

FLYIN'

by
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STORY OF THE PLAY

Brett Spencer yearns to do more, to be more. So she and her best friend Nora form this kind of group thing to help them get through their senior year of high school without losing their minds. No rules, no constitution, not even a name, it's just a place to meet and be yourself. Their friends join them, Paige, who tries not to overeat because she feels so empty inside; Juice, just out of a treatment center; Danny, who hangs loose, hangs tough and just hangs on, and others who are seemingly always on the outside looking in at the popular kids.

Hurting, confused and fearful, they feel like broken misfits. But one incident makes them realize that in life there are rules, important rules that will affect how you feel inside. And when you follow those rules, you can face the future and start flyin'.

SYNOPSIS OF SCENES

ACT I

Scene 1: The shelter house.

Scene 2: The high school, several days later.

Scene 3: The shelter house, that night.

Scene 4: The high school, several days later.

Scene 5: The shelter house, that night.

ACT II

Scene 1: The high school, the next day.

Scene 2: The shelter house, that night.

Flyin'

- 3 -

CAST OF CHARACTERS

(9 m, 10 w)

BRETT SPENCER: Yearns to do more, be more.
ALLIE CAVANAUGH: Works to hold herself together.
PAIGE CARLSON: Wants desperately to fit in.
NORA DELANEY: Extraordinarily normal.
JUICE JONES: Original in thought and dress.
JACEY HAYES: Finds she's more than a girlfriend.
MELANIE HUNTER: One of the "in" crowd.
SHIREEN: Another.
TAMMY: Another.
PHYLLIS AVERY: Holden's shallow mother.
HOLDEN AVERY: Popular but lonely.
DANNY CASSIDY: Hangs tough, hangs on.
GRAHAM CLAYTON: Thinks everyone else is a loser.
MARK PARFITT: Hypochondriac.
ANDY DUVCHEK: Self-proclaimed screw up, quiet.
MAX MEYERS: One of the "in" crowd.
ROB CHRISTENSON: Another.
KELSO: From Danny's gang.
NATE: Local drug pusher.

Flyin'

- 4 -

SETTING

On a platform USR, is Brett's bedroom, suggested by a desk and chair. On a second platform just below the bedroom area is the shelter house, represented by a picnic table and benches. The rest of the stage is a high school hall, with a row of lockers USL, and benches DSR and DSL.

PROPS

In addition to books and book bags for all the students, props include a journal, pen, and fliers for Brett; papers and nasal spray for Mark; and candy bar for Paige.

Flyin'

- 5 -

ACT I
Scene 1

(AT RISE: BRETT is at her desk, writing. Brett is full of fire and energy. She thinks she's strong, wants to be tough, and succeeds in being vulnerable.)

BRETT: I have always thought there were three species. Boys. Girls. And me. I've always thought diaries were stupid. Diaries are for the "supposed to" people ... the ones who do everything right. The girls who think about proms and dates. Diaries are not for someone like me. The third species. But then I decided to call this a journal, and that seemed to make it okay. Journals are for people who want to change the world. And I do. And I am! I'm going to be someone. I have not yet decided for what I will be famous, but my SAT scores did indicate it will not be in the areas of math or science. That's why I decided to start this journal. To figure out where this great place is I'm going to. And how exactly I'm going to get there. And what exactly it is I'm going to end up as. And because journals are invaluable for biographers, I also wanted to write about the group that Nora and I started. Nora doesn't want to be famous and that's good, because every famous person needs at least one non-famous person she can count on. You can count on Nora.

(LIGHT on NORA on the main stage. She is sensible and practical ... with great longing to be neither.)

NORA: *(Addressing the audience.)* Nora Delaney. Age 18. I am a very normal person. Not a dweeb or a feeb or anything like that. Just ... normal. I figure in about five or six years, I'll really be something. Gorgeous, rich ... but in a normal sort of way. Just your normal, average, rich, fantastically gorgeous person living a normal, average, unbelievably fantastically successful, wonderful ... normal ... life.

Flyin'

- 6 -

BRETT: (*Writing.*) So anyway, Nora and I decided to start this group kind of thing, to help us get through senior year without losing our minds. What little of our minds we have left after junior year.

(*BRETT crosses down to the shelter house as NORA crosses up.*)

BRETT: I don't think we need a constitution or officers or anything like that.

NORA: That would make it seem like the PTA.

BRETT: And that would make us seem like our mothers.

(*LIGHT on PAIGE on the main stage. Paige is earnest, awkward, eager to please. She speaks in a rush.*)

PAIGE: (*Addressing the audience.*) When Brett and Nora asked me to join their group, I was really, really happy because, let's face it, I'm a joiner. I just really, really like to be a part of things. Anything. Something! I just want to ... fit. See, I spent most of my life, right up to last year actually, not fitting. Anywhere. Especially into clothes. I was a tub. My parents aren't tubs. My mom is anything but a tub. She spends hours doing these really awful aerobics. Her body is so hard, you could shellac it. So I am not genetically disposed to tubdom. I don't even have a sluggish metabolism. What I have, I guess, is this empty spot inside, all the time. And the only way I can ever fill it, even for a little while, is with food. After I pig out ... which I absolutely, positively do not do anymore ... I feel all warm and full. For a while. Until my mom finds out and I get all nervous, which makes me stuff six frozen Ho-Ho's in my mouth. Which I absolutely, positively do not do anymore. (*Crossing up to the shelter house.*) Do you think I worry too much about my weight?

BRETT: How can you worry about your weight at all, when the entire world is in flames?

PAIGE: It is?

BRETT: Metaphorically speaking.

Flyin'

- 7 -

PAIGE: I think I worry too much. I worry that I worry too much.

BRETT: We should read things at our meetings ... important things. Things with meaning! *(Quoting, with fervor.)* "Some men see things as they are and say, why? I dream of things that never were, and ask, why not?"

PAIGE: Cher said that, didn't she?

BRETT: Robert Kennedy said that!

NORA: *(Dryly.)* Close.

(LIGHT on MARK on the main stage. Mark means well, but he can drive you up a wall with the best of 'em.)

MARK: *(Addressing the audience.)* Mark Parfitt. Age 17. I think the girls asked me to join because I'm so comfortable to be with. *(Flatly.)* And so desperate. I mean, I need this group. It's like this morning. I was feeling pretty good. No excess drainage of the nasal passages, no overt pigmentation of the eye cavities. It was a pretty good morning! And pretty good is as close as I ever get to great. So I decided to take inventory. Teeth? Not bad. I mean, I floss daily. I water pik! Hair? Okay. Skin? No zits you can see. Except for that one over there. And this one over here. And that one down there. Right then I knew the truth. I was having an epidermal eruption! And let's face it, the hair wasn't really okay. It was like limp parsley ... like a carpet remnant! Stuck on my head. My funny shaped head. And who was I kidding? My teeth are pathetic. I should have had braces! *(Frenzied.)* Why didn't I have braces? Was I a deprived child? So there went my pretty good day. Right down the tubes. I didn't even want to leave the house without a mask, a hat ... and extensive dental work. *(Crossing up to the shelter house.)* Do you want my cholesterol count before you let me in? Blood count? Blood type? *(Pulling out a huge mass of papers.)* I have my partial medical history right here.

Flyin'

- 8 -

(LIGHT on HOLDEN on main stage. He's capable, idealistic.)

HOLDEN: *(Addressing the audience.)* Holden Avery. Age 18. *(Crossing up to the shelter house.)* I asked Brett if I could join your group.

PAIGE: *(Beside HERSELF.)* You? You want to be in our group? You? You're popular!

HOLDEN: That's just a word, Paige ... I don't even know what it means.

PAIGE: I do. I know exactly what it means. I've never been it, but I know all about it, so that if it ever happens, I'll be ready.

HOLDEN: I just need to talk to someone. Who listens.

PAIGE: The popular kids are always talking. Mostly to each other. But if you kind of get in the middle, they have to sort of talk around you, so you can kind of pick up on what they're saying. Not that I listen. Are we going to have refreshments in this group? Not that I'd eat 'em.

MARK: I would.

(LIGHT on JUICE on the main stage. Juice is an original, in thought and dress.)

JUICE: *(Addressing the audience.)* Juice Jones. Age is without meaning. Most of life is without meaning when you get right down to it, but hey, we got to go with what we got, right, and what else is there, know what I mean? I'm just outta a treatment center. Drug addiction. Before that I was addicted to Rocky and Bullwinkle cartoons. I couldn't make it through the day without watchin' five or six of 'em. Then I couldn't make it through the day without five or six hits. I got an addictive personality, know what I mean? Hey, I know all the right words ... all the big words. I know all about me. That's all we did in the treatment center, talk about ourselves. Self-actualization all day long. I'd kinda avoided myself before. Doin' drugs and watchin' Rocky and Bullwinkle is a great way to avoid things. Especially yourself.

Flyin'

- 9 -

JUICE: *(Cont'd.)* So I get home and try to unload myself, and guess what? I won't go away. So now I got to figure out what to do with old me, myself, and I. Know what I mean? *(Crossing up to the shelter house.)* So does anyone care if there's a genuine Kentucky fried freak in the group?

MARK: I resent that!

JUICE: I mean me, Mark. Jeez.

(LIGHT on ANDY on the main stage. Andy is a good kid, a painfully shy kid, and when he does talk, it's hesitantly.)

ANDY: *(Addressing the audience.)* Andy Duvchek. Age 17. I'm a screw-up. *(Crossing to the shelter house.)* Uh ... hi.

DANNY: *(Entering, taking a belligerent stance.)* Everybody out. *(DANNY has an attitude. He's a kid on the edge, always ready to shove back.)*

BRETT: *(Responding in kind.)* What do you mean, everybody out?

DANNY: Don't you speak English? I mean, get lost.

MARK: *(With HIS usual apprehension.)* Is this going to escalate into physical violence?

BRETT: This is our place!

DANNY: This is my place.

MARK: Because if this is going to escalate into physical violence, you should know I'm a bleeder.

PAIGE: *(To DANNY.)* You're in my comp class, the new guy. The one who just got out of juvenile hall.

DANNY: That's me all right. I just get sprung outta one joint, and they stick me in another one.

NORA: What did you do?

MARK: Is what you're going to tell us make me hyperventilate?

DANNY: I ran away. And then I ran away again. And then they put me in the hall, and I ran away from there. And then the step-jerk said he was gonna kill me ... but we moved here instead.

BRETT: So you spend most of your time running away.

DANNY: Bustin' loose I call it.

BRETT: And you hang out here?
DANNY: I like it here.
HOLDEN: No one can get on you here.
DANNY: *(In some surprise.)* That's right.
ANDY: *(Unsure.)* Holden said it would be okay if I came tonight. So is it? Okay?
PAIGE: Why wouldn't it be?
HOLDEN: You're a good guy, Andy.
ANDY: I'm a quiet guy.
HOLDEN: Quiet is okay.
ANDY: Loud is better.
HOLDEN: It's not better or worse. Quiet is just quiet.
PAIGE: Like popular is popular. You're either popular ... *(Flatly.)* ... or you're dead.
ANDY: It's not that I don't have things to say. It's just that I never... I can't seem ... ever to ... uh ...
PAIGE: Get 'm out.
ANDY: *(With relief.)* Yeah.
PAIGE: Me, too.
NORA: Paige, you never shut up!
PAIGE: I know and I'm sorry, and I worry about talking too much, but no matter how much I talk or how much I worry, I never really say what it is I want to say. Which is okay, I guess, because what I do say is usually so stupid. That's what people say, anyway.
DANNY: You gotta know the jerks are always tryin' to pitch the bull at you, tellin' you this is wrong, and that's stupid, when they don't have a clue.
BRETT: And you do?
DANNY: I can spot bull a mile away.
NORA: So you're telling us what we need to get through high school is a built-in bull detector.
BRETT: What we say here isn't going to be right or wrong! And when we're here, we're not smart or dumb ... we just are.
DANNY: What are you? The Boy Scouts?
BRETT: *(She's off again.)* We're seekers! Searchers after the truth.
DANNY: Do you always say stuff like that?

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