

When it Rains Gasoline

By

Jason D. Martin

Synopsis:

A play about teenagers hanging out, holding up, getting down, and falling through.

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SETTING

A moderate-sized high school. This does not take place in the inner city, but it doesn't take place in a small town either.

CHARACTERS

Paul

A heavy-set stereotypical "loser." The other kids avoid Paul or make fun of him.

Emily

A popular cheerleader who has just found out that she's pregnant.

Jody

A young man who is trying to deal with his sexual identity.

Dayna

A popular cheerleader who is still a virgin.

Alysa

One of the most popular girls at the school. The head cheerleader. She is both a stereotypical "mean girl" and an airhead.

Chris

A rude, mean and angry jock.

Sean

The captain of the football team and a semi-serious religion nut.

Angus

Chris' sidekick. A punk jock who likes to rip on people he sees as less important.

Rose

A complete rightwing religious wingnut.

Jessie

A video-game drama nerd who is infatuated with cheerleaders.

Annie

A video-game drama nerd who is infatuated with Jessie.

A NOTE ABOUT PUNCTUATION:

In this play two types of punctuation that indicate different things are used at the end of a sentence. A dash indicates that a character is being cut off by another character, whereas an ellipsis (the three dots) indicates that the line fades away.

CASTING

This play was designed for eleven actors. However, it would be simple to make the chorus larger. Feel free to add characters where needed.

FLOW AND STAGING

When it Rains Gasolines was designed as a minimal setting show. The play merely requires a few chairs and tables. Everything else may be mimed or created by lighting. The show should move seamlessly. There is no reason to close curtains or to stop the production for any reason.

This piece is a full-length play in one act. Please stage it as a single unit. Do not “find” a place to impose an act break. This will only hurt the flow of the piece.

The actors should never leave the stage. Instead they should always be in the background, watching the action. Some directors may choose to have them frozen in a pose, whereas others may choose to have them wearing masks while they watch, and others may just have them become part of the audience.

Costumes should be simple. Actors should never change clothes, but instead should add something over their existing clothing in order to show that it is prom or a different day or whatever the director feels the scene needs. Additional pieces of clothing may be added or taken off in front of the audience.

CUTTING FOR CONTENT

Some schools or institutions may feel the need to cut certain lines due to overzealous principals or parents. It is fine to cut single words and to replace them with something less controversial. But adding or cutting entire sections is not appropriate and will ultimately hurt the overall content and theme of the play.

The “assface” scene and the rape scene may not be cut. If these scenes are too graphic for your institution, then a different play should be considered. These scenes may be staged in such a way so as “not-to show-anything” or so as to not make the performers uncomfortable.

For those who don’t feel that they can perform the piece with these stipulations, the author has developed a play with a similar tone, but with less controversial material entitled, *Ghouls*.

HISTORY AND INSPIRATION

The inspiration for *When it Rains Gasoline* slowly came to being while the author worked as a high school drama and English teacher in the late 90s. Several of the characters and scenes were based on his experiences working at an inner city school in Seattle.

Many of the early drafts dealt with more “traditional” inner city issues like gang activity, drug use and racial intolerance between minorities. However, the play was heavily revised after two very sick young men committed a heinous series of murders at Columbine High School in April of 1999.

By that time the author had transferred to a rural school district where it felt as if more kids were marginalized by their personal attitudes, by their clicks, and by their peers than in the inner city district. The day after Columbine, a number of students arrived at school wearing black trench coats to show solidarity with the Colorado murderers.

In August of 1999, the author began a graduate playwriting program at the University of Nevada, Las Vegas. It was there that he developed the concept into a series of intertwined mini-plays. The sequence between Paul and Emily was turned into a stand-alone ten-minute piece entitled, *Stuffed Animals*. *Stuffed Animals* has seen numerous productions at high schools and universities around the United States and Europe.

During the development of *When it Rains Gasoline* as a unified work, the character count skyrocketed. The large cast made it less likely that the play would see a professional production. Large casts lead to large payrolls, and that is hard for most small theatres to deal with... But even though the script seemed too daunting in cast size for most American theatres, *When it Rains Gasoline* finally saw a complete production in Timisora, Romania at the English Language Theatre Festival in 2003.

Between the first production and the present, the play has seen many new drafts. Each draft has allowed it to grow and change. The author has explored the characters from many different perspectives, even developing a few drafts into a screenplay format with a filmmaker friend.

By the end of the first decade of the new millennium, Emily’s Pink Bunny monologue and Paul’s Insect and Maggot monologue had been performed in hundreds – if not thousands – of auditions and competitions. Student performances of scenes and monologues from the script can be found on video all over the internet, but the play itself only saw a handful of productions.

In 2010, the author turned the computer back on and reopened the file entitled, *When it Rains Gasoline*. He cut a number of characters and scenes in order to make it mildly more producible. He tightened the transitions and sprinkled inspirations from Brecht and Ionesco into the play. And in the process of breaking down and rebuilding the piece, he believes that he found the true heart and soul of each individual character...

...That is, until the next time that the author gets the itch to “fix” just one little thing in the play...

Following this most recent rewrite, after fifteen years of tinkering, *When it Rains Gasoline* finally saw a complete professional American production. In the spring of 2010, the Mad World Theatre Company produced the piece at the Renegade Theatre in Los Angeles.

So is this the “final draft”? Not by a long shot. This play is very much alive in the author’s head and will continue to see rewrites for future productions.

ROYALTIES

This play is protected by the copyright laws of the United States of America. **All productions (both amateur and professional) of this show are subject to a royalty payment.** Royalties are

required of all productions whether they charge an audience for tickets or not. This play may not be produced under any context without written permission from the author.

Amateur productions (secondary school, college, university and community productions) of this play will be charged \$15 per performance for “free” performances (i.e. performances for the school during the day), \$20 per performance for donation-only performances, and \$35 per performance for ticketed performances. Professional productions should inquire with the author for professional rights and performance royalties. Small house productions may have very similar royalty costs as the preceding scale.

Monologues and scene cuttings from this play – not to exceed eight minutes – may be used for competitions, class work, and auditions without a royalty payment and without written permission.

American College Theatre Festival and Irene Ryan scholarship judges should consider this notation written permission from the author for the use of monologues and scene cuttings from this piece for standard regional competitions.

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QUESTIONS AND COMMENTS

Please direct questions about royalties or commercial use to the author at:
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For more information about the history of this play and the author’s other works, please log onto:

www.dramaticwriter.com.

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At rise, a young man is discovered center stage. He is a bit chubby and holds a mop. He is in a back classroom, cleaning the floor. He slowly pushes the mop across the floor, daydreaming. He is PAUL.

All of the other actors are on the periphery of the stage. Throughout the play performers will not leave the stage. Instead they will move to the side and watch. Some directors may want them frozen on the side, whereas others may want them to move a bit. They may be sitting or kneeling on the edge or back of the stage, but it should be clear that they are not part of the action or of the scene. They simply don't leave the stage when they are not in the midst of a performance.

Suddenly Paul stops mopping. He flips the mop over and stands as if he is ready to fight. He makes a noise with his mouth. It sounds like a light saber going on. He slowly turns around and swings the mop around a little bit. Every time he swings he makes a light saber sound. Then, all of a sudden, he is in a battle. He is swinging the mop around like a character out of "Star Wars" and he is fighting invisible monsters and Storm Troopers. He ducks laser fire and rolls across the floor to attack an invisible enemy. Perhaps he starts to sing the music from the movies. Or perhaps he continues to make light saber sounds and laser sounds with his mouth. Or perhaps he throws in a line from the films here or there.

The lights dim and suddenly we hear the real thing. Lasers are blasting. Star Wars music is blaring. And now actors in Storm Trooper masks are attacking. This goes on for a long moment before the Storm Troopers stand aside and Paul is once again fighting the air. The music stops and we see the Storm Troopers standing around him in a circle. Each of them is holding a phone or a camera and they are videotaping Paul as he fights invisible enemies for his life. It is silent again, except for the sounds that Paul himself makes.

The lights fade.

In the dark, we hear voices. NEWSCASTERS speak. The newscasters should be wearing the Star Wars masks, or should be somehow otherwise masked. The lights should slowly rise on them standing on stage. The actor playing Jessie should be Male Newscaster #1. The actress playing Annie should be Female Newscaster #1. The actor playing Jody should be Male Newscaster #1 and the actress playing Emily should be Female Newscaster #2.

MALE NEWSCASTER #1

Another video has gone viral. This time it's a seventeen-year old boy pretending to play Star Wars with a mop. With over seventeen-million hits and several thousand re-edits, the Star Wars kid was one of the most watched videos on the internet this year!

FEMALE NEWSCASTER #1

For the second time in recent months, conservative activists have come together to support language in high school text books that defines homosexuality as an abnormal and abhorrent psychological trait that can be cured through intensive therapy.

MALE NEWSCASTER #1

The numbers do not lie. For more than a decade rural school districts have spent millions of dollars on abstinence only education. Ironically, those regions and school districts that have placed the most emphasis on abstinence-until-marriage have the highest teen pregnancy rates.

In the following beat, the newscasters will begin to talk all at once in a cacophony of voices. They will all finish on the exact same note. If a school or university has a problem with the language, the final line could be changed to "screwed up."

FEMALE NEWSCASTER #1

Social networking has taken a new turn. In recent months Google announced an additional new app: the personal diary application. This software allows the user to essentially social network with his or her self. The user will simply turn on the computer's camera and begin to speak directly to the computer. And while initially it appeared that this form of social networking was destined to failure, it has absolutely taken off. Teenagers in particular, are using personal diaries more than ever. It is estimated that one in three teens are now having private conversations with themselves. The software allows the user to either keep their diaries completely private or to open them to the public. Surprisingly, this program is bucking the trend and more kids are keeping their profiles to themselves. This program tells us one thing about teens... Kids these days are fucked up...

MALE NEWSCASTER#1

For the seventh straight year the teen homicide rate has seen a significant increase. Analysts say that there are three different types of teen homicide. They are gang related, bully related and sociopathic. Gang related homicides appear in street gang conflicts. Bully related homicides tend to be when a bully goes too far or when a victim takes revenge on a long time enemy. While all of these homicides are troubling the most troubling are the sociopathic. These are the school shooters. These are the kids that are so damaged that they don't see anything wrong with taking the lives of anyone, teacher or student that wronged them. One thing is for sure.... Kids these days are fucked up...

FEMALE NEWSCASTER#2

In a radical vote today, the school board in the state of Kansas elected to severely reduce and perhaps completely eliminate the teaching of evolution in their text books. This issue has come to the forefront for the fifth time in recent years. A similar past ruling was reversed after a change in the composition of the school board. Colleges and universities universally scorned students after the initial ruling. They felt that the middle and high schools did the kids no favors by limiting their access to universally accepted scientific fact. No doubt about it. Kids these days are fucked up...

MALE NEWSCASTER#2

The details of a new report on teen drug use have startled parents and teachers alike. There was and always has been an assumption that children were drinking alcohol and using marijuana. But the new report indicates that the use of meth amphetamines, heroine, crack, cocaine and pharmaceutical drugs are on the rise in every social class. This tells us one very important thing... Kids these days are fucked up...

The scene shifts and a pool of light appears on the center of the stage. ALYSA steps into the light.

ALYSA

Hi! I hope you can see me. This is the first time I've used this private diary video multi-whatever thingy. I don't know if I can keep this all to myself though. You know, I want

everyone to know about me. I'm here and I'm a popular girl. Not a mean popular girl like in the movies, but a cool and nice popular girl. I have over three-thousand followers on Twitter. I have hundreds of friends on Facebook and I even got a fanpage. Oh and p.s., the only reason Jane Hickman has so many followers on Twitter is because she'll follow pretty much anybody who will follow her back. Oh and spread her legs for pretty much anyone who will follow her too. Huh. *(laughs)* That's pretty good.

She pulls out her cell phone and starts typing on the keys.

Jane. Hickman. Will. Spread. Her. Legs. For. Anyone. Who. Will. Follow. Her. On. Twitter... Update. *(puts her phone away)* Anyways, let me show you some pictures of my friends.

Another pool of light rises and we see EMILY and DAYNA.

This is Emily and Dayna. Cheerleaders. All around cool chicks. Everybody wants to be like us. Everybody. Em's a bit of a slut, but she loves me like a sister. And Dayna's va-jay-jay is pretty much sewn shut. But, we're workin' on that. One night I got her drunk at a party and sent her into a bedroom with a horny dude. I thought she'd pass out and get it over with...but it didn't happen. Anyway, she loves to party with me and she won't be a little saint forever. I'll see to that. Next time I'll have to send her back with two horny drunk guys...

The lights fade on Emily and Dayna. A new pool of light rises. There we see, ANGUS, CHRIS and SEAN.

And these are the hot guys at school. Angus is my boyfriend. Chris is cute, but...dumped him. Sean's cute too, never went out with him...didn't have a cool enough car. Maybe some day after I dump Angus, I might try Sean. Angus has the best car right now, so obviously he's my boyfriend.

The lights fade on the boys and another pool of light rises on ANNIE, JESSIE, ROSE, JODY, and PAUL.

And I don't know why this picture's in here. I don't know any of these people's names. You know, 'cause they don't, like, matter. Hmm. I guess I do have names for them. *(goes down the line pointing)* Dork. Video game nerd dork. Religious freak dork. Faggot dork. And fat faggot dork. *(laughs)* That last guy was in a really funny video where he's in Star Wars or something with a mop. Somebody posted it on YouTube and now everybody knows what kinda' freak he is. You should watch it. I'll link it to this thing some day. I just got to figure out how.

The lights fade on the last group.

So, cool. Now you know all my friends. And now you know why I'm so popular and why everyone likes me so much. 'Till next time.

She winks and the lights crossfade to a high school cafeteria. There are three tables. At one table sits Sean, Angus and Chris. At the next table we see Emily, Dayna and Alyssa. And at the third table we see Annie, Jessie, Rose and Jody. A pool of light on each table will indicate where the action takes place. The other tables will be frozen in the dark. Annie holds drum sticks. She plays them on the table throughout the scene. This may just be tapping or something more intricate, or a combination of both. The scene should not be played to silence.

SEAN

Yeah, what-up bitches? That little chicky will be bowin' down to the king tonight.

CHRIS

Yeah? Who ya' talkin' 'bout?

SEAN

You know who.

CHRIS

I dunno'. Fat Paulie?

ANGUS

Ohhh snap. He said you're gay!

SEAN

Dude!

Shift focus.

DAYNA

I've got a hook-up tonight.

ALYSA

With who?

DAYNA

You'll never guess.

ALYSA

Probably not... Paulie?

DAYNA

(Laughs.) Gross. No. Try again. And think hot guy, not not hot guy.

ALYSA

Hot guy, not not hot guy?

Yeah, hot. DAYNA

Football team? ALYSA

Duh. Yeah... DAYNA

Have I gone out with him? ALYSA

Depends. DAYNA

Depends on what? ALYSA

Depends on what you consider going out. I think you eyed him but figured you'd dump him two minutes after you picked him up. DAYNA

Yeah, but I dump everybody. I'll drop Angus as soon as I can find a college guy. Or someone who's been on TV. ALYSA

Shift focus.

Look at 'em. JESSIE

Who? ANNIE

Them. All of them. The quote, un-quote, cool kids. JESSIE

What about 'em? ANNIE

I hate 'em. JESSIE

Why? ANNIE

JESSIE

First of all, they don't know anything. Three of them together couldn't do a calc problem if their lives depended on it. Remember last-year in class when Chris asked if we had to take British literature next year. And when Mr. Lee said yes, he was all like, "dude, I don't wanna' have to learn British."

ANNIE

Yeah, that was funny.

JESSIE

All they do is sit over there and talk about those girls.

ANNIE

Which girls?

JESSIE

You know which girls.

ANNIE

Oh.

JODY

Sounds like someone's jealous

Annie looks surprised.

JESSIE

Of who? Them? Please...

JODY

Sounds like somebody's got a hard-on for one of the cheerleaders.

JESSIE

So what? Everybody's got a hard-on for the cheerleaders. Don't you?

JODY

No.

ROSE

You guys shouldn't talk like that.

JESSIE

Rose. Your religion's your thing. But this is a free country and we're just talkin' like normal guys. And Jody... Don't give me that! (*Jessie emphasizes the words, "hard-on" to burn Rose.*) I know you got a hard-on for one of the cheerleaders. Every guy's got a

hard-on for one of the cheerleaders. If you don't got a hard-on for one of the cheerleaders, you're just not a man!

ROSE

People go to hell, you know...

JESSIE

(Laughs.) What?

ROSE

For lust. For language like that. For coveting...

JESSIE

Coveting... What the...? Hard-on. Hard-on. Hard-on. Hard-on. Hard-on.

ROSE

Jessie McNeil! You are a bad person and devil's gonna' eat your soul!

JESSIE

Hard-on.

Rose storms off. The focus shifts. Paul enters. He holds a tray of food. He sits by himself. He watches the kids at each table. The focus shifts again.

SEAN

No, you dipwad. I'm goin' out with Dayna.

ANGUS

(Speaks in falsetto.) Ahhh boy!

CHRIS

You mean Dayna with the *(holds hands in front of his chest)* and with the *(holds hands over his rear-end)*.

SEAN

No, my invisible friend Dayna. What do you think?

Shift focus.

EMILY

You've got to be kidding. Sean?

DAYNA

Yeah, Sean.

ALYSA

The captain of the football team? (*Laughs.*) My little girl's growing up.

EMILY

Dayna.

DAYNA

(*Exasperated.*) What...?

EMILY

You know what...

Shift focus.

CHRIS

That girl is shut up like an abandon house in the winter.

ANGUS

And by shut up he means (*falsetto voice*) no nookie for you.

SEAN

Whatever. That's just 'cause she hasn't been out with me. You guys know better than that. Every chica in this school wants me.

CHRIS

What every chica doesn't want is to pull out the tweezers and the microscope to find it.

ANGUS

Ohhhh double snap.

Shift focus.

ANNIE

Which one?

JESSIE

Which one what?

ANNIE

Which one do you like?

JESSIE

I don't know.

JODY

Whoa, that's not what it sounded like a minute ago.

ANNIE

Yeah, where'd all that righteous teenage angst and anger go?

JESSIE

Look, can't I just quietly wish that I was in a different social class in this high school?

ANNIE

No.

JESSIE

Why?

JODY

Because that would mean that you don't want to be friends with us...

Shift focus.

EMILY

And I want to be your friend. That's why I'm saying this.

ALYSA

Oh please. It's about time she went out with someone like that.

EMILY

No it's not. She's not like you.

DAYNA

I'm right here and I'm perfectly capable of deciding who I'm like and not like.

EMILY

He's gonna' want something from you.

DAYNA

I've been out with plenty of guys who want something from me.

ALYSA

Yeah, drama nerds.

DAYNA

I went out with him one time and I made him promise that he'd never tell anyone I went out with him.

ALYSA

Sympathy sex?

DAYNA

No! I didn't have... No! Not every guy is as perverted as you two think.

ALYSA

My dear dear Dayna. Every guy is more – way more – perverted than you think. Believe me. This is something I know a lot about.

Shift focus.

CHRIS

Believe me, I know all about this chick. She ain't gonna' be makin' any bacon.

ANGUS

(Falsetto voice) Or apple juice.

CHRIS

Or any other kinda' juice.

SEAN

Whatev.

CHRIS

She's not gonna' wanna' do anything.

SEAN

Dude. You guys. I know how ta' get that kinda' chick in the mood.

CHRIS

Yeah? How?

SEAN

I just know.

Shift focus.

DAYNA

You don't know anything.

EMILY

I know you. I know how you think. And I know that you're not gonna' go for this kinda' guy. Guys like that... They're... They can be dangerous...

DAYNA

Look, you're not my mom. Maybe I'm goin' out with him because I want him. Maybe I'm goin' out with him because I think it's time to do something real with a boy.

ALYSA

You go girl!

EMILY

There's rumors.

ALYSA

There's no rumors.

EMILY

There's rumors about Sean.

ALYSA

There's no rumors.

DAYNA

Alright. What kind of rumors?

ALYSA

There's no rumors.

EMILY

The kind where the girl doesn't call the cops afterwards because she thinks they won't believe her.

ALYSA

So there's one rumor...

DAYNA

I didn't know about that. I'm supposed to go to the lake with him.

Shift focus.

CHRIS

You taking her to the lake?

ANGUS

Get the doctor on the phone because that is (*falsetto voice*) sick!

SEAN

Word. That's what I'm sayin'. She knows what the lake means.

ANGUS

(*Falsetto voice.*) She knows what the lake means!

SEAN

Beat box.

Angus starts to beat box. Annie's drumming is in sync with the beat box.

SEAN

(Rapping.)

Flick flack bitchslap,
Slap da' bitch around,
Killin' Chillin' Sittin'
Back and spillin'
In any bitch that willin'
To go down...
Slap 'em,
Wrap 'em,
Bring 'em in and crack 'em,
Flick flack bitch slap,
Slap da' bitch around.

Angus stops beat boxing.

CHRIS

Man... You are not as good at that as you think.

ANGUS

Yeah, you suck.

SEAN

Dude. Whatev...

Shift focus.

JESSIE

Sorry. I didn't... I didn't mean that... I just meant...

JODY

I know.

ANNIE

Are you...? Do you think...? Are you going to...? What're you gonna' do about the prom?

JESSIE

I don't know. It doesn't matter.

ANNIE

Are you going to...? Are you going to ask her? The one you like?

I don't know. What do you care?

JESSIE

I don't.

ANNIE

There is a pause. Jody is looking at Annie. He turns to Jessie.

Don't ask her to the prom.

JODY

Why?

JESSIE

She's not out of your league, but she's tied up with a different group of people. You know? You should go with someone from your group of people. Someone from your clique. Someone that you have something in common with. You know what I'm sayin'?

JODY

No. Who?

JESSIE

(Mildly sarcastic.) I don't know. I can't think of one person.

JODY

Shut-up Jody.

ANNIE

(Looking at the other table.) I went out with her before.

JESSIE

What?

ANNIE

She didn't want me to tell anyone that we went and saw a movie.

JESSIE

What movie was it?

ANNIE

Alien Invasion.

JESSIE

That was a great movie. The part where the android...

ANNIE

ANNIE and JESSIE

(Together.) ...gets stuck in the jet engine!

ANNIE

Talk about great CGI...!

JESSIE

Yeah... She didn't like it.

JODY

Okay, so she didn't want you to tell anyone she went out with you. And she hated the movie you took her too? And it was the movie that you'd been excited about since last year when the first trailer came out? *(Dripping with sarcasm.)* Yeah, you guys would make a great couple...

ALYSA

You guys would make a great couple.

ANGUS

(Thrusting his hips and in a falsetto voice.) You guys could make a great couple.

EMILY

I think that he's dangerous.

JODY

This kind of...longing just isn't good for you.

CHRIS

If you don't get it on soon, your junk will probably explode.

ALYSA

Girl, it is time. Emily doesn't know what she's talking about. You gotta' get your freak on.

JESSIE

Thanks Jody. *(Sarcastic.)* I appreciate your lack of encouragement.

SEAN

Thanks for the warning Chris. But you know I'll make sure that it's not a problem.

DAYNA

Thanks. But I can take care of myself.

CHRIS, ANGUS, JODY, ANNIE, ALYSA and EMILY

(All together.) You're welcome.

Annie stops her beat.

ANGUS

(Falsetto.) And God bless us, every one.

The scene shifts and Emily is discovered alone. She has just pushed record on her personal diary. The rest of the kids have cleared to the side of the stage. They watch. During the monologue the kids all breathe audibly in through their noses and out through their mouths. This should be in sync and should give effect of ocean waves in the background. It should not be very loud and should not have an impact on the scene, but it should give the scene rhythm.

EMILY

Sometimes I just wish the world was full of pink bunny rabbits. There would be a beautiful lush forest, green grass, a sparkling brook, and it would always be warm. And all that would live there would be pink bunny rabbits. Hundreds of pink bunny rabbits. They would eat the grass and the leaves and there wouldn't be any wolves to hurt them. Every rabbit's Mom and Dad would love them no matter what... And all the rabbits would be in love... They would all have the perfect mate that would never ever hurt them in any way. They would all be able to trust each other and know that if something bad happened, no one would run away. I know it's a weird dream, but I've heard weirder. My boyfriend used to tell me how cool it would be if there were a one-way mirror into the girls locker room. That's kind of strange... Then again, he is a guy. I had another friend who thought that rocks were alive and that if you touched them, the grease on your fingers would kill them. A little weirder. Someone once told me that he had a premonition that one day we would all have flying waffles for cars... That almost takes the cake for weirdness. No, I'll tell you the weirdest thing I ever heard was when my doctor told me that I was pregnant... There is no doubt that that's the weirdest thing I've ever heard. I never knew a fifteen-year old girl would... Well, I suppose I've heard about it happening. I guess I just never thought that it could happen to me. I wish the world were full of pink bunny rabbits...

The scene shifts and Emily disappears. The audible offstage sounds change. The kids continue to keep the breathing rhythm of breathing in through their noses in unison, but now when they breath out through their mouths, they whisper "oh no" throughout the scene. This should not be very loud and should have no impact on the lines. It should just provide a background rhythm to the scene.

Angus and Chris appear wearing gym clothes. They run around the stage as if it is a gymnasium. After completing a lap or two, Paul appears. He is also wearing gym clothes and running, but he is having a very hard time. Chris sees Paul and nudges Angus. They slow down and keep pace with Paul.

CHRIS

How's it goin', Paulie?

You know...it's goin'.

PAUL

Wanna' check somethin' out?

CHRIS

What?

PAUL

Under the bleachers.

CHRIS

Mr. Johnson wants us to run until 10:30.

PAUL

Mr. Johnson's a jackass.

CHRIS

And he's blind as a bat.

ANGUS

He'll never know we're gone.

CHRIS

I don't know...

PAUL

Come-on...

CHRIS

Yeah. Come-on...

ANGUS

Alright. I guess. If it's just for a minute...

PAUL

It will be. Here.

CHRIS

Chris, Angus and Paul duck under the bleachers. This should be indicated with a change in the lighting.

It's dark under here.

PAUL

ANGUS

Naw man, it's just your eyes. I can totally see.

CHRIS

Yeah. It's probably just your glasses.

PAUL

Yeah, maybe.

ANGUS

So, Paul...me and Chris have this bet goin'. I want ya' ta' help me prove Chris wrong. He thinks you can't do an Olympic sit-up, and I think you can.

PAUL

What's an Olympic sit-up?

CHRIS

It's a special sit-up. Dude – Angus – he's not gonna' be able to do it. Let's just go back out with the rest of the class.

ANGUS

Naw man, he can do it. You can do it. Right, Paul?

PAUL

I can do an Olympic sit-up.

CHRIS

No way. You won't be able to do it.

PAUL

I can do it!

Chris and Angus exchange a glance, a gleam of mischief in their eyes.

ANGUS

Okay, get into the sit-up position.

Paul gets down on his back with his hands behind his head, fingers intertwined.

ANGUS

Alright, we'll do a practice one first. All you have to do is to do a sit-up and touch Chris's hand with your nose.

PAUL

That's it?

ANGUS

That's it for the practice.

Chris puts his hand out above Paul. Paul easily does a sit-up and touches his nose to Chris' hand. Chris is smiling. Angus looks as if he's about to crack up.

ANGUS

Okay, now's the real one. Chris will move his hand a little further away.

Chris does this. The new sit-up will require Paul to bring his chest all the way to his knees.

ANGUS

The only difference this time is that you'll have to keep your eyes shut.

PAUL

My eyes shut?

ANGUS

Yep.

PAUL

That doesn't sound that hard.

Paul puts his hands behind his head and gets ready.

ANGUS

Now Paul, you have to close your eyes.

PAUL

Why? I don't get that part.

ANGUS

Because it makes you work harder.

PAUL

Okay...

Paul closes his eyes. As soon as he does this, Chris steps over the boy so that his rear end is toward Paul's face. Chris drops his pants and leans over with his ass sticking out.

ANGUS

Ready. Set. And go!

Paul sits up and face plants into Chris' ass. Paul opens his eyes and Chris and Angus begin to laugh hysterically. Chris stands up, pulling his pants back up.

PAUL

Oh God. Gross. Gross. That's gross!

Paul frantically tries to wipe off his face with his open hands. Chris and Angus cannot stop laughing.

CHRIS

Dude. You are so frickin' stupid. I can't believe that you fell for that.

PAUL

(Nearly in tears.) I can't believe you would... Gross. Oh. Gross.

ANGUS

Man, did you see that? Did you see how he was like totally trying to stick his nose up your ass? *(Angus does a poor imitation of Paul, pointing his nose up in the air and acting like he's trying to insert it in something.)*

CHRIS

Isn't that what they call a brown-noser?

They both laugh.

ANGUS

(Falsetto voice.) Brown-noser.

Paul is starting to stand up.

CHRIS

Dude, we didn't say you could stand up.

ANGUS

Yeah. Chillaxe bro.

PAUL

I was just...

CHRIS

I was just... I was just... What? Trying to get your nose in my ass for some more?

PAUL

No. No. I don't want...

ANGUS

You want a bit more Paulie?

PAUL

No. I don't.

ANGUS

We could give you some more assface if that's what you want...?

PAUL

(Very close to tears.) I don't. No...

CHRIS

You don't know if you want more.

PAUL

I don't... I don't want more.

CHRIS

Angus. You wanna' hold him down...?

ANGUS

Sure.

Angus pins Paul to the floor.

PAUL

Please. I don't want... Please. I don't want more.

CHRIS

What a brown-noser...

Chris acts like he's about to pull down his pants again, when the class bell starts to ring. He stops.

ANGUS

Mr. Nash next. Can't be late.

CHRIS

Damn. Well, Paulie... Saved by the bell.

Chris slaps the young man on the face. Then Angus lets him go. Chris and Angus exit. Paul begins to cry in earnest. The lights fade. As they fade we continue to hear him cry. The offstage "oh no" breathing stops. The lights shift and we discover Dayna standing in front of a mimed mirror. She is combing her hair. Voices emerge from backstage. They should be played like they're in her head.

MALE VOICE

Young lady, you will be home at curfew or you will be grounded for a month.

ALYSA

It's time to grow up girlfriend. Time to see what gettin' it on is all about.

MALE VOICE

I was a teenage boy once, you know...? And I know what those boys will do. You have to watch yourself. You have to take care of yourself. Those boys aren't interested in you. They're only interested in one thing.

ALYSA

And it is great! Absolutely great! And you know what else? They'll do anything for it. You want something? They'll buy it for you. You want to have a good looking date to the prom, you got one. You want 'em to pay for everything? No problem. You just gotta' put out.

EMILY

There are rumors about Sean, you know. The kind of rumors that girls don't want to tell anybody because they're afraid no one will believe them.

MALE VOICE

You're my little girl and I just want you to be safe.

Dayna snaps open her purse and pulls out a condom in a package.

DAYNA

Don't you worry Daddy. I'll be safe...

The lights shift and Dayna and Sean are discovered sitting side-by-side in a car. Annie starts to keep a rhythm on the side of the stage by slapping her thighs. It should be light and it should not be an intense rhythm, but should provide a beat underneath the scene.

SEAN

I'm really glad you came tonight.

DAYNA

So am I...

SEAN

You know, I been thinking a lot about you lately.

DAYNA

Really?

SEAN

Yeah... Sure. I mean, you're not like the other girls around school.

DAYNA
What...? What do you mean?

SEAN
I mean, you're different. You know, prettier.

DAYNA
Prettier?

SEAN
Oh yeah. Way prettier.

DAYNA
Way prettier?

SEAN
You have no idea, do you? Dayna, you're the prettiest girl at school.

DAYNA
(Laughs.) No. Alysa. Jane Hickman. There are lots of prettier girls than me.

SEAN
No. Actually, there aren't. You're the prettiest.

Pause.

DAYNA
Thank-you.

Sean puts his arm around her shoulder.

SEAN
Alysa thinks she's hot, but she's way too into herself. She tweets everything she does. It gets pretty boring watching her tweet what she's eating on her Iphone. Man, Angus and me and Alysa, we were at a movie once, and I swear she ran a running commentary on every scene on Twitter or Facebook or something. Over the top and boring... And Jane Hickman's just a rich little daddy's girl. She has her own hot tub in her room. You... You're the one I think about all the time. Every day.

DAYNA
You've been in Jane Hickman's room?

SEAN
No. No, I just... She told... I just...

DAYNA
It's okay.

SEAN
I never went out with her.

DAYNA
But you went out with Alysa...?

SEAN
No, I never went out with her... She—

SEAN and DAYNA
(*Together.*) Doesn't like my (your) car. (*Dana says "your" and Sean says "my."*)

They laugh.

SEAN
But why are we talking about her?

DAYNA
I don't know.

SEAN
We should be talking about you.

DAYNA
Yes. We should.

They laugh again. Suddenly, Sean leans across the seat and kisses Dayna. She smiles.)

DAYNA
I thought we were talking about me.

SEAN
We are.

He kisses her again and she goes along with it. In between the kisses, the following lines take place.

DAYNA
Sean?

SEAN
Yeah?

DAYNA

Justa' ... Just a little slower.

SEAN

Yeah.

The kissing becomes more passionate. Sean begins to attempt to touch Daya's breast. Each time his hand gets close, Dayna moves it away with her own hand. Sean gets a little more aggressive and tries to put his hand up her shirt. He continues kissing her during the following lines.

DAYNA

No, Sean. Just... If you could just stay away from there.

SEAN

Uh huh...

The kissing continues for another moment or so, until Sean tries again.

DAYNA

Come on. I said, no.

She moves his hand away. Sean continues kissing her, not really paying attention. He tries one last time, as Dayna raises her hand to stop him, he keeps going. She is pushing on his arm to keep it off her breast, but he will not let go.

DAYNA

Sean! Stop! I said, stop!

He stops and sits up embarrassed.

SEAN

I'm sorry... I didn't mean to...

DAYNA

It's okay... I mean...

SEAN

Yeah.

Pause.

DAYNA

Sean?

SEAN
Yeah?

DAYNA
You can kiss me... And if you want, you can touch me.

SEAN
What?

DAYNA
I'm... I'm totally into it... It's just... It's just that... I want it to be special, you know?

SEAN
I... Ah...

DAYNA
Just... Not so fast... Slow. Gentle. Special.

SEAN
What?

DAYNA
It's okay... I want you to. I'll do more than that if you want.

SEAN
No. I...

DAYNA
What's wrong?

SEAN
I just don't...

DAYNA
A minute ago you were all over me. Is there something wrong?

SEAN
No. No. No, it's just that...

DAYNA
You said I was the prettiest girl at school.

SEAN
You are, but...

DAYNA
But what? I've heard the rumors Sean. I know all about you. You don't go half-way.

SEAN
Rumors?

DAYNA
You know what rumors I'm talking about.

SEAN
You don't understand.

DAYNA
I don't. Is there something wrong with me?

SEAN
No. No. It's just...

DAYNA
Just what?

SEAN
My church.

DAYNA
What?

SEAN
My church.

DAYNA
Your church?

SEAN
Yeah.

DAYNA
What does that have to do with anything?

SEAN
I... I...

DAYNA
What?

SEAN

I took this oath.

DAYNA

What do you mean, oath?

SEAN

Promise.

DAYNA

Promise...?

SEAN

Look, you can't tell anyone. Usually when I... Girls don't like it when I move too fast and they...

DAYNA

I don't understand.

SEAN

This can't get out.

DAYNA

What can't get out?

SEAN

My church...

DAYNA

I heard about the church already.

SEAN

I said I wouldn't... You know...

DAYNA

Really?

SEAN

Yeah.

DAYNA

You have to be kidding.

SEAN

No.

DAYNA

But the rumors...

SEAN

Girls don't like to go too fast. If I push it, they freak out.

DAYNA

Oh. My. God. You're a...

SEAN

Yeah.

DAYNA

Oh. My. God.

SEAN

I'm sorry.

DAYNA

I can't believe it.

SEAN

This can't get out...

DAYNA

But you have to admit, it's kinda' funny.

SEAN

Dayna, this can't get out...

DAYNA

Don't worry... *(She starts to giggle.)* The captain of the football team... God. I never woulda' thought...

SEAN

It can't get out.

DAYNA

No. I won't tell anyone your secret identity.

SEAN

You won't?

DAYNA

No. *(Sighs.)* I guess it's back to drama geeks for me.

SEAN

What?

DAYNA

Nothing.

SEAN

So...? Do you want to do this again sometime...?

Pause. Dayna looks disgusted.

DAYNA

No.

SEAN

Okay...

The lights shift. Sean is standing on the stage alone. The following should be played as if he is addressing his friends. The beat that Annie keeps on her thighs becomes more hurried.

SEAN

So she was like, give it to me. I can't wait any longer. Give it to me. And so guess what bitches? I gave it to her. Tell you what, I gave it to her and gave it to her. And that girl... Man, that girl... She is just wild. Absolutely wild. Nothing prude about her at all. She knew her stuff. And you know, I don't say this about most girls I been with, but that girl... That girl taught me some stuff... Man, she taught me some stuff I ain't even seen on the internet. She was just wild... Wild man, wild...

The lights shift again and we discover Rose, Jody, Paul and Chris. They have their desks pulled together in a "cooperative learning circle." A teacher speaks from offstage. Annie's beat stops and the offstage, but visible, actors begin breathing audibly again. They breath in through their noses and out through their mouths. The Teacher's Voice should come from Jessie, offstage but observing.

TEACHER'S VOICE

So your journaling assignment today is gay marriage. Studies show that a large percentage of the population now approves gay marriage as a social norm. Young people such as yourselves are leading this societal shift in thinking. Before you journal on the subject, I'd like you to discuss it in your cooperative learning group. What do you think about gay marriage? Should it be legal? Should it be something that our state adopts? *(If you are already in a state where gay marriage is legal, the line should be, "should this be something that our state dismisses?")* What do you think and why? You have five minutes to discuss this in your group before we start to journal...

CHRIS

(*Surveying his group.*) Loserville again.

PAUL

(*Hesitantly.*) I guess we should start to talk about this stuff.

CHRIS

Shut-up Paulie.

JODY

We only have five minutes. We probably should start to talk.

CHRIS

Screw that. I know I don't want to sit around here talkin' about homos all day.

Chris pulls out his cell phone and starts texting. He is still listening and looks up at his classmates throughout the following.

ROSE

God damns homosexuals.

JODY

Rose, this is a public school... You're not supposed to talk about God all the time.

ROSE

I can. It's called freedom of speech. In America, I can talk about whatever I want. I can... I can talk about God and I can talk about what God hates. And God hates fags... (*Pause.*) And Socialists...

JODY

It sounds like you hate gay people too...

ROSE

I hate the sin. But I love the sinner.

JODY

What about those church people who protest at funerals...? The people with the signs that say exactly what you just said... The people who hold the "God hates fags" signs. You ever done that, Rose?

ROSE

My church is active politically.

JODY

Right.

PAUL

I think—

CHRIS

Shut-up, Paulie.

ROSE

God made Adam and Eve, not Adam and Steve.

JODY

Yeah, well... That's debatable...

CHRIS

What?

JODY

It's debatable.

CHRIS

Oh man, everybody knows that part of the Bible.

ROSE

God made Adam and Eve.

JODY

God made Adam in his image.

CHRIS

Yeah, Dude. Everybody knows that part too.

PAUL

I ah... I...

CHRIS

Shut-up Paulie.

JODY

So... How was Adam supposed to procreate?

ROSE

That's why God made Eve, duh.

JODY

I'm not as religious as you, Rose. In fact, I'm not really sure I believe in God at all.

ROSE

What?

JODY
I'm not that sure I believe in God...

ROSE
That's insane. You'll go to hell...

JODY
Not if there is no hell.

ROSE
There's a hell...

JODY
This is beside the point.

ROSE
God is not beside the point.

JODY
Let me just get back to Eve.

ROSE
Eve?

JODY
Isn't that what we were talking about?

CHRIS
Supposed to be talking about fruitloops tryin' to hook-up with fruitloops to make 'em their booances. (*Booance is pronounced, boo-on-say. This is the plural.*)

ROSE
Alright. Tell me about Eve. I'm sure you know all about her.

JODY
What I was trying to say is that I'm not as religious as you, but... I've read the Bible.

ROSE
And that didn't prove to you that God exists...?

JODY
No. It's just a book.

ROSE
Just a book...?

JODY

Anyway, I've read the Bible. But I probably don't know it as well as you.

ROSE

That's an understatement.

JODY

It is... But that's not the point. If I remember right, I think Adam asked for Eve.

CHRIS

So what? He didn't ask for Steve. Or Brad. Or Jake. Or Ben. And he definitely didn't ask for no Paulie. He didn't ask for no daisy chain a guys suckin' each other's—

JODY

But he made man in his image, right?

ROSE

That's right.

JODY

So Adam's there all by himself. He's frolicking in the Garden of Eden, naked. He's out there chasing rabbits or doing whatever you do when you're by yourself with nothing to do. And he's alone, right?

ROSE

Yes.

JODY

So, I ask you again. How was he supposed to procreate?

CHRIS

Eve. Dude, aren't you listening?

JODY

Dude, aren't you listening? He had to ask for her. Lots of people think that God is both man and woman combined.

ROSE

Liberal, small-minded Christians.

CHRIS

What are you sayin', man?

JODY

That if God is both man and woman, and Adam was made in God's image, then maybe Adam was both man and woman too...

ROSE

What?

JODY

Adam was a hermaphrodite. He was going to reproduce with himself.

ROSE

What?

JODY

He was a hermaphrodite.

CHRIS

Hermaphro...

JODY

Hermaphrodite.

ROSE

What?

JODY

Man and woman as one.

ROSE

I know what it is. I just can't believe—

PAUL

What about gay people getting married?

CHRIS

Shut-up Paulie. Dude, that is the most ass-backward, gayest thing I ever heard.

ROSE

And it's wrong. You can't say stuff like that Jody.

JODY

What happened to freedom of speech?

ROSE

Freedom of speech isn't about letting people like you tell lies.

JODY

People like me...? What do you mean?

ROSE

I mean, hell-bound homos.

JODY

I'm not gay.

CHRIS

Yes you are. And you know what happens to little gay boys around here, don't cha'?

JODY

I said, I'm not gay. I like girls.

CHRIS

Right. Which ones?

JODY

There are some I like.

CHRIS

Who?

JODY

I... I have a girlfriend.

CHRIS

You do not.

JODY

Yes, I do!

CHRIS

Who?

JODY

She goes to a different school!

CHRIS

Yeah, what school?

JODY

It's... It's not in this state.

Chris sets his cell phone on the table.

CHRIS

You got her number? I'm thinkin' I wanna' give that girlie-girl a call.

JODY

My cell's in my locker.

ROSE

That's weird. I saw you texting before class.

CHRIS

You textin' your boyfriend for a booty call?

PAUL

You guys don't have to be so mean.

ROSE and CHRIS

Shut-up Paulie!

CHRIS

Oh... Snap. I get it! You. (*points at Jody*) and you (*points at Paul*).

PAUL

I'm not gay.

JODY

Dude, why don't you just leave him alone for once.

CHRIS

Oh, that's good. Defending her honor. Now we know who's on top.

ROSE

God hates fags.

CHRIS

Listen. I ain't jokin' around now. God's not the only one around here who hates fags. Some people – some of us – really really really hate people like you. It makes us sick to our stomachs to know that there isn't a special camp somewhere... You know, a special camp where we could put you... A special camp where you... A special camp where you and all the other little perverts get gassed...

Pause.

TEACHER'S VOICE

Okay... Excellent. Let's go ahead and separate from our groups and open up our journals. You'll have fifteen minutes to journal about what you and your group talked about.

The lights shift. Jessie and Dayna are discovered on opposite sides of a classroom. They are texting one another. In the following scene, capitol letters should be said as letters. This should be done fast, as a dialogue. Annie begins keeping a beat on the stage with her drum sticks.

JESSIE

U, letter U. Want, WNT. To, number 2. Go. Out.

DAYNA

W U? With you?

JESSIE

J slash W. Just wondering.

DAYNA

Maybe.

JESSIE

Maybe?

DAYNA

WIIFM? What's in it for me?

JESSIE

Dinner. Movie.

DAYNA

What movie?

JESSIE

Restless Killers 3.

DAYNA

RUMCYMHMD. Are you on medication, because you missed a dose.

JESSIE

Something else?

DAYNA

YSAN. You're such a nerd.

JESSIE

RB at sign A. Right back at cha.

DAYNA

PPL. People. Can't know NO about us.

JESSIE

Why? Letter Y.

DAYNA

Cuz PPL will talk.

JESSIE

WGAF? Who gives a flying—?

DAYNA

I do.

JESSIE

RUNTS. Are you nuts? I NO You – letter U – like me.

DAYNA

I have a REP.

JESSIE

Yeah. I NO about UR REP. I heard Sean talking about it.

DAYNA

What –letter R – you – letter U – talking about?

JESSIE

I don't care about your REP.

DAYNA

Question mark?

JESSIE

Number 8.

DAYNA

What?

JESSIE

That's what Sean said.

DAYNA

FYI! Sean is an F-ing liar.

JESSIE

IDC – I don't care – about that. IYQ. I like you.

Everything is FUBAR. DAYNA

Question mark? JESSIE

I'm FINE. I'm F'd up, insecure, neurotic and emotional. DAYNA

Question mark? JESSIE

I can't go out W slash you – letter U. DAYNA

IDG. I don't get it. JESSIE

We can't go out. DAYNA

Question mark? JESSIE

We just can't. DAYNA

Question mark? JESSIE

TAW. Teachers are watching. DAYNA

NTN. No they're not. JESSIE

I can't go out with a LUSER. DAYNA

You – letter U – think I'm a LUSER? JESSIE

Yes. DAYNA

Pause.

JESSIE

OMFG! You are – letter U, letter R – a SNERT! A snotty-nosed, egotistical, rotten, teenager.

DAYNA

FU!

JESSIE

RBAY! Right back at you!

DAYNA

PO! Piss off!

JESSIE

Fine! (*Long pause.*) Do you – letter U – think we could go out next week?

Dayna groans angrily and puts her head down on her desk. The scene shifts. Annie stops her beat. The offstage actors begin a different breathing rhythm. When they breath out, they make a “pu” sound and then a “ti” sound, before they breath back in. This is done in unison. We see Rose in the hallway. She is carrying a sign. She places the sign on the wall. It says, Emily Smith plans to kill her unborn baby. Rose exits just as Emily enters. Emily sees the sign and immediately runs to it. She tears it down and begins to tear it up. As she tears it up, she starts to cry. She finishes tearing up the sign and sits down. She continues to cry. She opens her backpack and pulls out a stuffed pink bunny rabbit. She hugs it as she cries. Paul enters. He notices her, but doesn’t approach right away. He watches her for a long moment. Finally he approaches.

PAUL

Emily...? What’s wrong?

Emily tries to hide the stuffed animal and wipes away her tears.

EMILY

Nothing.

PAUL

I just heard you. I was walking and I heard you.

EMILY

It’s nothing.

PAUL

Is there...? Is there anything I can do?

EMILY

No... I just...

PAUL

I was sitting just around the corner. I was sitting by myself 'cause I needed to study. I heard you and came over. I... I didn't want to sit in the cafeteria 'cause people'd wanna' hang out with me and stuff.

EMILY

Yeah.

PAUL

Really, is there anything I can do?

EMILY

No.

PAUL

It was the sign wasn't it...? I saw Rose... I saw Rose and some of her church friends putting them up.

EMILY

Them...?

PAUL

Yeah.

EMILY

There're more?

PAUL

I'm sorry.

EMILY

I can't believe this...

PAUL

I'm... I'm sorry they told everyone that you're pregnant.

EMILY

Pregnant—what do you know about it?

PAUL

I...

What? EMILY

Well... I... PAUL

Why're you even talking to me? EMILY

It's just that... You were crying... I... You were crying and I was studying... PAUL

Do you want me to cry somewhere else so I don't interrupt your studying? EMILY

No... I just want... PAUL

What? EMILY

I... I... I wanna' help. PAUL

Oh. EMILY

I mean... I'm sorry. PAUL

It's okay. I'm the one who's sorry. I... I usually don't get so mad... EMILY

I know. PAUL

Do you? EMILY

Pause.

Well, I was bothering you and stuff... PAUL

It's okay. EMILY

PAUL

I was actually gonna' go hang out with my buddy Randy. You know, maybe study biology or something with him.

EMILY

Randy? Randy Wilkins...?

PAUL

Yeah.

EMILY

Isn't he in a gang?

PAUL

Yeah, but his Mom knows my Mom. You know, so sometimes we hang out.

EMILY

Oh.

PAUL

I mean, she doesn't make him hang out with me.

EMILY

Yeah.

PAUL

So, you're okay...?

EMILY

Sure. Yeah. I'm okay.

PAUL

I'm sorry, I...

EMILY

Yeah, you should probably be...

PAUL

I am... I... I'll go.

Paul turns to go.

EMILY

No, don't...

What? PAUL

Don't go. EMILY

I... I can stay. I can stay if you...if you need me... PAUL

I... I need someone. EMILY

Everyone needs someone. PAUL

It's weird. EMILY

What's weird? PAUL

I don't know, I... It's just like I don't wanna' talk about this stuff, but I wanna' talk about it. You know? EMILY

You wanna' talk? PAUL

I... I do. EMILY

To me...? PAUL

Yeah. EMILY

What about your friends? PAUL

They... They don't want to talk about this stuff. EMILY

Really? PAUL

You don't want to either... EMILY

No, I... I can talk. I can talk. PAUL

You sure...? EMILY

Yeah. Yeah, I can listen too. PAUL

And you won't...? EMILY

What? PAUL

You won't. I can tell. EMILY

Won't what? PAUL

Nothing. EMILY

What? PAUL

Pause.

Judge me. EMILY

Judge you? PAUL

You won't, will you? EMILY

No. No, I'd never do that. PAUL

What am I gonna' do? Everybody knows. Everybody knows everything. EMILY

Yeah.

PAUL

Everybody knows everything and I... I don't know anything.

EMILY

Was it...? Was it Chris?

PAUL

I hate him.

EMILY

I'm sorry.

PAUL

As soon as I told him... The second I told 'em... Outta' there. (*Snaps her fingers.*) Like that. Gone.

EMILY

Maybe you should go home. I bet they'd let you go home today.

PAUL

So much for Prom.

EMILY

Mr. Mason. I bet he saw the signs. He'll let you go home.

PAUL

My Mom won't let me. She... You know...

EMILY

Yeah... (*Pause.*) That's a nice doll.

PAUL

It's a pink bunny.

EMILY

Aren't you afraid people will make fun of you with that?

PAUL

Nothing could be worse than the signs. Nothing...

EMILY

I like it.

PAUL

What? EMILY

Your stuffed animal. PAUL

Oh. EMILY

I used to have a stuffed lion. I remember holding him at night. PAUL

Paul grimaces.

What's wrong? EMILY

I shouldn't have told you that. PAUL

It's okay. I think it's sweet. EMILY

You do? PAUL

Chris is mean to you, isn't he? EMILY

Naw, he's just joking around. He likes to joke around with me. PAUL

He was mean to me. (*Angry groan.*) Uhhh... Why'd they do that? Why'd he do that? Why? EMILY

I don't know... I just— PAUL

I wish I could turn back time. EMILY

I... Maybe I'll invent a time machine... You know, when I grow up. PAUL

When you do, come and see me. EMILY

I will. PAUL

Paul? EMILY

What? PAUL

Aren't you afraid of being seen with me? You know, with the sign and everything? EMILY

No, I mean... PAUL

It's just that, you're the first person to say anything nice to me since Rose started making rumors and putting up signs. EMILY

I... I can't just let you sit here and cry... Those kids can be really mean. I mean, if I were you, I'd want someone to stop and talk to me. PAUL

Yeah. EMILY

Kids... Kids can be really mean... PAUL

No kidding. EMILY

Maybe I could get you a tissue or something. PAUL

I'm fine now... Thanks. EMILY

It's no problem. I was just studying. PAUL

What do you think I should do? EMILY

PAUL
Oh... I... I don't know about that kind of stuff.

EMILY
The signs... If I have a... You know? Everybody's gonna' know.

PAUL
That's hard.

EMILY
And if I don't... Oh God...

PAUL
You could... You know, you could put it up for adoption.

EMILY
I don't know, I...

PAUL
You could say you had a miscarriage.

EMILY
I don't think they'd believe me.

PAUL
You could, um... You could transfer schools.

EMILY
That's easy for you to say, you...

PAUL
Yeah...

EMILY
And I'm...

PAUL
I know.

EMILY
Well, I was...

PAUL
Yeah.

EMILY

I'm sorry, Paul. I... I didn't mean to...

PAUL

I know.

EMILY

It would just be easier for someone like you to transfer.

PAUL

Yeah.

EMILY

I don't mean to be mean, ya' know.

PAUL

I know.

EMILY

You know what else? I... I think you're a really good guy.

PAUL

Really?

EMILY

Yeah, I think it's sweet that you had a stuffed lion. And I think it's wonderful that you stopped to talk to me—to see if I was okay.

PAUL

Well, I... I mean, I couldn't just let you sit there crying.

EMILY

Thanks.

PAUL

Well, um... Maybe you could ditch school for the rest of the day...?

EMILY

Yeah, maybe.

PAUL

I'd... I'd come with you... I... We could hang out in the park and talk. You know?

EMILY

I think I'd...

PAUL

Don't worry about being truant. I... I work in the attendance office. I could take our names off the list tomorrow.

EMILY

Maybe... Maybe we could do that.

PAUL

I... I can't believe Chris did this to you. I mean, if I had a girlfriend as pretty and as nice as you... I... I would never leave her. I'd... I'd be by her side through everything.

EMILY

You're a sweet boy, Paul.

PAUL

Um... Thanks... I... You know...

EMILY

No... What you said... It's... It means something to me.

On an impulse, she hugs him tightly. After a moment he hugs her back. They stand like that for a long moment. Dayna and Alysa enter. The next lines are said during the hug.

EMILY

Thank-you. Thank-you for listening.

PAUL

I... I like hugging you... I mean... If I had a girlfriend like you...

They break their embrace. As they pull away from one another, they make eye contact. Emily leans in and kisses him lightly on the forehead. They are holding hands.

PAUL

You know, you were talking about prom...about prom being over. It... It doesn't have to be—

ALYSA

Emily?

Embarrassed, Emily pulls her hand away from Paul.

ALYSA

What're you doing?

Nothing, I—
EMILY

ALYSA
You've got more than enough problems. Come here.

Emily approaches the girls.

ALYSA
What're you doing?

EMILY
I... He...

ALYSA
What do you think Chris would say about this?

EMILY
I...

ALYSA
If you hang out with someone like that, he's gonna' find out.

EMILY
Don't tell him. Please don't tell him.

DAYNA
We won't tell him. Right Alysa?

ALYSA
Why're you hugging that loser?

EMILY
I... I don't know.

ALYSA
You don't know? Em, that's the YouTube kid. He's the biggest loser there is. And in your condition...? I'm just saying, you don't need to be hanging out with people like that. Your reputation is already—

EMILY
I wasn't, I...

Emily glances back at Paul for a moment.

ALYSA

What?

EMILY

He... He works in the attendance office.

ALYSA

The attendance office?

DAYNA

That's right. I've seen him there.

EMILY

Yeah. Yeah, I was gonna' ditch and he, he was gonna' take my name off the list.

ALYSA

So, why were you hugging him and...you know, making googley eyes at him?

EMILY

I wasn't making—

ALYSA

But you were hugging him.

EMILY

I just... I thought I could get him to take my name off the list. You know, I thought I could get him to take my name off the list by...by being flirty.

Pause. Paul is shattered.

DAYNA

Now that's what I call feminine charm.

ALYSA

What a sassmuffin. (*To Paul.*) Hey fatty. You gonna' take my homegirl's name off the list?

PAUL

Yeah... Yes.

ALYSA

Great. (*To Emily.*) Let's getcha' outta' here. The religoids kinda' screwed up the day. And we need to talk. We need to talk about whatcher gonna' do about the bun.

EMILY

The bun?

ALYSA

The bun in the oven, girlfriend.

They start to exit. Emily turns.

EMILY

Thanks for... Thanks for taking my name off the list...

They exit. Paul stands staring after them. The breathing shifts. The offstage actors audibly breath in and out through their mouths. The scene shifts and we see Jody sitting in a chair, alone, in a pool of light. His face is buried in his hands. FOUR MASKED CHARACTERS enter the stage. They encircle Jody, taunt him and dance around him.

MASKED CHARACTER #1

(Angus is wearing this mask.) He's such a little faggot.

MASKED CHARACTER #2

(Chris is wearing this mask.) Back in Laramie they know what to do with boys like you.

MASKED CHARACTER #3

(Sean is wearing this mask.) That's so gay.

MASKED CHARACTER #4

(Rose is wearing this mask.) God hates fags.

MASKED CHARACTER #1

What a gaywad.

MASKED CHARACTER #2

The Nazis put pink triangles on people like you...

MASKED CHARACTER #3

It's like a disease...if you get close enough, maybe you can catch it.

MASKED CHARACTER #4

It is an abomination for a man to lie with a man. Leviticus.

MASKED CHARACTER #1

Shut-up you fag.

MASKED CHARACTER #2

They put 'em in gas chambers. They put 'em in ovens.

MASKED CHARACTER #3

They've all got AIDS. Them and the Africans.

MASKED CHARACTER #4

The fires of hell are waiting.

MASKED CHARACTER #1

This place is gay.

MASKED CHARACTER #2

AIDS isn't a disease. It's a cure.

MASKED CHARACTER #3

They're all trying to turn our kids.

MASKED CHARACTER #4

Jesus loves you and has a wonderful plan for your life: hell.

MASKED CHARACTER #1

I know exactly what you're thinking when you look at me, you fag.

MASKED CHARACTER #2

They call it smear the queer for a reason.

MASKED CHARACTER #3

Gay rights are not civil rights.

MASKED CHARACTER #4

God rained fire on Sodom.

MASKED CHARACTER #1

You should just do it to yourself and save everyone the trouble.

MASKED CHARACTER #2

Just die.

MASKED CHARACTER #3

It would be easier to just not be anything anymore.

MASKED CHARACTER #4

It would be easier to just be dead.

JODY

No!

The masked characters fade away.

JODY

No! No! No! No!... I'm not that guy... I'm not that guy...!

Jody turns on the private diary setting on his social networking site. He begins to speak into the computer's camera.

JODY

I'm scared. I mean, I'm not just a little bit frightened... I'm actually scared—really scared. I can put 'em on a bit. Act cocky. But they know. They know what I really am. These kids here... They... Well, they don't understand. Most of 'em live in a dream world. They think about football and prom and hanging out at the mall. I guess that's pretty normal. Problem is... I don't fit the norm. It's not easy being what I am here. People say it's not an easy thing to be anywhere, but... It's really not an easy thing to be here. And it's not like I got a whole lotta' support. My Mom—well that didn't go over well. Locked herself in the bathroom all night. And my Dad... Let's just say he's not very open-minded. We don't talk about it at home. We pretend like it, never came up. It is not a subject that is open for discussion. I know that a lot of queer teenagers are suicidal. They just can't take it. But that's not me. That's not me. I don't think about that stuff... Mostly, I don't think about that stuff. Okay, sometimes it comes into my head, but there is no way I'd ever do anything to myself. There's no way. I mean, look at me. I'm not scared of what I'm gonna' do. I'm scared of what other kids are going to do to me if they ever really find out. I mean, I'm worried about my friends. I'm worried that they won't want to be around me. I'm worried that they'll think I'm somehow different, diseased, inferior... But that's only part of what I'm scared of. Only part... I'm also worried about the others, the ones who aren't my friends. The others... the ones who hate. The ones who sit in the back of the classroom and talk about Mexicans taking their jobs. The ones who thought Obama was born in Kenya. The ones who think we're all pedophiles with AIDS who made a choice to be like this. (*Laughs.*) If only they knew. I don't think anyone anywhere would ever make a choice to be like this. It's too hard... Yeah, the ones who hate... they're stupid. But you know what? Stupid people are dangerous, really dangerous. I mean, I'm just a guy. I'm just a person. I don't want to hurt anyone. I'm not going to hit on some insecure jock. I mean, give me a break. I don't even have the self-esteem to hit on another gay guy. So I don't know what they're problem is. I don't know what it is. But it doesn't matter. If the others—the ones who hate—if they find out about me, they'll come after me. And they'll hurt me. And they'll laugh when they do it. I'm afraid. Scared. What will people think of me when I'm out? What will people do to me? Everything's gonna' change. Everything.

The scene shifts. Dayna and Sean are discovered in Sean's car. Annie begins to keep a rhythm on the stage floor with her drumsticks. The audible breathing stops.

SEAN

So here we are.

DAYNA

Here we are.

Again. SEAN

We're here again. DAYNA

So what made you change your mind? SEAN

About what? DAYNA

About me? About going out with me again? SEAN

Nothing. DAYNA

Nothing? SEAN

Okay, there was something. DAYNA

What? SEAN

A rumor. DAYNA

What rumor? SEAN

About something you were saying... DAYNA

What was I saying? SEAN

Something about me. DAYNA

About you...? SEAN

Pause.

DAYNA
Seems like you talk about a lotta' girls.

SEAN
So?

DAYNA
So you lie about a lotta' girls.

SEAN
What?

DAYNA
You lie about a lotta' girls.

SEAN
I don't lie.

DAYNA
No, you do.

SEAN
I don't lie.

DAYNA
You do. You do lie. You say you had sex with them. You say you had sex with them and people believe you. And they don't say anything.

SEAN
I wouldn'ta gone out with you again if I knew you were gonna' pull something like this.

DAYNA
Like what? Sean, you're an ass. You say you're saving yourself or some stupid thing and then you tell everyone something different. You're an ass.

SEAN
Alright. I'm an ass. Can we go now?

DAYNA
No. No. Everybody thinks you're some kinda' sex machine. And you know what? Girls don't say anything. I don't know why they don't say anything, but they don't. And everybody thinks they're sluts because you come back and tell these crazy porno stories about 'em. And they don't say anything. Well, guess what? The whole reason I came out with you tonight is because I wanted to tell you in person that things were gonna' change.

Change?
SEAN

Yeah, change.
DAYNA

What do you mean?
SEAN

I mean, that I'm gonna' tell everyone.
DAYNA

What?
SEAN

I'm gonna' tell everyone.
DAYNA

What do you mean everyone?
SEAN

I mean everyone on the football team, the baseball team, the basketball team. I mean everyone in debate and on the chess team. I mean the goth kids and the emo kids and the skater kids. I mean the kids in the knitting club and in the sci fi club and even the kids in the band. Everyone is gonna' know. Everyone...

You can't. You wouldn't...
SEAN

I can and I would...
DAYNA

You have no idea what you're saying. You'll ruin everything.
SEAN

Shoulda' thought about that before spreading rumors about people.
DAYNA

Look...
SEAN

No. You're not talking your way outta' this.
DAYNA

SEAN

No, look... The girls... The girls like the rumors.

DAYNA

Yeah, just like girls who wear short skirts like to get raped.

SEAN

No. No. No, you're not listening. It's not the same thing.

DAYNA

You're right, it's not. But it's the same ballpark.

SEAN

It's not. They like the rumors because they like the attention. They want people to think they had a wild night with me.

DAYNA

That's not true.

SEAN

Yes, it is. Yes, it is. Any cheerleaders give you a hard time about being a virgin lately?

DAYNA

That's not the point.

SEAN

Alysa. How about Alysa? Has she given you a hard time lately?

DAYNA

It's not the point.

SEAN

If you tell, all of the girls who have been keeping my secret will be in the open.

DAYNA

Yeah, but their not the ones who are lying.

SEAN

Yes, they are. By not saying anything. By not saying anything, they're lying.

Pause.

SEAN

Just think. Think about all the girls that you know that I've been out with. Think about 'em.

DAYNA
Anybody ever do this to you before?

SEAN
Do what?

DAYNA
Back you in the corner? Tell you they're gonna' tell?

Pause.

SEAN
You're gonna' hurt a lot of your friends.

DAYNA
Maybe... Maybe you're right.

SEAN
I am right.

DAYNA
Maybe.

SEAN
It's for the best.

DAYNA
The best?

SEAN
Yeah...

DAYNA

The best...

SEAN

You wanna' go home now?

DAYNA

In a minute...

SEAN

What?

DAYNA

It's pretty close to Prom.

SEAN

(Hesitantly.) Yeah?

DAYNA

So when I first went out with you, I thought we were starting something...

SEAN

Yeah...?

DAYNA

So I need a date for the Prom.

SEAN

I've... I've already got a date.

DAYNA

Yeah, me.

SEAN

No, I've got—

DAYNA

You're gonna' break that date unless you want the whole school to know about your...situation.

Pause.

SEAN

Whatevs.

DAYNA

I'm on the Prom committee and I can't miss it. It's gonna' be a good one. There's gonna' be ice sculptures and black lights... It's gonna' be good. Besides, by going with me you'll save some money.

SEAN

How so?

DAYNA

My Dad's about your size. And he's got a tuxedo. Should totally fit you and it's not gay or anything.

SEAN

Really...?

DAYNA

Yeah...

SEAN

Okay.

DAYNA

Okay?

SEAN

Yeah... Okay...

The scene shifts. Paul is discovered alone. He turns on the private video diary mode of his social networking site and starts to talk. All the noise stops. There is no sound from the offstage visible actors.

PAUL

I get along with pretty much all the kids. I know there are a lotta' girls that really like me, they're just shy. I'm kinda' shy too. I know what they're going through. I don't expect them to jump out and tell me how they feel, especially with Chris and... Well, you know. This one group of girls – really popular girls – invited me to a party. I got all dressed up. I was the only boy there. We played a game where they giggled and dared each other to kiss me. None did... I'm sure they were just shy. I... I can really get people to laugh when I do things sometimes. I'm... I'm not always sure what those things are... I mean, I get up from eating lunch and a whole group of kids at the next table starts to laugh. I've thought about maybe being a comedian... Especially since I'm so good at making people laugh. Chris and Angus and... I don't like making those guys laugh. Not really. Sometimes they're... I... It's not fun to make them laugh, they... (*A painful pregnant pause.*) Sometimes I wish that their little hearts would just freeze. I have fantasies about that. Sometimes in my dreams I see people like Chris choking on something. He's motioning for me to help him. He wants me to give him the Hiemlick maneuver or something, but I just stand there. I watch him fall to his knees, holding his throat, his face turning blue... For some reason blood starts to come out of his nose and ears. His eyes pop out and blood starts to come from there too. The whole time I know that I can save him, but I don't do anything. I watch him die. He's lying there, not moving, not doing anything. And suddenly... Suddenly his skin splits open. I expect to see muscles and bones, but... But instead, maggots and spiders and worms start to crawl out of his ravaged body. And then... And then I know what he was... Nothing. He wasn't worth anything to anyone but insects and maggots... Sometimes... Sometimes, I think about ending it. It would be so easy to make a statement, to show the world that people like me aren't gonna'] take it anymore. Put a gun to his head... Pull the trigger... See if I'm right about his insides...

The scene shifts. Annie, Jessie and Jody are discovered in the cafeteria. The offstage actors begin a breathing rhythm. When they breath out, they make a

“pu” sound and then a “ti” sound, before they breath back in. This is done in unison.

JESSIE

That’s—that’s not what I’m saying!

ANNIE

You just said it. It is what you’re saying.

JESSIE

You’re choosing to misinterpret what I’m saying.

ANNIE

I’m not misinterpreting anything. You just said it.

JESSIE

I know. And you just misinterpreted it.

ANNIE

Whatev. I can see I’m not going to win this one...

JODY

Are you guys done?

JESSIE

Not by a longshot.

JODY

Oh, ‘cause I wanted to tell you something, you know—when there’s a second or two...?

JESSIE

In a minute. Let me just try to say this in a different way. With all these new graphics, with all these new systems, with millions of bytes...it’s easy to forget the roots. And the roots are important.

ANNIE

Yeah, it’s easy to forget the roots of science fiction movies too. But that doesn’t mean I’m gonna’ sit around and watch Metropolis all the time. It’s old. And it’s bad. Gaming is the same way, but worse...stuff from three years ago is old and bad.

JESSIE

Okay, I don’t even want to get into the three year ago thing...

ANNIE

Why not?

JESSIE

‘Cause that’s not what I’m talkin’ about.

ANNIE

Then what are you talkin’ about?

JESSIE

You take these super games and their super graphics that the creators took as long to produce as a Hollywood movie and you forget what came before. You forget about the old school. You forget what a real man’s game is. Now Ms. Pac Man—that was a real man’s game. The original Donkey Kong, that was a real man’s game. And... And you know what they were playing back in the day? Pong! Pong! Now that...that was a real man’s game. You’ve got your ball, you’ve got your paddle, and you’ve got your little bricks. Simple. To the point. A real man’s game. There is no fantasy super force Mario ex lax save point. You don’t have to log onto some special website to figure out the secrets. And you certainly don’t need some lame ass magazine! You bounce the ball off the bricks and they disappear. When the bricks are gone, you win!

ANNIE

When the marbles are gone. You win.

JESSIE

(Deadpan.) Ha Ha Ha, very funny.

ANNIE

Of course, you don’t know what you’re talking about...

JODY

Is this gonna’ be a long conversation?

JESSIE

I absolutely do know what I’m talking about.

ANNIE

You absolutely don’t.

JESSIE

Please. Explain.

ANNIE

First, you don’t even know what game is what. The brick game was Super Breakout.

JESSIE

That’s not the point, I—

ANNIE

Second, I'm not a man and don't want to be a man. So your argument is useless. I certainly don't wanna' waste my time playing a "real man's game."

Pause.

JESSIE
Okay, so... We need another opinion. Jody?

JODY
My opinion?

JESSIE
Yeah.

JODY
Alright, you asked for it.

ANNIE
Go ahead. He's gonna' be on my side.

JODY
I wanted to tell you guys something, but I can't keep my mouth shut about this anymore.

JESSIE
Shut about what?

JODY
This is what we in the homo world like to call, nerd foreplay.

ANNIE and JESSIE
What?

JODY
Nerd foreplay.

JESSIE
I don't... I don't—

JODY
Jessie. It's time for you to go out with a girl who likes you. Like Annie.

Annie is blushing, deeply.

JESSIE
I... I...

JODY

There's no Is. (*"Is" is I in the plural.*) Just say, "Annie, would you like to go to the prom with me?"

JESSIE

But... But—

JODY

There are no buts. Annie, would you like to go to the prom with me?

JESSIE

I just can't—

JODY

And there are no can'ts. Annie, would you like to go to the prom with me?

JESSIE

But what if—?

JODY

She'll say yes. You'll say yes, right?

ANNIE

Probably.

JODY

See. That's pretty good. Now, Annie, would you like to go to the prom with me?

JESSIE

Dayna—

JODY

Is using you. Annie, would you like to go to the prom with me?

JESSIE

Alright.

JODY

Alright?

JESSIE

Yeah. (*To Annie.*) What do you think?

ANNIE

About what?

JESSIE

About the prom thing. I guess, I'm probably gonna' go. And you know...I'd probably allow you to come with me if, you know, you wanted.

JODY

Okay. Stop. Annie, do not say yes to that. Pretend like you didn't hear it.

JESSIE

Why? I did what you want.

JODY

Yeah, the junkshow asshole way.

JESSIE

What?

JODY

With me now, Annie would you like to go to the prom with me?

JESSIE

With you?

JODY

Yeah, speak with me...

JODY and JESSIE

Annie, would you like go to the prom with me?

ANNIE

Yes. I would like that very much.

JODY

See, that wasn't so bad.

JESSIE

No.

JODY

Alright, I'm gonna' let you two lovebirds continue your nerd foreplay without my presence.

Jody starts to leave. Jessie's voice stops him.

JESSIE

Wait!

What? JODY

You said something else. JESSIE

I know what you're talking about. I heard it too. ANNIE

What? JODY

You know what. JESSIE

Something homo something. ANNIE

And you weren't talking Australopithecus or Sapien JESSIE

Yeah, it wasn't a Lucy reference. ANNIE

Okay so, I have no idea who Ropithecus or Lucy are. JODY

That doesn't surprise me, but I have a feeling you know another type of homo. JESSIE

The sexual kind? ANNIE

Yeah. Is that what you were trying to tell us? JESSIE

Pause.

You guys have no idea how perfect you are for each other. JODY

Are you gay? JESSIE

I've done good work here today. JODY

Jody, are you...? JESSIE

You can tell us... ANNIE

Pause.

Yeah... Yeah. I'm... Yeah... JODY

So, what does that mean? JESSIE

It means he likes men, you ignoramus. ANNIE

I know that? JESSIE

Is there a specific boy you like? ANNIE

He doesn't want to talk about that. Why did you ask him that? JESSIE

I just thought that since we were sharing... ANNIE

It's too much, too soon. JESSIE

So you guys are—? JODY

Are what? ANNIE

We're not gay. JESSIE

No. No, that's not what I was asking. JODY

JESSIE

What're you asking?

JODY

You guys are okay with this?

ANNIE

Okay with what?

JODY

Me.

JESSIE

Yeah. Of course.

ANNIE

You're our friend.

JODY

I just thought...

ANNIE

You didn't have to think that.

JESSIE

You didn't...

JODY

Thanks. Thanks, guys.

JESSIE

But you do have to think about Pong.

JODY

Oh no.

JESSIE

Oh yes! Pong. We're gonna' play it at my house tonight. And I'd like to see if a gay guy, like yourself, is man enough to play, "The Pong."

JODY

Sure. Yeah. I'd love to give Pong a shot...

JESSIE

And you...? My prom date?

ANNIE

I'm not gonna' come because I'm your date.

JESSIE

Really?

ANNIE

I'm gonna' come because you guys are gonna' be there. I could do without the Pong, but I'll be there for you guys.

JESSIE

You're such a girl...

The scene shifts. Alysa is discovered center stage. She is making another report into her private video diary. She looks distraught. The offstage breathing shifts. In unison, the actors breath in through their noses and out through their mouths.

Do you realize that tonight is the most important night of my life? Oh my God! Do you? It's like way more important than cheer tryouts. It's way more important than my first kiss, the first day of middle school, the first day of high school, the first day of drivers ed, more important than my driver's license, more important than any of my ex-boyfriends, more important than my current boyfriends—I mean friend. It is the pinnacle of the high school experience. The prom. Prom night. The night that I will remember for the rest of my life. I spent six-hundred dollars on my dress. Anyway, Jane Hickman spent a thousand... She's a total daddy's girl. For her sixteenth birthday, her dad got her a brand new Ford Mustang. For my sixteenth birthday, I got a two-year old Prius. Whatever. Some girls are just born with a silver spoon in their mouth. She's such a snobby little rich girl. A little rich girl who's parents buy her anything she wants. Her parents have a swimming pool and a tennis court. All we have is a Jacuzzi. One time she told me she, *(Make quote signs with her fingers.)* liked my outfit. She's such a snob. I know what she meant. She was making fun of my new designer jeans. She thinks they're out of fashion already. Slut. Oh well, I'm not gonna' let Jane Hickman ruin the most important day of my life. My six-hundred dollar dress is way more stylish than the over-priced rag she's gonna' wear. That little bitch. That little slut. I'm gonna' be homecoming royalty for sure. Homecoming queen! I hate Jane Hickman. Hicky Hickman, 'cause she's always got a hicky. That little hootchie-mamma better not be gettin' on the royal court. I'd just kill myself if she was homecoming queen. I'd kill myself! It's bad enough that her dress costs more. It's bad enough she's got a newer car. It's bad enough she's got a pool and a tennis court. I hate my parents. Why don't we have a pool and a tennis court? My Mom is so lazy. All she does is sit around at the computer. And my Dad... My Dad's never around. He's always *(Makes quote signs again.)* at the office. Whatever that means. Like if he was *(Makes quotes a last time.)* at the office, he'd be making money, right? Well maybe he needs to get his butt in gear and get his daughter a fifteen-hundred dollar dress so she doesn't look like a bag lady at the prom. That's what I'm gonna' look like. A bag lady! Jane Hickman's gonna' be prom queen for sure! This is the worst day of my life!

The scene shifts and all the kids appear on stage, except for Paul. We can see him in the background off stage watching the action. There is a dark look on his face. It is Prom Night and all the kids are entering the stage in a line. They're looking around the room in awe. There are no organic sounds from offstage. Music is thumping and some kids start to dance. Other kids quietly greet one another with hand shakes, fist bumps or hugs. Chris enters alone, but immediately approaches Angus and Alysa. Emily enters alone as well, but stands off to the side watching. Rose is also alone, watching and judging. Jody enters with Jessie and Annie. Dayna and Sean enter, arm-in-arm.

SEAN

This is great. You did a really good job.

Dayna spins Sean around to look at the back of his tuxedo.

DAYNA

No.

SEAN

What?

DAYNA

It's not...

SEAN

What?

DAYNA

There's something wrong.

SEAN

Oh no, the tux is great too. Tell your Dad thanks for letting me borrow it. Saved me like a hundred bucks and it looks good.

DAYNA

There're supposed to be blacklights.

SEAN

Chillaxe. It'll be fine without 'em.

DAYNA

No. No, it won't. Just a minute.

Dayna rushes out. Sean joins Alysa, Angus and Chris. He greets Angus and Chris with a fist bump and hugs Alysa.

SEAN

What up? What up?

ANGUS

Nada.

ALYSA

Sean.

SEAN

How's it going, Alysa? You look good.

ALYSA

So does Dayna.

CHRIS

You see that?

SEAN

What?

CHRIS

That litte perv kid.

ANGUS

What little perv kid?

CHRIS

The fag. Jody what-his-name...

ANGUS

What 'bout 'em?

CHRIS

Didn't bring a date.

SEAN

Neither did you, my brother. You lookin' to hook up with him or what...?

CHRIS

Dude. Chill with that.

SEAN

Alright, whatev.

Suddenly the blacklights go on.

SEAN

Hey, there they are!

Sean turns to look around. We see that the back of his clothing is glowing with a secret message that we couldn't read before. Two words stand out on the black. They are, "LIAR! VIRGIN!" Everybody starts to laugh and tease him.

ANGUS

Oh snap!

ALYSA

Dayna! You go girl!

CHRIS

What the...? You makin' everything up?

The kids improvise a few lines about the jacket. The nerd group improvises a couple of fast lines about the jacket as well. The improve fades as Jody speaks.

JODY

Too much Sprite. I gotta' hit the bathroom. I'll be back in a minute.

Jody exits the stage and the scene shifts. We see Jody standing with his back to the audience at a urinal. He sighs loudly. Chris enters and walks over to the urinals. He stands right next to Jody. He looks down into Jody's urinal. The other kids are offstage. They are all watching on their hands and knees, tapping the floor and keeping a rhythm. The light floor tapping should be ominous. A Director may choose to make this beat change pace or volume with the scenes. This should continue until the first gunshot.

CHRIS

You like me looking down into your urinal like that.

Jody moves over to the next urinal. Chris moves to the urinal Jody that Jody was just at.

CHRIS

God made Adam and Eve. Not Adam and Steve.

JODY

Dude. Leave me alone.

CHRIS

(High pitched mimic.) Leave me alone. *(In his normal voice.)* Adam wasn't queer.

Jody zips up to leave. Chris zips up and rushes past him. He is blocking the door.

CHRIS
I saw you pretending out there.

JODY
Pretending what? Let me past.

CHRIS
I saw you pretending you were normal.

JODY
I didn't do anything to you. Why're you messing with me?

CHRIS
You were pretending. I saw you with that girl. You know, the girl who looks like she's got some mad cow disease or something.

JODY
Annie?

CHRIS
Yeah.

JODY
She's a nice looking girl.

CHRIS
Only a gay boy would say that. You bring her?

JODY
She came with another friend.

CHRIS
But you were dancing with her. Like you were normal.

JODY
She's my friend—what are you talking about? I am normal.

CHRIS
No you're not.

JODY
Fine. Just let me through.

CHRIS
No. Not good enough.

JODY

What do you want from me?

CHRIS

I want you to admit it. I want you to admit that you're a little homo fag.

JODY

Let me through!

Jody tries to push past Chris. Chris knocks him to the floor and starts to beat him. Jody is crying.

JODY

Stop! Stop it! I didn't do anything!

CHRIS

Yes, you did. (*Beating him.*) You looked at me! You looked at me like you wanted me! You looked at me!

JODY

I didn't! I didn't!

CHRIS

You know you did! You know you did!

Chris gets off of Jody and kicks him. Jody is crying. Chris walks to the bathroom door and turns the bolt-lock.

CHRIS

Let me just lock up so we got a little privacy.

JODY

(*Crying.*) Please stop hurting me. Please.

CHRIS

Stop hurting you? Little fag boy, I'm just gettin' started...

Chris jumps on top of Jody and starts to hit him again. In the process he starts to pull Jody's pants off. Jody realizes what is happening and starts to scream and cry more loudly. He attempts to fight back, but Chris is much bigger and much stronger. Improvised lines during the fight may be appropriate.

JODY

No! Don't! Oh God, don't!

CHRIS

You wanted it. You looked at me and you wanted it! Now you gonna' get it!

Chris rapes Jody from behind. It happens very fast. Jody is crying. Eventually, Chris stops, zips up, unlocks the door and exits. Jody lays on the bathroom floor for a long time – at least ten full seconds – crying. The door opens and Paul enters.

PAUL

Jody? Oh my...

Paul rushes over as Jody is trying to sit up. Jody is crying and can barely talk. Paul helps him pull up his pants. It's a struggle for Jody to get the following lines out. Paul is holding him like a soldier holds his injured comrade.

PAUL

What happened? What...? Who did this?

JODY

(Still crying.) I was just in here...

PAUL

Do you want me to get a teacher? I'm gonna' get a teacher.

JODY

No. No. Nobody can know...

PAUL

Somebody's got to know.

JODY

No. He...

PAUL

What...?

JODY

He... He... I can't...

PAUL

What?

JODY

He...

PAUL

What did he do?

JODY

He raped me. Oh God. He raped me.

PAUL

I gotta' get someone.

JODY

No.

PAUL

We can't do this by ourselves.

JODY

No. No. I don't want it.

PAUL

We can't—

JODY

He raped me. Oh God, he raped me...

PAUL

Who raped you...?

JODY

He pulled my pants down and he...

PAUL

Who did it?

JODY

I can't believe... Oh God...

PAUL

We should call the police.

JODY

No. No.

PAUL

Who did it? Who did this...?

Pause. Jody is trying to talk. Finally he's able to say it.

JODY
Chris. It was Chris.

PAUL
Chris?

JODY
Yes. Chris. That bastard. Chris raped me.

PAUL
Jody. Jody. I have to go.

JODY
No. No. Don't—

PAUL
I'm gonna' take care of this.

Paul stands up.

JODY
Don't leave me here. Please, Paul. Don't leave me.

PAUL
I'm gonna' send someone in. A teacher. And I'm gonna' take care of it.

JODY
Don't... Don't...

PAUL
I'm gonna' take care of it.

Jody curls up into a ball on the floor crying, as Paul exits. The scene shifts. We see Chris and Angus talking on the dance floor. The other kids are on the periphery of the stage, watching the action. They continue the floor tapping. It becomes louder. Paul enters.

CHRIS
Hey, look who just got here. Hey Paulie... Over here!

ANGUS
(Falsetto voice.) Chunky chubby choo choo chunk.

Paul quickly approaches.

PAUL

Look, I don't want any more trouble.

CHRIS

What are you talkin' about, no more trouble?

PAUL

I'm talkin' about this.

Paul pulls out a gun and points it at Angus. He fires. The gunfire sound should be made by the kids on their knees watching. The gunfire sound will be made by the group clapping as one. Angus falls to the ground. Paul fires into Angus two more times. The floor tapping has stopped. The kids on the sidelines watch.

PAUL

No more trouble.

Paul turns the gun on Chris and fires into his leg. Again the gunfire sound is made by clapping. Chris screams and falls to the ground. He immediately starts to try to drag himself away. He is panicked and crying.

PAUL

Turn over.

Paul follows him for another moment.

PAUL

I said, turn over.

CHRIS

No... No... You'll shoot me. Oh God! It hurts! Please don't hurt me anymore... Please.

Chris turns over, facing Paul. Paul stands over him, aiming the gun at him. Paul starts to cry.

PAUL

Don't hurt you? Don't hurt you? When I asked you to stop; no, when I begged you to stop hurting me, did you? When I cried... When I cried in front of the world, did you have mercy and stop hurting me then? Did you stop Chris? Did you? No. Of course you didn't. You were just getting started...

CHRIS

No... Please... Please...

PAUL

Well, now I'm just getting started.

CHRIS

(Desperate.) Please, just let—

Before Chris can finish what he is about to say, Paul raises the gun up and fires. He shoots Chris four times. Each shot is made by the sound of clapping. Paul stares at the body for a long moment, crying. He slowly raises the gun to his own head. He shoots himself. The sound is made by clapping. Blackout.

The lights slowly rise to a dim level. We see the following kids silhouetted by the light: Alysa – holding her pink bunny, Jody, Sean, Dayna, Jessie and Annie. Angus, Alysa, Chris, Rose and Paul are now masked journalists standing behind the silhouetted kids.

NEWSCASTER #1 (ANGUS)

In another shocking incident, a student at Red Valley High School shot and killed two students and then took his own life.

NEWSCASTER #2 (ALYSA)

Little is known about the seventeen-year old boy. His peers indicated that he was a social outcast.

NEWSCASTER #3 (CHRIS)

At least one of the kids killed, had a long history of bullying. The police and parents are now looking into why this wasn't addressed by the school district.

NEWSCASTER #4 (ROSE)

A recent report indicates that there's been a history of social problems at Red Vally High School that haven't been addressed by parents, teachers or students.

NEWSCASTER #5 (PAUL)

It makes one wonder...if someone, if anyone was paying attention to the dynamics at the school. Would the shootings have taken place?

NEWSCASTER#1

There are those who believe
That the problems are systemic
That kids simply need someone to
Talk to. That they need a mentor
That they need an adult friend.
This boy who committed this act
Was clearly sick, but he was part
Of a sick system. The kids need
help. The need someone to look
out for them. Because one thing
is clear. The kids are fucked up.

NEWSCASTER#2

There are those who believe
that the problems are systemic
that kids simply need someone to
Talk to. That they need a mentor
That they need an adult friend.
This boy who committed this act
Was clearly sick. But he was part
of a sick system. The kids need
help. Because one thing is clear.
The kids are fucked up.

NEWSCASTER#3

There are those who believe
that the problems are systemic
that kids simply need someone to
Talk to. That they need a mentor
That they need an adult friend.
This boy who committed this act
was clearly sick. But he was part
Of a sick system. One thing is
Clear. The kids are fucked up.

NEWSCASTER#4

There are those who believe
that the problems are systemic
that kids simply need someone to
Talk to. That they need a mentor
that they need an adult friend.
This boy who committed this act
was sick. But one thing is clear.
The kids are fucked up.

NEWSCASTER#5

But it's because they're hurting. If kids listen to one another and treat each other – no matter who they are – with respect, then they can fix most of the problems themselves...

The lights fade to black

The play is Finished

Jason D. Martin
About the Author

A former high school drama teacher, Jason lives and breathes to write for and about theatre and film. Over the years, seven of his plays have been published in different anthologies. Numerous productions of these plays and others have been performed throughout the United States and Europe. He has received three Meritorious Achievement Awards from the American College Theatre Festival for excellence in playwriting; and his play *Dying Light* was selected as the Best New Play at the Northwest Drama Conference in 1995. More recently, Jason's Brechtian exploration of Native American rights and modern environmentalism entitled, *Endangered Species*, was selected as a finalist in the Earth Matters on Stage conference in Humboldt, California. As a screenwriter, Jason adapted John Weld's book *Fly Away Home* into a screenplay for Laguna Films in California. In addition to writing for theatre and film, Jason is a film critic and outdoor adventure writer who has seen his work published in newspapers, magazines, on blogs and in journals throughout North America. Jason holds a Masters of Fine Arts degree in dramatic writing from the University of Nevada, Las Vegas and currently resides in Bellingham, Washington.