

**A Cold Read** by Jeremy Wilson (July 2018)

Dramatis Personae:     **Director**  
                              **Dad**  
                              **Daughter**  
                              **Stage Direction**  
                              **Rest of Cast**

Props:                   copies of this script

At rise, the director is seated. The cast stands around, awaiting the director's vision. All hold copies of this script.

DIRECTOR

Okay. This one has...a dad and his young daughter.

(eyes the cast)

I hate when writers do that.

(picks 2 actors, same gender, same approximate age)

You two. Dad. Daughter. Go.

(points to another actor)

You. Stage Direction.

STAGE DIRECTION

A dad and young daughter arc, starting upstage.

They walk the L, adjusting as Stage Direction continues. Director moves seat to survey the scene.

The daughter is focused straight ahead. The dad looks down, hands in pockets.

DAD

So...how many days left of school do you have?

STAGE DIRECTION

Daughter replies with slight European accent

DAUGHTER

(exaggerated European accent)

Ten.

DIRECTOR

Don't do that.

DAUGHTER

(standard American English)

Ten.

STAGE DIRECTION

They stop.

DAD

(trying to be stoic)

Do you get mad that I'm not in your life more?

DAUGHTER

(childlike emotion soup of confusion and regret)

I'm not mad at anybody.

DAD

Well, I didn't choose this. I never knew my dad and I don't want you to feel that way. If it were up to me, I'd spend everyday with you.

DAUGHTER

I'm not mad. I just know Mom better.

DAD

I know. I love you.

STAGE DIRECTION

Daughter falls into Dad with a full-body hug.

They do that.

DIRECTOR

How'd that feel?

DAD\*  
Unrelatable

DAUGHTER\*  
Saccharin

DIRECTOR

Welp...Let's run it again.

Black out.

\*Note to director: This reading is if both actors are women. If the actors are both men, Dad says Saccharin, Daughter says Unrelatable.