

# **NOTHING FOR GRANTED**

**A TWO-ACT DRAMA**

**By Daniel Shafer**

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### **STORY OF THE PLAY**

Darby is a senior in high school, editor of the school's newspaper and dating the homecoming queen. Everything in his life is normal with one secret exception. Darby has HIV, which he contracted from a blood transfusion as a child. The play shows what happens when a group of typical high school students learn of Darby's disease and how they deal with the loss of a close friend to AIDS. The play opens with humor as Darby deals with his diverse newspaper staff, moves forward with romance as he ends one relationship and starts another with Wanda, and ends with a dramatic scene.

### **SYNOPSIS OF THE PLAY**

#### **ACT I**

Scene 1: One morning before classes begin

Scene 2: Two weeks later, after school

Scene 3: Night of the homecoming dance

#### **ACT II**

Slide Prologue

Scene 1: The following spring, one day after school

Scene 2: The next morning

Scene 3: One month later

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**CAST OF CHARACTERS**

*(2 M, 6 F, 1 Flexible)*

**MRS. SNODGRASS** - Faculty advisor for school paper  
**RANDY** - Good writer, but a goof-off  
**DARLENE** - Assistant editor  
**HEATHER** - Airhead girl on news staff  
**DIANE** - Heather's friend, also on staff  
**TIFFANY** - Darby's girlfriend of two years, Homecoming Queen.  
**DARBY** - Editor of the school paper, HIV positive  
**WANDA** - Animal lover  
**\*KIM** - Photographer for school paper

\*The role of Kim may be cast as a male or female

CAST FOR THE ORIGINAL PRODUCTIONS OF  
*NOTHING FOR GRANTED*

MRS. SNODGRASS - Melissa Mantyk  
DARBY - Chris Duvernay  
RANDY - Wayne Harrington  
Dave Caroland\*  
DARLENE - Adrienne Eder  
HEATHER - Kristy Steward  
DIANE - Sam Howard  
TIFFANY - Stacie Albert  
WANDA - Janey Rockwood  
KIM - Lauren Petre

\*\*\*\*\*

DIRECTOR - Jennifer Trupp

\*Dave Caroland played the role of Randy for the St. Clair County AIDS Commission performance.

## **SETTING**

The play is performed on a single box set of a school newspaper production room. Four computers line the walls, one DSR, one DSL, and two along the UPS wall. There is an entrance to outside hallways SL and SR. Along the back wall are two doors. One USR is marked "Teacher's Office" and the other, USL is marked "Darkroom" and has a warning light or sign near it. Next to darkroom is a bookshelf with stereo and speakers on one shelf, a mirror on another shelf and books on the other shelves. SR of bookshelf is worktable. Various signs and posters related and unrelated to newspaper production hang on the walls. Among them are large signs stating "No Food or Drink at Computers." DSL is a small desk for the paper's editor. An "Editor" nameplate sits on desk facing audience, along with other desk related items. Also DS, just right of CS, is a large table with four chairs around it.

**PLACE:** High school newspaper production room

**TIME:** The 1995-96 school year

## **PRODUCTION NOTES**

**Slide Presentation:** Stage some seasonal events if possible (Halloween, Christmas) to show the passage of time. Casting the play a few months in advance will allow cast members to be photographed together at a number of events in different seasons. The play may be staged without the slide show, but the production will then lack the development of the relationship between Wanda and Darby. It is a lot of work, but the slide show was very effective and well received by the audience in the original production.

**Animals:** While they are unpredictable, the use of dogs adds a great deal to the play and helps establish Wanda's character. In the original production, a Yorkshire terrier was used for Poopers and a golden lab puppy for D. D. For the dog urine, squirt gun ring was used with yellow water.

**Costumes:** Actors portraying students wear clothes typical of teenagers attending school. Sweaters/jackets/sweatpants and other clothes can be used in layers and quickly pulled off for quick changes between scenes in order to establish a passing of time.

## **PROPS**

SET PROPS: Three tables with computers or typewriters, one table, one teacher desk, bookshelf, worktable, eight chairs, posters for wall, "Teacher" and "Darkroom" signs, Harold statue, mirror, stereo, books for shelf, "editor" sign for desk, waste baskets, picture in frame, miscellaneous objects in desk drawers.

SNODGRASS- tote bag, keys, papers, squirt gun ring, empty box, legal pad, money

RANDY- backpack, pop can, layout pages, magazine, Twinkie

DARLENE-books, compact, layout pages

DIANE-backpack, notebook, layout pages

HEATHER-backpack, purse, film, layout pages

KIM-camera bag, chemical bag, camera, towel, layout page

WANDA -dog leash, birdcage (w/fake bird), towel, purse, dental floss, layout pages, backpack

DARBY-Harold statue (the tackier, the better), backpack

TIFFANY-pom-poms

**Darby's Column:** The information in the column read by Mrs. Snodgrass in Act II, Scene 3 was researched and is accurate. Information from your state or city should be used where appropriate. Your local county health department should have the necessary statistics.

## **End of Freeview**

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