



The Valley

Joan MacLeod

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Eighteen-year-old Connor, an aspiring author whose fantastical stories foretell his growing struggle with depression, can't wait to be free of his adverb-wielding, solve-it-all mother, Sharon. But six weeks after leaving for university, he drops out and returns home.

Dan Mulano is an infatuated new dad and well-meaning police officer whose selfishness is veiled by the lofty aspirations he holds for his family. His wife, Janie, a former addict and exhausted new mom, struggles to cope with the challenges of recovery in the midst of her battle with postpartum depression, which Dan dismisses as "just hormones."

A precipitous incident brings the two families together. When Connor's erratic behaviour at an underground train station requires police intervention, Dan responds to the call and makes the arrest, but the teen's jaw is broken during the incident. Is it police brutality or self-harm? For Sharon, there is no question; she portrays Dan as a reckless cop in the media, while he remains silent, refusing to break protocol and tell his story.

Inspired by an event in British Columbia that shattered the public's confidence in the police – the 2007 Taser death of Robert Dziekanski during his arrest at the Vancouver airport – *The Valley* dramatizes the volatile relationship between law enforcement and people in the grip of mental illness. In addressing this fraught relationship, award-winning playwright Joan MacLeod empathizes with both parties, each of whom is guided by good intentions but equally challenged by their own cultural biases and flawed humanity.

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