

CROSSES TO BEAR

By Bryan McCampbell

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PUBLISHED BY

ELDRIDGE PUBLISHING COMPANY

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STORY OF THE PLAY

How students cope with the death of classmates due to drinking and driving is poignantly brought home in this one-act. Lisa is consumed with guilt because she didn't take her brother's car keys away even though she knew he drank. Kurt is racked with guilt because if he hadn't been drinking, he wouldn't have needed his sister to pick him up. Now their siblings are dead, in one instantaneous accident, and everyone at school is in shock.

Further tensions arise when the football team wants to erect a roadside cross in memory of Lisa's brother right next to a cross the girls are planning in memory of Kurt's sister. But aren't roadside crosses supposed to remind us of the victims of drunk drivers? One teen made a choice, another teen didn't get one.

As Kurt and Lisa try to cope, their high school friends must also try to heal. Their losses becomes their crosses to bear. A sensitive and carefully crafted drama.

CAST OF CHARACTERS

(5 m, 5 w, 6 flexible, extras, doubling possible)

LISA: Brad's sister; working to understand her brother's death.

KURT: Heather's brother; trying to understand his sister's death.

LUKE: Member of the football team. Friend of Kurt and Brad.

BILL: Another.

SAM: Another.

PAUL: Another.

RUTH: Student upset over the reasons for Heather's death.

LEE ANN: Student who had a crush on Brad.

*ROY: Student.

*GUS: Another.

*CARLA: Another.

*TEDDI: Another.

**DR. WYNN: (Voice over) Brad's therapist.

**REV. HILL: (Voice over) Lisa's counselor.

ELIZABETH: Volunteer for Heather's memorial.

PAIGE: Also a volunteer.

*NEWSCASTER: Anchor for the local news station.

*EDWARD ALBANY: News reporter.

**PRINCIPAL: (Voice over) School principal.

*Indicates flexible part which can be male or female.

**Indicates part can be doubled.

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SETTING

The majority of the play occurs in the school commons area. There are tables with chairs set up at various points about the area. The TV news desk and interview area are isolated from the rest of the set by area lighting.

PROPS

RUTH: Book bag, homework, cross.

PAUL: Cross.

LEE ANN: Watch.

SET PROPS: Miscellaneous school books, teddy bear, picture, cross.

SOUND EFFECTS

School bell, P/A announcement tone.

Scene 1

(AT RISE: CURTAIN opens on a darkened stage. At extreme DSR a spot finds a NEWSCASTER sitting behind a desk.)

NEWSCASTER: The Jacksonville High School State Championship celebration ended in tragedy last night when Bradley Carter, Jacksonville's All-State quarterback, lost control of his car and ran into oncoming traffic, resulting in a head-on collision that took the life of Carter and a young woman. Carter was pronounced dead at the scene. To add to the tragedy, police claim that alcohol was indeed a factor in the accident. The driver of the other vehicle, also a student at Jacksonville, died shortly after arrival at Stivers Hospital. Her name is being withheld pending notification of her next of kin. In other news, the Mayor is planning to begin again...

(The SPOT begins to fade as does the ad-lib news of the ACTOR. The news desk is struck as the sounds of busy high school hallways are heard. There is a sound of a BELL as LIGHTS come up full on stage. This is Jacksonville High School's commons area. There are several lunch room tables sitting in different areas of the stage. Off CSR, several students sit at a table and talk.)

ROY: My dad told me that his head was cut off.
Completely.

GUS: His head?

ROY: Yeah, windshield shaved him clean.

GUS: God. Man, what a way to go. *(THEY pick up their bags and begin to exit SL.)*

ROY: Dad says he was drunk outta his head.

GUS: *(Not believing.)* How would he know?

ROY: The news said there were bottles all over the place an' his car smelled like a wino.

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(ROY and GUS exit. LEE ANN and RUTH sit at a table off CSL and hide that they are listening to the boys as they exit. Lee Ann is crying.)

LEE ANN: I can't believe that they'd say that.

RUTH: Say what, that he was drinking?

LEE ANN: Yes. How could they say that about Brad?

RUTH: 'Cause that's what the news said.

LEE ANN: Well, that doesn't make it true. Brad didn't drink.

(The last line is said with heavy denial.)

RUTH: Really. How would you know?

LEE ANN: I just do, that's how.

RUTH: Lee Ann, grow up. Everyone knew that Brad drank.

He was a drunk. *(LEE ANN quietly cries harder.)* You're gonna have to get over it, Lee Ann. What are you so upset about?

LEE ANN: Because he's gone, that's why. I can't believe it.

(Several of the FOOTBALL PLAYERS enter SL and cross to DSR table. They all wear letter jackets with black armbands on in honor of Brad. They sit and talk quietly among themselves.)

RUTH: *(Giving in.)* Lee Ann, I thought you got over that crush a long time ago. *(Softens voice.)* He didn't even know who you were, not unless you ran in those circles. *(SHE points discreetly to the FOOTBALL PLAYERS.)* He didn't know who you were.

LEE ANN: That's not true.

RUTH: Yes it is, and you know it. You don't need to be crying over him.

LEE ANN: You're heartless, Ruth. A person died.

RUTH: People died, Lee Ann! Don't forget about Heather.

LEE ANN: I'm not.

RUTH: That's who you should be crying over.

LEE ANN: I am.

RUTH: She was just driving...*(SHE begins to cry a little.)* She's the one you should cry about. *(As SHE becomes just a bit more upset, she rises and exits SL.)*

End of Freeview

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