. I couldn't have imagined being that mad. But I was mad as hell. I was blind.

TRACE

Mr. Hattigan, is this how--

Mr. Hattigan is crying softly.

MR. HATTIGAN

I thought I was shootin' that boy. I wanted to shoot that boy. I wanted him dead.

(sobbing now)

I needed him dead, more than I needed that woman. More than I needed anything.

Trace leans in. Mr. Hattigan gets excited.

MR. HATTIGAN (CONT'D)

And I shot. Bang!

Trace shoots back in his seat. Mr. Hattigan pauses and wipes his face with a handkerchief.

MR. HATTIGAN (CONT'D)

And someone shot back at me. That's how's I got this limp the first time. I got hit...it knocked me into the wall. It was dead quiet. I remember that quiet sometimes. I can hear the quiet. I pulled myself up and turned on the light. There was Bobby Walton Jr., laying on the floor on the other side of the bed, naked, bleeding, holding his gun, and my wife, my young, beautiful wife, spread naked on the bed, covered in her own blood. Ruined. Gone.

TRACE

Sheriff Walton?!

MR. HATTIGAN

Yes.

TRACE

Wait, but...who shot who?

MR. HATTIGAN

According to Sheriff Walton, your Sheriff Walton's daddy, there was no way to know for sure.

TRACE

How did no one know about this?

MR. HATTIGAN

Old Sheriff Walton had a good hold on these people, not good enough to deny that my wife was shot, but good enough to blame it on some unknown traveller, then use it to control the town even more.

TRACE

You should have talked! You needed to know what happened! You...you--

MR. HATTIGAN

I had no choice! Old Sheriff Walton told me that we should all have the same story. That if I talked, he could have it all fixed so that I'd hang for it.

TRACE

Oh god--

MR. HATTIGAN (CONT'D)

And I believed him. The last thing he'd want is for everyone to know that his son, his only son, had a thing for black girls. So I agreed, and I went on with my life.

TRACE

That's so awful. I don't know what to say.

MR. HATTIGAN

I still went to work, and I shopped, and I had a buddy or two...for a while. But one night, that Bobby Walton got drunk like he did most nights, and he told someone that I did it. Once that rumor made it around...they stared at me, all of them...and I lost my job, and my friends.

(MORE)

MR. HATTIGAN (CONT'D)  
 And next thing I know, this whole town was under the spell of those Walton boys.

TRACE  
 And that's why you want revenge? I get it. I do, but--

MR. HATTIGAN  
 Do you get that I'm just an old you, and you're just an old someone else?

TRACE  
 But I'd have to get back at Sheriff Walton and the whole town? I just...I don't know how that's possible!

MR. HATTIGAN  
 Well, maybe you don't, but one day, I think you will. Can you promise me that you'll do it when it comes to you?

TRACE  
 I...I don't even understand...but, sure, OK. Let's drop it.

MR. HATTIGAN  
 You'll do it. You'll know what to do.

Mr. Hattigan stands up and takes his knife to the sink. He turns on the water. He looks back at Trace and smiles.

MR. HATTIGAN (CONT'D)  
 I knew you'd come in handy.

Trace smiles and ponders for a moment.

TRACE  
 Just how naked *is* a jay bird?

Mr. Hattigan turns off the water and begins to laugh.

END FLASHBACK

## Sample 2

### Untitled Blues Feature

#### Setting the scene:

This scene is from a currently untitled feature script about the development of Blues music in the United States, specifically focused on post World War II music and the transition from country blues to urban blues through the migration of performers from the South to Chicago.

The protagonist is Sam, a light-skinned African-American orphan who suffers from what today we would consider autism. Sam is adopted by a rich white family and raised white until he learns of his true ethnicity and runs away to Chicago to be a musician. His deep connection and understanding of blues music paired with his lack of communication ability offers a journey through the mid-century history of the Blues free from the protagonist's commentary, only further emphasizing the cultural and historical influences and implications of the music.

These are the first few pages of the screenplay.

INT. HOSPITAL - DECEMBER 25, 1931

A small all-black hospital staff is gathered at a nurse's station in a very well-worn delivery ward. There are modest decorations and the staff drinks eggnog from cheap paper cups.

SCREAMS come from down the hall and a NURSE runs out of a room to the gathered staff.

NURSE  
We need ya'lls help.

Two nurses drop their drinks and follow the other nurse back into the room.

INT. HOSPITAL DELIVERY ROOM - CONTINUOUS

One white DOCTOR is at the helm of a young black woman in stirrups as she screams in agony to deliver a baby.

DOCTOR  
Young lady, you must stop pushing.

She just screams as the nurses run around preparing for the worst.

DOCTOR (CONT'D)  
Nurse Jackson...

A small-framed nurse steps next to the doctor. He whispers to her.

DOCTOR (CONT'D)  
I can save the baby. I need sutures  
and blood for her.

Nurse Jackson grabs two other nurses and leaves the room.

DOCTOR (CONT'D)  
(to his patient)  
Your baby is tangled up in the  
umbilical cord and he's turned  
sideways. I can adjust him, but I  
need you to be calm and still, and  
don't push until I say so. This is  
going to hurt.

The woman takes a deep breath. The doctor reaches under the sheet draped across her legs. She begins to scream more than before.

DOCTOR (CONT'D)  
 Don't push. Don't push. Stay with  
 me. Stay calm.

A nurse wipes her brow.

NURSE  
 It's gonna be ok baby.

The nurse begins to hum a little song.

DOCTOR  
 I've almost--there! Now push!

The nurse stops humming.

NURSE  
 Push, girl. Push.

The young woman pushes and screams. She stops suddenly and flops back on the table. The moment her cries stop, a BABY CRY is heard a split second before the doctor has the child in his arms.

The staff rushes to the doctor's side. One grabs the inconsolable infant, one cuts the cord, and two stay with the doctor.

DOCTOR  
 She's hemorrhaging. There's too  
 much blood. We can't stop it.

NURSE  
 Doctor...she's unconscious and her  
 breathing has slowed.

The other nurses burst back into the door with supplies. The baby is crying on the other side of the room where he's being checked and cleaned up.

The nurses start handing supplies to the doctor as he tries to save her.

NURSE (CONT'D)  
 Doctor...she's not breathing. I  
 have no pulse.

A nurse starts to hook up an IV of blood.

DOCTOR  
 (to the nurse with blood)  
 No. Don't waste it. She's gone.

The doctor leaves the room.

The baby begins to scream even louder.

The nurse who hummed to the young woman goes to the baby's side.

NURSE  
(shocked)  
That baby's white!

One of the nurses cleaning up the baby stops. They all look at him screaming.

OTHER NURSE  
We both saw where this baby just  
came from. He's as black as we are.

NURSE  
And he screams somethin' awful.

She begins to hum again and he starts to calm down.

OTHER NURSE  
Do that again, Betty. I think it's  
working.

NURSE  
I have a terrible voice. Let's turn  
on that old radio.

While most of the staff has cleared out, the third nurse left in the room goes to a radio by the wall, and turns it on, scanning for something.

On the radio comes the New York Metropolitan Opera's Hansel and Gretel.

The baby quiets for a second and then keeps howling.

NURSE (CONT'D)  
Try something different.

On the radio comes a broadcast of Amos and Andy. He doesn't stop crying. Then comes Rudy Valee and the Connecticut Yankees. He still cries.

Finally, on the radio comes Mamie Smith's "Crazy Blues".

The baby falls silent. All three black nurses gather around this white baby in awe.

NURSE (CONT'D)  
My goodness. He *is* black.

EXT. COLORED ORPHAN ASYLUM, OXFORD NC - 1933

A small group of southern high-society white women enter a looming brick building with the sign "The Angier B. Duke Memorial Building".

A distinguished black man, MR. JOHNSON leads the women through explaining the needs of the facility. They enter a common play room, where children of all ages are playing. Among the black children is one seemingly white 2-year-old boy with a record player and a toy xylophone.

MR. JOHNSON

And here we have some children playing, as they do every afternoon before supper.

The women look into the room over the half-wall. They all watch the children play for a moment.

MR. JOHNSON (CONT'D)

We'll go to the dining hall now before the children come in.

One woman, MRS. REDFERN, hovers watching the children, paying specific attention to the one white child.

MRS. REDFERN

Mr. Johnson, wait just a moment.

Mr. Johnson stops, comes around the side of the other women, and joins her.

MR. JOHNSON

Yes, Mrs. Redfern.

MRS. REDFERN

Who is that boy?

MR. JOHNSON

(consulting a clipboard)  
That is Samson Green. He was brought here when he was a day old. Mother died in child birth.

MRS. REDFERN

Are you aware that he is white?

MR. JOHNSON

Yes ma'am, he does appear to be, but I assure you, he was born to a poor black mother.

MRS. REDFERN  
Fascinating. What about the father?

MR. JOHNSON  
There is no mention of him. I  
assume he is--

MRS. REDFERN  
He is playing alone.

MR. JOHNSON  
Yes ma'am. He tends to do that.  
Only plays with the musical toys.  
He shows promise.

MRS. REDFERN  
Fascinating. Let's move on.

The group of women and Mr. Johnson exit.