

NORMALCY

A TEN MINUTE MONOLOGUE

By Bobby Keniston

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SYNOPSIS: How do you recover from an unfathomable tragedy? Shana has been sent to a psychiatrist by her father in order to "get back to some sense of normalcy", after her mother's violent murder. Though she wishes she could remain silent, her bottled up emotions come pouring out as she battles with her feelings of anger, grief, and an honest bewilderment. How can she possibly feel normal in any way when she loves her mother's murderer? This thought-provoking dramatic monologue is perfect for a challenging forensic competition piece.

CAST OF CHARACTERS

(1 Female)

SHANA GRANT (f)In her teens, 16 or 17. She is struggling with a tragedy that has occurred in her family. She is depressed, angry, and confused. There is a good chance she doesn't want to be talking about all of this, but once she gets going, she can't stop.

DURATION: 10 minutes

SETTING: I believe this monologue should be performed as though SHANA were talking to a psychiatrist, as there are hints within the monologue that suggest it. This does not mean she has to be laying on a couch or anything, but there should be the impression she is in the office of a psychiatrist.

COSTUME SUGGESTION: Shana should be dressed as an average teenage girl, nothing flashy.

DEDICATION

This monologue is for Tracy Sue, for all of the belief when I needed it.

I know you want me to talk, so, fine, I'll talk. But I don't want to hear anything you have to say, because it won't help. It won't. Whatever good intentions you have to figure me out and shrink my head into little bitty compartments, and I'm sure you have plenty of good intentions, you guys always do, even if you do charge a hundred dollars an hour or something, I'm telling you, it is not going to work. And I don't feel like apologizing. Okay?

My dad sent me here because he said "We have to find a way to get back to some sense of normalcy." Whatever that means. To tell you the truth, our family was never even close to normal to begin with. It's not like I can look back before the "incident" or "tragedy," depending on who you are and how you want to say it, and really remember any time growing up that felt like it was normal. And it wasn't all Jasper's fault, either. He's not the only reason our family was all "abnormal", no matter what anybody else wants to say. Even if he is responsible for the "incident" or the "tragedy" or whatever you want to call it.

Personally, I hate both of those words. "Incident" is how some of the neighbors refer to it. They don't know what to say. It's not their fault. They've known the Grant family for years, have even known about all of Jasper's troubles. They don't know how to respond to it any better than I do, and they don't know what to call it. So they say "the incident."

Of course, the police just call it "the murder". You know what? I couldn't even say that word two weeks ago without throwing up. But I can say it now. "Murder." That's what the police call it, but that's not exactly right, though, not really.

“Tragedy” is what the papers and the news shows say. “What a tragedy, such a tragedy, could this tragedy have been avoided, learning from the Grant tragedy, so sad, so sad, so sad,” they say, these newscasters with every hair in place, carefully studied serious expressions on their faces, while inside their hearts are racing. They love tragedies! Tragedies mean ratings! If they really cared about human beings, would they stick a microphone and camera in my face and ask me how it feels to know that my older brother killed my mom? If they had any shred of humanity inside their tanned plastic shells, would they ask a question like that?

(Laughs a little.) How do you answer a question like that? “Well, Tim, it’s not the best feeling in the world, know what I mean?” or “It certainly has been a struggle, Tim, considering that, well, my MOTHER IS DEAD.”

(Slight beat.) And I’m the one who has to return to normalcy. What about these sick vultures, huh? How is what they do “normal” in any way? They feed on the misery and fears of others. And all of these people watching the story of the Grant tragedy, do you know what they’re really thinking, deep down? Past the comments they say to each other like “Those poor people,” and “Our prayers are with you,” underneath all those platitudes is the simple thought of “Better them than us.” They thank God that this hasn’t happened to them. There’s no such thing as true “empathy” in a situation like this. Who can relate?

I sometimes think my parents were the best human beings on the planet. I mean, we would argue, I would get upset, they'd occasionally yell at me, but that was all just part of growing up, you know? But they never, and I mean NEVER treated me like I was their "normal" child, and they never treated Jasper like he was the "different" one. Ever. Jasper was just my older brother growing up, that's all he's ever been, my older brother. And I am his little sister. When things started changing, my parents did speak to me about making sure I told them if my brother's behavior became "unusual" or "aggressive" and they would assure me that it was something that was inside of him, but that he was still my brother, and he still loved me very much. I never even noticed anything was wrong until I was twelve, when...

(Beat.) What's the point? What's the point? *(Pause. SHE takes a deep breath, then smiles a little.)* Jasper's two years older than me. He taught me how to ride a bike, you know? My parents had tried and tried, and I would scream whenever they let go of the bike, and refused to try to ride all by myself. I thought I'd never be able to ride a bike without training wheels, until Jasper took me out one day, took the training wheels off of my bike, and said, "Shana, you gotta do this. Riding a bike is the closest we get to flying. Why are you afraid of flying?" And I told him I wasn't afraid. And he held on while I started to pedal, and then, without giving me a choice in the matter, he let go. I was going to scream, but he started yelling out encouragement. "Keep pedaling, Shana, you're doing it! You're flying, Shana!" And suddenly I wasn't scared anymore, and I just rode around, pretending I was flying. When I got back to Jasper, he had a huge grin on his face, and he said, "The whole trick of riding a bike is to not be scared of falling once in a while." *(Beat.)* And I was so happy I had a big brother who would take the time to teach me things. He was my hero.

And I never even noticed until I was twelve... we were out raking the lawn, raking up big piles of leaves to jump in, and everything was fine until Jasper looked over at me, dropped his rake and said, "Come here. I gotta tell you something." I thought he was goofing around, but he came closer to me, got right up to my ear and whispered, "Mom and Dad are trying to kill us." I laughed for a second, but he grabbed my face, not too hard, but enough to jump me, and he said, "I'm not kidding! I know they're trying to kill us. They said so!" And I was really freaked out, and I said, "Mom and Dad said they were trying to kill us?" and he let me go and yelled, "No! They wouldn't admit that! THEY told me! THEM! They're saying it right now! Can't you hear them?" He was so serious, and so scared. And then about five minutes later, he went back to raking leaves and didn't say another word about mom and dad.

(Beat.) I'm sure you're well aware that schizophrenics often start showing signs of it in their late teens or early twenties. Jasper was diagnosed when he was thirteen, but my parents didn't tell me until he was fourteen, and it was really starting to change him. When the voices got bad. I remember Jasper banging his head against the wall to get them to shut up, and my father pulling him away before he really hurt himself. I remember the pain in Jasper's eyes. I remember the different pills that were supposed to help, I remember the screaming at three o'clock in the morning, I remember my parents never, not once, losing faith or courage in the face of their son or with me.

And then three months ago, my father found my mother. I think he sensed something. He had taken me to the mall, and Mom was at home with Jasper, because he'd had a rough night. When Dad and I got home, he stopped the car, and got out. I started to get out, too, but he stopped me. He went inside and saw my Mom in the kitchen, dead. I got out of the car, but didn't go inside. I heard Dad calling for Jasper. He sounded so soft and calm for a man who had just seen his wife's dead body, stabbed seven times. Blood everywhere. But he called out softly for Jasper, because he didn't want to scare him. And Jasper was in the living room, finishing a model airplane. He looked up at my Dad and said, "Hey, Dad. Where's Shana? I think this is gonna be ready for a test flight, soon."

The next day, when my Dad and I went to visit Jasper at the institution, he walked right up to me, threw his arms around me and said, "Where's Mom? They keep telling me I did something awful to Mom. Why would they say that? Why would they say that?" And I tried so hard to keep the tears out of my eyes, and I told him everything was okay, he was going to be okay, and my Dad and I told him that we loved him very much.

Because we do. And you know what? My Mom loves him very much. I have no doubt in my mind that my Mother forgives Jasper for killing her, because, people don't understand even now that it wasn't Jasper, not really, not really.

I love the person who killed my Mom. I love my brother, even though he will never be able to fly again. He's stuck behind those walls forever. And I still love him very much, even though he stabbed my mother seven times and took her away from us.

So tell me: how am I supposed to find the "normalcy" in that?

END OF PLAY

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NOTES

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