A WALK IN MY SHOES
A DRAMA IN ONE ACT

By Doris Anderson

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By Doris Anderson

CAST OF CHARACTERS
(SIX MEN, EIGHT WOMEN, SIX EITHER)

LOGAN...........................................An abused teen; very artistic. (41 lines)
ANNIE .........................................Logan’s sister; Freddie’s girlfriend. (37 lines)
MOTHER..........................................Hard worker. (5 lines)
FATHER .........................................Abusive alcoholic father. (4 lines)
*LOSER #1 ....................................Bully. (11 lines)
*LOSER #2 ....................................Bully. (11 lines)
*LOSER #3 ....................................Bully. (9 lines)
DANNY ..........................................Logan’s not-so-true friend. (18 lines)
FREDDIE........................................Leader of the “crew”; Annie’s boyfriend. (28 lines)
*MR. THOMPSON.........................A teacher. (3 lines)
MELISSA........................................Annie’s friend; Anthony’s girlfriend. (14 lines)
ANTHONY.......................................Crew member; Melissa’s boyfriend. (3 lines)
BECKY ..........................................A wannabe. (2 lines)
CAROLYN ......................................Becky’s friend and follower. (1 line)
DENA ..........................................Becky’s friend and follower. (1 line)
MARTHA ........................................Peer counselor; Taylor’s girlfriend. (12 lines)
TAYLOR ........................................Martha’s intellectual boyfriend. (8 lines)
*STOREKEEPER..............................(4 lines)
*MRS. STANLEY .........................Principal. (10 lines)
*NARRATOR...................................(14 lines)
*STAGE HANDS .........................[optional], non-speaking role(s).

* Could be played by males or females.
PREFACE

This one act play portrays a group of high school students struggling to deal with violence from home, friends, and from bullies. They are forced to confront dilemmas faced by many young people today. How do you deal with abusive behavior at the hands of others when you have no real power? But there is help, if you know where to look. The choices young people make about how to deal with people who treat them unfairly today will impact them for the rest of their lives. Twenty characters act out sequential scenes leading up to an explosive, tragic conclusion. The audience can see where these kids made the wrong decisions, even though the kids thought they were making the right decisions at the time. Caring people try to help. Some accept the help; some don’t.

PRODUCTION NOTES

A technique that has proven useful to help the audience receive the full impact of the experiences of these teens is to display headings and subheadings visually. There are two easels, stage right and far left, covered with felt. As the scenes progress, STAGE HANDS place signs backed by Velcro listing the events and choices the characters encounter. By the end of the play, the audience will see a list of all of the traumatic events the characters faced and the choices that were available to them. Instead of easels, the director could post the signs on walls outside of the auditorium. Another possibility is to place two overhead projectors on each side of the stage with pre-made transparencies. The messages can be projected onto strips of butcher paper hung from the ceiling. As each message is needed in the story, the STAGE HAND simply moves a cardboard obstruction on the transparency until at the end of the play, all messages are revealed on both projectors. Obviously, the play could be produced without the signs, but the story might not have the same emotional impact.
For an easy set, cover a backdrop with butcher paper and simply chalk in the appearance of a brick wall. This could be the side of the high school, label it Midland High School. A window or two can be added, if desired. Simple trees can be sketched on the backdrop to simulate a park or the school grounds.

Although there are several different scenes, most of them are school-related and could even be placed on stage before the curtain rises. As the NARRATOR speaks between scenes, STAGE HANDS or the actors themselves could make minor adjustments to the set.

Optional: add music as the audience enters the auditorium and exits. It should fit the tone of the play. It can also be used as stage adjustments are made. Lighting can be adjusted to simulate the night scenes.

**PROPERTIES**

- Couch (the park bench can double for the couch by simply throwing a comforter over it)
- Table (the table can be the art room table, Mr. Thompson’s desk, Mrs. Stanley’s desk, and the storefront counter)
- Checkers set
- Two bags of groceries
- Artist’s notebook
- Drawing paper and pencils for the art room
- Three chairs
- Portable room divider (one side covered with white butcher paper for Mr. Thompson’s classroom and the other side painted to look like a row of lockers or school hallway)
- Can of spray paint
- Two student desks
- Stool and podium with a desk lamp for the narrator
- Assorted books, papers
- Cash box or cash register
- Stage money
- Baseball bat
- Plastic pipe
- Foam rock
APPEARANCE OF EASELS

**STAGE RIGHT**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Events</th>
<th>Responses</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Innocent Baby</td>
<td>Adult’s Bad Behavior is Not a Kid’s Fault</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Abusive Parent</td>
<td>No One Can Destroy Your Worth Without Your Permission</td>
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<tr>
<td>Bullies at School</td>
<td>Others Can Help</td>
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<tr>
<td>Doing Wrong to Belong</td>
<td>True Friends Build You Up, Not Tear You Down</td>
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<tr>
<td>Abusive Boyfriend</td>
<td>Being in Need is Not Being in Love</td>
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<tr>
<td>Attacked for Doing Right</td>
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<td>Going Along With The Crowd</td>
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<td>One Thing Leads to Another</td>
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<td>Criminal Record</td>
<td>Hard Lessons Learned</td>
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<tr>
<td>Death</td>
<td>Hold Fast to Dreams!</td>
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**SYNOPSIS OF SCENES**

SCENE 1  Logan’s living room; just a couch is needed.
SCENE 2  School hallway.
SCENE 3  Art class.
SCENE 4  Park; park bench is needed.
SCENE 5  Mr. Thompson’s classroom; teacher’s desk is needed.
SCENE 6  School hallway.
SCENE 7  Mr. Thompson’s classroom.
SCENE 8  Principal’s office.
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SCENE 9 Lunch room.
SCENE 10 Park.
SCENE 11 Storefront.
SCENE 12 Park.
SCENE 13 Storefront.
SCENE 14 Freddie’s car; two chairs are needed.
SCENE 15 Lunch room.
SCENE 16 Park.

TIME: Today.
PLACE: Here.

This play is dedicated to sixteen students who attended San Andreas High School from 1987-1999 and died in their youth. Eight of the young men died from violence at the hands of others while two young women were killed by their boyfriends. Three were death by suicide, and the other three died from accident or illness. It is also dedicated to the multitudes of students who have passed through my classes and from whose lives I receive inspiration from daily.

Doris Anderson
SCENE 1

SETTING:
A tattered couch is stage right. A park bench can substitute for the couch by throwing a comforter over it. Newspapers are scattered around the couch and the floor. A checkers set is on the floor in front of the couch.

AT RISE:
Lights come up on stage as music sets a sad and somber tone. Music stops. (Information regarding the phrases placed on easels is explained in the Production Notes.) NARRATOR takes place at podium which can be placed far right or far left down stage.

NARRATOR: Welcome, ladies and gentlemen, and welcome to reality where there isn’t always a happy ending. Some parents put down and slap around their kids, guys hit and disrespect their girlfriends, kids try to make a name for themselves in school by bullying others, and some kids find a lot of excuses and cheap thrills in joining a gang that “rules” a neighborhood. Today, we observe a group of high school students making choices, responding to circumstances, present and past, and struggling to make life make sense. We see how the roots of violence spreads.

LOGAN: (Steps out to center stage and addresses the audience.) We’re all born innocent little babies, but things happen. (Pause, while STAGE HAND places “Innocent Baby” on top easel at right down stage.) A lot of stuff that aggravates you happened as I was growing up. When I was about twelve years old, I had some experiences with my family that really got to me. (Timidly to the audience.) Meet my sister, Annie. (ANNIE as an eleven year old enters and stands beside him, waves shyly.) Imagine, if you will, that we're just kids. I'm twelve and Annie is eleven. We're home alone waiting for Mom to come home from work, and sorta not wanting to think about Dad coming home at all. You'll see why. (They take their places on the floor and begin playing checkers.)
LOGAN: (As a child.) You can’t jump red chips with red chips, you dork! Don’t you know anything? I wish I had a brother.

ANNIE: (Looks at him, frowns, then grabs the checker board and dumps all the chips on the floor.) I don’t want to play with you anyway. You’re a cheat.

LOGAN: Sisters suck! (He reaches to her shoulder and shoves her over.)

ANNIE: (Scrambles around and begins to cry.) I’m gonna tell.

Offstage, we hear footsteps, then keys jangling. A door opens.

ANNIE: Mom! Mom! Logan hit me!

As MOM enters, her arms laden with two bags of groceries, ANNIE grabs her arm and nearly knocks her down. She is obviously very tired from working, and we can see from her stained clothes that she is a restaurant worker.

MOM: (Struggling to the couch where she sets down the groceries, answers wearily.) What time is it anyway? (Pauses, looks at watch.) Gosh, I’m sorry I’m so late. (She takes off her coat and tosses it across the back of the couch.) I had to close up again. Is your dad home yet? (Both children freeze at the mention of their father. LOGAN slowly gets to his feet holding the checkerboard.) Logan, what did I tell you about hitting your sister?

LOGAN: You always blame me. (He flings the checkerboard down.)

MOM: (Pleadingly.) Logan.

LOGAN: I hate Annie. She messes everything up. Why do I have to have such a stupid sister?

MOM: Logan, don’t talk about your sister like that.

The door opens again and everyone freezes as they watch DAD enter. He has obviously been drinking and is in a mean mood. He lurches to the couch and tries to flop down, but the bag of groceries is still there.
DAD: What the heck is this mess? Can’t a man come home to a clean house and a decent meal. (He begins to fling the food on the floor.) What’s going on here anyway?

MOM: It’s okay, honey. I’ll clean it up. I’ll get dinner right away. (She stoops down and begins to pick up the groceries.) Kids, go to your room while I fix dinner so your dad can have a little peace and quiet. We’ll talk about your little problem after dinner.

DAD: What little problem? (Louder.) What little problem? Is that why my dinner’s not ready? These blasted kids! (He stands up.) Logan, come here!

LOGAN: (Crouching a bit.) Please, Dad, no! No! It’s nothing. We didn’t do anything.

ANNIE: (Runs off stage.) I’m going to my room. Like Mom said.

DAD: (Striding toward LOGAN.) Come here, you little pansy. I’ll teach you to cause trouble in this house. (He stalks unevenly across the floor and raises an arm to strike LOGAN, who ducks. He misses LOGAN which infuriates him even more. and the next one lands hard on the side of LOGAN’S head, spinning him around. He tries to duck away, but DAD has grabbed his arm and yanks him around by it.)

MOM: (Shrilly.) For God’s sake, Harold, leave the kid alone. You’re going to break his arm. (She grabs at his shirt trying to pull him away, so he turns on her.)

DAD: That’s it, take the little punk’s side. (He shoves her mightily to the floor.) I bet he’s not even my kid, the way you dress like a tramp and kiss up to the guys to get those big tips. Where is the money anyway? (He begins to paw through her coat on the couch looking for tip money.) I need some cigarettes. (He finds a few dollars, stalks to the door, and as he exits, he yells back.) And I want dinner ready when I get back!

LOGAN: (Rushes to MOM, helps her up, they hug.) I’ll help with dinner, Mom. (Lights dim. MOM exits.)
Spotlight on LOGAN as he takes his place down center stage. While he speaks, STAGE HAND attaches a second message, “Abusive Dad” to the felt-covered easel at stage right. On top of easel at stage left, STAGE HAND places a banner that says, “Adult’s bad behavior is not a kid’s fault.”

LOGAN: I learned to fear my father. Somehow, I was disgusted that my mom would let him treat her that way. Especially in front of me and Annie. I love my mom and all, but I sensed that guys could bully women around. How can you really respect someone that lets you bully them around? I was just twelve years old. How was I suppose to know the answer to that question? But I also learned to hate my dad. Why should I listen to adults who try to boss me around, when my own dad, who should’ve been my role model, broke all the rules of how things are supposed to be? So I figured I was on my own, and whoever had the power, could call the shots. When I got into the ninth grade, I learned another lesson . . . and you’ll see how one things leads to another.

SCENE 2

SETTING:
Room divider covered with butcher paper downstage left represents a deserted school hallway.

AT RISE:
LOGAN is bending over, fumbling with his book bag when three LOSERS surround him. He looks up.

LOSER #1: Hey, punk.
LOGAN: (Looking up.) Huh? What’s up? (He stands up.)
LOSER #2: We need your help.
LOGAN: Yeah? Like for what?
LOSER #3: (Moving closer, menacingly.) We need your money, punk!
LOGAN: Man, I don’t have any money. Heck, my mom sends me to school with a peanut butter sandwich.

LOSER #1: The little punk’s getting smart with us. I don’t like that. Do you guys like that?

LOSER #2: Heck no. Let’s jack the little punk. (He quickly moves behind LOGAN and grabs him, pinning his arms at his sides. LOSER #3 picks up his bag and begins to rifle through it while LOSER #1 tries to search his jacket pockets.)

LOGAN: (Beginning to struggle.) Hey, I said I don’t have any money. Let go of me!

LOSER #2: (Clamping one hand over his mouth.) Shut up, ya little wuss. (LOGAN continues to struggle.)

LOGAN: ( Emitting muffled, enraged yells.) You jerks!

LOSER #1: Lookee here! Five bucks! (He holds aloft a crumpled five dollar bill.) He’s a real punk now. He lied to us!

LOSER #3: (Holding up an artists’ notebook.) Look at this. He thinks he’s an artist. (He rifles through the notebook, then rips two sheets out, looks at the drawings so the audience can see, then deliberately tears them up and drops the pieces on the floor.)

LOSER #1: Listen! I thought I heard someone coming. Let’s get outta here. (LOSER #3 flings the artists’ notebook on the floor in contempt.)

LOSER #2: (Releases LOGAN, pushing or slugging him.) Keep your mouth shut about this, understand, or you’ll think this was fun in the park. Get it, punk? (The three LOSERS hurry off stage.)

LOGAN: (Tums and socks the wall or ground in frustration, then stoops down, gathers up his things including the torn pictures that have been tossed all over the floor, smoothes the rumpled pages of his artists’ notebook, shoves it into his bag, straightens up his disheveled jacket, and starts off stage.) I hate this school!
Lights dim on hallway scene and come up on NARRATOR. STAGE HAND adds third strip to easel at stage right that says, “Bullied at School.” Two phrases are added to stage left easels: “No One Can Destroy Your Worth Without Your Permission” and “Others Can Help.”

NARRATOR: Logan began to miss some school. His grades dropped. But he met a student in art class that became someone to hang out with.

SCENE 3

SETTING:
DANNY and LOGAN are sitting at a table in art class.

DANNY: Where you been, Logan?
LOGAN: Aw, I hate this school. Not this class, but what happens in the hallways and stuff.
DANNY: Yeah, too bad about those two pictures that got torn up. Are you still mad?
LOGAN: Heck yeah. What do you think, man? I wish I could think of a way to get even. I don’t like going home and I hate being at school.
DANNY: I might have an answer for you, if you really want to do something about those guys.
LOGAN: Such as?
DANNY: Well, I know some people. They don’t take crap off anybody. They can handle stuff, you know? I mentioned your situation and . . .
LOGAN: You mean they do dirty work for people? I don’t know if I want to get into this mess that deep.
DANNY: Naw, it’s not like that. You become one of us . . . I mean them. I joined up with them a while back.
LOGAN: You mean a gang? You belong to a gang!? 
DANNY: Hey, man, it’s not like you think. It’s a crew! We’re not terrorists or anything. We just help keep things even, if ya know what I mean. (Pause.) Man, I probably shouldn’t have said anything. Just forget it.

LOGAN: (After a slight pause.) How could they help me?

DANNY: Well, ya gotta become a member, and stuff, and ya gotta go through stuff to get in to prove you’ll be loyal, and all that, and they might not even want to mess with you. (Pause.) If you want to meet the leader, meet me at the bench in the park about nine tonight. Freddie can check you out to see if you’ll fit in.

LOGAN: (Frowning and shuffling his feet nervously.) Well, I guess it won’t hurt to look into it. Okay. I’ll see you there at nine.

SCENE 4

SETTING:
Park with a couple of trashcans. Comforter has been removed from park bench.

AT RISE:
LOGAN comes in alone, looking around. He slumps down on the bench and looks at his watch. He fidgets and starts to shake his head as if he’s decided this is not for him when DANNY and FREDDIE come up from behind.

DANNY: What’s up, Logan.

LOGAN: (Whirls around, sees DANNY, relaxes a bit, then looks at FREDDIE.) What’s up?

FREDDIE: Danny tells me you could use the help of some friends.

LOGAN: (Relaxes.) Well, yeah. I guess so. But I don’t even know you. What kinda friends? What kinda help? (Pause.) What do I have to do? Aren’t you guys afraid of getting caught doing stuff? I don’t want to get in trouble.
FREDDIE: *(Kicks at the ground.*) Sheesh, Danny told me you had some cajones. I didn’t know you were a wuss. I don’t think the crew even wants you.

LOGAN: Wait a minute. I didn’t mean that.

DANNY: Well, if we decide we can use you, ya gotta prove you’ll not rat on us, ‘cause we gotta do the business we do.

LOGAN: I never rat on my friends.

FREDDIE: Yeah, anybody can say that. We need evidence. But we don’t even know if we want you. What can you offer us in return for our protection and loyalty? Ya know, we gotta maintain respect, ‘cause we don’t like to take crap from anybody, in the neighborhood, at school from the teachers, or from the kids.

LOGAN: You go to Midland? I don’t remember even seeing you there.

FREDDIE: Well, I used to, but they got on my nerves. I get along better on the streets. We get along, don’t we Danny?

DANNY: Yeah, man, we get respect, and we take care of each other. We’re like family, huh, aren’t we Freddie? *(Freddie nods and looks around, making sure no one else is nearby.)*

LOGAN: Well, tell me, like what do I gotta do? Like I’m not into weapons or anything like that. *(FREDDIE shakes his head in contempt. There is silence for a while. Then apparently FREDDIE makes up his mind.)*

FREDDIE: Okay, Logan, we’ll give you a little test. Danny’s been getting disrespect from his last period teacher. We need you to teach the teacher some manners. After school tomorrow, when he leaves, you sneak into his room and mess it up. You spray our mark around in there and let him know he’s messing with our people.

LOGAN: How am I going to do that? He always has his door locked. I don’t know how to bust into locked rooms. What if the security catches me?
DANNY: Man, (Disgustedly.) I told him you weren’t a wuss. (Pause.) Hey, Logan, we work as a team. Freddie’ll come by after school like he’s going to give me a ride home. He’s good at locks. I’ll be lookout for him. When he’s got the lock jimmed, I’ll signal you and you go in and do the deed. Peek out the back door when you’re done, and we’ll be by the lunch tables and let you know when it’s safe to come out. Think you can do that? If you can do this, and prove you’ve got enough cajones to be in the crew, we’ll see no one messes with you or your art anymore. Then we’ll jump you in, and you can help us raise our cash.

LOGAN: Man, I don’t know.

FREDDIE: Come on, Dan Boy, he’s a wuss. (He starts to leave.)

LOGAN: No, wait. Okay. I’ll do it. When?

DANNY: Tomorrow after school. Okay, Freddie?

FREDDIE: We’re on. See ya. I’ll bring the stuff you need. (Aside to DANNY as they walk away.) I hope he makes it. His sister’s lookin’ good. (Exit.)
SCENE 5

SETTING:
We see a teacher’s desk with books and papers on top. Behind it is a portable board or room divider covered with butcher’s paper.

AT RISE:
LOGAN enters furtively. He spray paints his crew’s marks all over the room divider, then turns and knocks over the chair and tips the desk on its side so that the books and papers scatter. He freezes a moment, listening to hear if anyone’s near, then slips to the “door,” opens it, and nods to the offstage DANNY. LOGAN steps off stage. STAGE HAND adds fourth strip to easel at stage right which says, “Doing Wrong to Belong.” “True Friends Build You Up, Not Tear You Down,” is added to easel at stage left.

NARRATOR: Soon Logan was jumped into the crew. He ended up with a black eye and bloodied lip. He lied to his mom and told her he’d taken a spill in P.E. He felt kind of bad about lying to his mother, and even worse, when, for once, she believed him. But in another way, he felt a little bit of power at having taken out some of his frustrations by messing up that teacher’s room. Even though getting jumped into the crew hurt a bunch, for a little while he was the center of attention. And Danny and Freddie and the rest of the crew really acted like they respected him. He fought back that little voice in his conscience that told him he was getting in too deep and what he was doing wasn’t right. Meanwhile, Freddie was starting to pay a lot attention to Annie.
SCENE 6

SETTING:
Same hallway (locker) background as in SCENE 2. ANNIE is in the hall by her locker stuffing things in her backpack. FREDDIE approaches and puts his arms around her from behind.

FREDDIE: Hi, little sis. Wanna have some fun? My car’s waiting in the parting lot.

ANNIE: (A bit uncomfortable with his clutching, as she tries to wriggle away.) Freddie, don’t grab on me like that. You know I don’t like that.

FREDDIE: (He lets go and kind of shoves her away. She pauses and looks at him rather hurt.) Well, I noticed you liked that last night. Man, you just like to tease. I don’t like that!

ANNIE: (Defensively.) I’m sorry, Freddie. (She tries to give him a little hug, but he grabs her and yanks her close.) Freddie, take it easy. What’s the big rush? I’m not ready for the big time yet. (She wriggles away.)

FREDDIE: That sucks, Annie. How am I suppose to know what you want? A girl is supposed to make a guy feel good. I guess you don’t appreciate that bracelet I bought you. (He grabs at her arm to look at the bracelet.)

ANNIE: I love the bracelet, Freddie. I appreciate you. I’m sorry. Let’s go talk in your car a while, okay? I don’t want to do anything real serious now, you know.

FREDDIE: I know. Boy, do I know.

They exit off stage. STAGE HANDS set up two chairs facing audience at center stage. ANNIE and FREDDIE sit down as if they are in the front seat of his car.

NARRATOR: Annie is impressed by the respect everyone shows Freddie on the street. She feels important to have such a smooth guy pay so much attention to her. Her girlfriend, Melissa, has told her to be careful around Freddie, but Annie doesn’t really want to hear it.
FREDDIE: (Putting his arm around ANNIE and pulling her close.) Hey, baby, relax. (He tinkers with the radio, and a romantic song comes on.) I won’t hurt you.

ANNIE: (Trying to relax, but nervous.) I love this song.

FREDDIE: (Moves close to kiss her, but she’s stiff.) Just relax, baby. (He puts his hand on her leg. She jerks away.) What the heck’s the matter with you, anyway. I’m sick of this. If you don’t wanna put out, there are other girls that do.

ANNIE: Freddie, I’m sorry. I’m just not ready for this. (She reaches for him, but he shoves her away.)

FREDDIE: Get out. Just get out. I don’t need some babe to get me all hot and then leave me hanging. (He begins to shove her out of the car.) Just get out.

ANNIE: I didn’t mean to. Please, Freddie. Don’t leave me here. I don’t want to walk home all by myself in the dark. (She lands outside the car.)

Music cuts off abruptly. Stage lights switch back to NARRATOR. ANNIE and FREDDIE exit. STAGE HAND attaches strip to easel at stage right which says, “Abusive Boyfriend.” On easel at stage left is added, “Being in Need Is Not Being in Love.

NARRATOR: Annie kept trying to please Freddie, but even when she did what he wanted, he got more and more demanding and started to physically attack her.
SCENE 7

SETTING:
Back in teacher’s class. Spray-painted butcher’s paper has been pulled off revealing fresh paper beneath.

AT RISE:
MR. THOMPSON is straightening out things on top of his desk. MARTHA, a peer counselor, is there trying to help cheer MR. THOMPSON up.

MARTHA: Mr. Thompson, let me help you. (She picks up a few books and places them on his desk.) A lot of kids I know say they really like how you teach. They are sorry about what happened, but they’re too scared to say anything. Actually, they’re afraid of the kids that did this.

MR. THOMPSON: (Pausing, looks at MARTHA a moment.) Do you know who did this?

MARTHA: All I have heard are rumors. But if they’re true, even teachers who try to do anything about it should be afraid. (She pauses, and looks around, as if trying to be careful that no one else is listening.)

MR. THOMPSON: So you don’t know, or you don’t want to say?

MARTHA: Well, I can tell you what I heard if you promise not to use my name. I really didn’t see anything myself, and nobody would tell me straight out since I’m a peer leader and they think I’m a goody-two-shoes anyway.

MR. THOMPSON: I won’t give your name without your permission, Martha. I understand your position on this (He shakes his head sadly.) The whole thing sounds like the wrong people are in charge of this school. When the thugs run things and good people are afraid to stand up to them, we’ve lost what all of our soldiers have fought and died for, our basic freedom. (Pause.) Sorry, I didn’t mean to preach at you. Thanks for caring, Martha. If you’ll tell me what you’ve heard, I give you my word that I won’t tell who told me. Okay? (MARTHA pulls up a chair to the desk, they both look around to
make sure no one is listening, she leans over as if she’s whispering. BECKY approaches the door, sees them talking, listens a moment, then turns quickly away. As NARRATOR begins to speak, they both exit).

NARRATOR: Sure enough, Mrs. Stanley, the principal, called in Logan and Danny and questioned them about the vandalism of Mr. Thompson’s room. The word has gotten out that somebody talked, and kids are upset, for they can feel tension building.

SCENE 8

SETTING: Principal Stanley’s office. The same “desk” setting as in the previous scene can be used here.

AT RISE:
MRS. STANLEY is seated behind her desk. LOGAN and DANNY enter.

MRS. STANLEY: (Looking up from paper work.) Come in. Have a seat. (LOGAN sits down nervously, while DANNY defiantly flops into the chair, slumps back, arms folded.)

DANNY: We didn’t do anything. Why’d you call us in? (LOGAN shifts uncomfortably.)

MRS. STANLEY: I’ll ask the questions here. Logan, hold out your hands, nails up, please.

LOGAN: Huh? Why? (MRS. STANLEY just looks expectantly at him. Finally he holds his hands out. She adjusts her glasses and looks.)

MRS. STANLEY: I was afraid I’d see that paint around your nails. (Turning to DANNY.) Danny, hold out your hands.

DANNY: I don’t have to. I didn’t do anything.
MRS. STANLEY: Are you choosing to defy me? I don’t have to let you stay in this school, either. (After a pause and some shifting around, DANNY holds out his hands. She looks and nods.) Okay, Danny, you can go back to class. (DANNY slinks out.) Logan, you want to explain why you vandalized Mr. Thompson’s room?

LOGAN: (Fidgeting and looking down.) Who said I vandalized Mr. Thompson’s room?

MRS. STANLEY: I said you vandalized Mr. Thompson’s room. Did someone put you up to it?

LOGAN: I don’t know.

MRS. STANLEY: Logan!

LOGAN: I can’t say, Mrs. Stanley. I never rat on anyone.

MRS. STANLEY: Out of some kind of pride, I suppose. I wish you’d have pride in your school work. Your art teacher says you have lots of talent. She even talks about wanting to recommend you for a scholarship to a special art school. (Pause, she shuffles papers.) I’m going to have to notify your mother and suspend you for five days. Then when you come back, you’ll work with our custodian two hours every day after school till you’ve completed 30 hours. I’ve given him a schedule for keeping track of your time. (She hands him some papers.) Give your mother this suspension notice. (Pause.) Do you have a ride home?

LOGAN: (He grabs a copy of the suspension paper she holds out to him.) I’ll take the bus. (As LOGAN exits, he wads up the suspension copy and flings it on the floor. MRS. STANLEY stands up and watches as he leaves, shaking her head sadly, then she exits also.)
SCENE 9

SETTING:
Lunch room. Same table as in previous scene can be used.

AT RISE:
MARTHA, ANNIE, and MELISSA are seated at a lunch table. BECKY approaches with two other girls, CAROLYN and DENA.

BECKY: (Loudly.) Boy, if there’s one thing I can’t stand, it’s somebody with a big mouth? What do you think, Dena? Somebody around here has been blabbing their brains out and messing into things that are none of their business.

DENA: Yeah, I’ve heard the same stuff. What do you think we should do about this, Carolyn? Can you stand this?

CAROLYN: (Who has begun to sock her fist into her other hand.) I say we can’t let this go by. We’ve got to take care of business. Some people have got to learn their lesson, the hard way.

ANNIE: (Standing up.) What are you guys talking about? Are you talking about one of us? What’s up, anyway?

MELISSA: Martha, do you know what’s going on?

MARTHA: I don’t know what they’re talking about. Are you guys trying to threaten us?

BECKY: No, honey (Sarcastically,) we never threaten. (DENA, CAROLYN, and BECKY surround MARTHA, while ANNIE and MELISSA step back in horror.) Here’s what you get for messing with Logan and his business. (She gives MARTHA a mighty shove, she falls to one knee. CAROLYN and DENA step in and begin to pummel MARTHA, who tries to cover her head and face with her arms. She crumples to the floor in a fetal position and the three attackers each kick at her. ANNIE and MELISSA make feeble attempts to stop the attack but are rebuffed. Then the three attackers turn and run off stage.)
ANNIE: Logan, she said Logan! What did she mean by that? (ANNIE and MELISSA bend over MARTHA and try to help her up. Her hair is all disheveled, and blood streaks her face. She struggles to a sitting position and looks slowly at ANNIE.)

MARTHA: Call Mrs. Stanley, you guys. Call her, please.

ANNIE: Melissa, go get Mrs. Stanley. (MELISSA exits, ANNIE helps MARTHA up and back to the table where she sits down.) What did she mean, Logan? Martha, do you know something about my brother? (MARTHA just hides her face in her hands and repeats, “Oh, God! Oh, God!”)

MRS. STANLEY and MELISSA hurry up to the table. MRS. STANLEY bends over MARTHA, who raises her head. When MRS. STANLEY sees her bloodied face, she puts her arm around her.

MRS. STANLEY: It’s okay, Martha. You’re safe now. (She turns to ANNIE and MELISSA, who are standing there horrified.) Did you girls see who did this? (They both look at each other, and shake their heads.)

ANNIE: You know, I didn’t really recognized them. Did you, Melissa? I think they’re new here.

MRS. STANLEY: You’re afraid to say anything for fear the same thing will happen to you, aren’t you? That’s too bad. Martha, do you know the girls who did this to you?

MARTHA: (After a slight pause, as she looks into the faces of ANNIE and MELISSA, who both turn away from her searching look.) Yes, I do, and so do they, but . . . let me think about it a while. I’m not a fighter, Mrs. Stanley. I try to help people. But I don’t seem to be safe around here. If I say anything, they’ll kill me.

MRS. STANLEY: Well, you know I have to call in School Police to take a report. You’ll have to come with me to the office. We’ve got to notify your mother and see if you need us to call the paramedics. Let me look at your eyes. (To MELISSA and ANNIE.) You girls come, too. We have to get statements from you. (They exit.)
STAGE HAND adds strip to easel at stage right which says, “Attacked for Doing Right.” Left easel says, “Doing Right Creates Self-Respect.”

NARRATOR: Martha’s world was shaken. She questioned everything she’d been taught about doing the right thing. What should she do in the future? Did she do the wrong thing by speaking up to a teacher about someone wrecking school property and messing up his room? Her minister said she should go on the side of right, and her mom said, “Honey, your life is going to have more decisions like this. We all have to do what is the right thing, even if it is hard.” But her mom had never been beaten up for doing the right thing. If she had kept her mouth shut, she would have felt sick inside, for then people who break the law would be in charge, and they were doing it by sneaking around. That showed they knew what they were doing was wrong, and by beating her up, they wanted her and everyone else to know they’d better not step out of line, because the crew ruled with fear and intimidation. But now, people at school talked behind her back, and people she thought were friends seemed to go the other way. Why should doing the right thing make her feel so miserable? But Taylor, her boyfriend, stuck by her.

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