

GONE TOMORROW

A Play about AIDS

by Daniel S. Kehde

Based on a story by
Mary Elizabeth Kehde

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PUBLISHED BY
ELDRIDGE PUBLISHING COMPANY
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STORY OF THE PLAY

Rick, an intelligent ninth grade student athlete, has his first sexual encounter with Amanda, a senior. He has four more relationships before he graduates. By the spring of his senior year, when he tests HIV positive, he has inadvertently exposed more than fifty of his classmates to AIDS.

That number has little impact on most audiences until the end of the play when fifty audience members are called to the stage from the names on cards they are handed.

HISTORY OF THE PLAY

Gone Tomorrow is continuing to be produced by Covenant House of West Virginia, Inc. in high schools and junior highs around the state. Since the program began in 1995, *Gone Tomorrow* has been seen by over 18,000 students and adults state wide, and its video version has won numerous awards nationally.

CHARACTERS

(1 m, 5 w, 1 flexible, extras if desired)

RICK DAVIDSON: A student at a junior college.

AMANDA: A pretty, personable high school senior.

JESSICA: A bright high school sophomore.

RHONDA: A sexy, self-confident high school junior.

JENNIFER: A bubbly, high-strung high school junior.

ALLISON: A spirited, fun-loving high school senior.

DR. MEYERS: A physician.

EXTRAS: Liz and 3 or 4 giggling girls. (Actresses above can double in these roles.)

Prior to the production, make up fifty, 3x5 cards with the names listed in the last scene (one name per card). Hand out the cards to fifty members of the audience. When the name on the card is read by the actor playing the doctor, the audience member holding the card should walk up on stage. The final result is a very graphic representation of the number of normal students easily exposed to HIV.

PRODUCTION NOTES

This play can be effectively performed in an area as informal as a gymnasium or cafeteria as well as on a well-equipped stage. Action takes place in three areas on stage; left, center and right, thus simple lighting is very effective. Props are minimal, and strictly supplemental to the action at hand.

SETS

A park bench (stage right)

Three straight-backed chairs

A screen or curtain signifying offstage right and left (optional)

Scene 1

(AT RISE: The stage is empty. A YOUNG MAN, appearing to be about 21 and dressed in a jacket and tie, walks up on stage left. Lights on the remainder of the stage fade out so only he is seen.)

RICK: My name is Richard Davidson. My friends call me Rick. I've been asked to tell you my story today. Maybe it will help some of you. *(Pauses.)* But that's for you to decide.

(Lights fade on stage left and rise stage right on a WOMAN, also about twenty one. SHE is pretty, energetic and personable. SHE smiles frequently and earnestly and speaks with a great deal of personality.)

AMANDA: Hi! My name is Amanda Green, and about four years ago my parents sent me to live with my aunt to finish high school. *(Laughs.)* No. I wasn't pregnant. Why is it everyone always thinks that? Anyway ... well, there was this guy, you know, his name's Ted; and well, the folks ... well, he was twenty-four, and the folks really didn't want me hanging around him. No. It was worse than that. They really blew up when they found out I was going out with him. I mean, they REALLY blew up. Well, I did kind of stay out all night with him, but it was their fault. My dad ... this is what my dad said, "If you go out that door with him, don't bother coming back." *(Shrugs.)* So I didn't. Anyway, the folks called the cops, and the cops came and found me – it wasn't as if I was hiding – I was in homeroom. Yeah, do you believe that? Sitting there playing dots with Janine and two cops walk in the door. *(Laughs.)* A runaway? What kind of runaway goes to homeroom? Anyway, so they take me to the office and call the folks; and they come down and send me back to class. Makes sense to me, right? Anyway, so we go to this family counseling thing where my folks yelled at me some more, and they decided to send me to my aunt's,

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AMANDA: *(Continued.)* so I wouldn't see Ted again. You know, Ted was cute and all ... but he ... was ... so ... stupid. I never told the folks but, after spending the night with him, I really didn't want to see him anymore anyway. So I moved in with my aunt. My aunt's really nice. But I didn't know anybody else in town. Here I was a senior and all my friends were 500 miles away. Two doors down from my aunt's house was this little ninth grader named Ricky. You've got to know Ricky. *(Laughs.)* Every school's got a Ricky.

(Lights up stage left. RICK has changed clothes and taken on the mannerisms of a 9th grader, gawky and unsure. HIS voice is higher and more excitable.)

RICK: *(Waves.)* Hi Mandy!

AMANDA: *(Shrugs apologetically.)* We used to ride the bus together, okay? *(Sarcastically.)* My folks were really going to let me have a car. It was kind of all right, though, between me and Ricky. We got each other through the first few days, you know? So nobody hit on me, and no one beat up on Ricky.

(Lights up on RICK in the school hall. As he stands there, a girl walks past. He is obviously attracted to her.)

RICK: *(Stammering.)* Uh, hi Liz. *(The GIRL walks by unnoticed.)* Liz? Hey, Liz!

(HE looks at the ground and sighs. Light fades.)

AMANDA: *(Shakes her head.)* What a man. Around Thanksgiving, Ricky got it bad for this Liz girl. I guess she was cute, at least to him; but what a bitch, you know? As if she was any better than he was. He'd write her letters, and she wouldn't answer him. He'd call her, and she wouldn't come to the phone. It got to be Christmas, and he bought her this real expensive bottle of perfume. He must have sold everything in his room for that.

AMANDA: *(Continued.)* And he gives it to her, and the bitch just laughs at him. Laughs at him.

(Lights up on RICK, sitting by himself on a bench stage left, his head in his hands, his book bag alongside of him. It's winter. HE'S dressed in a winter coat and ball cap. AMANDA looks over at him and back to the audience.)

AMANDA: Jeeez. *(Calls out sadly.)* Ricky. *(Shakes her head and walks over to HIM and sits down. HE looks up at her.)* I heard.

(HE shrugs.)

RICK: Does it always hurt like this?

AMANDA: I don't know. *(Takes his hand.)* I don't think so. At least not every time. What do I look like, an expert?

(RICK laughs, but still looks down. He reaches beside him and pulls out a small package about the size of a bottle of perfume, wrapped in Christmas paper, with a bow on it.)

RICK: Want some perfume?

AMANDA: What, you got it back?

RICK: *(Nods his head, still looks at the ground.)* Bitch.

AMANDA: *(Laughs loudly.)* All right Ricky.

(Puts HER arm around HIM and hugs him. Lights fade to black. Spot comes back up on AMANDA at her original place.)

AMANDA: *(Laughs and looks back fondly at the darkness where the bench used to be.)* Well, maybe not every school. That spring went by all right. I actually went out a couple of times—nothing serious. Let's face it, I wasn't that anxious to get involved again. I just wanted to graduate and get on with my life—whatever *that* might be. And Ricky was starting to learn the ropes, if you know what I mean.

End of Freeview

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