

## **Just Kidding, Just Fine and Other Lies: Background Information and Production Requirements**

The play, *Just Kidding, Just Fine and Other Lies*, was written by Jennifer Bobbe and The Voice, a Peer Education Theater Troupe made up of high school students at Spring Lake Park High School in Spring Lake Park, Minnesota. Creation and production was made possible by sponsors: Beyond the Mirror Arts Project, and funders: the Metropolitan Regional Arts Council in Minnesota, several Anoka and Hennepin County community agencies, individual donors. The production would not have been possible without the cooperation and resources of the Spring Lake Park School District Community Education Program.

The script was developed through an intense and lengthy process. Teenagers shared their personal, often painful, experiences through stories and poetry. Their experiences were communicated with intense language, vivid imagery and heart breaking emotion. Parts of these stories and poems were woven together and through this process, the realities of the physical, sexual, and emotional violence portrayed in the play come alive in meaningful and powerful ways. It is important to note that the show reflects the language, experiences, and emotions experienced by students who lived through verbal abuse and bullying. The stories are based on actual experiences. We elected not to edit the sometimes painful and often offensive language because to do so would not be reflective of what actually occurs. We hope that audience members are affected, offended, and committed to take action to end bullying and verbal abuse. We firmly believe that identifying the problem is only the first step towards ending the abuse.

*Just Kidding, Just Fine, and Other Lies* is a free production. We grant permission to produce this play without fees given by the authors and sponsors. The authors and sponsors wish to emphasize that there is an expectation that the integrity of the play's content be preserved. In addition, the play is a copy written production and we ask that mention of the authors (Jennifer Bobbe and The Voice) be noted whenever the production is performed. Having said that, we also recognize that certain artistic liberty may be necessary to keep the show relevant. As a result, we give permission for the student names to be changed without permission. If the production omits significant portions of the show or wishes to add additional language and/or scenes, written permission from Jennifer Bobbe is required. In addition, given the play's potential to evoke strong emotions and bring up painful memories, it is strongly suggested that post-play discussions take place to allow audience members an opportunity to process what they have viewed. It is also an excellent opportunity to ask attendees how they will change their behaviors in the future, thus ensuring a commitment to positive change.

Permission to produce this play without fees is given by the authors and sponsors. It is required that any organization/group producing the play, notify the author. Please contact Marlene Jezierski/Jennifer Bobbe via email at: [jbobbe3@gmail.com](mailto:jbobbe3@gmail.com) for permission to use and/or alter the script. Please provide information related to production including where and when the play will be produced.

AUGUST, 2016

**JUST KIDDING, JUST FINE  
AND OTHER LIES**

**JENNIFER BOBBE AND THE VOICE  
SPRING LAKE PARK HIGH SCHOOL**

## CAST OF ACTORS

GHOST/EVERYGIRL . . . . MELISSA WARME  
 MEAN GIRL . . . . . RACHEL LEHMAN  
 SLUT . . . . . CASEY MEILE  
 POPULAR . . . . . JUSTINE BORDEN  
 NEW KID . . . . . WILL KAISER  
 (THEY SAY I'M) GAY . . . JUSTIN CLARKIN  
 JOCK . . . . . NICK DEDOLPH  
 LOSER . . . . . JACK FISH  
 BULLY . . . . . COULTER CAREY  
 VICTIM . . . . . REBECCA NELSON  
 ABUSER . . . . . WILL KAISER  
 TEACHER . . . . . STEPHANIE PI

EVERYGIRL/GHOST/GONE  
 MEANGIRL/GUILT-STRICKEN/CHANGED  
 SLUT/LOVED/LOVING  
 POPULAR/BRAVE/FREE  
 NEW KID/HERO/CONFIDENT  
 THEY SAY I'M GAY/DOES IT MATTER IF I'M GAY?/? IT DOESN'T  
 MATTER IF I'M GAY  
 JOCK/STUNNED/AWAKE  
 LOSER/FOUND/EMPOWERED  
 BULLY/BROKEN/GROWING UP  
 VICTIM/COURAGEOUS/HOPEFUL  
 ABUSIVE/CONFLICTED/TRYING  
 TEACHER/LEARNING/TEACHING

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**JUST KIDDING, JUST FINE AND OTHER LIES:  
A SHOW IN ONE ACT  
SCENE LIST**

**PRELUDE:**

SCENE 1: PUBLIC SERVICE ANNOUNCEMENT  
SCENE 2: GHOST ALONE (IN WHITE!)

**FALL (T-SHIRTS BLACK)**

SCENE 3: WELCOME BACK (BLACK T-SHIRTS W/WHITE)  
SCENE 4: THE CAFETERIA IS A BATTLEFIELD  
SCENE 5: JUST KIDDING  
SCENE 6: AFTER THE PARTY  
SCENE 7: WHY SHE DOESN'T DATE GOOD GUYS (SLUT)  
SCENE 8: CONTROL (PHONE CALL) Split Screen  
SCENE 9: Auditory fighting  
THEY YELL SO LOUD THE WALLS SHAKE  
SCENE 10: WE GO ROUNDS

**WINTER (t-shirts black)**

SCENE 11: WHAT EVER HAPPENED TO LOSER?/ MY  
CONTRIBUTION FOR THE DAY (Loser)  
SCENE 11: Photos on the Phone/Rejected Date  
SCENE 12: GOOD ENOUGH/SHE NEVER LEAVES  
SCENE 13: NOT NEUTRALITY/WHAT DO I DO? (Musical)  
SCENE 14: FIGHT (Triple scene) son/mom/dad  
BAD DOG and SON vs. MOM  
SCENE 16: IT ALL ADDS UP

**SPRING (t-shirts to white)**

SCENE 18: GHOST ALONE (Reprise) in white  
SCENE 18: LOSER RETURNS (EMPOWERED - Light  
Saber MONOLOGUE Fight 4 self.Gets Help?  
SCENE 19: Gay and Teacher- Bully gets Told  
SCENE 20: SHE LEAVES HIM (Popular to Free)  
SCENE 21: HE GETS THE GIRL (HERO)  
SCENE 23: TO ALL THE HATERS (Spoken Word Bully  
and JOCK) Reforming?Learning?Growing Up  
SCENE 24: ABUSER and VICTIM get HELP(LEARNING  
TOGETHER) I statements  
SCENE 24: GHOST ALONE (Reflecting) in white  
Transitions to: The END SCENE  
Everyone is strategically placed in the same  
spots from the beginning in brightly colored with new,  
positive words on the front.  
(Handout flyers from Pete Yelle)  
SCENE 1: PUBLIC SERVICE ANNOUNCEMENT

(This scene is deliberately over-the-top. It's a farce on all of the anti-bullying campaigns that sound cheery, but don't actually provide much substance. P.S.A. GIRL and P.S.A. BOY have a goofy, cheesy quality to everything they say and do. Think: deliberate BAD ACTING.)

P.S.A. GIRL:  
Hey, you look sad. Are you feeling all right?

P.S.A. BOY:  
I am sad. I am being bullied by some kids at school.

P.S.A. GIRL:  
Bullied? What's going on?

P.S.A. BOY:  
Well, these guys in my class have been calling me some really mean names. It really hurts.

P.S.A. GIRL:  
Wow. That is really harsh. Have you told anyone?

P.S.A. BOY:  
No. I don't know who to talk to. Who should I tell?

P.S.A. GIRL:  
How about a parent or another trusted adult?

HECKLER 1:  
(from audience right)  
Narc!

P.S.A. BOY:  
(pause)  
Wow! What a great idea! I feel better already.

HECKLER 2:  
(from the audience left)  
I feel like throwing up.

P.S.A. GIRL:  
(pause and glance to P.S.A. BOY)  
Isn't that what friends are for?

P.S.A. BOY:

Yes. Friends (and trusted adults) can put an end to bullying. All you need to do is speak up.

HECKLER 3:

(from somewhere in the audience, yelling)  
You guys suck!

(P.S.A. GIRL and P.S.A. BOY exchange worried glances.)

P.S.A. GIRL:

Bullying is a major problem in our schools and communities.

P.S.A. BOY:

And we have the power to make it better.

HECKLER 1:

(from the audience)  
Use your power to disappear.  
(laughter)

P.S.A. GIRL:

(breaking character and stepping down stage, peering out at the audience.)  
Hey you! Can you stop it? We are trying to perform a show. We think this is an important message and we want to share.

HECKLER 1:

(from stage left)  
You thought wrong.

P.S.A. BOY:

(also breaking character and stepping downstage)  
That's enough. We worked really hard on this show. If you don't like it, leave.

HECKLER 2:

(mocking)  
If you don't like it, leave.

P.S.A. GIRL:

Seriously? What is your problem?

HECKLER 2:

It's this show. It's lame. You're not helping anyone. No one cares.

P.S.A. BOY:

Fine. You're probably right. This was a stupid idea. I don't know what I was thinking.

(turns to P.S.A. GIRL)

I'm sorry.

(He walks off stage down the steps and "out" of the theater down the aisle.)

P.S.A. GIRL:

Hey, wait. Don't go. We can make this work.

(Looks up at the projection booth.)

Ryan! Ryan can you get these guys out of here? They're ruining everything!

(Plants in the audience begin to grumble "This is dumb" "Let's see if we can get our money back" etc. and get up out of their seats to "leave.")

P.S.A GIRL:

Wait! Don't go! Please just give us a chance. It gets better, I swear—

(P.S.A. GIRL also steps off the stage and runs up the aisle. There is an awkward silence and a barren stage. Then all the lights go out.)

**SCENE 2:GHOST ALONE**

(After a brief pause a single spot light comes up on GHOST center stage. The entire theater is dark. Players are stationed throughout the theater with flashlights. As each speaks, they turn on their lights, then turn them off.)

GHOST:

I think I know something about bullying. I see it—I hear it—every day.

VOICE 2

You're such a bitch.

VOICE 3

Everybody hates you.

VOICE 4

You're worthless.

VOICE 5

Why do you even bother trying?

VOICE 6

Nice shirt. Did you get that at GoodWill?

VOICE 1:

VOICE 7

Everyone says you're really easy. Maybe you should keep your legs shut.

VOICE 8:

Whore.

VOICE 9:

You're fat and ugly. You can't change ugly. Maybe you should try to lose some weight.

VOICE 10:

Don't raise your hand in class. No one wants to hear your wrong answers.

VOICE 11:

Do you ever wish you were dead? I know I wish you were.

GHOST:

All those words, used like weapons. I used to think maybe I was hearing things wrong. I mean, who talks like that to another human being?

[The VOICES (V1-V4) continue to berate GHOST from their positions throughout the theater.]

V1:

Why are you looking at me funny?

V2:

God, you're really funny looking!

V3:

What are you looking at?

V4:

Stop looking at me.

GHOST

I wish I was invisible so no one could see me.

V1:

Is something wrong?

V2:

You did this all wrong.

V3:

What's wrong with you?

V4:

You're wrong, again.

GHOST:

Is there something wrong with me?

V1:

What were you thinking?

V2:

Can't you think for yourself?

V3:

Who do you think you are?

V4:

Do you think?

GHOST:

I think I need some help.

V1:

Is there a problem here?

V2:

What is your problem?

V3:

Why are you making this my problem?

V4:

You're the problem.

GHOST:

I've got problems and I don't know how to fix them.

V1:

You look like hell.

V2:

You're going to go to hell.

V3:

Get the hell outta here.

V4:

Go to hell.

GHOST:

It's hell to live like this and feel this way.

(She puts her head down. Give a silent count to 5.  
Then slowly lifts her head.)

I don't know what to do. The words hit me like fists, but they don't leave physical wounds. I don't know where to turn. Maybe it's just me. It's just words, right?

[At this point, there is an audio track of a little girl singing. "Sticks and stones may break my bones, but words will never hurt me." One by one the VOICES in the audience turn on their flashlights and join this track until everyone is singing. It slows to a disturbing distortion—and stops only when ghost-ears covered with both hands screams:]

GHOST:

Stop it!

(All the flashlights go out and the singing stops immediately.)

I hate this. I hate everyone. I even hate you. (pause)  
Some days I think I hate the world. But I don't hate anyone as much as I hate myself.

(Lights out)

**SCENE 3: WELCOME BACK**

(In the classroom. All of the students are congregated/chatting/texting etc. TEACHER is at the front and she calls the class to order.)

TEACHER:

Alright everyone. It's time to get started. I know some of you may know me as Miss. Cox, but I had a name change since last year. So from now on, please call me Mrs. Johnson.

BULLY:

Wait, so you changed your name from Cox to Johnson? Why would you do that?

TEACHER:

Because I got married over the summer.

BULLY:

You didn't want to hyphenate that?

TEACHER:

No, Kyle. I didn't want to hyphenate it.

BULLY:

Why not? Aren't two heads better than one?

GAY:

Just ignore him. And congrats on getting married.

BULLY:

Yeah, ignore me. You married a dick, and he wishes he could.

TEACHER:

(beat) Anyway, I hope you all had a great summer and that you're refreshed and ready to learn.

(there is a knock at the door)

TEACHER:

(turning towards the door)  
Come on in.

NEW KID:

(NEW KID slowly enters the room.) Excuse me, but are you (looks down at schedule) Mrs. Johnson?

TEACHER:

Yes, I am. Why don't you come in and take a seat.

NEW KID:

Thank you, ma'am.

TEACHER:

Are you a new student to Springbrook High?

NEW KID:

Yes ma'am. My name is Matthew. My family just moved here from Kansas last week.

TEACHER:

Well, welcome to Springbrook. We're glad to have you here.

BULLY:

Some of us more than others, right? (nudging GAY)

TEACHER:

Does anyone want to share what they did over the summer? Jenna?

BULLY:

And that's WHAT you did over the summer, not WHO, okay?

SLUT:

Well, we all know who I DIDN'T do, don't we? Jealous much?

BULLY:

You wish.

SLUT:

Actually, no, I don't.

(The scene freezes and SLUT steps forward into her monologue)

SLUT

And this is how my year starts. Again. I don't even know how this all started. I mean, we're all mis-informed, all mis-educated. It's what we learn from every magazine and every movie. We all know the stereotypes. If a guy sleeps around, he's a stud. He gets slapped on the back. His status improves. A girl, on the other hand, well, she can't win. If you don't put out, then you're frigid. You

get the reputation you're cold and no one wants that. But if a girl sleeps around—or if she sleeps with the wrong guy and it gets out, then she's a slut. All it takes is one bad decision. One guy, one bad break-up, and a few choice words on Facebook. Suddenly, everybody thinks they know what kind of girl you are. You don't get over that.

(Scene unfreezes)

TEACHER:

Can we stay on task here people? Summer vacation . . .

MEAN GIRL:

Well, I don't know about everyone else, but I had a great summer. We moved into that new development in Oakside and our new house has a pool, so I spent most of the summer hanging out with my friends and partying by the pool. I'm having another party next weekend, so watch for a text.

TEACHER:

Thanks, Ashleigh. Anyone else? Lia? Did you do anything exciting over the summer?

POPULAR:

Well, we came in 2<sup>nd</sup> at nationals for our dance team competition.

BULLY:

DANCING IS NOT A SPORT.

JOCK:

(looking at PREP) And . . .

POPULAR:

And . . . it was really fun?

JOCK:

(sighing deeply) And you started dating the most awesome guy in this school.

BULLY:

What? We're dating?

JOCK:

No, dipstick, me.

BULLY:

Dude, I do not roll that way, but I know somebody that does... (nudges GAY)

GAY:

Yeah, you're hilarious. Everyone gets it. Now stop it.

BULLY:

(waving hands limply in front of him, speaking with a lisp)  
Yeth, pleath stop it!

GAY:

I wish I could tell you when this all started. I wish there was one moment that triggered it, but I don't remember anything but this. We all get our miseducation somewhere and mine started on the playground. I was 8 years old. It started when I was in elementary school. And it wasn't just one thing, it was a series of events. My dad once said, "It's only words. Words can't hurt you."

The first time someone called me a faggot I had to look it up in a dictionary. It said it was a bundle of sticks. That's what I thought it meant. I thought, hey, it isn't that bad. It wasn't until later that I learned what it really meant.

Well that was a lie. I think I would have preferred the sticks and stones. At least that way, someone else might have seen the damage. It's funny, but a fist leaves such an obvious wound. Some bully pushes you over on the playground and leaves you with a bloody knee, well that's a band aid. But what about when he teases you; calls you a faggot. It's not like the lunch money he stole; he can't give you anything back. Not your pride.

TEACHER:

Anyone else? Uh, (snaps fingers in frustration) you?

GHOST/EVERYGIRL:

You mean Andrew?

TEACHER:

Yes, I'm sorry, of course you Andrew. I'm sorry. You're always so quiet . . .So, what did you do this summer?

LOSER:

(Opens he mouth to talk, but is interrupted by BULLY)

BULLY:

He did nothing.

JOCK:

Nothing but solitaire and Cheetos.

BULLY:

Youtube videos and Facebook updates.

JOCK:

With no comments.

BULLY:

Because he has no facebook friends.

JOCK:

Or friends period.

POPULAR:

Be nice, Josh.

TEACHER:

Andrew? Would you like to explain for yourself? Do you want to contribute to this conversation?

**(The scene freezes. SPOTLIGHT on LOSER other LIGHTS OUT.)  
LOSER stands up and out of the scene into his monologue.)**

LOSER:

You want an Explanation?  
To tell you why I'm quiet.  
Why I don't speak up--  
Speak out?  
Maybe it's because  
I wish I could disappear.  
Somedays I think I'm  
Disappearing  
So much for the saying  
I'm rubber  
You're glue  
Everything you say  
Should  
Bounce off me  
And stick to you.  
But your words don't.

Your words are daggers.  
 Your words are heat seeking missiles  
 They leave your icy tongue and  
 Aim for my warm heart  
 Open and aching to belong.  
 Your words don't bounce.  
 They don't stick.  
 They burrow.  
 They are parasites that fester  
 and multiply.  
 I look in the mirror and see them  
 Weaving and writhing underneath my skin.  
 It's repulsive.  
 I'm repulsive.  
 I want to be a recluse and  
 never leave the house.  
 But I need A Good Education  
 so I can get A Good Job and  
 Become a Contributing Member of Society.  
 So I go. So I come here.  
 So I sit and pretend to be invisible  
 Try to avoid the wrathful stares.  
 My sores, these lesions of hurt,  
 ooze under my clothes.  
 I think I'm rotting.  
 I wish I could hide.  
 Then I'm called on.  
 Called out.  
 Everyone snickers.  
 Everyone turns to look.  
 I'm visible.  
 I'm the freak-show.  
 No one comes to my defense.  
 What's my answer?  
 What do I know?  
 I open my mouth and maggots fall out.  
 This is my contribution for the day.

**(SPOTLIGHT out. Other Lights up. The scene comes back to life.)**

TEACHER:

Andrew? Did you hear me? Do you have anything to say?

LOSER:

No.

TEACHER:

Well, okay then. How about you Lissa? What did you do over the summer?

GHOST:

Nothing. Nothing much at all.

BULLY:

(fake coughing, under his breath, but clear)  
Because you have no life.

TEACHER:

Alright, it sounds like many of you had interesting summers. I hope we can have a great year. Now, everyone get out their textbook. Let's look at the introduction to chapter one. . .

(universal groans) really? On the first day? You've got to be kidding me. Welcome back . . . not.

(Fade to black)

**SCENE 4: THE CAFETERIA IS A BATTLEFIELD**

(In a dark setting, five tables are set up with students sitting at them. There is one table/stand that the CAFETERIA LADY is standing behind. NEW KID is making his way through the minefield that is the cafeteria.)

CAFETERIA LADY:

(Handing NEW KID a tray)  
Good luck out there kid. Try not to make a mess. Bob and weave when you're in there.

(Exits)

NEW KID:

(Begins moving toward first table on stage right)  
Uh...Hey guys, what's going on?

TABLE 1: JOCK

(turning towards his friends)  
Did you hear something? I didn't hear anything.  
(His friends all laugh.)

NEW KID:

I was inquiring about that seat over there. . .

TABLE 1:

In-what? What a nerd. That seat's saved. Just keep on walking.  
(There is a sound of bombs dropping. A flag is put up marking territory.)

NEW KID:

Uh, okay. Sorry about that.  
(moves to the next table)  
Excuse me, is this seat taken?

TABLE 2:

(mocking)  
Excuse me, yes.

NEW KID:

That seat looks open.

TABLE 2:

He said, the seat is taken. Do you have a problem with that?

NEW KID:

Yeah sure, I mean no, I got it. No problem. No problem at all.

(Nerd moves on to another table)

Do you mind if I sit down with you?

Table 3:

(Eyes over NERD, raps bandannas around head)

No room.

(glances at the open seat.)

For you.

(Gunfire is heard)

NEW KID:

(Obvious signs of depression are setting in as NEW KID finds his way to the empty table and sits down. He begins to settle in as a group of people move in from stage right and towards his table)

Hi guys. Would you like to sit with me?

GROUP LEADER:

Actually we were hoping you might let us have this table.

NEW KID:

Well I was here first...

GROUP LEADER:

True, but we really want our own table.

NEW KID:

Couldn't you ask someone else?

GROUP SUB-LEADER:

Listen nerd, this is our table now. Go. Leave.

NEW KID:

(Slowly gets up to leave.)

Yeah...I understand. Have a nice lunch.

(NEW KID stands and walks to the exit. He's met the by TEACHER who stops him.)

TEACHER:

Excuse me son, but where do you think you're going?

NEW KID:

I was just going to leave . . .

TEACHER:

Sorry, but no food leaves the cafeteria. Why don't you take a seat?

NEW KID:

(steps down stage and breaks out of the scene.)

The lunchroom, it's a warzone. If you've ever switched schools or class schedules then you know what I mean. The anxiety and fear of not knowing where to sit or who to approach—it's terrifying. All I wanted was a place to sit, maybe a friend to talk to. I'm not picky, just someone, anyone, but I guess that's too much to ask.

What's wrong with me? Did I tell them how I enjoy Star Wars and playing video games? Maybe I let slip my love of fantasy books. Oh wait, I didn't. I didn't get the chance to say anything. So why am I being judged? Do I smell funny?

(sniffs armpits)

Do I look weird? Am I wearing the wrong clothes?

(pulls at his shirt)

Is it my hair? Well, then why am I treated like this? Isn't it enough that I had to leave my friends and my life to move here? I didn't ask for this. Why won't anyone defend me? They can't all be against me, can they? What am I supposed to do? I don't know what or how to change. And why should I have to? Let that one sink in, for anyone for cares. Now excuse me, while I "enjoy" the rest of my lunch.

(he walks to the trashcan and deposits his lunch.)

(LIGHTS OUT)

**Scene 5: Just Kidding**

(JOCK, BULLY, and LOSER are in the center of the class room. LOSER is reading his text book? JOCK and BULLY slowly close in on their prey...)

BULLY:

(Sits backwards on the chair in front of LOSER.)  
Hey buddy.

JOCK:

(In the desk next to LOSER.)  
...whatcha reading?

LOSER:

(Slowly lowers book.)  
The same thing you should be.

BULLY:

Ooooooh! Nice. Way to look out for us. Why am I not surprised you're reading your school work. Gotta get ahead, right?

JOCK:

Gotta get a scholarship for college.

BULLY:

Don't have anything better to do, do ya? Come on man! Doesn't anything else interest you?

JOCK:

I have some pretty interesting magazines in my locker--if you know what I'm saying.

LOSER:

Thanks, but no thanks.

JOCK:

Dude, you do not want to turn this, uh, opportunity down. Any guy would jump at this chance.

BULLY:

Well, other than him.

(Gestures towards GAY.)

We don't have the magazines he's into. . . unless, that's what you're into too?

JOCK:

EAYOOOOOO!!!

(Both JOCK and BULLY laugh and high five.)

BULLY:

You do get what I'm saying, right?

LOSER:

Yeah...yeah, I get it. I'm not gay, I just don't want to see your stupid magazines, okay. I don't degrade women like that. And as for \_\_\_\_\_, you don't know him. You say crap like that all the time, but you could easily be proven wrong.

BULLY:

(putting his hands up) Whoa now! Can't you take a joke? I don't degrade women, I love women.

JOCK:

You shouldn't take everything so seriously. Maybe you should develop a sense of humor. Maybe everyone wouldn't think you're such a LOSER.

BULLY:

Yeah! I mean let's face it dude, you're kinda...

JOCK:

...weird.

BULLY:

EAYOOOOOOOOO!!!!

(BULLY and JOCK high-five again with huge grins.)

LOSER:

Yeah. . . like I haven't heard that before. Loser. Weird. Got it. Way to be 'original'.

(goes back to his text book.)

BULLY:

(aggressively) Don't be an idiot. We were being nice to you. You aren't being very 'nice' back are you, friend?

LOSER:

(looking BULLY in the eyes)

We aren't friends.

JOCK:

Dude, you're right. You have no friends.

BULLY:

Do you realize no one would notice if you disappeared? No one gives a shit about you. You are nothing. Worthless. Just keep reading your books. Then you can go home at the end of the day and cry to your mama about how mean all the other kids are. You are so pathetic. I don't know why we even bother talking to you.

(LOSER pulls his book up close to his face and shuts out BULLY and JOCK.)

JOCK:

Oh! Facebook, ha! But you're doing it all wrong!

BULLY:

Good one. I didn't know you had it in you.

(High five)

(LOSER looks at his book again.)

BULLY:

So, what do you think? Got anything else to say? Maybe another smart ass come back?

TEACHER:

Watch your language in my class room!

(Standing behind LOSER.)

What exactly are you gentlemen doing over here anyway?

BULLY:

(Fake smile, false innocent tone. Puts his arm around LOSER who visibly cringes.)

Nothing. Just kidding around, you know. Being guys.

(Scene freezes. LOSER breaks into his MONOLOGUE.)

LOSER:

(Breaks character.)

'Just Kidding! Can't you take a joke? You're just that weird. It's all a joke...' Let me tell you all some jokes:

(LOSER steps center stage with a microphone to tell his

jokes in an open-mic format.)

(after every joke, unfreeze and turn towards the audience and "laugh" then turn back and wait for next joke)

What do you call Mexicans in a pool?  
Bean dip.

What's wrong with quadriplegics?  
Nothing. They just don't stand up for themselves.

How tall are gay people?  
(gesture with hand) This tall.

How do you blindfold an Asian?  
With dental floss.

What's better than winning the Special Olympics?  
Not being a retard.

Did you hear about the new blonde paint?  
It's not real bright, but it's cheap, and spreads easy.

How are fat girls and mopeds alike?  
There fun to ride and as long as your friends don't find out.

A black girl and black guy are in a car. Who's driving?  
The cop.

What? What's wrong? Why aren't you laughing? It's just a joke. I'm just kidding around. Who cares if it's offensive or cruel or heartless. Maybe you're just uptight. Maybe you don't have a sense of humor.

Wait, are you laughing or crying?

It's never funny to the victim. It's never funny to me. I've go through this every day-- and nothing changes. They make their 'jokes' and everyone laughs. When did I stop being me? When did I become the joke?

It makes me wonder, if I disappeared, if I died tomorrow, would it make a difference? Would anyone notice I was gone? Would someone else suffer in my place?

(Pauses, looking around at the frozen set.)

It doesn't matter. It never will. No one's going to stop them, no one cares enough to even try. No one gives a crap about me. Nothing will ever change. Maybe, I should just give up already...

(Scene unfreezes)

TEACHER:

(Looks at all 3 boys.)

I think it's time for the 'joking around' to stop. Class is about to begin.

**SCENE 6: AFTER THE PARTY**

(The girls are in a hallway. MEAN GIRL approaches EVERYGIRL)

MEAN GIRL:

Oh, hi Stacy. How are you? Feeling better?

GHOST:

I'm fine. I was never sick.

MEAN GIRL:

Really? I just assumed you must have been sick since you weren't at the party.

GHOST:

(pause. Stare at Mean Girl in disbelief.)  
I wasn't invited to the party.

MEAN GIRL:

You're kidding? I thought I sent a text to everyone. Sorry about that. It's a bummer you didn't go. Everyone was there. It was. . . amazing.

GHOST:

Yeah, bummer.

MEAN GIRL:

You know, Paul was there. I never really noticed him before, but he seemed so lonely, just standing around all by himself. I always thought he was kind of a dork, but he's actually really funny. God, I don't remember the last time I laughed so hard.

GHOST:

Yeah, I know. He's a "funny guy."

MEAN GIRL:

And so much more. I mean, I never would have expected it, but he's an amazing kisser. And his hands . . . wow. Everything about him was a huge surprise, you know?

(STACEY looks down.)

MEAN GIRL

(putting a hand on GHOST's arm.)

Are you okay?

(fake gasp)

Oh . . . you guys aren't going out still, are you? Oh my god. You are. You must feel so terrible. Try not to worry about it. I'm sure it was just a one-time thing, you know. In fact, I bet he was thinking about you the whole time. I didn't really want him anyway. He's all yours.

(MEAN GIRL walks across the stage to her friends who flank her.)

POPULAR:

I thought you didn't like Stacy? Why would you invite her to your next party?

MEAN GIRL

No, I can't stand that skank. I wouldn't invite her anywhere—but she doesn't need to know that.

POPULAR:

Oh. Ooooookay. (She starts to laugh.)

MEAN GIRL

You don't even know the half of it. You couldn't because I never see you anymore. Seriously, where have you been? Are you too good for your friends? Too busy? Oh, yeah, that's right. You've got a boyfriend now so you're with him 24-7 and you just cut everyone else off.

POPULAR:

I'm sorry. It's just really, intense, you know.

MEAN GIRL:

Oh, okay. That's fine. I'm just gonna go throw up now. But we should hang out this weekend. Before you get all fat and pregnant, you know?

POPULAR:

I'm not gonna get pregnant. And I can't hang out this weekend. Maybe next weekend?

MEAN GIRL:

What's going on this weekend?

POPULAR:

I got plans. With Josh.

MEAN GIRL:

Great. You have fun. But don't count on next weekend-- I might make other "plans."

(looks up and sees SLUT)

Maybe I'll have a new best friend by then. NOT.

(calling out to SLUT)

Hey girl. What's up?

SLUT:

Nothing.

MEAN GIRL:

You sure were a hit at the party.

SLUT:

What's that supposed to mean?

MEAN GIRL:

I heard all about it from Marcus. And Travis. And Corey.

SLUT:

Heard what?

MEAN GIRL:

That you did the good deed. In the guest room. Tacky.

**WE NEED TO ADD TO THIS SCENE TO EXPLAIN A BIT ABOUT SLUT.**

(calling after her.)

And you're welcome.

**SCENE: HOW I LEARNED MY PREFIXES AND SUFFIXES**

BULLY:

You don't learn everything from school. I learned all about prefixes and suffixes at home.

(As we hear the words the boyfriend yells out, they appear on the screen, the prefix or suffix, highlighted.)

You are so worthless.

I've never met anyone so incompetent.

You are

**SCENE : Jock**

I think all of this talk about bullying is bullshit. It's a complete waste of time. I'm tired of all your internet chats and parental suggestions. I'm sick of your stupid T.V. after school specials where everything gets solved in a single episode. And who listens to those stupid public service announcements? Don't tell me to talk to my mom. Don't tell me to talk to a trusted adult. I'm no narc.

You want a real public service announcement? Let me do you all a favor. I'll save you the time of having to change the channel.

Hey boys and girls! It's me your school Bully. You don't like being picked on, do you? Well, get used to it. That's the way it is. Fly under the radar. Don't do anything weird. Don't stick up for anyone else—then you're weird by association. Just do what you're expected to do. Be the star athlete. Date the right girl. If your friends all laugh, you laugh too.

You know what my dad said? He said if you aren't on top, you're on the bottom. Better to step on someone than get stepped on. There's 1<sup>st</sup> place and then there are the losers.

I'm not a loser.

You can call me an asshole, but I'd rather be called an asshole than a loser or weak, or worthless.

You know what else my dad said? He said he wished I'd never been born. He said he wished he'd used protection so that he'd never have to put up with my bullshit.

But you don't hear me crying about that do you? I'm tougher than that. I can take anything my old man throws at me. I'll show him.

I just don't know how to be tough and take it like a man without turning into him. And yeah, maybe, I'm a little scared of that.

**SCENE: Words Hurt****Scene: DOG**

(MOM tells her story. She is a victim of a family where she is verbally abused by her husband. She is between her husband and son. DAD verbally abuses her and BULLY tries to defend her.)

MOM:

(starts quiet and increases in volume and intensity with each stanza.)

He likes me quiet.  
 Docile.  
 A dog at his feet.  
 Trained and Well-behaved  
 Ignored as long as she  
 Does what she's told.

He likes me quiet.  
 Doing my work and getting things done.  
 Industrious.  
 Productive.  
 Loyal.  
 Alone.

He likes me quiet.  
 So I sit.  
 And I wait.  
 Hungry for a bone.  
 A kind word.  
 A pat on the head.

And you.  
 You watch me with such disgust.  
 You want me to bark.  
 You want me to bite back.  
 Don't you see that I'm broken?  
 Who would want this old pet?  
 There are no new tricks for me.

You want me to leave.  
 To run away.  
 But I'm leashed.  
 Trained.

Owned.

**Scene: We Go Rounds**

(This scene is linked to the next. Stage Left is the scene of 2 parents arguing. The scene is in a kitchen. MOM has a dish towel over her shoulder. DAD is watching T.V. in a chair.)

MOM:

Good grief. Look at this mess. Is it impossible to put a dish in the dishwasher?

DAD:

What are you muttering about it? If you have something to say, say it to my face.

MOM:

I just wish people would put their dishes in the dishwasher, that's all.

DAD:

People? You mean me? Do you think I'm lazy? I work all day to put food on this table. I think you can handle washing my dishes.

MOM:

No, I don't think you're lazy. I wasn't saying that at all. It's just . . . well, I work all day too. . . nevermind. Have you spoken with your son yet tonight?

DAD:

What? Why are you bringing him into this? I haven't talked to him. I haven't even seen him. So does that make me a bad father? Is that what you think? You think I'm lazy and a bad father?

MOM:

No. Definitely not. You're a great father. You're a wonderful father.

DAD:

You're damn right I'm a great father. And don't you forget it. Maybe you should look in a mirror sometime. You're hardly up for mother-of-the-year. Look at this house. Dirty laundry, crap piled up everywhere. You're incompetent.

(he goes to the cupboard for a glass and a drink.)

MOM:

I'm sorry. That's not what I meant. I didn't mean to say anything. And I'm sorry about the mess. I've just been so busy lately. I'll get started on it right now. (pause) Do you really want that drink? It isn't even five o'clock yet.

DAD:

(slamming his glass down)

Do you ever shut up? Why do you have to be such a nag? Maybe I drink because of you. If you weren't such a bitch, maybe I wouldn't have too.

MOM:

I didn't mean-

DAD:

(mocking) I didn't mean- you didn't mean what? How many times have I told you not to bother me when I'm stressed. Do you even know how much stress you cause me? I don't know why I bother talking to you. You just don't seem to listen.

(pause)

Why are you just standing there? Are you crying again? God you're weak. I thought you were going to clean up this dump? No wonder nothing ever gets done around here. If I don't tell you what to do and when you'd spend the day standing around like a complete idiot.

MOM:

(wiping her eyes)

I'm sorry.

DAD:

You should be. You don't know how good you've got it.

(They turn their backs to one another. Lights out.)

**Scene : They Yell So Loud the Walls Shake**

(BULLY is in his bed. He is listening to his parents fight. We hear them argue from off stage.)

BULLY:

They yell so loud the walls shake.  
 They fight so long my heart aches.  
 I sit and listen  
 Through eyes that glisten.  
 In my bedroom where I hide.  
 My heart empty- Nothing left inside.

They yell so loud the walls shake.  
 They fight so long my heart aches.  
 Our home has become a battlefield.  
 The scars and wounds won't heal.  
 Love is shot to the ground.  
 It's torn up and beaten down.

They yell so loud the walls shake.  
 They fight so long my heart aches.  
 Then the fighting is done.  
 Not a single thing won.  
 No good memories of late.  
 Is their life my fate?

They yell so loud the walls shake.  
 They fight so long my heart aches.  
 Empty and unfilled  
 Everything good's been killed  
 Bruised and beaten  
 My heart has stopped beating.

They yell so loud the walls shake.  
 They fight so long my heart aches.

## SCENE: WE GO ROUNDS

(Lights come up, two spot lights that will need to follow each character. MOM and DAD both have boxing gloves on. ("Words Hurt" is on each of the gloves. We'll also need a bell to signal the start of the "match." They alternate lines with "we go rounds" spoken in unison.)

(Sound of a bell)

MOM/DAD:

We go rounds.

MOM:

From corner to corner.  
Eye for an eye.  
Insult for insult.

MOM/DAD:

We go rounds.

DAD:

A jab, an undercut.  
A step back and  
Surprise attack.

MOM/DAD:

We go rounds.

MOM:

We fight dirty.  
No man in stripes to hold us back.  
No umpire to call the match.

MOM/DAD:

We go rounds.

DAD:

We go for the jugular.  
Aim for hidden weakness.  
The achillies heel  
Cracks in the armor

MOM/DAD:

We go rounds.

MOM:

Our shared history is full of holes.  
Fists in walls.  
Secrets torn open.  
Hearts broken.

MOM/DAD:

We go rounds.

(They turn to face each other in an accusation.)

MOM/DAD:

And you're never in my corner.

**(lights out)**



**WINTER Scene: Photos on the Phone**

[Classroom everyone is talking, the teachers not there, they have their phones out and they are showing each other pictures of SLUT. The only kid unaware is NEW KID who has his headphones on and is in his own world. SLUT walks in and everyone goes silent and stares. SLUT sits in her desk -awkwardly- and people start talking again ... about her ... loudly.]

POPULAR:

[Turning to MEAN GIRL as she sits down] Hey, check your phone. You won't believe the text I just got.

MEAN GIRL:

[Opens her phone and lets out a yelp of delight.]  
What. A. Whore.

EVERYGIRL/GHOST:

(shocked) I can't believe she took that picture.

MEAN GIRL/EXTRA:

Are you kidding? She's a slut. She's always been a slut. What did you expect?

EVERYGIRL/GHOST:

I don't think she meant for everyone to see it.

GAY:

I bet her boyfriend loved it.

BULLY:

You mean, you loved it when your boyfriend sent you his pic, right?

JOCK:

She looks good naked . . . I think she could be a stripper.

POPULAR:

[smacks him on the arm]  
Excuse me?

JOCK:

A cheap stripper. Like day-shift only.

BULLY:

[BULLY slyly comes up behind SLUT and whispers in her ear] Whaddya think? Do you wanna be a stripper? Maybe you need more advertising? I could help you with that.

[SLUT clearly overhears them and tries to block it out.]

BULLY:

Then again, maybe you don't need more advertising. It's such a pretty picture. Your "boyfriend" liked it so much it sent it to all his friends. And they sent it to their friends and their friends sent it to their friends. It's everything you ever wanted, isn't it? Just think: You're popular.

[This revelation CRUSHES her under his breath. She shifts in her desk than runs out of the room. You see her on the other side of the door crying. This is when her Monologue begins.]

SLUT:

I don't know why I'm so upset.  
I've been called it all before.  
I'm The Slut  
The Girl With a Bad Reputation  
The Stupid Bitch  
The Whore Who Stole Your Boyfriend.

You say it like it's truth.  
You say it like you know me.  
But you don't know me.  
You don't know what I am.  
What I've done.  
Who I've done or Who I haven't done.  
I'm so much more than your labels address.  
I'm a Student  
A Friend  
I'm a Sister  
I'm a Daughter.  
I try to make my parents proud.  
I try to be Good.  
But I'm Me. Just a girl. Just a person.

A person who makes mistakes.  
 I'm more than the picture on your phone.  
 So the next time you pass by me in the halls,  
 Instead of calling me some slur  
 Or looking the other direction,  
 Why don't you try something new. (pause)  
 Ask my name.

[She leans against the door with her head down and cries.  
 TEACHER walks up and looks down at her.]

TEACHER:

Is everything okay?

SLUT:

[looking up, laughing]  
 It's perfect, can't you tell? Everything is f-ing perfect.

TEACHER:

Uh, I can see you're upset, but I'd prefer you didn't use  
 that kind of language. . . [pause] Do you need a tissue?

SLUT:

No, I don't need a tissue. I need a redo.

TEACHER:

A re-do?

SLUT:

Nevermind. Forget I said anything.

TEACHER:

Do you want a pass to the counseling office? I'm sure your  
 counselor can help you with whatever you need.

SLUT:

[Laughs.] It's a little too late for that. [SLUT gets up  
 and walks off stage.]

TEACHER walks into the classroom where students are  
 buzzing.

TEACHER:

Everyone. Please settle down. We need to get started. Come on, put the phones away. Now. Thank you.

Looks like most everyone is here. . . or in the building anyway. Wait, does anyone know where Andrew is? Is he sick? Did he move away? He hasn't been her for a couple of weeks . . .

EVERYGIRL/GHOST:

He hasn't been in any of my classes.

TEACHER:

Has anyone seen him around? Anyone talk to him lately?

GAY:

I think he rides my bus.

BULLY:

Bet that's not all he rides.

GAY:

Shut up.

BULLY:

Somebody's missing his BOYFRIEND.

NEW KID:

Uh, sometimes he's on-line.

BULLY:

World of Warcraft. Whoooie! Sounds like a fun Saturday night!

NEW KID:

No, usually it's Call of Duty.

JOCK:

If you gotta dream, dream big.

MEAN GIRL:

Do we really need to waste any more time on this? He isn't here.

BULLY:

[in an electronic tone] GAME OVER.

[Switch to stage left. LOSER is sitting by himself at home. He's all alone. He has a laptop and headphones on. He takes the headphones off to deliver his MONOLOGUE. On the side screen roll statistics about kids and truancy/missing school due to absences.]





**SCENE: BAD DOG**

[Opens as a couple walks in to a class room. He is yelling at her, cutting her down, and telling her what to do. She is resistant. He starts to say hurtful, cutting things.]

JOCK:

(seething) Stop being such a bitch.

[At that moment the scene freezes. Only GIRL is able to move about the scene. As she talks she circles BOY and calls out to him.]

POPULAR:

What do you think I am? Your dog? You think you can call me whatever you want? Do you think this is some kind of training? Well, I disobey. I defy.

I do without your permission.

Go ahead. Lash out.

Threaten punishment.

Use your words to

Crush

Batter

Break

Leave

invisible

marks

I think

I should make a stand.

Bite

Claw

Bark back

Or run away

I think

I should

Leave—

(GIRL turns back to BOY and pauses.)

But I just stand here. Silent. Waiting. For things to get better.

(GIRL begins walking back to BOY.)

You say: You love me.

You say: You didn't mean it.

You say: Please, don't leave

You say: Stay.

(GIRL is standing at the desk where the scene began)

So, I sit.  
 (GIRL sits down.)

JOCK:  
 (leaning over her appreciatively.)  
 Good girl.

(Lights out.)

**Scene: NOT NEUTRALITY**

(GAY is in the classroom. He is being teased without mercy. The teacher says/does nothing directly.)

TEACHER:  
 I wish I knew.  
 Just what to do.

I'm just not sure  
 About this little "rumor"

I think it might be a very personal issue.  
 I don't think this is the time or place to state my own  
 view.

Maybe if I just turn away  
 This awkward situation will go away.

What do I say?  
 Do I ask if he's gay?

I love these kids, I love my job, there's nothing I would  
 rather do—  
 Do I make a stand or state my case? I wish I knew.

(GAY looks to TEACHER for support and help, but finds  
 nothing. He is broken and hurting. His sexuality is not

clear—nor does it matter. After the bullying freezes, he breaks out into song—show-tune style and moves around the stage. The other students will look up to sing the chorus, then look back down.)

GAY:

(singing)

Why does it have to be this way?  
 Why does it matter what they say?  
 Do you also think I'm gay?  
 Should it matter anyway?

This is not neutrality.  
 Please stop this insanity.

You all sit so expectantly.  
 Is this what you expect from me?  
 This is not neutrality.  
 While I'm lying in my bed.  
 Wishing dreaming I was dead.  
 Won't somebody rescue me?  
 Stop this pointless revelry  
 All of the expense of me?

This is not neutrality.  
 Please stop this insanity.

I know I'm not the only one.  
 Please just let this fight be done.

(He sits back into his desk. A bully throws a ball of paper at him and yells)

Bully:

Faggot.

Teacher:

Turn in your books to page sixty one.

(beat)

(Lights out.)

**SCENE:** It All Adds Up  
(from Leadership Camp)

Everyone in a row (frozen) As she walks by the person (or people) unfreeze and walk forward to say what they have/need to say. 1, 2, 3, etc.

End: "It all adds up." Bang.

(Lights out.)

The end of this scene signals the end of Winter.

On the screen:

It's always darkest  
Before the dawn. . .

These words slowly emerge as the sun slowly comes up and the lights come up on stage.

Words on Screen:

SPRING

**SPRING****Scene 20: TEACHER WAKES UP**

(Class is dismissing. GAY is slower than the rest as he puts his stuff in his bag. BULLY is taunting him.)

BULLY:

(Laughing to self before his attention turns to GAY.)  
Hey fag, can I ask you a question.

GAY:

(Eyes roll as he, unenthusiastically, puts his stuff in his bag.)  
You probably will anyway.

BULLY:

(Chuckling.)  
When you and your boyfriend are "together"—

GAY:

(interrupting) I don't have a boyfriend.

BULLY:

Yeah, sure you don't. Anyway, when you're together, what are you?

GAY:

I don't know what you're asking.

BULLY:

I'm just wondering if you're a top or a -

TEACHER:

(interrupting) Stop. You're done. This "conversation" is over.

BULLY:

Hey, my friend and I were just talking—

TEACHER:

And now you're not. Go to class.

BULLY:

Can I have a pass?

TEACHER:

No. I'm not giving you a pass. You need to go now before I write you up for harassment .

BULLY:

Harassment? Who do you think I was harassing?

TEACHER:

Do you really want to have this conversation right now? I know what you were doing. The two of you are not friends. To the best of my knowledge, you never were. You harass him because you think he's gay and I'm not going to allow it anymore. What you're doing is not okay. And it's going to stop.

BULLY:

Fine. Whatever. I'm out—but not out of the closet.

(BULLY runs out the door. )

TEACHER:

I'm sorry about that. Just so you know, I'm going to write him up.

GAY:

It's okay. You did enough. Don't bother.

TEACHER:

No, I didn't. I haven't. But I'm going to change that.

GAY:

So why do you want to help me now?

TEACHER:

I . . . I'm figuring some things out. My personal beliefs . . . my faith. . .my job. . . Lissa . . . all of you . . . It's really hard to explain.

GAY:

Does it matter?

TEACHER:

(surprised) Does what matter?

GAY:

Does it matter if I'm gay? You've never asked. Everyone assumes I am. I've gotten teased for years about it. So what I'm asking is, does it matter? Do gay kids "deserve" to get treated like crap every day? Would you support me if you thought I was being wrongly accused?

TEACHER:

I'm not asking. That's you're business.

GAY:

You're right. It is. But you didn't answer the question.

TEACHER:

It doesn't matter. It shouldn't matter. I want you to feel safe. I want everyone to feel safe. I think maybe my job is more than just teaching my content. I think kids learn better if they're safe. School should be safe. So I've got make my room a place where everyone can be themselves. I mean how focused can you be on class if you're worried about someone teasing you because of your skin color or religion, how much money you have or don't, the clothes you wear, your sexuality, or even your interests.

GAY:

That . . . that sounds good. You do realize that might take some time?

TEACHER:

So we'll work on it. We'll all work on it. How else can things get better?

GAY:

Finally. (with a wry grin) You give me an assignment worth working on in class.

## SCENE: AND HE BECOMES A HERO

BULLY:

Hey, sexy. How've ya been?

SLUT:

What do you want?

BULLY:

Why do I have to want something? Or are you offering to give me something? Your advertising is pretty impressive.

SLUT:

I don't know what you're talking about.  
(She starts to walk away.)

BULLY:

Really? Because I've seen your picture.

SLUT:

(pausing) Great. You and everybody else.

BULLY:

(coming up behind her) Look, I was just wondering if, maybe, I could get one of my own.

SLUT:

You're an ass.

BULLY:

But you have such a nice one.

SLUT:

Shut up. You're such a pig.

BULLY:

Really? You think someone like you is too good for me? I'm hurt. In fact, I think you owe me an apology.

NEW KID:

Back off, dude. She's not interested.

BULLY:

What's this? You've got your own bodyguard now?

NEW KID:

I'm not her bodyguard. I just think you should leave her alone.

BULLY:

Ooooooooooh, very threatening. Very dramatic. And how are YOU gonna make ME do that?

(SLUT steps in between)

SLUT:

Enough. I don't need anybody's help.

BULLY:

See? She doesn't want your help. She doesn't want YOU.

NEW KID:

I think you should leave, now.

BULLY:

And what are you going to do if I don't?

NEW KID:

I'm not gonna "do" anything. I'm just going to "say" that you're a nobody who gets off on hurting others. I've gone all year putting up with your shit. You have some major issues. (points to SLUT) Look at what you're doing to this sweet girl. You have no right to say or do *anything* to her, especially negative. Your opinions don't matter and your comments are stupid.

BULLY:

(Shocked) Nobodies EVER said that to me before. (Pause for self-reflection) Am I really *not* funny?

SLUT:

(Shakes her head no)

BULLY:

Oh god...I'm just like my dad. (Leaves almost confused and scared at the same time)

SLUT:

What was that for?

NEW KID:

What do you mean?

SLUT:

What do you want? You wanna picture too?

NEW KID:

Picture? I don't know what you're talking about.

SLUT:

I can't believe you would stand up for me.

NEW KID:

You're worth sticking up for.

SLUT:

Am I really supposed to believe you didn't see that...that picture?

NEW KID:

(Smiling) I have no idea what you mean.

SLUT:

Oh god, I'm such an idiot.

NEW KID:

No, you're not. You're smart and beautiful.

SLUT:

(Begins a thought) I...(changes thought) thank you. (SLUT smiles, and they both walk off and out of the scene)

SCENE: JUST LIKE DAD

(After being told off by NEW KID, BULLY starts to have some internal battles with himself as he realizes just what he's been doing to the people around him. He's returning home from school, but stops with his hand on the door handle.)

BULLY:

That guy... He's gotten into my head! I mean, what does HE know about me?!

(He looks at the audience, releasing the door handle.)

He makes it sound like I treat everyone like shit. Like there's nothing good about me. He just had to step in the middle of my conversation and rub my face in it . . . .like he's so much better than me! He makes it sound like I go off on everyone! (he continues to escalate) Like I'm out of control and have no respect for anyone! Like I just attack people for no reason. . . That I'm like...!

(Stops and looks like he's been hit in the face, pure realization and fear. Maybe even shame.)

That I'm like...

(He's almost lost his voice.)

...my DAD.

(BULLY's anger is gone as he goes through the door to find MOM trying to stop crying as she's folding clothes.)

BULLY:

Mom, what's wrong? Are you okay?

MOM:

(Jumps at the sound of BULLY's voice.)

Oh! Oh, you're home... I'm sorry. . .

(Takes a sniffling breath.)

I didn't hear you come in. I'm fine.

BULLY:

Then why are you crying? What did he do this time?

MOM:

(Tries faking a smile.)

You're father hasn't done anything. He was just really stressed and...he wanted to come home to a quiet house but...but I had a neighbor over and...

(Trails off with shaking breaths.)

BULLY:

Mom...

MOM:

He was just really, really stressed. This is all my fault. I should have known better. It was just so awkward with Mrs. Johnson here. I didn't want her to hear . . . She shouldn't have been over here. I...I don't even know why I'm crying.

(Turns back to the laundry, hoping that BULLY will leave it be.)

BULLY:

(Shaking his head.)

He...! He yelled at you with the neighbor here?! He did that?

(Backpack falls to the ground as he steps forward, menacingly.)

(angrily) Why didn't you do something? Why didn't you try to shut him up!?

MOM:

(Surprised with obvious fear.)

I... I would never do that. Everything he said made sense.

. . .

BULLY:

(Speaking with his hands.)

Everything he "said"? Don't you mean everything he screamed at you?! What was he 'saying' this time?! Was it about how much of a disaster the house always is? Or was it that you weren't smiling enough? Was that it? Or was it that his laundry wasn't folded correctly? You know, nothing you do is ever good enough for him. What's the point of doing the damn laundry in the first place? (he grabs the basket away from her and scatters clothes all over the floor.)

MOM:

(Shaking head with no words to speak.)

BULLY:

(Falls silent.)

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

MOM:

(Looks at BULLY with tears in her eyes.)

I know.

(she leans over to pick up the laundry.)

BULLY:

(Kneels beside MOM putting a hand on her shoulder.)  
Stop. I'll clean this up. . . I don't understand why you just take it all the time. Why do you let him do this to you?

MOM:

(Shakes head, mouth opening like she's going to say something, but nothing comes out. She bows her head, feeling like she can't hold everything together anymore, like everything is going to fall to the floor, like she's going to fall to the floor, and finally break.)

BULLY:

(Strong emotion and, almost, assertiveness to his voice.)

This has been going on for too long. Something has to change. If he doesn't change... it's only going to get worse.

(Searching for words. When he finally find them, his head slowly bows.)

I'm afraid . . . I'm afraid I'm turning into him.

MOM:

(On her knees, holding his face so he has to look at her.)

You are nothing like him! You are such a good boy. You're my sweet boy. You have friends, teachers, and relatives that love you so much...

BULLY:

(Holds MOM's hands and stares blankly.)

No, I don't. My teachers don't care about me. I treat my best friend like crap! And the only girl who ever gave a damn about me is dead. The only real family I have is you.

(Pause.)

And I don't want to lose you.

MOM:

I'm right here. I'm not going anywhere.

BULLY:

But that's the problem. It's only going to get worse. He's going to come home. And he's going to go after you for something. And I'm going to hear it all from my room and I . . . (sobs) and I won't be able to do anything about it.

MOM:

(She's no longer crying. Hugs BULLY tightly.)

Honey, you're wrong.

BULLY:

I'm sorry... I'm so sorry I didn't do something. I wanted to save you, but I didn't know how.

MOM:

(Releasing hug.)

It's my job to save you. And things do need to change around here.

DAD:

(Comes stomping in after throwing the door open.)  
What the hell happened here? Why is that laundry all over the floor?

MOM+BULLY:

(Both stare at DAD silently)

DAD:

Why are you looking at me like that? What the hell is wrong with you two?!

(Steps closer.)

Why were you crying again?

(No answer.)

Are you trying to make me angry? Somebody better answer me! I mean it. What the hell is going on around here?

(His insecurity is becoming clearer and clearer as he grasps at straws.)

MOM:

(Loud but not too loud.)

Enough.

DAD:

(Glares at MOM.)

What did you just say?

MOM:

(Flat out mad.)

I said that's enough.

DAD:

(Surprised, caught off guard.)  
Now, you listen here--

MOM:

(Quiet and then getting louder.)

No YOU listen. I have listened to *everything* you've had to say to me for years. Now you're going to listen to me. I'm done with the insults, the name calling, the "shut ups." The words you've said hurt more than punches. Sometimes I wished you would just hit me instead.

DAD:

I've never hit you.

MOM:

(laughing) I know. I wanted you to hit me so I could leave, but you never did. I guess I thought the words didn't count . . . but they do. They hurt me. They hurt our son.

(Pause.)

I love you, but we can't go on like this. Things need to change. They need to change, now. You have two options and you need to choose one. The first, is that we get help. You have a problem and you need talk to someone about it. We all need to talk about it. The second option, is that I leave you.

DAD:

Hold on a second--

MOM:

No! I won't. Not one more second.

DAD:

(Steps back in complete shock.)

MOM:

So what's it going to be?

(Scene freezes, lights go out.)

GHOST: (?) (Work on this!)

People don't always realize what they're doing, until it's almost too late. Sometimes people don't want to see what they've done. Until someone makes them see where they're heading, what they're going to end up like. Sometimes a person goes and shows the other this on purpose and other times, they don't even realize they've done it. A word, a gesture, a display of selflessness. It doesn't always register at the moment of the cause, but what that cause shows at the end, like here, may very well change someone's whole life.

### Scene 2?: LOSER gets a call

(The setting is LOSER'S room. In this scene several people try to connect with LOSER. First he's contacted by TEACHER by phone. Then there's an email message from SLUT. Finally, NEW KID shows up at his front door. The scene opens with the sound of a **home phone ringing**. LOSER hears the phone ring, but doesn't answer it. We hear the voicemail.)

TEACHER:

Uh, hello this is Mrs. Johnson. This message is for Andrew. Andrew, it's been several weeks since you were last in school and I'm very concerned about you. I know they are proceeding with truancy, but that's not why I'm calling. Your classwork is very good and you're a very talented writer. I'd hate to see that talent go to waste. I really think you should come back to school. I know we haven't talked a lot in the past, but I shared some of your work with the school newspaper advisor and she thinks they may have a spot for you on staff. It would be a great way to get involved here at school. I look forward to seeing you again soon. Please don't hesitate to contact the school if you have any questions. (pause) I know you think you go unnoticed, but that's not true. We do miss you Andrew.

(There is a sound of a **BEEP** as the message ends.)

(LOSER turns to his computer and opens up his email. **Lights up on the screen. Show school email account. Put text up on the screen. As LOSER reads, we hear the auditory voice of SLUT as she composes the message.**)

Hey Andrew,

I hope this is your email account. I guessed this was it, but I'm not sure you even check your mail so who knows if you'll ever get this. I noticed you've been gone for a

long time. I hope you're okay. School has been rough lately. I don't know if you heard, but Lissa died. I know she talked to you in Biology.

Do you remember that time when we were 6 and in Mr. Smith's 1<sup>st</sup> grade? We always played together on the playground. You saved me from the "monsters." Weird how you remember stupid stuff like that, huh?

I know we haven't talked much in the last few years and I'm sorry about that.

Everyday, I look at Lissa's empty seat and know she's never coming back. Then I look at yours. Come back to school, Andrew.

-from SLUT

**(Doorbell rings.** Then it rings again. Finally, a third time. LOSER gets up and walks over to the door and opens it, but doesn't invite NEW KID inside.

LOSER:

What do you want?

NEW KID:

Hey Andrew. It's good to see you too.

LOSER:

(skeptically)  
Oh, sorry. (pause) Hi.  
(there is an awkward pause.)

NEW KID:

Is there any chance you could let me in? It's freezing out here.

LOSER:

Okay. (He opens the door and lets NEW KID in. NEW KID blows on his hands and rubs them together.

NEW KID:

Thanks man.

LOSER:

Uh, what's going on?

NEW KID:

Well, I just knocked on three complete strangers doors because all of these townhouses look exactly alike and I didn't know which one was yours.

LOSER:

Why were you trying to find me?

NEW KID:

Somebody had to. You've been gone for weeks. How are you possibly going to get caught up in your classes if I didn't show up and bring you some light reading?

(NEW KID dumps a bag of books and materials in front of LOSER.)

LOSER:

Thanks?

NEW KID:

So what's wrong with you? You don't look sick. There were some rumors you had some rare disease, but I said you were in the federal witness protection program for your work as an undercover agent.

LOSER:

Oh.

NEW KID:

That was supposed to be a joke. I was wondering about you and since I don't live that far away, I figured I'd try to find you.

LOSER:

You didn't have anything better to do?

NEW KID:

Internet's down. (beat) That was another joke.

LOSER:

Got it.

NEW KID:

So, why aren't you coming to school? Your house seems nice enough, but I don't see a bowling alley or a pool or an in-home theater, so it isn't that great.

LOSER:

I, I didn't really like it anymore.

NEW KID:

Does anyone? I mean, unless you are at the top of the social hierarchy, who really loves school? It's just a means to an end, you know. Go to high school so you can get a degree and go to college to get a job and make money and have a real life. You know what I mean?

LOSER:

I guess.

NEW KID:

It isn't all bad.

LOSER:

Maybe not for you.

NEW KID:

Look at me. Did you really just say that? I'm not exactly popular, but I still get up and go to school every day.

LOSER:

But I'm not like you.

NEW KID:

I'm not so sure. Imagine you're playing HALO. You're sitting there, playing by yourself. Sure, you could follow the storyline, throw a few grenades, but eventually you get bored or even a little sad, but then you remember you have XBOX Live. You login and find yourself a team. Suddenly, everything is fantastic again. You're relearning everything you knew before, but it's better. Now you have people to carry medpacks with you. You always have someone to take point and watch your back.

LOSER:

So . . . you'd carry my medpacks?

NEW KID:

Well, metaphorically, yeah. School is better when you aren't alone. And I'm not. And if you come back, you won't be either. Whaddaya think?

(Scene freezes. Loser steps out into his monologue)

LOSER:

What do I think?

I think at any moment a flying unicorn is going to come through my front window.

I think it sounds like a nice story, but stuff like that doesn't happen to people like me.

But this kid is standing in my living room.

So maybe. . .

Maybe it could get better.

But what if I go back and it's just more of the same.

What if it's better, but not for me?

Then what?

I don't want to be a loser anymore.

But then again, I don't really have anything left to lose.

(Scene unfreezes.)

NEW KID:

Hey, uh, I'm not trying to over stay my welcome. I just wanted to make sure I talked to you.

(NEW KID moves towards the door and looks over his shoulder.)

See you Monday?

LOSER:

Yeah... maybe.

(NEW KID MOVES OUT THE DOOR and away. LOSER goes to the doorway and calls out to him.)

Wait. I, uh, I have an XBOX. And an extra controller.

(pause) You wanna play some HALO?

NEW KID:

Campaign or Verses?

**(Lights out. Scene ends.)**

**SCENE 23: SHE LEAVES HIM**

(JOCK and POPULAR are texting. We see what they are texting on the big screen. POPULAR and MEAN GIRL are hanging out. MEAN GIRL notices that POPULAR's phone is buzzing—repeatedly. (We need buzz audio for this.)

(The phone is sitting on a table. It starts going off. BUZZ. BUZZ.)

MEAN GIRL:

Your phone is buzzing.

POPULAR:

Yup.

(BUZZ.BUZZ.) MEAN GIRL:  
Are you going to answer that?

POPULAR:

Nope.

(BUZZ. BUZZ.) MEAN GIRL:  
Seriously, your phone is blowing up.

POPULAR:

I know.

(BUZZ. BUZZ.) MEAN GIRL:  
Okay, I've had enough of this. (She grabs the phone)

POPULAR:

Don't. Please don't answer that.

MEAN GIRL:  
(holding the phone out of POPULAR's reach)  
Why not? (suspiciously)

POPULAR:

Just don't. I don't want to talk about it.

(BUZZ. BUZZ.)

MEAN GIRL:

Who the hell is texting you?

(She slides open the phone and reads. The audience sees the text on the big screen.)

(Shows all of the texts. Scrolls through hundreds of texts. They are all from JOCK. They are all demanding, repetitive, intrusive, and rude.)

JOCK:

I miss U babe.

What R U doin?

Can we get 2gether?

Why don't you answer?

Where R U?

Who R U with?

Pick up.

Pick up now.

I'm coming over.

MEAN GIRL:

Holy shit. (in disbelief) This is . . .

POPULAR:

Intense?

MEAN GIRL:

No, this is f-ed up. Is he like this all the time?

POPULAR:

(pause) He's . . .

MEAN GIRL:

No. Don't say it. He is. He's like this ALL THE TIME. Lia, this not okay.

POPULAR:

He's just a little possessive.

MEAN GIRL:

A little? Are you kidding? Look at your text history. This isn't a little possessive . . . O.M.G.! All this time I've been giving you crap about not hanging out with me and this is what was going on.

POPULAR:

It wasn't always like this.

(BUZZ.BUZZ.)

MEAN GIRL:

So what? This isn't normal. He's a creeper.

POPULAR:

He's not—

MEAN GIRL:

Yeah, he is. I know he's your first boyfriend and all, but you deserve better. This . . . this isn't love.

POPULAR:

Like you know what love is?

MEAN GIRL:

(Grabbing at her heart sarcastically) Oooohhh. Ouch. You know what, you're right. I don't know what love is. But I know what it isn't . . .

(RING. RING.)

And it isn't this. (She opens the phone)

Hey. This is Lia's phone and since she hasn't picked up the last thousand times you texted, I'm guessing she doesn't want to talk to you so don't leave your message at the tone and she won't get back to you. BEEP. (She hangs up.)

POPULAR:

You shouldn't have done that.

MEAN GIRL:

You're right. (pause) YOU should have.

POPULAR:

I . . . I don't know how. He never leaves me alone. Whenever we're at school we're together. And when I'm home he's calling or texting me 24-7. I tried to tell him to give me some space and he freaked out. He says he loves and he doesn't want to lose me, but it's too much. He's . . . he's kinda scary sometimes. I'm afraid of what he'll do if I leave.

MEAN GIRL:

(sarcastically) Well that's a great reason to stay. He's a creepy jerk, but I don't want him to feel bad, so I'm just going to feel bad instead.

POPULAR:

You don't understand. It's not that simple.

MEAN GIRL:

You have some options you know. You aren't just stuck. You could flat-out break up.

POPULAR:

That won't work.

MEAN GIRL:

You could get a restraining order against him

POPULAR:

But he's never hit me.

MEAN GIRL:

He doesn't have to hit you to be abusive.

POPULAR:

(Door bell rings)  
(with distress) He's here.

MEAN GIRL:

Don't let him in.

POPULAR:

I have to.

MEAN GIRL:

You don't—

(POPULAR opens the door and let's JOCK in)

JOCK:

What is SHE doing here?

POPULAR:

We were just hanging out.

MEAN GIRL:

We're friends. Friends spend time with each other. Maybe you should go see some of yours?

JOCK:

(to POPULAR)  
Tell her to go.

POPULAR:

(looks at JOCK and then at MEAN GIRL)

JOCK:

Lia— tell her she needs to leave NOW.

MEAN GIRL:

Lia, if you want me to go, I will. But if you need me, I'll stay.

POPULAR:

I . . . I don't think I want her to go.

JOCK:

What has she been saying about me? She's poisoning your mind. She's turning you against me.

MEAN GIRL:

Do you hear what you're saying? We're friends. I haven't seen her in weeks. I miss her. She needs her friends.

JOCK:

No, she needs me. She loves me.

MEAN GIRL:

You need her. There's a difference.

JOCK:

What do you know? You're just jealous of what we have. No one will ever love you the way I love her. You're worthless and pathetic and (blah, blah)

MEAN GIRL:

I don't ever want to be "loved" like this.

(turning to POPULAR)

Hon, I'm sorry, but I'm gonna head out. I can't listen to him. You do what you need to do. You'll leave when you're ready—and I'm here for you no matter what.

(She walked out the door.)

POPULAR:

I'll call you later.

MEAN GIRL:

I know.

(Door closes)

JOCK:

God, I'm glad that bitch is gone. You are not going to see her again. Do you understand? She's trying to break us up.

POPULAR:

She's my best friend. I've known her forever.

JOCK:

I thought I was your best friend? And we're gonna be together forever. That's what's most important. If you really loved me, you'd do what's best for us.

POPULAR:

(quietly) But what about what's best for me?

JOCK:

What's that supposed to mean?

POPULAR:

Since I met you, I quit seeing my friends, I quit dance team, I quit student council, I quit everything I loved to do so I could spend time with you. I'm not going to give up my best friend too. I can't do that. I won't do that.

JOCK:

What are you saying? Are you breaking up with me?

POPULAR:

Yeah. I am.

JOCK:

You can't break up with me.

POPULAR:

I can. I just did.

(They stare at each other. JOCK moves towards her to give her a hug and she visibly flinches)

Don't.

JOCK:

What did you think I was going to do? I was going to hug you—God, I would never hit you. Do you think I would?

POPULAR:

(Backing away)  
You need to go.

JOCK:

We can make this work. I love you. We're good for each other.

POPULAR:

No, we can't. I can't. I'm sorry, but we're through.

JOCK:

You'll regret this. You're nothing without me. You'll come back. Just wait. You'll see.  
(he leaves.)

POPULAR paces around her room then slides to the floor.  
(pause) She pulls out her phone.

POPULAR:

Hey. Can you come back?

MEAN GIRL:

(Knocking on the door and entering)  
Hey.

POPULAR:

(disbelief) How did you get here so fast?

MEAN GIRL:

I never left the driveway.  
(The girls hug.)  
LIGHTS OUT.

**SCENE 24 :GHOST ALONE (The End Scene)**

(Lights come up to GHOST alone on center stage. She's in a white dress, ethereal. All other characters are strategically placed around the theater same as the first scene.)

GHOST:

It was an awful fall and a horrible winter. And then, it got better. It actually got better. And I missed it. They always say it gets better, only I didn't believe them. I wish I had. I only saw the darkness and I quit before the dawn. It wasn't anyone's fault. It was everyone's fault. It wasn't just one thing. It was everything. It was every little comment, every snide remark and every dirty look. It was a big mistake that I can't take back.

Now, it's getting better.

It's getting better for kids-- kids who were teased because someone thought they were poor, or dumb, or different, or weird, or slutty, or gay.

It's getting better for adults- teachers and parents, people who needed as much guidance and support as their children and students.

It's getting better because people are figuring out that it's not okay to hurt people with their words any more than

it's okay to hurt them with their fists. The wounds are the same— it's just some bruises and scars are more visible.

People wake up. People grow up. But I won't. I can't. Not anymore.

It's getting better. They always said it would. And I'm going to miss it all.

I'm going to miss them all.

JOCK:

She was so smart. She always helped me with my Algebra.

ABUSER/DAD:

She was good girl. I was so proud of her.

SLUT:

She was a good friend. I could always count on her to be there for me when I needed her.

MOM/VICTIM:

She was loving and kind. She gave the best hugs.

TEACHER:

She was a hard-working student. She always tried to do her best.

GAY:

She had a great sense of humor. She always made me laugh.

LOSER:

She talked to me. She saw me when I thought I was invisible.

MEAN GIRL:

She was pretty, but never stuck-up. We could have been friends.

NEW KID:

She was the nicest person I knew.

BULLY:

She loved me. She always saw the good in me—even when no one else did. I wish I got the chance to love her back.

GHOST:

(Slowly fading to black)

All those words could have made the difference.

Make sure you say them

Before someone like me is (beat)

Gone.

(Spot up on the dress lying on the floor.)