

A SCHOOL LIKE OURS

by Joe Cherubino

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STORY OF THE PLAY

Chris, an all-American student, is healing. Having survived a shooting at school, he is starting to get on with his life. He has moved to a new school. He meets new friends; Allison, a girl with a big heart; Trent, the most popular kid in school with problems at home; and Randy, the kid no one seems to like.

While dealing with everyday issues like homework and relationships, Chris and the others find themselves in the middle of an ongoing battle between Randy and Trent. What starts as name-calling escalates to a fight and then turns much darker when Randy brings a gun to school.

Set in a high school or middle school, **A School Like Ours** provides a realistic and thought-provoking look at many of the issues facing youth today, i.e., relationships, self-image, the need to belong, and violence. It also demonstrates the power young people have to find positive solutions when dealing with these complex issues.

Running Time:
90 minutes

**To Charlie E., Matt D.,
and the rest of the original cast and crew:**
Thank you. You're the best. This is all yours.
I hope you enjoy it.

CAST OF CHARACTERS

(5 m, 5 w, extras)

CHRIS: Well dressed and good-looking, an all-American boy.

RANDY: An ordinary-looking student.

TRENT: Football star, the most popular kid in school.

JOSH: Trent's sometime sidekick.

ALISON: Trent's oldest friend; caring and sensitive.

HEATHER: Trent's girlfriend; flirt and a bit of a tease, and generally obnoxious

BROOKE: Heather's friend.

STEPHANIE: Classic student, works hard.

MALE STUDENT

FEMALE STUDENT

MR. ALVEREZ (VOICE)

COACH (VOICE)

MRS. DUNCAN (VOICE)

ANNOUNCEMENT (VOICE)

EXTRA STUDENTS

A School Like Ours was originally performed at Schaefer Middle School, Springfield, Ohio on November 2, 2000 under the direction of Joe Cherubino with the following cast:

CHRIS..... Charlie Edwards
RANDY Matt DeLong
TRENT Greg Rydel
ALISON..... Alicia Coonrod
HEATHER..... Jessica Meadows
BROOKE..... Chelsea Smith
JOSH Scott Ryon
STEPHANIE..... Megan Stedman
MALE VOICE Mark Linquist
FEMALE VOICE Ivy Hatcher
MALE STUDENT Bryant Weber
FEMALE STUDENT..... Evyn Steinberger

AUTHOR'S NOTES

This play was written out of a need for meaningful theatre for middle school actors. School safety and all of the shootings have been a hot topic recently. Somehow that planted itself in my brain. My students loved the idea. This is heavy material. I kept hearing during preproduction as we ironed out some of the kinks in the script and started picking music "This is going to be hard." Along with that, when the latest school shooting graced the evening news, a cast member looked at his mother and said, "See, that's why Mr. Cherubino wrote this play."

We had a lot of success with this piece, being asked to perform at many other schools as part of their school safety events as well as community events related to safety and ending violence.

There was the fear of the playwright and the hope of the educator that I was writing a museum piece. The playwright in me would like to see this play survive, at least for a couple of years. However, the educator in me would love to see this trend in our schools rapidly become a thing of the past. Possibly, this play can stand as a reminder of the tragedy that has occurred and, unfortunately, continues to occur in schools across this country.

Is this the final word? Of course not. It is one situation, one possible solution to a complex problem. It is, however, a start.

There are only a couple of specific things to keep in mind when staging this show. The first is all the adult characters are only voices on purpose. This is the world of kids. It should remain that way. A different actor can be cast as each voice instead of doubling like suggested in the cast list, but they should always remain voices. Additional students can be added to group scenes, like lunch, but is not necessary to do so.

The second is keep the flow between scenes as seamless as possible. Large breaks, such as full blackouts or curtain closings, should only happen between acts or to show large lapses in time.

Third, the use of music was very important. We built a soundtrack much like that of a movie. The cast helped compile songs that they liked, that were popular at the time of the production, that fit the mood of certain scenes. *Be sure to obtain permission to use copyrighted music.*

And finally, the technical needs of this show are very flexible. There are some specific costumes, props, and sound effects needed. Costumes should change to show the passage of time. A suggested set using a few key pieces was originally used. A complete set could be constructed, but the show would probably work just as well using "black boxes."

SCENES

ACT I

- Scene 1:** Late October; after school; hallway at school
- Scene 2:** Middle of the night; Chris's bedroom
- Scene 3:** The next morning; hallway
- Scene 4:** Reading class
- Scene 5:** Girls' restroom
- Scene 6:** Lunch; cafeteria
- Scene 7:** After school; hallway
- Scene 8:** The next morning; hallway
- Scene 9:** Reading class; hallway
- Scene 10:** Lunch; cafeteria
- Scene 11:** Friday night; Halloween dance

ACT II

- Scene 1:** A week later; middle of the night; Chris's bedroom
- Scene 2:** The next day; art class
- Scene 3:** That evening; boys' locker room
- Scene 4:** November; lunch; cafeteria
- Scene 5:** Hallway
- Scene 6:** That night; Trent's basement
- Scene 7:** December; middle of the night; Chris's bedroom
- Scene 8:** The next morning; hallway
- Scene 9:** Later that day; hallway
- Scene 10:** That night; Randy's basement
- Scene 11:** Friday night; Spirit dance
- Scene 12:** February; morning; outside

ACT I
Scene 1

(A typical middle school hallway after school in late October. TRENT, an athlete, enters SR, not looking where he's going, yelling to someone offstage.)

TRENT: Tell Coach I'll be there in a minute. I have to go to my locker.

(ALISON enters SL. TRENT backs into her. It's obvious that they're friends.)

TRENT: Oh. Sorry.

ALISON: Hi, Trent. In a hurry?

TRENT: I've got to get on the bus.

ALISON: Who do you guys play?

TRENT: Northmoor.

ALISON: What time do you leave?

TRENT: Now. It'll take almost an hour to get there. Coach is already pacing around the locker room. If we lose, he'll run us to death tomorrow.

ALISON: You'll be great.

TRENT: Thanks.

ALISON: I should get to play practice. Score a touchdown for me.

TRENT: Sure. *(Beat.)* Can I call you later?

ALISON: How late?

TRENT: Eleven, eleven-thirty. I need help with our history.

ALISON: Okay. That's all? You're okay?

TRENT: *(Understanding completely.)* Oh, yeah. I'm fine.

ALISON: Good.

ANNOUNCEMENT: Coach Rogers needs all football players in the locker room at this time. Football players please report to the locker room.

TRENT: Gotta go.

ALISON: Good luck.

TRENT: Thanks. I'll tell you all about it tonight.

ALISON: Okay. Bye.

End of Freeview

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