

Divided We Fall: A Series of Teenage Monologues

By Bryan Starchman

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Dedication

For my students: present, past, and future.

Story of the Play

Everyone has some burden, but shared pain is always easier to bear. This monologue-based play is sure to strike the hearts of teens, showing them that any frustration, embarrassment, loneliness, and grief they are experiencing is not limited to them alone. Some major issues within the dozen monologues include a girl's concern about her body image, a boy who feels smothered by his girlfriend, a girl who runs to escape her home life, and a boy who feels guilty after failing to defend someone who needed help. Each actor, while wearing a hooded sweatshirt that symbolically confines him in his own world, remains onstage the entire time, occasionally serving as a member of the chorus, thus an integral part of a true ensemble piece. The play will help remind students that although they may think they are all alone there is, in reality, love and support all around.

PLAYWRIGHT'S NOTE

I feel the most important component of this play is to have some sort of program or support set up. When it was first produced, we partnered with a local women's shelter that also specialized in teen counseling. The goal of the play is to let students know they are not alone and to start a dialogue, so if they are moved to start talking after they have seen the play or been a part of the production, be sure to have available school counselors, representatives from local organizations, or at the very least lists of various hotlines. I recommend the following site which provides information for dozens of national organizations:

<http://www.teenhealthandwellness.com/static/hotlines>

Characters and Monologues

1. **“D” The Girl I Once Knew (male)**
2. **“I” The Skin I’m In (female)**
3. **“F” Her Life Depends on Me (male)**
4. **“E” Why I Run (female)**
5. **“V” And I Did Nothing (male)**
6. **“N” Better Living through Chemistry (female)**
7. **“L” The Shadow Knows (male)**
8. **“A” The Password Is... (female)**
9. **“W” Keep it Down (male)**
10. **“U” He was my Brother (female)**
11. **“T” I Just Wanted to Teach (male)**
12. **Entire Cast United We Stand**

SETTING: The setting is a public high school in Anywhere, USA.
The time is the present. The stories describe the recent past.

Premiere Performance

A version of this show was performed May 21, 2013 in the Richard D. Fiester Auditorium on the Mariposa County High School campus. The collaborative cast and crew included West Bothwell, Sage Hart, Ben Schiff, Tomben Cunningham-Summerfield, Kira Hart, Aminta Dunn, Kylie Treese, Kylie Bazinet, Taylor Woodward, Chase Kelsey, Josh Levy, Sadie Holmes-Good, Rebecca Adams, Sebastian Padua, Bryan Starchman, and Aaron Marcus.

PLAYWRIGHT'S NOTES

All characters appearing in this work are fictitious. Any resemblance to real persons, living or dead, is purely coincidental. These monologues are works of fiction and represent events that might occur in a teenager's life. A specific character's name, even though it is fictitious, may match that of someone in the audience. While this series of monologues is meant to be relatable to audience members, pure coincidence could make it far too personal and maybe even result in the audience making assumptions about those around them. To avoid this, the main characters' names are simply letters. The letters have not been chosen at random. If rearranged, and in some instances used more than once, they create anagrams, spelling out "Divided We Fall" and the word "United." All other names mentioned in the actual body of the monologues do not relate to real people and were chosen by the author at random. Directors may change specific names (i.e. "Russell" and "Sarah" mentioned in the first monologue.) at their discretion.

This play can be produced in a few different ways. The original staged production followed the format described in the script with each actor holding a script hidden in a black binder. They set these black binders on a music stand to use as a backup prompter when they approached the microphone. This play also works well as reader's theatre, with all of the actors lined up in chairs or on stools with scripts in hand. Specific monologues can be cut out to meet your needs or single monologues can be used as competition pieces. As with any cuts, royalties still apply, so please contact Eldridge Publishing at hiStage.com for more information before performing cuts.

If a chorus member has a single line during a monologue, it will be separated to break into the monologue. The chorus will also often speak at the same time as the lone actor or actress. In those cases, the key words that they share will be in **ALL BOLD CAPS, UNDERLINED, AND ITALICIZED**. These additional voices represent key thoughts, feelings, and memories of the speaker delivering the monologue.

PRODUCTION NOTES continued at end of script.

THE GIRL I ONCE KNEW

(“D” is hesitant to go first but separates himself from the group and walks down to the microphone. He lowers his hood.)

D: There was this girl I once knew. It was back in eighth grade but I’d known her for awhile. Her name was Susan. *(Beat. Thinking.)* No. It was Sarah. Yeah, Sarah. *(Still unsure.)* Susan...or Sarah. *(Laughs to himself.)* You know, it’s funny. You grow up with someone almost your entire life and once she’s gone, you only remember a few things. I guess I never really knew her that well, I just knew *of* her.

She always seemed to sit in front of me in class, so I knew her hair really well. It was brown, but with those like streaks of blonde. What do you call those? Highlights? And it wasn’t the kind you do at home, they looked good. Professional. Like a movie star. I think she had some money. Her nails were always new too. I mean, decorated in different ways. I think she must have spent more time on her nails than on her homework because she’d usually turn around and flash me this smile and I knew that smile meant she needed to “borrow” *my* homework again.

I was 13. I looked 10. But she...she looked like the high school girls I’d see at the bus stop. Don’t get me wrong, **SHE WASN’T STUPID** or anything. I mean, she wasn’t held back, she was 13 too, but girls develop faster than guys, right? I think she **PLAYED DUMB** though. I know it isn’t considered cool to get straight A’s, but I looked like I was in the fourth grade and didn’t have a chance with a **GIRL LIKE HER** so I just did my homework. The guys seemed to like that she needed all this help, like a damsel in distress. But she was so put together, so well-dressed, and never had a hair out of place, she couldn’t have been as dumb as she acted. No one seemed to notice but me. She fooled everyone else.

D: (Cont'd.) The guys would move in, even the truly dumb ones like Russell and he'd put his arm around her as he crowded in behind her desk, trying to show her how to draw a parabola on her graph paper. Sure, what he drew looked more like a trapezoid than a parabola, but she didn't care because **HE WAS PAYING ATTENTION** to her.

They started going out. I'm sure I was jealous at the time, but I was jealous of anybody who'd **ACTUALLY BEEN KISSED**. (Beat.) They kissed a lot. I remember they got written up for sneaking into a stall in the girls' room and making out during fourth period.

What I really remember though is how the boys treated Russell. He was a **STUD** and **THE MAN**. And then...they had sex. They were the first kids I ever knew who had **SEX**. I mean, maybe it was going on and I was just oblivious, but I knew they had sex because **SHE CHANGED**.

She didn't walk into class with her head held high anymore and I could hear whispers all around me. Everyday someone would call her **EASY** or a **SLUT** or a **WHORE**.

I mean, she wasn't knocked up. She wasn't sleeping around. In fact, Russell **DUMPED HER** and started dating some other girl who giggled too much and always needed help on *her* homework. (Beat.) Sarah didn't turn around and ask me for help anymore. She didn't ask anyone for help. She just kept to herself and worked hard but the name calling got worse. **SLUT. WHORE. SLUT. WHORE.** It was written on her locker in permanent Sharpie. It wasn't whispered anymore, but instead was spit into her face as girls walked by. **SLUT. WHORE.** ("Whore" can be substituted with "Skank," "Easy," "Tease," or cut all together.)

And then she just broke. Some guy was egging her on during homework time in math and the substitute that day didn't seem to care. This kid in the back was grunting.

End of Freeview

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